

OPINION

THE LONDON ATTACKS

What do they mean for America?

By M. Kent Bolton

Some believe the events of Sept. 11, 2001, were so traumatic that the U.S. government and society have unalterably changed. Others suggest that Sept. 11 alone was not enough to adapt U.S. foreign policy for the transnational and national threats of the next 50 years. For the latter, another "shoe" needs to drop for the U.S. government to make dramatic and sustained changes in U.S. foreign policy, the sort made as the Cold War commenced.

Last Thursday, putative Islamists detonated four bombs in London's public transportation system and another on an iconic double-decker bus, all within a short period of time. The attacks were not another "shoe" dropping; they were, nonetheless, important events for citizens of America.

Many similar attacks have occurred since Sept. 11, 2001. To cite a few: Islamists attacked Bali, Indonesia, in October 2002, over 200 persons died; Jihadis attacked Madrid on March 11, 2004, killing some 200; and Chechen Islamists attacked Moscow's subway in early February 2004 killing nearly 40. Few have forgotten the schoolchildren tragically killed in Breslan, Russia, as Islamists seized a school in September 2004 — some 330 perished (including nearly 160 children).

What do the London attacks mean for Americans? Beyond the natural empathy Americans feel for Britons, Thursday's attacks should remind Americans that their country is in an existential war. Since at least Sept. 11, al-Qaeda and other extremist Islamic groups (mostly Sunni adherents to Wahabism) have declared war on America and the West. America and most of the West have similarly declared war on Islamists. The global war on terrorism should be seen as every bit as momentous as was the Cold War.

Unfortunately, far too many Americans have become complacent and mired in the frustrations of Iraq. Indeed, the war in Iraq may have contributed to Americans' complacency. (Polling data show that Americans have become impatient and frustrated with Iraq.) Regrettably, Iraq has become a diversion.

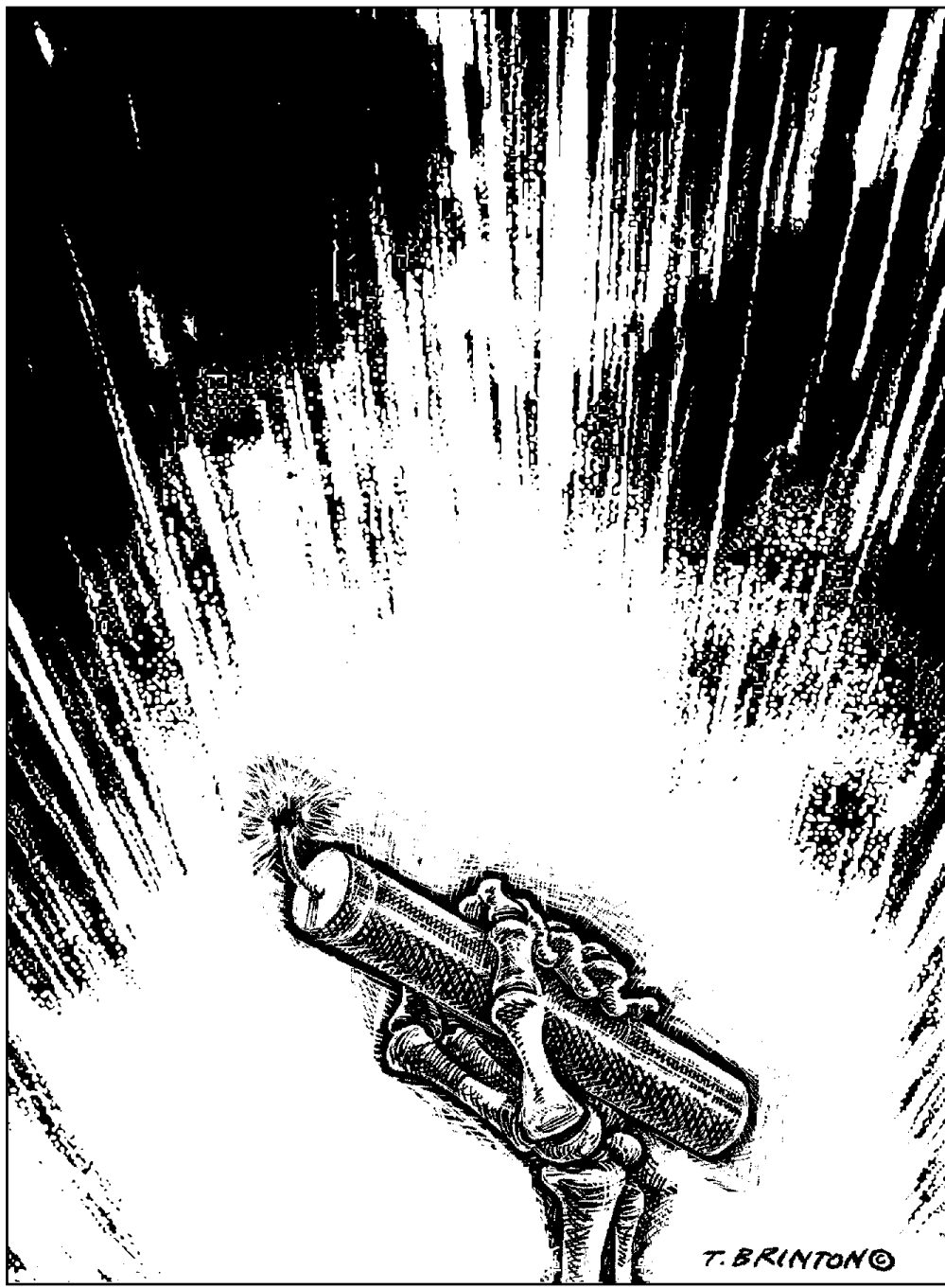
That's not to say that Iraq is disconnected from the global war on terror; it is connected. Whether or not one thinks it was proper for America to invade Iraq, some 140,000 U.S. troops are in that country now; Saddam Hussein is in custody; America has become responsible for Iraq's future (at least in the near term); and, clearly, Islamists and various other miscreants have been drawn to Iraq to confront the America they perceive as evil. America can scarcely walk away and wash its collective hands now!

Iraq has obscured the bigger picture. Namely, America must approach the global war on terror with a similar multigenerational strategy as during the Cold War, but focused on emerging transnational threats; at the same time Americans must not forget that many national threats persists (states possessing weapons of mass destruction, proliferation and the growing pains of continued globalization among them). It is therefore worthwhile to assess, tentatively, the Bush administration inasmuch as it has been in office since nine months before Sept. 11.

If one attempts to be objective, one must admit there has been both good and bad in President Bush's leadership in the war against the global terrorist hydra. First, the positive.

President Bush repeatedly told Americans (especially in the months after Sept. 11 but as recently as 2005) that the struggle would be long, it would require vigilance, and it would cost much in America's blood and treasure. It has: America has spent approximately \$300 billion thus far in Iraq; as of Monday, 1,755 Americans have lost their lives while nearly 13,500 have been wounded.

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Tim Brinton

In sharp contrast to presidents during the Vietnam War, however, President Bush has been fairly honest about the costs of the war. Further, there is at least circumstantial evidence that some of the administration's policies have helped prevent additional attacks in America — this is clearly controversial and some believe that Iraq alone has created more "second generation" terrorists.

Nonetheless, America has not been attacked since Sept. 11, 2001. Bush has signed legislation creating a Department of Homeland Security, a Cabinet-level agency to protect America from emerging threats. (Recently, under Secretary Michael Chertoff's leadership, Homeland Security has begun to function as it was intended.)

Bush also signed into law the Intelligence Reform Act (December 2004) creating, inter alia, a new director of national intelligence, or DNI — someone whose job is to obviate bureaucratic "groupthink." The DNI has budgetary power over most of America's intelligence collection and analysis bureaucracies (15 disparate agencies). America is, at least nominally, safer than it was on Sept. 10, 2001. The administration deserves some credit.

America's military has begun badly needed transformations for the 21st century and emerging transnational and national threats. That Bush resisted many such changes, particularly the commissions that recommended them (the 9/11 and the Robb-Silberman commissions) does not subtract from the fact that he ultimately supported their recommendations against tremendous bureaucratic inertia. Whether one was for or against the war in Iraq, the seeds of a pluralistic society have been planted there.

Now the negative. President Bush has been as good as his word in terms of America's defense appropriations. In 1996 dollars, the average appropriation during key years of the Cold War era was some \$280 billion (calculated using Office of Management and Budget "Historical Tables," FY 2003 and the CPI adjusters). The president's 2004 and 2005 defense appropriations (roughly \$420

billion each year excluding most supplemental budgets for Iraq) have boosted post-Sept. 11 defense spending by over 50 percent of the Cold War average; including supplemental budgets, the increase has been much greater.

The problem is an excessive number of those dollars have perforce been absorbed by Iraq — a war that the United States, arguably, did not have to fight at this time in order to prosecute effectively the global war on terror. As a result, badly needed dollars for protection of America's critical infrastructure have gone elsewhere. While America's airlines are probably safer than before Sept. 11, and America may be nominally safer in general, the administration has neglected America's shipping ports (Los Angeles-Long Beach is one of the world's busiest ports and critical to America's economy). Railway infrastructure, too, has been neglected. Too little has been done to protect America's critical infrastructure.

So, what do last week's attacks in London mean for Americans? First, they mean that the other "shoe" has yet to drop for America. They mean that America has been given another chance to rethink its future and what its role should be against the global-terrorist hydra and to arrange its priorities accordingly. The attacks also mean that the global war on terror continues, largely unabated.

The attacks in London mean that America (including an informed American electorate) must realize that a multigenerational approach will be needed to defeat the global terrorism. Thus America's foreign policy must maintain a focus on this transnational threat while resisting the urge to neglect future national threats; it must be able to entertain two thoughts at once!

The attacks mean that America is almost certainly going to be attacked again. When the next "shoe" drops in America, it could easily be far more traumatic than Sept. 11 — it might involve weapons of mass destruction killing many more Americans. It means that Americans ought to take last week's tragedy as badly needed wake-up call lest we all be shocked when the next shoe drops.

Ruben Navarrette Jr.

THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

Uniting in the fight against terrorism



Two months after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, I was in England, at Oxford outside of London. I was there as part of the British-American Project, a binational leadership program that pairs up about 20 young Americans with British counterparts.

The agendas for the gatherings are set by the host country and done far in advance. Even in light of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, our program made scant mention of terrorism.

My American colleagues and I took that as an insult, and some of us didn't hesitate to say so to our British hosts. Besides the issue of one group's insensitivity to another during a difficult time, how could anyone prepare for any sort of leadership role in the 21st century without addressing one of the century's great challenges: confronting and defeating international terrorism?

When our British counterparts did broach the subject in private conversations, it was with a sense of emotional detachment. You'd hear things such as "Well, that's your problem" or — with the memories of terrorist attacks by the Irish Republican Army in the 1970s and '80s still fresh in their minds — "Well, now you understand."

You could even get into an argument over whether Tony Blair and the British government had been right to send British troops to fight in the U.S.-led war to root out terrorists in Afghanistan.

All week long, the message, at least from these young intellectuals, was clear — that the Americans had somehow brought the Sept. 11 attacks upon themselves by meddling in the affairs of other countries, and that the British need not be concerned about something similar happening to them.

Now that bombs have ripped through three underground trains and a double-decker bus in London during a morning rush hour, killing at least 52 and wounding more than 700, the British elites have learned differently.

Of course, there will be those on the far-left fringe who insist that all this is the Americans' fault and that Great Britain is paying an enormous price for allying itself with the United States. The al-Qaeda-affiliated group that claimed responsibility for the bombings has said they were in retaliation for British involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq.

That could be. But I would hope that most of the British people now realize that — regardless of how they got here — what matters now is that they are here. And they need to figure out where they go from here. The British have no choice but to take the fight to the enemy now that the enemy has taken the fight home to them.

There has always been some portion of British society who identified with the United States and saw the need to come to Americans' aid after Sept. 11.

But that's the point. Before last week, the more common view among the British chattering classes was that this was America's fight and that all the British needed to do was decide whether to lend a hand.

Now we know different. This fight belongs as much to the people of the United Kingdom — and to all freedom-loving people around the world — as it does to the people of the United States. America is in the cross-hairs of radical extremists and murderous terrorists, but it isn't there alone.

In one sense, the British are trying to figure what they're up against. They don't know whether the attack was the result of faulty border security or the work of some in-house "sleeper cell" — or both. British investigators say that the blasts came from "military quality" explosives that may have been put together by an expert bomb-maker who came to London to lend a hand to a local terrorist cell.

But in another sense, our friends should also be experiencing — during this national tragedy — a moment of great clarity and purpose. Too many people on both sides of the Atlantic wasted too much time arguing about whether our leaders rushed us into a war in Iraq on bad evidence and false premises. The Bush critics and the Blair critics will never be convinced that the war was anything but an abysmal failure of leadership, and that it has been a distraction from the war on terror. They are wrong about that. But now is not the time to argue.

The issue here is simple: There are people out there who wish to destroy us. Regardless of who is in the White House or at 10 Downing Street, we have no choice but to find and destroy them first.

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REMEMBERING GENOCIDE IN SREBRENICA

By Norman M. Naimark

A decade ago, in the U.N. "safe area" of Srebrenica, Bosnian Serb soldiers executed and buried in mass graves more than 7,000 Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) men and boys. Thirty-thousand women, children and elderly were forcibly deported from their homes.

Dutch blue-helmets stood helplessly by as the Bosniaks were taken away. "Kill them all," Gen. Radislav Krstic reportedly said to his deputy. "Not a single one is to be left alive." No doubt,

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Krstic was acting at the behest of the commander of the army of the Serb Republic, Gen. Ratko Mladic, and president of the Serbian Republic, Radislav Karadzic, both of whom shamefully continue to elude capture.

The reverberations of Srebrenica go far beyond the trials and sentencing of the perpetrators. Most important is the continuing effect the massacre has had on Bosniaks themselves: the loss of loved ones, the many humiliations suffered, and the still nagging problem of thousands of missing relatives and friends. The recent release of film clips of Serbian paramilitaries — "Scorpions" — taunting, torturing and killing a group of Bosniak men and boys has had an important, if still hard to gauge, impact on changing Serb self-images

from victims to perpetrators.

As the largest incidence of mass killing in European history since World War II, Srebrenica has also had important implications beyond the borders of Bosnia. The massacre shamed the West into taking concerted military action against the Bosnian Serbs.

The launching of Operation Deliberate Force by NATO in August 1995 finally brought peace to the region, codified by the Dayton agreement the following December. The resolute response of the United States and NATO to Serbian ethnic cleansing in Kosovo in 1999 also can be traced to the shock waves in the West about the depredations committed by the Serbs at Srebrenica.

Motivated by the frustrations generated by Bosnia, Kosovo and Rwanda, human rights activists underlined the principle of the "responsibility to protect," whereby the humanitarian norms of the international community should trump those of state sovereignty when citizens are threatened with genocide or ethnic cleansing. This argument most recently found its way into the 2005 U.N. secretary-general's high-level panel report on the future role of the United Nations: "When a state fails to protect its civilians, the international community then has a further responsibility to act, through humanitarian operations, monitoring missions and diplomatic pressure — and with force if necessary, though only as a last resort."

Srebrenica demonstrates that, if force is designated as the last resort instead of one of many possible policy options, circumstances tend to militate against its use. Especially in situations where multinational efforts are needed to engage in military activity, problems of intelligence, coordination, decision making and operational effectiveness are often too daunting for concerted action to be taken.

The Dutch and the United Nations should have learned that bitter lesson in Srebrenica. On July 11, the 10th anniversary of the fall of the city, the Bosniaks buried the recently discovered remains of an additional 550 victims of genocide at Potocari Memorial Cemetery.