DEBATE RESEARCH ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB
by
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Since September 11, almost everyone in America has been debating about weapons of mass destruction and the prospects of their use on American soil. And, just as this event has transformed public dialogue on the streets, it has transformed your debate topic.

When you are debating, you cannot simply bracket the impact of the September 11 attacks on your arguments. The dynamics of international relations have changed, arguments that terrorists are willing to commit mass murder have been validated, the prospects for use of weapons of mass destruction have become real, the Social Security surplus is largely spent, and the global economy is in a recession.

You need to research the impacts of the September 11 attack on every argument you are prepared to make in your debates, and you need to make an effort to produce some "new" arguments that take those events into account.

Although this research is a time-consuming task, it is not a difficult one. From the comfort of your own home or school, you can access through the world wide web almost any news or scholarly report that you will need to prepare for your debates.

The web provides individuals with instant access to stories that are produced by almost all major, and even some minor, media outlets throughout the world at no cost. You can access instant news from such sources as CNN (cnn.com)*, the New York Times (nyt.com) the Washington Post (washingtonpost.com), and thousands of other domestic news sources. These web sites are updated as stories break. People from Los-Angeles can follow the breaking world news and stay informed of security concerns in the area by logging on to the Los Angeles Times website (latimes.com)

On September 11th, and the days immediately following the attack, I was able to learn of new developments very quickly by closely monitoring the Boston Globe's

*All web sites listed here should be preceded by http://www. when typed into your browser.

website (boston.com). Their late-breaking news stories at the top of the screen contained more new information that I could find on the website of any other major media source.

Largely relying on major newsfeeds such as the Associated Press (AP) and Reuters, most major news networks will report all major national and international news. Individual media outlets, however, have their own reporters and also acquire news and information that they share with their subscribers and online viewers. Exposure to large variety of resources gives information seekers more opportunities. The New York Post (nypost.com) almost always has a number of stories that you will not find elsewhere.

Links to many of these newsfeeds as well as a number of other domestic and international news sources can be found at the Drudge Report (drudgereport.com). The Drudge Report indexes a number of papers, columnists, and keeps running links to the newest and most interesting news .

Thanks to the web, you do not have to wait for weekly editions of magazines and periodicals with new news. On September 20th, you were able to instantly access Time Magazine's discovery of the hijacker's attempt to rent crop-dusters as soon as the article was produced at their website (time.com). Newsweek (newsweek.com), U.S. News & World Report (usnews.com), Forbes (forbes.com) and Fortune (fortune.com) are also available online.

Instant commentary from a more liberal perspective, including a provocative article by the well-known Harvard professor Jonathan Schell, was immediately available at The Nation (nation.com). The Nation and the Progressive (progresive.com) continue to make a number of articles with a very liberal perspective on the U.S. response available online. Commentary from a more conservative perspective is available at the website of the National Review (nationalreview.com).

A major concern that continues to drive the workability of the U.S. military response is the ability of the United States to

get other governments, and, perhaps more importantly, the populations of other countries to support the U.S. response. One way to gauge support for this response is to rely on U.S. media outlets to interpret actions in other countries. Another way is to follow media reports from foreign media outlets that are available around the world. Many of these outlets offer their news and commentary in English.

Articles that are generally supportive of U.S. action can not only be found in the U.S. press but also in Israel's Jerusalem Post (jpost.com/)and Ha'arretz Daily (haaretzdaily.com/). Articles on the BBC (www.bbc.co.uk/news/) are generally supportive of the efforts, but also offer some critical, more-academic analysis. The UK's conservative Daily Telegraph offers a similar perspective (portal.telegraph.co.uk/news/index.jhtml).

There are at least five newspapers from Pakistan with reporting on diplomatic, military, and humanitarian actions in the region. Paknews.org reported only a couple days after the attacks that U.S. military forces that were making their way into Afghanistan had landed at the Islamabad airport. This was not reported by U.S media outlets until two weeks later. Other newspapers from Pakistan include the Frontier Post (frontierpost.com.pk/), the Pakistan Observer (pakobserver.com/), and the International News (jang.com.pk/thenews/)

Similarly, one can gauge support for the warming of U.S. ties with Pakistan in India by reading the Times of India (timesofindia.com/) the Indian Telegraph (http://www.telegraphindia.com/) Express of India (expressindia.com/), and the Hindustan Times (http://hindustantimes.com/)

Expressions of dissent from Iran and from the world at large can be read at the Islamic Republic News Agency (irna.com/en/), the Arab News (arabnews.com/), and the Middle East Times (metimes.com). Critical articles can also be found in the Iran Daily (iran-daily.com/), the Tehran Times (tehrantimes.com/), and the Iraqi News Agency (uruklink.net/iraqnews/eindex.htm).

Al—Zeera (aljazeera.net/) is the tele-

vision news network for the Arab world that is located in Qatar. This is the network that has been broadcasting Bin Laden tapes. It is only available in Arabic, however. Stories from the Arab Media Network (amin.org/) are available in English. The Saudi Arabia Information Service (saudinf.com/) is news from the Saudi Government. Since the Saudis have recently become critical of the U.S. air attacks on Afghanistan, you should be able to find news that reflects that.

There are also some specific places that you can find continual updates on news from the Middle East. Debka File (debka.com) showcases the news headlines of the Middle East. It is similar to the Drudge Report. The Middle East Daily (middleeastdaily.com) has a number of links to articles from various wire services covering the Middle East.

The web also provides access to many journals and periodicals that you would otherwise likely to only be able to obtain through subscription. Zmag (zmag.org), for example, features daily anti-war commentary from the left, including noted academic leftist Noam Chomsky.

There isn't much information coming directly out of Afghanistan itself, as the internet is generally illegal in Afghanistan. But, Azadi Afghan Radio, the radio of the Northern Alliance, is available at afghanradio.com/azadi.html.

Updated stories from the major newswires on Afghanistan are available from the Afghan News Network (myafghan.com/), the Sabawoon News Network (sabawoon.com/), the Afghan Online Press (www.afghan-web.com/aop/), and the Afghan Network News (afghan-network.net/News/).

A number of research papers and commentary from a number of the nation's and world's leading think tanks are also available on the web. Think tanks are groups of public policy scholars who study pressing national and foreign policy issues and publish papers advocating particular approaches. You will see many of these people interviewed in the popular media. Most of these largely non-profit organizations make their papers available free.

Many think tanks have particular ideological outlooks, making it easy to find sources that reflect particular opinions. The Heritage Foundation (heritage.org) is one of the nation's leading conservative think thanks and has produced many papers on the U.S. response to the attacks since September 11. Since the Heritage Foundation is a conservative organization, the papers at this site support a strong military re-

sponse to terrorism, including military attacks against state sponsors of terrorism and extensive grants of law enforcement powers for the purposes of arresting terrorists. Other conservative organizations with similar points of view include the Center for Security Policy (security-policy.org/) and the Nixon Center (nixoncenter.org).

The Brookings Institute (brookings.org) is a liberal to mainstream organization that usually supports a more moderate response to domestic and international problems. In the last month since the attacks, scholars at the institute have published a number of papers on the problem of terrorism and the pros and cons of different U.S. responses. All of these papers are available at the website. Similar organizations include the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (ceip.org) and the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) (fas.org/irp/threat/terror.htm). The FAS is the farthest left-leaning of the three.

More liberal scholars that are concerned with the potential negative implications of a U.S. military response are also making their views known on line through more liberal think tanks. The Nautilus Institute (nautilus.org), an institute that usually concerns itself with more liberal approaches to Asian security issues, has established a special forum on the September 11th attacks. Over 20 scholars have already contributed to the forum.

The more radical left that opposes U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and any military response to the attacks also has an extensive web presence. While you may not agree with this perspective, reading articles on these web sites will help you to understand the perspective of the other side and some of the problems that U.S. intervention might produce. Sources with this farther left perspective include Antiwar (antiwar.com), Foreign Policy In Focus (fpif.org), the Committee for A Just Response (justresponse.org), Common Dreams (commondreams.org), and War Resisters (warresisters.org).

There are also think thanks that do not appear to strongly represent either ideological perspective. The think tank dealing with foreign policy issues that probably has the most extensive web presence is the Center for Security and International Studies (CSIS) (csis.org). The CSIS has thousands of well-researched academic papers by noted scholars in the field, including many that focus exclusively on Homeland Defense available at no charge on its site.

Other mainstream organizations include the Center for Non-Proliferation Stud-

ies (cns.miis.edu/), the Council on Foreign Relations (cfr.org), the Center for Defense Information (cdi.org), the Foreign Policy Association (fpa.org), Global Security (globalsecurity.org), and the International Relations and Security Network (isn.ethz.ch), An extensive list of the online documents on preventing terrorism from the CEIP is available at ceip.org/npp.

One government-funded organization that primarily deals with U.S. security issues is the Rand Corporation (Rand.org). Almost all of its resources on terrorism and its prevention are available online for free.

A number of web sites are devoted either largely or exclusively to the problem of protecting the homeland and any U.S. foreign presence from terrorism. Web sites with articles that advocate different approaches to preventing terrorism in the United States and abroad include Terrorism.com (terrorism.com), Homeland Defense (homelanddefense.org), and the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ict.org.il).

The Nuclear Control Institute (nci.org), an organization that is primarily dedicated to preventing the spread of nuclear materials to new nuclear nations and terrorists, has a large collection of resources available at their web site. The Institute recently advised the federal government on measures to protect the security of domestic nuclear power plants.

There are also two journals on the web that are devoted exclusively to the problem of international terrorism and how to prevent it: Terrorism Reporter (terrorismreporter.com) and the Homeland Defense Journal (homelanddefense.org/Journal).

While understanding the need to develop strong laws to prevent future terrorist attacks in the United States, organizations concerned with civil liberties are interested in ensuring laws that are passed do not intrude on our civil rights. Prominent civil libertarian groups include the Cato Institute (www.cato.org) the American Civil Liberties Union (www.aclu.org), and the Electronic Frontier Foundation (www.eff.org).

There are also some organizations are focused exclusively on Afghanistan. The Stop Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan Campaign (feminist.org/afghan/intro.asp) and the Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan (rawa.org) are focused on advancing women's rights. Afghan.com is the "Site of the Islamic Resistance."

International institutions have an extensive web presence. The United Nations

makes almost all of its materials, including speeches and reports on the September 11th attacks available at its website (un.org/terrorism/). The World Health Organization, an international agency that is actively working to prevent and deal with the potential fallout of bioterrorism, also makes its materials available at who.org.

The web is also an outstanding source of information that is available from the U.S. government. All of President Bush's speeches are available at the White House web site (whitehouse.gov). Secretary of State Powell's speeches and publications that deal with the state of U.S. foreign relations with other countries and official designations of terrorist states are available at (state.gov). The State Department also has a special section of its website that is exclusively devoted to the September 11th attacks (.state.gov/s/ct/index.cfm?id=4291). All of Secretary of Defense Donald's Rumsfeld's speeches and other reports and broadcasts produced by the Department of Defense (DOD) that are available for public consumption can be found at the Department of Defense's web site (defenselink.mil).

The DOD is not the only place to go for information on the U.S. military or the global military situation. Stratfor (Stratfor.com) is a private company that provides analysis of economic, political, and security situations around the world for companies that are investing abroad. This company has made a number of recent analyses of the U.S. military response available for free at its web site. Jane's Defense (janes.com) is a journal that focuses on military warfighting issues and weapons systems. Although this site does require a subscription to view many of their complete articles, a large percentage of the articles can be read online for free.

Both the Senate (senate.gov) and the House (house.gov) also maintain web sites. The committees and subcommittees of each body make transcripts of their hearings and reports available online. Specific committees and subcommittees that have been dealing with the security and economic implications of the attacks and the U.S. response include the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (senate.gov/~foreign/), the Senate Judiciary Committee (senate.gov/~foreign/), and the House Foreign Relations Committee (http://www.house.gov/international_relations/).

The General Accounting Office (gao.gov) is an agency funded by the U.S. government that consists of experts in particular fields and auditing experts that evaluate the strengths and weakness of existing and proposed U.S. government programs. The GAO has released a number of reports that deal with the issue of how well prepared the United States is to defend and respond to a terrorist attack.

Two government agencies that have to protect loss of life in the event of another terrorist attack on the United States are the Federal Emergency Management Authority (fema.gov) and the Center for Disease Control (cdc.gov). The CDC's Office of Biological Terrorism can be found on the web at bt.cdc.gov. The University of Maryland has put together a list of specific government documents dealing with terrorism at lib.umd.edu/GOV/terrorism.html.

The most efficient way to access materials relating to the attacks and the potential U.S. response is to visit these web sites directly. Many individuals rely on search engines, such as Google (google.com) or Hotbot (hotbot.com), or directories, such as Yahoo (yahoo.com) or About (about.com), for their web research. Relying on these services to keep up with materials relating to the attack is not likely to be very effective.

The reason that relying on these search engines is not productive for doing up-to-date research on the September 11th attacks is that these search engines and services operate by searching a catalog book of the portions of the web that are indexed by those engines. This book is in no way comprehensive (even the largest book – Google's – has less that 25% of the known number of web pages indexed) and the books are only updated every one to two weeks. You will never be able to find current information by relying on this searching method.

The best one can do to search current news is to use specific search engines that catalogs breaking news. Moreover (moreover.com) catalogs up-to-the minute headlines and organizes them by topic. Daypop (daypop.com) and Rocket News (rocketnews.com) let you search many of the webs current newspapers up to the last six hours. Newsindex.com is a similar service. Yahoo's news search service (yahoo.com/r/dn) lets you search the last two weeks of the Reuters and AP wires.

It is important to note that these news search services still only search the daily news sites and are not comprehensive. They also have difficulty indexing stories as they break. For the most up-to-the date information, and for information from non-news sites, you will have to visit the sites.

There are places you can go for specific September 11th news. The Disaster Room News (disasternewsroom.com/) indexes news stories about disasters in general and the September 11th attacks in particular. The Newseum (newseum.org/attack.htm) catalogs news stories and graphics regarding the attack from major online news sources.

There are also a number of directories that maintain links to other web sites and specific articles on the September 11th attacks. I maintain one at Terrorismlibrary.com. This page has links to hundreds of web resources such as those mentioned here and a second page has links to over 250 articles that provide background material on the specific regions, countries, and players that are involved. Articles that discuss specific aspects of the U.S. military response to the September 11th attacks and terrorism prevention are also indexed. The University of Michigan maintains a similar site at (lib.umich.edu/govdocs/usterror.html#binladen) and so does the University of East Carolina (lib.ecu.edu/govdoc/terrorism.html). Findlaw.com has developed a special website on the attacks at http://news.findlaw.com/legalnews/us/terrorism/ and LLrx.com has developed one at http://www.llrx.com/newstand/wtc.htm.

The information and opinions on the web are truly becoming representative of the world, a world that changes hour by hour and a world that is very diverse. You have access to this changing world through the web and you can be with the world and monitor the changes by actively following recent news developments through a number of global news channels. By monitoring a variety of news channels, periodicals, think tanks, and government bodies, you will be exposed to a variety of viewpoints and enjoy a much richer perspective on the world around you.

This rich perspective will prepare you to advance arguments that are not only relevant to the world in light of the September 11 attacks, but are also unique and more relevant than any of your opponent's.

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