

A New Kind of War: Cold War Influences on American Culture After September 11th

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From the moment the second plane hit the South Tower of the World Trade Center, Americans were seized by the conviction that they were entering a new era in history. The attacks were declared unprecedented, both by the U.S. government and the news media.

President Bush repeatedly warned Americans that the response to these attacks would usher in “a different kind of war.”¹ All of this was true. Attacks on U.S. soil had occurred in the past, but never of this magnitude. The attacks of September 11th were unparalleled in American history. The wars that came as a result of these attacks were carried out in new and unique ways. Despite this, America’s reaction was not detached from historical precedent. In their desire to find a pattern for response, Americans turned to previously established cultural reference points to determine their behavior. Whether they realized it or not, Americans were expressing attitudes and anxieties that mirrored the attitudes of previous eras in American history. While the attacks were unparalleled, the responses were not.

An immediate connection was made by the media and the American public between the attacks of September 11th and the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center. In 1993 a bomb went off in the parking garage of the Vista Hotel in the World Trade Center Complex with the same goal as September 11th, trying to bring down the towers. The obvious link was location. There were other similarities as well; at least one of the perpetrators of the 1993 bombing, Ramzi Yousef, was suspected of belonging to or training in Middle Eastern terrorist training groups. While the perpetrators of the attack were the most similar to those of the attacks of September 11th, the attacks (thankfully) did not match the trauma of the September 11th attacks. The building, while damaged, did not fall. The death toll, while tragic, remained under ten. The majority of the perpetrators of the attack were identified and quickly apprehended. This quick response and recovery, “gave the country an optimistic sense of preparedness and security,”² that would not be so easy to find after the attacks of September 11th. Despite all the similarities between the two World Trade Center attacks, the effects of the attacks were remarkably different.

¹ "Radio Address of the President to the Nation." President George W. Bush. 29 Sept. 2001. Web. 28 June 2014. <<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010929.html>>.

² National September 11 Memorial & Museum. "WTC Bombing, 1993 Aftermath." 2014. <http://www.911memorial.org/aftermath-1>

Another event recalled during September 11th was the Oklahoma City Bombing at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The bombing was a logical leap to make from September 11th, as it had been (until September 11th) the worst terrorist attack on American soil.³ On April 19, 1995, the Oklahoma City bombing took 168 lives and left over 650 others injured. The attack was committed by American militia movement extremist Timothy McVeigh. Like September 11th, the Oklahoma City Bombing was initially thought to be the work of Arab extremists, but it soon became apparent that the attack was an internal affair. Timothy McVeigh was quickly apprehended, since he had been arrested the day of the bombing during a routine traffic stop. Two days later, McVeigh's accomplice, Terry Nichols turned himself in for questioning. The speedy capture of the parties involved in the bombing helped to quell national fears over the attack. As a result, the Oklahoma City Bombing would not cause major national policy changes the way September 11th would. While the trauma of the Oklahoma City Bombing was very real and comparable to September 11th, the political effects of the bombing remained minimal.

The most obvious reference point that Americans used for the attacks of September 11th was the attack on Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor had been the last major foreign attack on American soil, and so immediately came to mind. Other similarities caused the attacks of Pearl Harbor and September 11th to be linked together. The vehicle of attack, the airplane, was a significant similarity. Laden with jet fuel, these planes mimicked both the suddenness and destruction of the attack on Pearl Harbor. In One Nation : America Remembers September 11, 2001, LIFE Magazine described the "black oily smoke" that spewed from the towers as "another grim reminder of Pearl Harbor."⁴ Another tragic reminder of Pearl Harbor was the September 11th death toll. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the death toll hovered around 2,400. For the attacks of September 11th, the overall death toll was 2,977.⁵ There was a significant

³ Staff, History.com. "Oklahoma City Bombing." History.com. <http://www.history.com/topics/oklahoma-city-bombing>.

⁴ LIFE, Sullivan, Robert, ed. *One Nation: America Remembers September 11, 2001*. New York: Time Inc., 2001.

⁵ CNN Library. "September 11 Anniversary Fast Facts." 11 September, 2013. <http://www.cnn.com/2013/07/27/us/september-11-anniversary-fast-facts/>.

difference, however, between the deaths of Pearl Harbor and September 11th. The Americans who died at Pearl Harbor were largely military personnel, while the victims of September 11th were overwhelmingly civilian.

While the initial attacks of Pearl Harbor and September 11th contained many similarities, the American responses to the attacks were vastly different. Granted, there was a shared goal for retribution after both attacks. However, it was obvious early on who was attacking Pearl Harbor. It was not so clear who was attacking on September 11th. When America did know it's attackers, they were not direct actors of any specific state, but a global militant extremist group. Thus, the response was not quite as easy to determine. Unlike World War II, America was not entering an ongoing war, but declaring new ones.

When America did declare war, it was not a total war like World War II. During World War II, the American public was asked to conserve resources and spend responsibly to support the war effort. Able-bodied men were drafted for the cause and women took up jobs in formerly male sectors to maintain production. While men were drafted to fight in World War II, no such draft occurred after September 11th. After September 11th, Americans were not asked to conserve, but to spend.⁶ In a September 15, 2001 briefing, Press Secretary Ari Fleischer told reporters, "The country is ready, and the country knows that as the war preparations are made, that every citizen has a role to play - by doing their job, by going to work, by resuming their life, by enjoying their recreation."⁷ In this way, Fleischer implied that recreational spending was an important aspect of fighting the war on terror. As Elaine Tyler May argues in her book Homeward Bound, instead of asking Americans to conserve for the war effort, the American government "gave back tax dollars for people to spend."⁸ Further, May argued, America made

⁶ May, Elaine Tyler. *Homeward Bound*. 20th Anniversary ed. New York: Basic Books, 2008. Pg. 217.

⁷ "Press Briefing by Ari Fleischer", Fleischer, Ari, 15, September, 2001. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010915-5.html>

⁸ Tyler May, Elaine. *Homeward Bound*. pg. 218.

no steps to decrease dependency on foreign products, particularly oil.⁹ American policies towards issues of economy would not mirror World War II, but more closely resemble the policies of the Cold War. In fact, America after September 11th would mimic the trends and attitudes of the early Cold War more than any other historical period.

The Cold War emerged after World War II as the United States came to terms with its new superpower status in the same arena that Soviet Russia was beginning to assert its influence. In the early days of the Cold War, from the end of World War II through the 1950's, Americans were negotiating a return to peacetime, while trying to cope with a reality that included the threat of nuclear war. The USSR became defined as the major enemy of the United States and anticommunist sentiment swept through the nation in what was known as the second Red Scare. The threat of nuclear war and communist infiltration filled Americans with anxiety and in order to cope, Americans turned inward and focused on their home life. The home, the family and the comforts that came with it would provide the security Americans so desperately sought during the Cold War. Having lived through the depression era and now finding themselves with disposable income, Americans invested in products that would provide long term stability. This was the era of suburbia. It was the focus of these early years of the Cold War that America would return to after September 11th.

Economically, during the Cold War American consumerism was viewed as a secret weapon against the Communists. American spending was not only the best way to fend off an after-war recession, it was the best symbol of American superiority over the looming threat of Communism. During the famous "Kitchen Debates" with Vice President Nixon, Khrushchev scorned American consumer goods as "merely gadgets," but to Nixon these gadgets were symbols of American freedom, particularly freedom of choice. Similarly, after the attacks of September 11th, consumer spending symbolized confidence, and in doing so symbolized to the

⁹ Ibid.

terrorists that America would not be defeated. On September 27, 2001, President Bush gave a speech at O'Hare airport saying,

“When they struck, they wanted to create an atmosphere of fear. And one of the great goals of this nation's war is to restore public confidence in the airline industry. It's to tell the traveling public: Get on board. Do your business around the country. Fly and enjoy America's great destination spots. Get down to Disney World in Florida. Take your families and enjoy life, the way we want it to be enjoyed.”¹⁰

While President Bush mentioned business as an important part in supporting the airline industry, he pinpointed recreation as the key to fighting the atmosphere of fear. Recreational travel would not only jump-start a frightened economy, it would show the terrorists how ineffective they were at crushing the American spirit. The greatest demonstration of the American spirit, Bush defined, was enjoying life “the way we want it to be enjoyed.” The statement also contained a subtle jab towards Islamic extremist groups that Americans had not just the spirit but the freedom to enjoy their lives however they wanted. Just as Americans had the freedom to purchase “gadgets” during the Cold War, they had the freedom to spend however they saw fit after September 11th.

During the Cold War, the average consumer generally did not think of their purchasing power as a weapon, but rather saw it as a way to ensure security. After the uncertainty of the Depression and World War II, investment purchases like homes, cars and large appliances were seen as ways to ensure future comfort and security.¹¹ Similarly, after the initial shock of September 11th, homeownership rates began to rise, reaching their peak in 2004.¹² This was due in part to legislation passed by President Bush, but also serves to illustrate that Americans find confidence and security in homeownership.

¹⁰“At O'Hare, President Says ‘Get On Board’.” 27 Sept 2001. The White House-President George Bush.Web. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010927-1.html>.

¹¹ Tyler May, Elaine. *Homeward Bound*. pg. 157.

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, "Table 14a. Quarterly Seasonally Adjusted Homeownership Rates for the: 1980 to Present." *United States Census Bureau:Housing Vacancies and Homeownership (CPS/HVS)*. 7 Mar. 2014. Web. 1 July 2014. <<https://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/data/histtabs.html>>.

The United States after September 11th mimicked the Cold War in more ways than economics. The Cold War best mirrored the level of anxiety that the nation felt after the attacks of September 11th. There was no one trigger for Cold War anxieties, though there were many smaller triggers that contributed to the tension. The detonation of the atomic bombs that ended World War II were perhaps the earliest source of tension. Nuclear weaponry violated the old rules of war and gave rise to an era in which no one felt safe. War would never be the same again. The idea of a new kind of war was a trend that repeated after the attacks of September 11th. However, the vocabulary used to talk about September 11th was taken directly from the Cold War. For instance, the term “ground zero” technically defined is, “the point directly above, below, or at which a nuclear explosion occurs.”¹³ Today, the term “ground zero” conjures up images of World Trade Center rubble, not nuclear attack. There was no nuclear attack on September 11th, but in an attempt to cope with the devastation, Americans viewed the attack along these lines. Since using the atomic bomb, Americans have lived in fear of the bomb being used against them, and in many ways, September 11th was seen as the moment in which the attack finally came.

Another trigger point for Cold War anxiety, argued by Stuart Croft, in Culture, Crisis and America's War on Terror was the launch of the Soviet rocket Sputnik. To equate Sputnik with the attacks of September 11th is perhaps to overemphasize the impact of the launch itself but the similarities in reaction between the two events deserve examination. As with September 11th, Sputnik was a flashbulb moment in American history, Americans could recall exactly where they were when they heard about it. Similarly, the launch of Sputnik in the absence of an American space program conveyed the attitude that America had become lax and in doing so had compromised its safety. For Sputnik, a decisive intervention was created to cope with the event.

¹³ "Ground Zero." 1. *Merriam Webster Online*. 2014. Web. 8 July 2014. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ground%20zero>>.

This intervention was the creation of NASA and the start of the space race. For September 11th, the intervention took the form of the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the declaration of the War on Terror. Both the “space race” and the War on Terror were ways for America to compensate for its previous inertia and re-assert itself as a dominant power. This is not to say that America ceased to be the dominant power. However, the threat of losing its dominant status was enough to propel America into a anxious state of development.

Adding to national anxiety was the idea of enemy infiltration in which a certain portion of a population would rise up from within the country and attack. During the Cold War, the most pressing fear was that of a Communist infiltration. It was this fear that allowed for the rise of opportunists like Senator Joseph McCarthy who claimed to possess a list of Communists who had infiltrated the United States government. McCarthyism set off national panic in which everyone became suspect. Americans were encouraged to closely watch their neighbors, coworkers and even families and report suspicious activity to the government. After September 11th, the fear was not communist but terrorist. However the incentive to report activity was the same. FBI Director Bob Mueller stated that, “Since September 11th, the American people have been an important set of eyes and ears in our investigations -- both our investigation of the terrorist hijackings and our investigation into the anthrax attacks.”¹⁴ The presence of an FBI website and toll-free hotline generated over 170,000 tips and potential leads from the American public. Director Mueller also emphasized the \$1 million reward offered by the FBI to encourage citizens to step forward with information about the Post 9/11 anthrax attacks. Following a similar line of thought The Terrorism Information and Prevention System (or its fitting abbreviation, TIPS) was introduced in July 2002. This system would recruit blue collar workers to spy on fellow citizen while performing household repairs or deliveries. According to scholars, “The plan evoked visions of the excesses of the cold war anticommunist crusade when ‘naming names’ of

¹⁴ “Friday’s Homeland Security Briefing”, The White House - George W. Bush , 2 Nov 2001. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011102-3.html>. web. 7 Jul 2001.

possible subversives was a sign of patriotism, and schoolchildren viewed propaganda films in which patriotic youngsters turned their parents in to authorities."¹⁵

Infiltration fears were also expressed in American attitudes towards those of Middle-Eastern descent. "A face has been put on terror and it is Arab,' argued Debra Merskin at the University of Oregon.¹⁶ Despite President Bush's insistence that Islam was a religion of peace, in the wake of the attacks, there was an increase in hate crimes towards Muslim and Sikh Americans. On September 15th, 2001 a Sikh gas station owner named Balbir Singh Sodhi was shot by an Arizona gunman who, after the shooting, went on to attack a Lebanese clerk at another gas station and fire shots into the home of a family of Afghan descent. When arrested, the gunman shouted, "I stand for America all the way."¹⁷ In his haste to avenge his country, the gunman had chosen his victims more on stereotype than fact. Mistaken by their turbans and beards for Muslims, Sikhs became the victims of hate crimes throughout America. Of the alleged 120 hate crimes reported to New York police in the month after September 11th, 80 of them were committed towards persons of Arab or South Asian descent.¹⁸ The hate crimes towards these individuals illustrated the very real feelings of distrust Americans had for their fellow citizens and the extremes to which Americans would go to feel safe again.

Americans responded to the threat of the Cold War with a need to assert themselves in their home lives as well. Most distinctly, this was expressed as a tightening of "traditional" gender roles. During the Cold War, this was seen by the emphasis on dichotomous, complementarian gender roles. These roles were reinforced by their contrast to the gender roles of the Soviet Union, which tended to emphasize capacity to work over gender. These roles were

¹⁵ May, *Homeward Bound*. pg. 227.

¹⁶ Merskin, Debra. "The Construction of Arabs as Enemies: Post-September 11 Discourse of George W. Bush." *Mass Communication and Society* 7, no. 2 (2004): 157-75.

¹⁷ Lewin, Tamar. "Sikh Owner of Gas station is Fatally Shot in Rampage." *New York Times*, September 17, 2001. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/17/us/sikh-owner-of-gas-station-is-fatally-shot-in-rampage.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Aw>.

¹⁸ Sengupta, Somini. "A NATION CHALLENGED: RELATIONS; Sept. 11 Attack Narrows the Racial Divide." *New York Times*, October 10, 2001. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/10/nyregion/a-nation-challenged-relations-sept-11-attack-narrows-the-racial-divide.html>.

more than just simple competition, though. Men tended to conflate their own confidence in their masculinity with their confidence in America's power. As America worked to emphasize its dominance, there was a parallel push for men to reclaim traditional roles as the family protector. This role of protector was usually defined by how well a man was able to financially support his family, but also relied on Christian ideas of male headship in the family structure and a careful adherence to male gender stereotypes. During this time, female roles became more strictly defined as well. The female role in the Cold War family was not of protector, but of caregiver. The caregiver role was defined by the ability to nurture, create a safe home environment and to mother. Just as the male role during the Cold War was defined by its need to protect, the female role was similarly constructed as one that needed protection.

This same emphasis on the gender specific roles of protector and caregiver emerged in the immediate aftermath of September 11th. In the immediacy of September 11th and the conflicts that followed, these roles took on a more dramatic portrayal - that of the hero and the victim. In looking at the personal stories of the sacrifices made on September 11th, there is no shortage of heroes to be found. Among those most commonly labelled heroes were the law enforcement officials and firefighters who led the rescue efforts. These individuals were undoubtedly heroes, however the label began to express more than bravery, but a particular American demographic. "The operative word is men. Brawny, heroic, manly men" Patricia Leigh Brown declared in the *New York Times* on October 28th, 2001.¹⁹ She went on to explain, "Since Sept. 11th, the male hero has been a predominant cultural image, presenting a beefy front of strength to a nation seeking steadiness and emotional grounding." In this instance, the term hero came to signify a specifically male, frequently blue-collar identity, and it wasn't long before the media was fetishizing these men. As "hunks" and "knights in shining fire helmets" the first responders on September 11th were labelled as the newest female fantasy. According to USA

¹⁹ Brown, Patricia L. "Heavy Lifting Required: The Return of Manly Men." *New York Times* 28 Oct. 2001. Web. 5 July 2014.

Today, "These days, New York's bravest are like the latest Louis Vuitton bag... 'You have to have one.'"²⁰

There were many women on September 11th that played heroic roles serving as law enforcement officials, firefighters and medical personnel, but in the flurry to declare "the return of manly men" their stories got pushed aside. Terri Tobin, a Police Department veteran, continued to evacuate the area around Ground Zero despite concrete lodged in her skull, glass shards in her back and a broken ankle.²¹ Another woman, Port Authority police captain Kathy Mazza, lost her life in the World Trade Center after firing her gun into glass walls to allow hundreds to escape.²² New York Police Officer Moira Smith led scared and injured workers out of the World Trade Center, and lost her life after returning to help more people.²³ Even though these women played crucial roles on the day of the attacks, their heroic stories went largely uncelebrated in news articles. When the articles did mention women, they preferred to focus on the women who lost husbands in the attacks. Among these widows, particular focus was given to mothers and especially expectant mothers. These women generally watched the attacks from home, perhaps receiving a final tragic phone call, but had no involvement at the scene of the attacks. Portraying women in this way caused women to be seen as more passive than they actually were during the attacks and helped to reinforce the idea of women as caretakers, not heroes. The narrative that so many of these widows watched from home as these attacks occurred also had the effect of placing women firmly back into the domestic sphere, despite the fact that many women worked in and around the attack sites.

Similarly, female flight attendants like Sandra Bradshaw and Ceecee Lyles played an important role in communicating information to official channels and, in the case of Flight 93,

²⁰ Barker, Olivia. "The Hunk Factor." *USA Today*, November 26, 2001, sec. Life, p. 1D.

²¹ Leslie J. Calman. "The Heroic Women of Sept. 11: To the Editor, Re 'Hunks and Brutes'" *New York Times*, 3 December, 2001. Web. 6 July 2014.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Daly, Michael. "When you remember Moira, you hold onto what is most dear." *Daily News*, August 19, 2011. <http://911anniversary.nydailynews.com/when-you-remember-moira-you-hold-what-most-dear>.

arming themselves with pots of boiling water to use against the terrorists. Despite this, the media primarily focussed on a select set of male passengers on the plane, most frequently Todd Beamer, Mark Bingham, Tom Burnett and Jeremy Glick. These men were often credited with having led the attack against the terrorists even though it is still unclear today how events within the plane unfolded. In media coverage, the names of these men were frequently followed by their height and chosen sport (Jeremy Glick: 6'1", Judo. Todd Beamer: 6'2", Baseball/Basketball. Mark Bingham: 6'4", Rugby. Tom Burnett, 6'3" Football.)²⁴. These sports stats helped to verify the capabilities of the male passengers and reinforced the idea that these men wouldn't have gone down without a fight, but also created a sort of macho man caricature that limited heroic ability to a six foot height requirement.

From phone calls made by Sandra Bradshaw and Elizabeth Wainio and Ceecee Lyles, it seems equally possible that women were a part of the revolt. "I've got to go, they're breaking into the cockpit." Elizabeth told her stepmother. Sandra's parting words to her husband were, "We're running to first class now."²⁵ Despite the evidence that at least one woman was involved in the attempt to recapture the airplane, the media preferred to focus on the male passengers who fit the 6 foot height requirement. Just as the World Trade Center reports preferred to focus on the widows left behind over the women at the scene of the attacks, reports about Flight 93 revolved around the wives and mothers left behind rather than the women in the plane. One example of this media attention was Lisa Beamer. Lisa Beamer was most frequently singled out as the shining example of American motherhood. A mother of two and pregnant with her third child when her husband's plane went down, Lisa singled out by the media as eligible for most tragic widow status. "It's hard to imagine a more poignant description of vulnerability," *People*

²⁴ Yahoo! Studios. "Unexpected legacy left by hero of Flight 93." 2 September 2011. Yahoo!
<http://news.yahoo.com/unexpected-legacy-left-by-hero-of-flight-93.html>.

²⁵ Breslau, Karen; Clift, Eleanor; Thomas, Evan. "The Real Story of Flight 93." Newsweek. 3 Dec 2001.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/214298200?accountid=6667>.

magazine declared²⁶. Whether she realized it or not, Lisa also embodied Cold War femininity. Self described as simply a “normal suburban mom,” Lisa told Larry King that, “My primary role before all this and after all this is to take care of my sons.”²⁷ Further, Lisa refused to give her public opinion on political issues, reinforcing an idea that had been popular both during the Cold War and after September 11th - that the government should not be questioned in times of crisis. Even Lisa’s outspoken faith hearkened back to a Cold War revival of Christianity, in which “under God” was added to the pledge of allegiance and “In God we trust” was added to paper money. Together, Lisa and Todd Beamer formed a tragically pleasing portrait of the revival of Cold War gender roles after September 11th. Todd played the businessman hero whose raw athleticism and masculinity helped to save the lives of Americans, while Lisa was the ideal wife and mother at home. The picturesque construction of Todd and Lisa’s marriage captivated an American public that was desperately searching for stability. They found that stability in the same places Americans had found it during the Cold War, in family life and clearly defined roles.

Americans returned to Cold War attitude and values because it represented a way to construct security. During the Cold War, Americans lived with the threat of an attack anywhere, at any time. Never before had Americans had to function with that level of anxiety. To cope with that anxiety, Americans acted in very specific ways. They shifted their focus to the family and the home life, they refrained from government criticism and they imposed stereotypes in order to easily sort friend from foe. When an event as nationally stressful as the attacks of September 11th occurred, Americans coped in the most familiar way they could, by returning to these norms. It was no coincidence that America would return to Cold War culture in a time when baby boomers (like President George W. Bush) were prominent in national leadership. For the boomer generation, it was comforting to return to a society that resembled their childhood.

²⁶ "Lisa Beamer: a Young Widow's Profile in Courage." *People*, December 31, 2001
<http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20136125,00.html>.

²⁷ Faludi, Susan. *The Terror Dream*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007. Pg. 101.

Raised to believe in the purity of values and to see the world in the terms of good and evil, Boomers were well primed to respond to September 11th with the same attitudes.

In reconstructing our national confidence, Americans created a stereotypical picture of the American citizen based on Cold War values and ideas. This American was a hard-working capitalist, a white male and of a Judeo-Christian faith. This stereotype resounded with much of the American heartland, but failed to accurately express the diversity of American culture. There is no stereotype that can correctly convey the deep and complex meaning of what it means to be an American, because America allows for the freedom to express citizenship in many ways. When we respond to September 11th with the same attitudes used in the Cold War we draw America back into a time in which what it means to be a hero and what it means to be an American are narrowly defined. By viewing the world through the same narrow lens used during the Cold War, we risk smothering the diversity that sets America apart as a nation and that makes it great. In our fear after September 11th, some of that diversity was silenced. As America struggled to reconstruct its national self-concept, it created a caricature of aggressively macho patriotism. This was not to our credit. This persona relied on strict sets of stereotypes to support its superiority against the rest of the world. In doing this, we were using the exact same tactics used by the terrorists to support their radical behavior. Instead of changing the game, we started playing by their rules.

America cannot continue to be a great nation if we refuse to acknowledge the full extent of freedom and diversity contained within it. Robert Kennedy said that, "Ultimately, America's answer to the intolerant man is diversity."²⁸ Our answer to the intolerance of terrorism should have been a celebration of our citizen's differences, not an insistence on their uniformity. Now, looking back, we must change the way we think about and talk about September 11th. We must reexamine how we portray concepts of heroism and patriotism. We must celebrate the

²⁸ Ultimately_Americas_answer_to_the_intolerant_man_is. Dictionary.com. *Columbia World of Quotations*. Columbia University Press, 1996. http://quotes.dictionary.com/Ultimately_Americas_answer_to_the_intolerant_man_is (accessed: July 15, 2014).

contributions of strong women in formerly male dominated roles. We must celebrate the racial diversity that has constantly challenged Americans to examine depth of character over outward appearance. We must embrace the religious freedom that we so proudly proclaim as a founding principle of our nation. It is this diversity that sets America apart from those who would silence all voices but their own. We are a country made great by it's freedom and diversity. Let us celebrate those concepts when we remember September 11th.

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