INTRODUCTION
POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES IN THE AFTERMATH
OF THE TERRORIST ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES

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The papers in this special issue were originally presented at the July 2003 meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology in Boston, Massachusetts. Because of the importance of the research on reactions to the historic terrorist attack on the United States, we issued invitations to authors to submit papers for quick review. The contents attest to the success of our appeal.

I would like to put the papers in historical context. Some of the studies deal with reactions to the September 11 suicide attacks on New York and Washington, others to the United States' October counter attack in pursuit of Al Quaeda in Afghanistan, and one paper deals with the controversial decision to launch an attack on Iraq in March of 2003.

One sunny morning in September, 2001, I was working in my home office when the call came from my daughter: "Quick, turn on the television," she yelled, "a plane has crashed into the World Trade Tower." I turned on the TV, and quickly called in my wife, who was working in the yard; we sat in stunned silence as the television repeated the horrible drama, planes crashing into buildings, over and over. Although we live 500 miles from New York City, with other Americans we look to the city as our country's center of trade and culture[1]. On that day, September 11, 2001, enemies of the United States of America had, for the first time since the Civil War, launched an attack on American[2] soil.

Airliners filled with passengers that had taken off from Boston, Washington, D.C., and Newark that morning were hijacked. Four or five terrorists brandishing knives assumed control of each plane. The first plane crashed into the north tower of New York's World Trade Center, followed by a second plane that flew into the south tower. The third plane, taking off from Dulles International Airport, flew directly to the national capitol and crashed into the Pentagon, nerve center of the nation's military. The fourth

plane, originating in Newark, New Jersey, was thought to have targeted either the White House or the Capitol building in Washington, DC. It crashed in Pennsylvania, forced down by heroic passengers who, feeling that they were to die one way or another, elected to storm the cockpit.

New York, Washington, and the people of the United States were stunned. The nation was placed on high alert and President Bush was flown to a secure location. New York Mayor Giuliani brought calm leadership to the city, where police and firemen were dying in a vain effort to rescue people from the flaming buildings. Eventually, it was determined that nearly 3000 workers, police and firemen had perished in the holocaust that destroyed the World Trade Center and damaged the Pentagon. In addition, 261 passengers and crew members lost their lives together with the suicidal hijackers in the four airliners.

Citizen reaction to September 11 is the topic of the first three papers in this monograph. Pratto and her colleagues examine and compare the hopes and fears of American and Lebanese students in the wake of the terrorist attacks, employing a rich social psychological perspective. Their results indicate the necessity for considering individual psychological factors, together with consideration of the social position of the individual, in understanding the emotions generated by traumatic events. For example, a strong fear among American students was loss of American predominance in the world. In contrast, Lebanese students, particularly strongly identified Muslims with low social dominance orientation, hoped for diminishment of American power.

Azarow et al. focus on the positive effects of shared crisis situations, drawing on an emerging literature on altruism and generativity. Their study is distinctive in its use of the internet to broaden its sample beyond the college-aged norm, and for going beyond the usual emphasis on helping to examine Erikson's concept of generativity as it has been developed by McAdams and associates. Their findings suggest that positive concern for others is stimulated by shared crisis, but dissipates with time. I was interested that political ideology was found unrelated to either altruistic or generative concerns, but I still believe that we will find more complicated relationships between ideology and positive behavior, as demonstrated by Gaertner's (1973, cited by Azarow, et al.) study.

What does it mean to be an American? Another consequence of the nation's crisis is explored in Silver and Silver's study of national identification. Their study is unique in that they had a pre-attack baseline. Their "multidimensional " definition of national identification is enriched by their use of social dominance theory to examine the impact of crisis on

identification across gender and ethnic groupings. Their findings generally support the notion of an increase of "American" identification following the 2001 attack, but their findings of greater affective identification among ethnic minority males makes us wish that they had had available a large sample of African Americans, but in opportunistic studies relating to uncontrollable events, we take data where we can.

Back to our historical précis: Despite warnings of potential terrorist attacks, the events of September 11 came as a surprise to the government officials as well as the public. How could such a thing have happened in the United States? Rumors circulated as to the culprits. The suicide attackers were identified from immigration and other surveillance records. The terrorist organization Al Quaeda was pinpointed as the source that planned, recruited, and paid the suicide terrorists. Osama Bin Laden, Al Quaeda leader, was named as the source of planning and financing the attack. There was urgent demand to avenge this horrifying attack, and the finger was pointed at Afghanistan (presumed headquarters of Al Quaeda and Bin Laden), despite the finding that 14 of the 19 terrorists were Saudi Arabian citizens. The United States and allies attacked Afghanistan on October 7 of 2001 and on December 22 installed an interim government to replace the Taliban regime. The United States and its allies had secured Afghanistan, but Osama Bin Laden and hundreds of Al Quaeda fighters had eluded them.

An integrated approach to leadership thinking in the West and the Middle East during this critical era is presented in the cooperative studies by Suedfeld and Conway, et al., who obtained integrative complexity scores for the same time periods (baseline, attack, coalition-building, counterattack, and post-war). Suedfeld has over a period of years developed a sophisticated approach to what had earlier been referred to as cognitive complexity. His concept of integrative complexity has been applied to the analysis of a wide range of leaders' speeches and writings. Because it uses existing documents, the study of integrative complexity lends itself to historical investigation as well as research on current events. Much of Suedfeld's research has focused on situational determinants of complexity, although it can also be seen as an individual difference variable, and the very low baseline integrative complexity score of President Bush pre-attack is given a speculative interpretation by Suedfeld, based on his cognitive manager model.

Because they employ the standardized scoring for integrative complexity, Conway and associates' scores for Middle Eastern leaders are comparable to those of Western leaders presented by Suedfeld. Although presented on different scales, it is interesting to compare the absolute scores in

the two studies. Bush's scores for baseline, attack and coalition building phases, estimated from Suedfeld's graphs (1.77, 1.65, and 1.60), are closer to the averages for Middle Eastern leaders (1.75, 1.39, and 1.61) than they are to those of Western leaders (estimated 3.00, 2.10, and 2.62). The relation of these scores to the historical context is less certain than the interpretations given by Suedfeld and Rank (1976, cited by Suedfeld) in their study of revolutionary leaders, where the findings were replicated across many leaders in comparable situations.

German attitudes toward the United States have been generally positive for the last half century, and there certainly was a large reservoir of sympathy and good will toward the U.S. in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. However, there was division among Germans about the United States' countermeasures in Afghanistan and Iraq. Cohrs and colleagues questioned a large sample of German people about their support for the Afghan war, finding in their sample distinguishable groups of war supporters, opponents, and undecided respondents. The investigators applied Albert Bandura's four "processes of moral disengagement" to the examination of war supporter attitudes. The one process used in common by all of the war supporters was "denial of responsibility" of the United States for the war. That factor is exemplified by Cohrs' questionnaire item: "If the U.S. wanted to protect their freedom, they had no choice but to intervene by military means." War supporters also exhibited more positive attitudes toward the United States.

After displacing the Taliban government in Afghanistan, President Bush and his advisors turned their attention to Iraq as a threat to the United States. Iraqi leader Sadaam Hussein was identified as an enemy who possessed weapons of mass destruction that could be launched at the US. After a lengthy period of controversy within the United Nations (and in the United States as well) about the existence of such weapons in Iraq, the United States elected to attack Iraq with one major partner, the United Kingdom.

As the war with Iraq seemed inevitable, opinion in America polarized. McFarland's paper explores determinants of student opinion one week before hostilities began in Iraq. The proportions of students undecided, opposing and supporting the expected war, roughly one third in each camp, reflected the division of opinion in the United States. The degree of opposition is surprising, considering that these were students from a conservative Southern state. The model that the author has constructed illuminates the contributions of authoritarianism and social dominance orientation to attitudes favoring the attack. The model makes clear that a large portion of the

support for attacking Iraq was the Authoritarians' fear of the Iraqi threat, and the high social dominant respondents' disregard of the human costs of the war. "Blind patriotism", another attitudinal support for the attack, was part of the belief systems of both authoritarians and social dominants.

This monograph was assembled on a fast track basis, in order to make a timely presentation of the interesting studies that had been presented in July. Thanks are due to the authors for their willingness to do the extra work of revision for publication at a very busy time of year. Also, thanks are due to Adela Garzon and the editorial staff of *Psicologia Politica* for their fast work in getting the issue into print. I have enjoyed working with you all.

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[1] See M. Sorkin and S. Zukin (eds.) (2002), *After the World Trade Center: Rethinking New York City*. New York: Routledge.

[2] Throughout this monograph, "America" and "Americans" must be taken to mean only the USA, not the entire continent.

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