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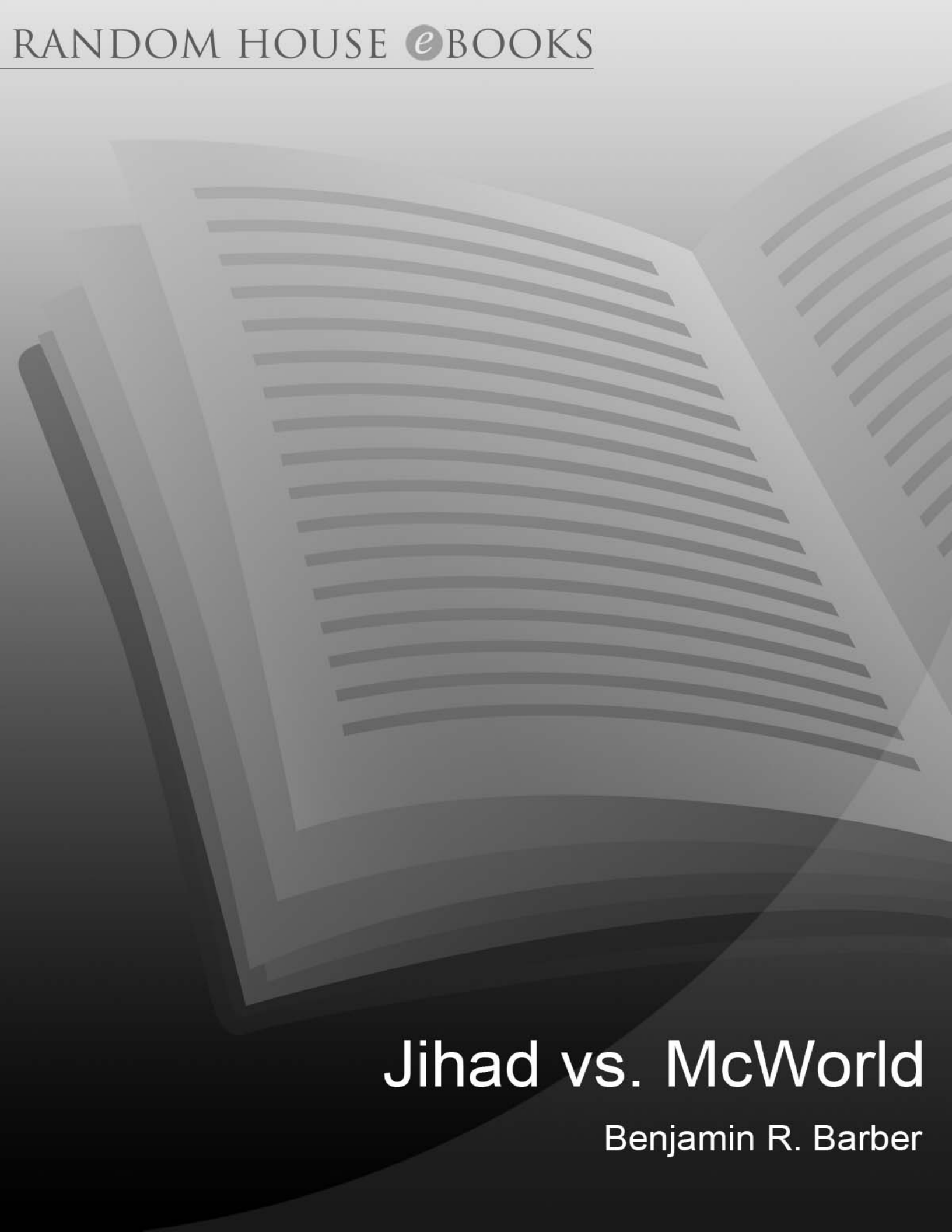

# Jihad vs. McWorld

Benjamin R. Barber

# About the Author

Benjamin R. Barber is the Whitman Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University and the director of the Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy. He is the author of numerous books, including the political classic *Strong Democracy* as well as *An Aristocracy of Everyone*. With Patrick Watson, Barber also created and wrote the prizewinning television series and book *The Struggle for Democracy*. He writes regularly for *Harper's*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and many other publications. He is married to the dancer and choreographer Leah Kreutzer.

## Acclaim for *Jihad vs. McWorld*

‘McWorld is the universe of manufactured needs, mass consumption, and mass infotainment. It is motivated by profits and driven by the aggregate preferences of billions of consumers. Jihad is shorthand for the fierce politics of religious, tribal, and other zealots. In its most extreme manifestations—in the ultra nationalism of Vladimir Zhirinovsky’s Russia, for example, or the balkanization of the Balkans—it counters McWorld’s centrifugal pull and bloodless calculation.

Although some countries or parts of countries fit into one or the other category, Jihad and McWorld are not so much places as reactions to experience and attitudes of mind. As Mr Barber provocatively puts it: ‘Belonging by default to McWorld, everyone is a consumer; seeking a repository for identity, everyone belongs to some tribe. But no one is a citizen.’
*The Economist*

*‘Jihad vs. McWorld* is that rare phenomenon—a book that is immensely readable, yet with a serious theme.’
*Government & Opposition*

‘Challenging and instructive.’
*San Francisco Chronicle*

‘Stimulating, tartly written.’
*Publishers Weekly*

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# JIHAD VS MCWORLD

Benjamin R. Barber

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*To the Memory of Judith N. Shklar*

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Many friends, colleagues, associates, and anonymous commentators—both in the United States and abroad—have

responded to the original *Atlantic* article, scholarly and popular presentations of the argument as it developed, and sections of the manuscript as it was being written. I feel lucky to have had so many astute critics who were also friends, among them Michael Kustow, François D'Alancon, Bhikhu Parekh, Ivan Vitanyi, Jean Leca, Preston King, Michael Greven, Bruce Ackerman, Ghita Ionescu, Brian Barry, Chantal Mouffe, George Kateb, Nina Belyaeva, Harry Boyte, Richard Lehne, Seyla Benhabib, Alan Ryan, and the consummate scholar and dear friend to whom the book is dedicated, Judith N. Shklar—who feared Jihad, distrusted McWorld, and, ever so carefully, worked to clear a space for freedom and democracy.

Had I heeded these friendly critics more consistently, I would have certainly written a better book.

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# 2001 Introduction
# Terrorism's Challenge to Democracy

ON SEPTEMBER 11, Jihad's long war against McWorld culminated in a fearsomely unprecedented and altogether astonishing assault on the temple of free enterprise in New York City and the cathedral of American military might in Washington, D.C. In bringing down the twin towers of the World Trade Center and destroying a section of the Pentagon with diabolically contrived human bombs, Jihadic warriors reversed the momentum in the struggle between Jihad and McWorld, writing a new page in an ongoing story. Until that day, history's seemingly ineluctable march into a complacent postmodernity had appeared to favor McWorld's ultimate triumph—a historical victory for free-market institutions and McWorld's assiduously commercialized and ambitiously secularist materialism. Today, the outcome of the confrontation between the future and the radical reaction to it seems far less certain. As the world enters a novel stage of shadowed warfare against an invisible enemy, the clash between Jihad and McWorld is again poignantly relevant in understanding why the modern response to terror cannot be exclusively military or tactical, but rather must entail a commitment to democracy and justice even when they are in tension with the commitment to cultural expansionism and global markets. The war against terrorism also will have to be a war for justice if it is to succeed, and not just in the sense in which President George W. Bush used the term in his address to Congress.

A week after the trauma of the first large-scale assault on the American homeland, more successful than even its scheming perpetrators could possibly have hoped for, the

president joined the abruptly renewed combat with Jihadic terrorists by deploying the rhetoric of retributive justice: “We will bring the terrorists to justice,” he said gravely to a joint session of Congress, “or we will bring justice to the terrorists.” The language of justice was surely the appropriate context for the American response, but it will remain appropriate only if the compass of its meaning is extended from retributive to distributive justice.

The collision between the forces of disintegral tribalism and reactionary fundamentalism I have called Jihad (Islam is not the issue) and the forces of integrative modernization and aggressive economic and cultural globalization I have called McWorld (for which America is not solely responsible) has been brutally exacerbated by the dialectical interdependence of these two seemingly oppositional sets of forces. In *Jihad vs. McWorld*, I warn that democracy is caught between a clash of movements, each of which for its own reasons seems indifferent to freedom’s fate, and might suffer grievously. It is now apparent, as we mount a new military offense against Jihad (understood not as Islam but as militant fundamentalism) that democracy rather than terrorism may become the principal victim of the battle currently being waged.

Only the globalization of civic and democratic institutions is likely to offer a way out of the global war between modernity and its aggrieved critics, for democracy responds both to Jihad and to McWorld. It responds directly to the resentments and spiritual unease of those for whom the trivialization and homogenization of values is an affront to cultural diversity and spiritual and moral seriousness. But it also answers the complaints of those mired in poverty and despair as a consequence of unregulated global markets and of a capitalism run wild because it has been uprooted from the humanizing constraints of the democratic nation-state. By extending the compass of democracy to the global market sector, civic globalization can promise opportunities

for accountability, participation, and governance to those wishing to join the modern world and take advantage of its economic blessings; by securing cultural diversity and a place for worship and faith insulated from the shallow orthodoxies of McWorld's cultural monism, it can address the anxieties of those who fear secularist materialism and are fiercely committed to preserving their cultural and religious distinctiveness. The outcome of the cruel battle between Jihad and McWorld will depend on the capacity of moderns to make the world safe for women and men in search of both justice and faith, and can be won only if democracy is the victor.

If democracy is to be the instrument by which the world avoids the stark choice between a sterile cultural monism (McWorld) and a raging cultural fundamentalism (Jihad), neither of which services diversity or civic liberty, then America, Britain, and their allies will have to open a crucial second civic and democratic front aimed not against terrorism per se but against the anarchism and social chaos—the economic reductionism and its commercializing homogeneity—that have created the climate of despair and hopelessness that terrorism has so effectively exploited. A second democratic front will be advanced not only in the name of retributive justice and secularist interests, but in the name of distributive justice and religious pluralism.

The democratic front in the war on terrorism is not a battle to dissuade terrorists from their campaigns of annihilation. Their deeds are unspeakable, and their purposes can be neither rationalized nor negotiated. When they hijacked innocents and turned civilian aircrafts into lethal weapons, these self-proclaimed "martyrs of faith" in truth subjected others to a compulsory martyrdom indistinguishable from mass murder. The terrorists offer no terms and can be given none in exchange. When Jihad turns nihilistic, bringing it to justice can only take the form of extirpation—root, trunk, and branch. Eliminating terrorists

will depend on professional military, intelligence, and diplomatic resources whose deployment will leave the greater number of citizens in America and throughout the world sitting on the sidelines, anxious spectators to a battle in which they cannot participate, a battle in which the nausea that accompanies fear will dull the appetite for revenge. The second front, however, engages every citizen with a stake in democracy and social justice, both within nation-states and in the relations between them. It transforms anxious and passive spectators into resolute and engaged participants—the perfect antidote to fear.

The first military front must be prosecuted, both because an outraged and wounded American nation demands it and because terrorists bent on annihilation will not yield to blandishments or inducements. They are looking not for bargains but for oblivion. Yet it will be the successful prosecution of a second civic front in the war rather than the strictly military campaign that will determine the outcome. It too, in President Bush's words, will be a war for justice, but a war defined by a new commitment to distributive justice: a readjudication of North-South responsibilities, a redefinition of the obligations of global capital to include global justice and comity, a repositioning of democratic institutions as they follow markets from the domestic to the international sector, a new recognition of the place and requirements of faith in an aggressively secular market society. The war against Jihad will not, in other words, succeed unless McWorld is also addressed.

To be sure, democratizing globalism and rendering McWorld less homogenizing and trivializing to religion and its accompanying ethical and spiritual values will not appease the terrorists, who are scarcely students of globalization's contractual insufficiencies. Jihadic warriors offer no quarter, whether they are the children of Islam, Christianity, or some blood tribalism, and they should be given none. I describe these warriors in *Jihad vs. McWorld* as

people who detest modernity—the secular, scientific, rational, and commercial civilization created by the Enlightenment as it is defined by both its virtues (freedom, democracy, tolerance, and diversity) and its vices (inequality, hegemony, cultural imperialism, and materialism). What can these enemies of the modern do but seek to recover the dead past by annihilating the living present?

Terrorists, then, cannot themselves be the object of democratic struggle. They swim in a sea of tacit popular support and resentful acquiescence, however, and these waters—roiling with anger and resentment—prove buoyant to ideologies of violence and mayhem. Americans were themselves first enraged and then deeply puzzled by scenes from Islamic cities where ordinary men, women, and children who could hardly be counted as terrorists nonetheless manifested a kind of perverse jubilation in contemplating the wanton slaughter of American innocents. How could anyone cheer such acts? Yet an environment of despairing rage exists in too many places in the third world as well as in too many third-world neighborhoods of first-world cities, enabling terrorism by endowing it with a kind of quasi-legitimacy it does not deserve. It is not terrorism itself but this facilitating environment against which the second-front battle is directed. Its constituents are not terrorists, for they are terrified by modernity and its costs and, consequently, vulnerable to ameliorative actions if those who embrace democracy find the will to take such actions. What they seek is justice, not vengeance. Their quarrel is not with modernity but with the aggressive neoliberal ideology that has been prosecuted in its name in pursuit of a global market society more conducive to profits for some than to justice for all. They are not even particularly anti-American; rather, they suspect that what Americans understand as prudent unilateralism is really a form of arrogant imperialism, that what Americans take to be a kind

of cynical aloofness is really self-absorbed isolationism, and that what Americans think of as pragmatic alliances with tyrannical rulers in Islamic nations such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are really a betrayal of the democratic principles to which Americans claim to subscribe.

Hyperbolic commentators such as Samuel Huntington have described the current divide in the world as a global clash of civilizations, and warn of a cultural war between democracy and Islam, perhaps even between "the West and the rest." But this is to ape the messianic rhetoric of Osama bin Laden, who has called for precisely such a war. The difference between bin Laden's terrorists and the poverty-stricken third-world constituents he tries to call to arms, however, is the difference between radical Jihadic fundamentalists and ordinary men and women concerned to feed their children and nurture their religious communities. Fundamentalists can be found among every religious sect and represent a tiny, aggravated minority whose ideology contradicts the very religions in whose names they act. The remarkable comments of the American fundamentalist preacher Jerry Falwell interpreting the attacks on New York and Washington as the wrath of God being vented on abortionists, homosexuals, and the American Civil Liberties Union no more defines Protestantism than the Taliban defines Islam.

The struggle of Jihad against McWorld is not a clash of civilizations but a dialectical expression of tensions built into a single global civilization as it emerges against a backdrop of traditional ethnic and religious divisions, many of which are actually created by McWorld and its infotainment industries and technological innovations. Imagine bin Laden without modern media: He would be an unknown desert rat. Imagine terrorism without its reliance on credit cards, global financial systems, modern technology, and the Internet: Terrorists would be reduced to throwing stones at local sheiks. It is the argument of this study that what we face is

not a war between civilizations but a war within civilization, a struggle that expresses the ambivalence within each culture as it faces a global, networked, material future and wonders whether cultural and national autonomy can be retained, and the ambivalence within each individual juggling the obvious benefits of modernity with its equally obvious costs.

From Seattle and Prague to Stockholm and Genoa, street demonstrators have been protesting the costs of this globalization. Yet though President Chirac of France acknowledged after the dissident violence of Genoa months before the attacks in New York and Washington that a hundred thousand protesters do not take to the streets unless something is amiss, they have mostly been written off as anarchists or know-nothings. More media attention has been paid to their theatrics than to the deep problems those theatrics are intended to highlight. After September 11, some critics even tried to lump the antiglobalization protesters in with the terrorists, casting them as irresponsible destablizers of world order. But the protesters mostly are the children of McWorld, and their objections are not Jihadic but merely democratic. Their grievances concern not world order but world disorder, and if the young demonstrators are a little foolish in their politics, a little naive in their analyses, and a little short on viable solutions, they understand with a sophistication their leaders apparently lack that globalization's current architecture breeds anarchy, nihilism, and violence. They know too that those in the third world who seem to welcome American suffering are at worst reluctant adversaries whose principal aim is to make clear that they too suffer from violence, even if it is less visible and destroys with greater stealth and over a longer period of time than the murderous schemes of the terrorists. They want not to belittle American suffering but to use its horrors to draw attention to their own. How many of these "enemies of McWorld," given the chance, would

prefer to enjoy modernity and its blessings if they were not so often the victims of modernity's unevenly distributed costs? How many are really fanatic communists and how many are merely instinctive guardians of fairness who resent not capitalism's productivity but only the claim that, in the absence of global regulation and the democratic rule of law, capitalism can serve them? It is finally hypocrisy rather than democracy that is the target of their rage.

Too often for those living in the second and third worlds to the south of the United States, Europe, and Japan, globalization looks like an imperious strategy of a predominantly American economic behemoth; too often what we understand as the market-driven opportunities to secure liberty and prosperity at home seems to them nothing but a rationalization for exploitation and oppression in the international sphere; too often what we call the international order is for them an international disorder. Our neoliberal antagonism to all political regulation in the global sector, to all institutions of legal and political oversight, to all attempts at democratizing globalization and institutionalizing economic justice looks to them like brute indifference to their welfare and their claims for justice. Western beneficiaries of McWorld celebrate market ideology with its commitment to the privatization of all things public and the commercialization of all things private, and consequently insist on total freedom from government interference in the global economic sector (laissez-faire). Yet total freedom from interference—the rule of private power over public goods—is another name for anarchy. And terror is merely one of the many contagious diseases that anarchy spawns.

What was evident to those who, before September 11, suffered the economic consequences of an undemocratic international anarchy beyond the reach of democratic sovereignty was that while many in the first world benefit from free markets in capital, labor, and goods, these same

anarchic markets leave ordinary people in the third world largely unprotected. What has become apparent to the rest of us after September 11 is that that same deregulated disorder from which financial and trade institutions imagine they benefit is the very disorder on which terrorism depends. Markets and globalized financial institutions, whether multinational corporations or individual currency speculators, are deeply averse to oversight by nation-states. McWorld seeks to overcome sovereignty and make its impact global. Jihad too makes war on sovereignty, using the interdependence of transportation, communication, and other modern technological systems to render borders porous and sovereign oversight irrelevant. Just as jobs defy borders, hemorrhaging from one country to another in a wage race to the bottom, and just as safety, health, and environmental standards lack an international benchmark against which states and regions might organize their employment, so too anarchistic terrorists loyal to no state and accountability to no people range freely across the world, knowing that no borders can detain them, no united global opinion can isolate them, no international police or juridical institutions can interdict them. The argument laid out in what follows proposes that both Jihad and McWorld undermine the sovereignty of nation-states, dismantling the democratic institutions that have been their finest achievement without discovering ways to extend democracy either downward to the subnational religious and ethnic entities that now lay claim to people's loyalty or upward to the international sector in which McWorld's pop culture and commercial markets operate without sovereign restraints.

Unlike America, which pretends to still enjoy sovereign independence, taking responsibility neither for the global reach of its popular culture (McWorld) nor for the secularizing and trivializing character of its adamant materialism, the terrorists acknowledge and exploit the actual interdependence that characterizes human relations

in the twenty-first century. Theirs, however, is a perverse and malevolent interdependence, one in which they have learned to use McWorld's weight jujitsu-style against its massive power. Ironically, even as the United States fosters an anarchic absence of sovereignty at the global level, it has resisted even the slightest compromise of its national sovereignty at home. America has complained bitterly in recent years about the prospect of surrendering a scintilla of its own sovereignty, whether to NATO commanders, to supranational institutions such as the International Criminal Tribunal, or to international treaties such as those banning land mines or regulating emissions. Even as I write, with the United States launching a military campaign against terrorism surrounded by a prudently constructed coalition, it has made clear that it prefers "coalitions" to "alliances" because it wants to be free to target objectives, develop strategy, and wage war exactly as it wishes.

Yet terrorism has already made a mockery of sovereignty. What were the hijacking of airliners, the calamitous attack on the World Trade Center, and the brash attack on the Pentagon if not a profound obliteration of American sovereignty? Terrorism is the negative and depraved form of that interdependence, which in its positive and beneficial form we too often refuse to acknowledge. As if still in the nineteenth century, America has persuaded itself that its options today are either to preserve an ancient and blissfully secure independence that puts us in charge of American destiny, or to yield to a perverted and compulsory interdependence that puts foreigners and alien international bodies such as the United Nations or the World Court in charge of American destiny. In truth, however, Americans have not enjoyed genuine independence since sometime before the great wars of the last century—certainly not since the advent of AIDS and West Nile virus, global warming and an ever more porous ozone layer, job "mobility" that has decimated America's industrial

economy, and restive speculators who have made capital flight more of a sovereign reality than any conceivable government oversight could be. Interdependence is not some foreign adversary against which citizens need to muster resistance. It is a domestic reality that already has compromised the efficacy of citizenship in scores of unacknowledged and uncharted ways.

It was the interdependence of America with the world and the interdependence of shared economic and technological systems everywhere on which the Jihadic warriors counted when they brought terror to the American homeland. They not only hijacked American airplanes, turning them into deadly missiles, but provoked the nation into closing down its air transportation system for nearly a week. They not only destroyed the temple of American capitalism at the World Trade Center but forced capitalism to shut down its markets and shocked the country into a recession, of which the stock market in free fall was only a leading indicator. How can any nation claim independence under these conditions?

In the world before McWorld, democratic sovereign nations could claim to be independent autonomous peoples exercising autonomous control over their lives. In Andrew Jackson's premodern, largely rural America, where communities existed in isolation, where there was no national system of transportation or communication, systematic terror was simply not an option, as there *was* no system. There was no way to bring America to its knees because in a crucial sense America did not exist, at least not as an integral collectivity of interdependent regions with a single interest, until after the Civil War and the Industrial Revolution that followed it. Today there is so much systemic interactivity, so highly integrated a global network, so finely tuned an integral communications technology, that it has become as easy to paralyze as to use the multiple systems and networks. Hence, the decision would-be sovereign

peoples face today is not the felicitous choice between secure independence and unwanted interdependence. It is only the sobering choice between, on the one hand, a relatively legitimate, democratic, and useful interdependence (which, however, is still to be constructed and which leaves sovereignty in tatters) and, on the other hand, a radically illegitimate and undemocratic interdependence on the terms of criminals, anarchists, and terrorists (an interdependence that is already here and which will triumph in the absence of a democratizing political will). In short, either we can allow McWorld and Jihad—Hollywood cowboys and international desperadoes—to set the terms of our interdependence, or we can leave those terms to new transnational treaties, new global democratic bodies, and a new creative common will. We can have our interactivity dictated to us by violence and anarchy, or we can construct it on the model of our own democratic aspirations. We can have a democratic and useful interdependence on whatever common ground we can persuade others to stand on, or we can stand on the brink of anarchy and try to prevent criminals and terrorists from pushing us into the abyss.

It will be hard for defenders of modernity—whether of McWorld's markets or democracy's citizenship—to have it both ways. Terrorism turns out to be a depraved version of globalization, no less vigorous in its pursuit of its own special interests than are global markets, no less wedded to anarchist disorder than are speculators, no less averse to violence when it serves their ends than marketers are averse to inequality and injustice when they are conceptualized as the "costs of doing business." It is their instinctive reading of this equation that turns poor people abroad into cheering mobs when Americans experience grievous losses at home. It is their perception of overwhelming hypocrisy that leads them to exult where we would wish for them to grieve.

In his address to Congress, President Bush was speaking to the world at large when he said, “You are with us or you are with the terrorists.” Americans may appreciate the impulse to divide the world into good and evil (though some will think that it smacks of the very Manicheanism for which Americans excoriate their fundamentalist adversaries), but America’s enemies (and more than a few of its friends) are likely to find this discourse unfortunate and misleading if not hubristic. An America that comprehends the realities of interdependence and wishes to devise a democratic architecture to contain its global disorder cannot ask others to either join it or else “suffer the consequences.” It is not that the world must join America: McWorld already operates on this premise, and the premise is precisely the problem. Rather, America must join the world on whatever terms it can negotiate on an equal footing with the world. Whether a product of arrogance or prudence, the demand that the world join the United States simply cannot secure results. It defies the very interdependence to which it is addressed. It assumes a sovereign autonomy the United States does not and cannot enjoy.

In *Jihad vs. McWorld,* I worry that a pervasive culture of fast food, fast computers, and fast music advanced by an infotainment industry rooted in the spread of brands tend to homogenize global markets and render taste not merely shallow but uniform. McWorld’s culture represents a kind of soft imperialism in which those who are colonized are said to “choose” their commercial indenture. But real choice demands real diversity and civic freedom (public choice—a point explored below). It also requires a willingness by the United States to work multilaterally and internationally to build global democratic infrastructures that rise next to McWorld and offset its trivial and bottom-up but all-too-pervasive hegemonies.

Yet in the last ten years the United States has intensified its commitment to a political culture of unilateralism and

faux autonomy that reinforces rather than attenuates the effects of McWorld. There is hardly a multilateral treaty of significance to which the United States has willingly subscribed in recent times, whether it is the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, the ban on land mines, or the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Indeed, at the time of the terrorist attack the United States was threatening to unilaterally abrogate the ABM treaty in order to be able to develop and deploy its missile defense shield. There is hardly a single international institution that has not been questioned, undermined, or outright abandoned by the United States in the name of its need to protect its sovereign interests. Only the competing need to gather a coalition to underwrite its antiterrorist military strike compelled the American government finally to pay its UN dues and to commit to modest amounts of simple humanitarian aid that should have been a function of normalcy (the United States still devotes a smaller percentage of its GNP to foreign aid than any other developed nation in the world).

The Bretton Woods institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization (heir to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) might have been of some succor in the effort to construct a more democratic globalism if they had been used for the kinds of developmental and democratic purposes for which they were designed in postwar Europe. Instead they have been cast by the democratic governments that control them as undemocratic instruments of private interest—seemingly the tools of banks, corporations, and investors that to an untoward degree also control the policies of the governments that nominally control them. Anarchism in the global sector is no accident: It has been assiduously cultivated.

Yet terrorism can be understood in part as a depraved version of this global anarchism—one that, for all its

depravity, is as vigorous and self-justifying as the global markets. It too profits from the arrogant pretense of claims to national sovereignty that turn out to be indefensible. It too benefits by the absence of international executive police and juridical institutions. It too exploits global anarchy to ferment national anarchy and the further weakening of the capacity of nations to control their own destinies, either apart or together. In late-nineteenth-century America, when the federal government was markedly weaker than it is today, social relations looked rather like global relations do today. Lawlessness came easily, both to the robber barons of growing capitalist metropolises and to the robber desperadoes of the western prairies. Outlaws prospered in the suites as well as in the streets.

The global sector today seems driven by the same anarchy, in which burgeoning forces of what many American bankers have called wild capitalism spread both productivity, which we welcome, and injustice, which we try to ignore. But alongside wild capitalism rage the reactionary forces of wild terrorism. Against capitalism's modern message, Jihadic fundamentalism spreads its anti-modern message, sowing fear and nurturing chaos, hoping to bring both democracy and capitalism to their knees. The war between Jihad and McWorld takes no prisoners. It cannot serve democracy, however it turns out.

The democratic project is to globalize democracy as we have globalized the economy—to democratize the globalism that has been so efficiently marketized. The issue is no longer the utopian longing for global democracy against the siren call of consumerism or the passionate war cries of Jihad; it is the securing of safety. Following September 11, global governance has become a sober mandate of political realism.

Mandate or not, it will not be easy for America to overcome the reassuring myth of national independence and innocence with which it has lived so comfortably for two

hundred years. Before it began to trade in the international currency of McWorld that made it the global merchandiser, America had invented a simpler story about itself. In the Puritan myth of the city on the hill, in the Enlightenment conceit of a tabula rasa on which a new people would inscribe a fresh history, Americans embraced Tom Paine's quaint and revolutionary notion that on the new continent humankind could literally go back and start over again, as if at "the beginning of the world." Europe's cruel torments, its ancient prejudices and religious persecutions, would be left behind. Safeguarded by two immense oceans, at home on a bountiful and empty continent (the native inhabitants were part of the new world's flora and fauna), Americans would devise a new and experimental science of government, establish a new constitution fortified by rights, and with the innocence of a newborn people write a new history. Slavery, a great civil war, two world conflagrations, and totalitarian regimes abroad could not dissuade America from its precious self-definition. Even as the oceans became mere streams that could be crossed in an instant by invisible adversaries, even as the pressures of an impinging world grew too complex to yield to simplicity, America imagined that it could safeguard its autonomy, deploying its vaunted technology to re-create virtual oceans, fantasizing a magic missile shield that would ward off foreign evil.

Was America ever really a safe haven in the tainted streams of world history? Was it ever any more innocent than the children of every nation are innocent? Human nature is everywhere morally ambivalent, the better angels cooing into one ear, their demonic cousins crowing into the other. Americans know no evil, even when they do it. To others their claim to innocence is an assertion of hypocrisy —among the deadliest of sins for Muslims and others who watch America demonize others and exonerate itself.

Terrorism has brought the age of innocence, if there ever really was one, to a close. How could the myth of

independence survive September 11? The Declaration of Independence, which announced a new coming, a new kind of society, has achieved its task of nation building. To build the new world that is now required calls for a new Declaration of Interdependence, a declaration recognizing the inter-dependence of a human race that can no longer survive in fragments—whether the pieces are called nations, tribes, peoples, or markets. There are no oceans wide enough to protect a nation from a tainted atmosphere or a spreading plague, no walls high enough to defend a people against a corrupt ideology or a vengeful prophet, no security strict enough to keep a determined martyr from his sacrificial rounds. Nor is any nation ever again likely to experience untroubled prosperity and plenty unless others are given the same opportunity. Suffering too has been democratized, and those most likely to experience it will find a way to compel those most remote from it to share the pain. If there cannot be equity of justice, there will be equity of injustice; if all cannot partake of plenty, impoverishment—both material and spiritual—will be the common lot. That is the hard lesson of interdependence, taught by terror's unsmiling pedagogues.

To declare interdependence, then, is in a sense merely to acknowledge what is already a reality. It is to embrace willingly and constructively a fate terrorists would like to shove down our throats. Their message is: "Your sons want to live, ours are ready to die." Our response must be this: "We will create a world in which the seductions of death hold no allure because the bounties of life are accessible to everyone."

Such grand notions must start with the mundane, however. America is perhaps the most parochial empire that has ever existed, and Americans—though harbingers of McWorld's global culture—are the least cosmopolitan and traveled of peoples who husband such expansive power. Is there another democratic legislature that has so many

members without passports? There is certainly no democratic nation that pays a smaller percentage of its GNP for foreign aid (a third of what other democracies pay). And for a remarkably multicultural nation, how is it that the American image is so monocultural, its inhabitants so averse to the study of foreign languages? Such a nation, even if it cultivates the will to a constructive and benevolent interdependence, will have a difficult time meeting its demands. Military strategists complain America does not speak the languages of its enemies. In America's universities, they no longer even teach the languages of its friends. Too many Ph.D. programs have given up language requirements, often allowing methods or statistics courses to take their place. Statistics may help us count the bodies, but it will do little to prevent the slaughter.

In the wake of two centuries of either isolationism or unilateralism, with only a few wartime pauses for coalition building and consultation, the United States is today inexperienced in the hard work of creative interdependence and international partnership. When America discerns problems in international treaties (the Kyoto Protocol, the land mine ban, the International Criminal Tribunal) and cannot negotiate its way in, it simply walks out. When international institutions such as UNESCO and the United Nations and international conferences such as the racism discussions in Durban resonate with hostility (as they often do), the United States withdraws in arrogant pique instead of participating with a view toward making its influence felt. The missile shield with its attendant requirement that we abandon the ABM treaty is a typically unilateral and hubristic instance of America's inclination to go it alone. Aside from its technological infeasibility—if we cannot keep terrorists off airplanes or individual "sleepers" from engaging in biological and chemical warfare, how can we imagine that we can intercept multiple warheads and their multiplying decoys without a hitch?—the missile shield once