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## From Terrorist Attack to Presidential Rhetoric to Hate Crimes: Is Stochastic Violence the Change That Links Them All?

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From Terrorist Attack to Presidential Rhetoric to Hate Crimes: Is Stochastic Violence the Change  
That Links Them All?

Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of Social Studies  
of Bard College

by  
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## **Abstract**

This paper aims to answer the question of what took place, in regard to presidential responses and hate crimes, following the September 11th attacks that had not occurred following previous terrorist attacks. This is done in order to find a deeper explanation for the wave of hate crimes that took place in the aftermath of 9/11. By examining the presidential responses to the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the Olympic Park bombing in 1996, and the US embassy bombings in 1998, and comparing them to the response of the September 11th attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, it is found that the difference between the pre-9/11 and post-9/11 responses was the use of stochastic violence. The volume of attention that was paid to the attacks and the issue of terrorism by the US government, as well as the amount of exposure that the American public had to the event and the issues surrounding it, resulted in an unprecedented amount of hate crimes committed towards Muslims and individuals of Middle Eastern descent. This paper utilizes the idea of stochastic violence to link presidential rhetoric to the committing of hate crimes in order to highlight the power and importance of presidential rhetoric. By doing so, it attempts to shine a light on the issue of hate crimes towards Muslims and Middle Eastern individuals in order to demonstrate that it is a highly prevalent issue which remains today and one that continues to define post-9/11 America.



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## Introduction

The events that took place on September 11th, 2001 caused recent history to be categorized as 'pre-9/11' and 'post-9/11' times, specifically in the fields of politics, diplomacy, security, and human rights. There must be significant reasoning as to why this is the case. Most obviously, it is because the United States had never witnessed an attack on such a large scale with such a great amount of devastation and destruction as it did on this day. However, 9/11 was not the first time that the US was threatened by terrorism. Nor was the period that followed the first time that American society experienced Islamophobia. However, a great change took place following this day that caused terrorism and Islamophobia to be linked to its events and the time that followed it, which resulted in the execution of a large number of hate crimes. To further understand what exactly took place to cause both this distinction between pre and post-9/11, and its relation to the increase of hate crimes, we can compare the responses to the 9/11 attacks to those of different terrorist attacks that took place in the decade leading up to 2001. By examining the responses made by President Clinton in the aftermath of four other attacks, and comparing these to those made by President Bush after the 9/11 attacks, it can be seen what was done differently after 2001, which was not done in the 1990s. As years passed, State of the Union Addresses and other presidential remarks in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks show an increase in both the times the attacks were addressed, as well as within the actions taken by the administration in response. Eventually, there would also be a greater emphasis placed on, as well as attention paid to, hate crimes. How differently the government responded to each terrorist

attack can be seen as a significant reason why 9/11 caused the wave of hate crimes that it did, and the terrorist attacks of the 90's did not.

Presidential rhetoric acts as a form of stochastic violence, whether intentionally or unintentionally, where there is reasonable certainty that random individuals will act on these messages, ultimately serving to aid in the performance of hate crimes. In this case, individuals who either had pre-existing Islamophobic beliefs or formed such beliefs following the September 11th attacks, utilized presidential rhetoric concerning the attacks or the issue of terrorism, as motivation to commit hate crimes against individuals who were or who were believed to be Muslims or of Middle Eastern descent. The idea that presidential remarks perceived as hate speech can support an individual's decision to commit a hate crime, highlights the influence of presidential rhetoric and the responsibility of the president to know and acknowledge the power of their words. Perpetrators of hate crimes are motivated by the amount of esteem and utility they will gain by committing such an act, and are deterred by the disesteem or disutility that may result. If by committing the act, they believe that they will benefit by people thinking well of them, they are more likely to follow through with it. When they believe that there are many people who feel the same way they do about Muslims and Middle Easterners, especially the president, then they will be more inclined to commit an act that they feel will be supported by those like-minded people. Seeing that the president does not face any consequences for engaging in hate speech, perpetrators are less likely to fear punishment for committing a hate crime, which would normally have deterred them from doing so. Although engaging in hate speech and committing hate crimes are two very different acts, the distinction is much less clear to those committing the acts, and it can not be denied that one helps lead to the other. Following 9/11, there was a much

greater certainty among perpetrators of hate crimes, where like-minded individuals would support each other's actions, thus causing a spike in hate crimes following 9/11, that did not take place after previous terrorist attacks.

The scale of the September 11th attacks caused them to be the major topic of conversation for both the US government and the American media. With the massive exposure that the American public had to information on these attacks and their cause, it would have been almost impossible to have avoided gaining information about them, especially immediately following the attacks. Such exposure also led to the forming of associations between the attacks, terrorism, and those who were, or were perceived to be, either Muslims or from the Middle East. While the link exists for obvious and factual reasons, in that the nineteen hijackers responsible for the events on September 11th came from Middle Eastern countries, practiced Islam, and belonged to a terrorist organization (Al Qaeda), this does not justify a line being drawn from terrorists, to all Muslims and all Middle Easterners. These associations are a result of how much the US government, as well as the American media, discussed the September 11th attacks, the issue of terrorism, the Middle East, and the religion of Islam in relation to one another.

In addition, 9/11 would come to affect the entire world, not just the United States. The size of destruction, amount of devastation, and its impact, both affected and was noticed by countries around the world. While other nations may not have been concerned with previous incidents within and against the US, which could have been seen as minor and isolated, the scale of the 9/11 attacks forced other nations to pay attention. It notified them that if something like that happened to the most powerful economic and political capitals of America, then it could happen to any country, anywhere in the world. Therefore, what helped to set the aftermath of the

September 11th attacks on New York and Washington apart from that of the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the Olympic Park bombing in 1996, and the US embassy bombings in 1998, specifically in terms of the fear and hate crimes that followed them, is that the previous four attacks were not overly represented or discussed by the government, nor the media, in the US or globally, in the way that the 2001 attacks were. The heightened exposure that the American public had to the information and issues concerning the September 11th attacks, which was not present for previous terrorist attacks, allowed presidential rhetoric to work in the form of stochastic violence in a way that it had never been able to before, resulting in a major increase of hate crimes targeted at Muslims and Middle Easterners. This posed an issue that defined post 9/11 America and still remains today.

The first section of this paper will summarize each of the five attacks being discussed and highlight why 9/11 would become the attack that stands out among all others with hate crimes being the key factor making this so. It will also address Islamophobia in America, how the phenomena existed prior to 9/11, and how, while it may have been ignited by the events of this day, it was not formed as a result. The next section focuses on presidential responses to each of the five attacks, utilizing the State of the Union Addresses as a constant for comparison, but also including other presidential remarks such as radio addresses and other speeches that were given in the immediate aftermath of the identified attacks. The final section explains what is meant by stochastic violence and shows not only how this is what links presidential rhetoric to hate crimes, but how this link marks the difference between pre and post-9/11 administrations' response to terrorist attacks. This section goes on to address the importance of presidential rhetoric, the responsibility attached to it in respect to its effect on hate crimes, and to what extent

Presidents Bush, Obama and Trump have acknowledged this responsibility as post-9/11 Presidents. The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of this research in respect to hate crimes towards Muslims and individuals of Middle Eastern descent as an issue that is still prevalent today.

## Terrorist Attacks and Hate Crimes

### The Attacks

#### *1993 World Trade Center Bombing*

On February 26th, 1993, a car bomb exploded underneath the North Tower of the World Trade Center in an underground parking garage, killing six people and injuring more than 1000 others.<sup>1</sup> The explosion left a 60-foot crater, and caused the collapse of several floors. Smoke and flames filled the area and moved upward through the building.<sup>2</sup> The blast knocked out the main power system which served both towers with electricity, telephones, closed-circuit television monitors and public address system, and damaged the police desk and operation centers. Generators became useless when the lines that carried the water to cool them were destroyed. With all systems down, everyone in the towers were left helpless trying to escape through the dark stairways filled with choking ash and smoke.<sup>3</sup> Around 50,000 people were evacuated from the buildings, many of whom were suffering from smoke inhalation. Within days of this attack, several radical Islamist fundamentalists had been arrested.<sup>4</sup> On March 4th, the FBI arrested Mohammad Salameh as he attempted to claim his \$400 deposit from a rented van that was reported stolen the day before the attack. Soon after, three more suspects were in custody and each were tried and convicted. Within the next weeks, the FBI had learned the name of the

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, Kenneth T. *The Encyclopedia of New York City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011, 1292.

<sup>2</sup> "World Trade Center Is Bombed." History.com. February 09, 2010. Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/world-trade-center-bombed>.

<sup>3</sup> Gottlieb, Martin. "Explosion at the Twin Towers: The Response; Size of Blast 'Destroyed' Rescue Plan", The New York Times, February 27, 1993. <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/02/27/nyregion/explosion-at-the-twin-towers-the-response-size-of-blast-destroyed-rescue-plan.html> (accessed December 5, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> "World Trade Center Is Bombed."

mastermind behind the bombing- Ramzi Yousef. He, along with another plotter, was not found until 1995.<sup>5</sup>

### *1995 Oklahoma City Bombing*

On April 19, 1995, a rented Ryder truck was parked outside of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. When the truck-bomb exploded, it caused a third of the building to be reduced to rubble and it flattened several floors. The entire north side of the building was blown off, dozens of cars were incinerated, and more than 300 buildings in the surrounding area were either damaged or destroyed. The attack killed 168 people, including 19 children who were in the building's day care, and more than 650 others were injured. Since the World Trade Center bombing was just two years earlier, the media and many Americans were quick to assume that the attack was done by terrorists from the Middle East. However, investigators began finding answers the day after the attack. On April 20th, the rear axle of the Ryder truck was discovered in the rubble. It's identification number was traced to a body shop in Kansas. Employees there helped the FBI develop a sketch of the man who had rented it. As agents showed the sketch around town, hotel employees were able to provide the name of the man who had stayed there: Timothy McVeigh.

By April 21st, it was discovered that McVeigh was already in jail. Turns out, he had been pulled over the same day of the attack, approximately 90 minutes after it took place, 80 miles north of Oklahoma City. He was pulled over when an officer noticed that the getaway car did not have a rear license plate. McVeigh was arrested once the officer discovered that he was carrying

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<sup>5</sup> "FBI 100 - 1993 Trade Center Bombing." FBI. February 26, 2008. Accessed April 03, 2020. [https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/stories/2008/february/tradebom\\_022608](https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/stories/2008/february/tradebom_022608).



a weapon. Investigators would eventually learn that McVeigh had become deeply radicalized by both the 1992 shoot-out at Ruby Ridge, Idaho between federal agents and Randy Weaver, and the 1993 Waco siege of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. The Oklahoma City bombing took place on the two-year anniversary of the Waco siege.<sup>6</sup>

### *1996 Olympic Park Bombing*

On July 7, 1996, a home-made pipe bomb exploded at 1:25 am in Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta during the 1996 Summer Olympics. The 40-pound bomb which was filled with nails and screws was left in a green knapsack in the crowded park of spectators near the main-site of the Olympic games.<sup>7</sup> The bomb directly killed one woman, and injured 111 people. A reporter also died of a heart attack while rushing to cover the incident. Most people suffered from shock or from minor wounds. Eleven people were hospitalized and two underwent surgery. Investigators “initially considered American right-wing extremist groups with grudges against the US federal government as the most likely suspects, rather than international terrorist groups”.

<sup>8</sup> The initial suspect of the attacks was Richard Jewell, who was the one that first discovered the knapsack containing the bomb, alerted the police, and helped to evacuate people from the area.

Days later, he was falsely accused by the FBI and media of planting the bomb himself.

Eventually, the FBI exonerated him as a suspect for the bombing. The individual that was actually responsible for the attack did not become a suspect until 1998, when he was identified as

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<sup>6</sup> History.com Editors. "Oklahoma City Bombing." History.com. December 16, 2009. Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://www.history.com/topics/1990s/oklahoma-city-bombing>.

<sup>7</sup> Sack, Kevin. "Bomb at the Olympics: The Overview; Olympic Park Blast Kills One, Hurts 11; Atlanta Games Go On." The New York Times. July 28, 1996. Accessed April 21, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Atlanta Olympic Games Bombing of 1996." Encyclopædia Britannica. July 20, 2019. Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Atlanta-Olympic-Games-bombing-of-1996>.

being the suspect for a different bombing, an abortion clinic in Alabama. Eric Rudolph would later be tied to two other bombings in Atlanta in 1997, one of an abortion clinic and one of a gay nightclub. He was not found until 2003, and was convicted in 2005.<sup>9</sup>

### *1998 US Embassy Bombings*

On August 7, 1998, US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania were bombed almost simultaneously. Truck bombs exploded outside each of the embassies minutes apart from one another. Together, the terrorist attacks killed 224 people, including 12 Americans, and wounded more than 4500 people. The terrorist organization Al Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attacks, the same group that would be responsible for the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center three years later. The embassy bombings took place eight years to the day that US troops were ordered to Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, which Al Qaeda's leader, Osama bin Laden, considered to be a grave offense. Bin Laden had issued two fatwas, or legal opinions in Islam. In 1996, he called for war on Americans. In 1998, he stated that "Muslims should kill all Americans, including civilians, anywhere in the world".<sup>10</sup> This would eventually be seen as a horrific foreshadow for what would happen three years later.

### *2001 Attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C.*

On the morning of September 11th, 2001, four airplanes were hijacked and used to carry out suicide attacks on multiple targets in the country. Two of the planes were flown into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, a third flew into the Pentagon in

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<sup>9</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Atlanta Olympic Games Bombing of 1996."

<sup>10</sup> "U.S. Embassies in East Africa Bombed." History.com. February 09, 2010. Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/u-s-embassies-in-east-africa-bombed>.

Washington, D.C., and the fourth crashed in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The passengers of this fourth flight had learned of the events that took place in New York and Washington involving the other three planes, and chose to take down their plane themselves, in order to prevent the hijackers from hitting their intended target. The intended target is not known for sure, but theories suggest that it may have been headed for either the White House or the U.S. Capitol building, both of which are also located in Washington, D.C.<sup>11</sup> The combination of the four attacks killed nearly 3,000 people, causing “the single largest loss of life resulting from a foreign attack on American soil”.<sup>12</sup>

At 8:46 am, Flight 11 which left Boston and was intended for Los Angeles, flew into the North Tower between the 92nd and 98th floors at 470 miles per hour. At 9:03, Flight 175 which had the same departure and destination locations as Flight 11 crashed into the South Tower between the 78th and 84th floors at 560 miles per hour. The impacts killed hundreds instantly, including the 147 combined passengers on board, and trapped hundreds more in higher floors. When the planes hit, they were loaded with fuel for a transcontinental flight. The impact sent engine parts into the core's structural columns. The jet fuel caught fire and burned through the insulation. The heat that was generated softened supports in the core and the perimeter of the buildings. Many of those below the point of impact were able to escape as the building structure deteriorated. Although it was hit second, the South Tower was hit at a lower point and at a much higher speed, and therefore was the first to collapse. Since there were 17 minutes between the attacks, many people in the South Tower were able to escape before it was hit.<sup>13</sup> The South

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<sup>11</sup> History.com Editors. "September 11 Attacks." History.com. February 17, 2010. Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://www.history.com/topics/21st-century/9-11-attacks>.

<sup>12</sup> "9/11 Interactive Timelines." 9/11 Memorial Timeline. September 11, 2001. Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://timeline.911memorial.org/>.

<sup>13</sup> Jackson, *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, 1168.

Tower went down at 9:59 after burning for 56 minutes, killing 800, and the North at 10:28 after burning for 102 minutes, killing another 1,600.<sup>14</sup> The force of the collapse sent ten stories of the South Tower compacted into six feet in the basement and twenty floors of the North Tower compacted into ten feet. Of the remaining five buildings in the World Trade Center, they either came down with the towers or were so damaged that they eventually had to be destroyed.<sup>15</sup>

In between the time that the Twin Towers were hit and collapsed, the Pentagon was attacked and Flight 93 was taken down. Flight 77 circled over downtown Washington, D.C. before crashing into the west side of the Pentagon at 9:45, which is the headquarters for the US Department of Defense. The fire that the attack caused led to the structural collapse of the concrete building. There were 125 military personnel and civilians killed at the Pentagon, along with 64 people aboard the flight. The passengers of Flight 93 fought the four hijackers, attacking the cockpit and causing the plane to crash in a rural field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania at 10:10, killing all 44 people on board.<sup>16</sup>

### **9/11: A Wake-up Call**

Two of the pre-2001 incidents were cases of domestic terrorism, and two were cases of international terrorism—one of which was committed on the homeland and one abroad. The incident most similar in nature and intention to the September 11th attacks was the first attack on the World Trade Center. While the intended outcome was the same, to bring down the Twin Towers, the plan failed immensely. However the attack most similar in terms of broad-scale meticulous planning and level of destruction were the embassy bombings. Still, the fact that they

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<sup>14</sup> "9/11 Interactive Timelines."

<sup>15</sup> Jackson, *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, 1168.

<sup>16</sup> History.com Editors. "September 11 Attacks."

were not committed on the homeland, even though they targeted the United States, did not evoke the same fear as an attack of that scale on US soil would have, and later did. While the embassy attacks were large-scale and a clear attack on America, the relatively low number of Americans killed did not translate to a greater response as would have if the 224 people were Americans. Each of these attacks did however kill Americans, pose a great threat to American security, and prove that even the United States was not an exception to such threats of terrorism. It seems as though the American government, and consequently the public, did not however come to this realization fully until after 9/11.

Ariel Dorfman makes a claim similar to this in his article ‘America’s No Longer Unique’, which was published on October 3, 2001. In this article, he speaks on how September 11th proved to Americans that they were just as vulnerable as any other nation to this type of devastation. He says that in the few weeks that had passed, he so often heard statements such as “this cannot be happening to us. This sort of excessive violence happens to other people and not to us, we have only known this form of destruction through movies and books and remote photographs”.<sup>17</sup> This speaks to the level of fear that set in after 9/11 and the fact that people began to believe that this really could happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time. He highlights the idea of “(North) America’s famous exceptionalism, (as the) attitude which allowed the citizens of this country to imagine themselves as beyond the sorrows and calamities that have plagued less fortunate peoples around the world”.<sup>18</sup> Americans never considered themselves as potential victims of such tragedy until after it already happened to them. It is evident that smaller signs of similar tragedy did not lead Americans to believe that they themselves could be potential

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<sup>17</sup> Dorfman, Ariel. "America's No Longer Unique." CounterPunch.org. October 06, 2015. Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://www.counterpunch.org/2001/10/03/america-s-no-longer-unique/>.

<sup>18</sup> Dorfman, "America's No Longer Unique."

victims of terrorism. President Bush acknowledged this truth in two addresses that were given in response to 9/11. In one given on September 16th, he suggested that the attack was a wake up call when he said “we’ve been warned. We’ve been warned there are evil people in this world. We’ve been warned so vividly- and we’ll be alert”.<sup>19</sup> In another address given on September 20th, he said that “our nation has been put on notice, we’re not immune from attack”.<sup>20</sup> In each of these statements, Bush acknowledges precisely what Dorfman is arguing, in that 9/11 alone was a wake-up call for Americans, and not any other previous attack on the US or on another country.

Each of the four incidents that took place in the decade leading up to 9/11 could have evoked the fear in Americans that terrorism could affect anyone at anytime, including them, alas it did not. As presidential remarks presented later will show, much of this could be due to the fact that the government did not acknowledge the ‘90s attacks enough as both incidents or threats in a way that would have heightened fear in the American public. While there may have been small instances of fear initially that may have made people believe that they could also be the victim of such tragedy, none of the four attacks in the ‘90s resulted in the increase of hate crimes that took place in 2001 and the years that followed. The fear of terrorism and potential attacks did not exist at a noticeable level in the decade leading up to 9/11.

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<sup>19</sup> The Avalon Project : Remarks by the President Upon Arrival The South Lawn 3:23 P.M. EDT; September 16, 2001. Accessed April 21, 2020. [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/sept11/president\\_015.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/sept11/president_015.asp).

<sup>20</sup> Eidenmuller, Michael E. The Rhetoric of 9/11: President George W. Bush -- Address to Joint Session of Congress and the American People (9-20-01). Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911jointsessionspeech.htm>.

## Hate Crime Statistics and 9/11 Impact

The Federal Bureau of Investigation releases an annual Hate Crime Report through their Civil Rights Program, based on data collected through their Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program.<sup>21</sup> These reports provide statistics on hate crimes beginning in 1996 and continuing until the present day. The report categorizes bias-incidents by several categories, among which includes religion and ethnicity/national origin. These are the categories that pertain to anti-Islamic, anti-Arab, and anti-Middle Eastern hate crimes. From 1996-2012, 'anti-Islamic' was a subcategory under religion, and 'anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin' (opposed to anti-Hispanic) was one of two subcategories under ethnicity/national origin. While 'anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin' is not specific to Middle-Eastern countries, this is where these incidents would have fallen under. In 2013, the 'anti-Islamic' label became 'anti-Islamic (Muslim)' and the 'Ethnicity/National Origin' category became 'Ethnicity' only with the two subcategories 'anti-Hispanic or Latino' and 'anti-Not Hispanic or Latino'. This remained the categorization until 2015 when 'ethnicity' was removed from its own category, and added to the already previously used 'race' category. This is where the new 'anti-Arab' label fell. This is how these hate crimes have been categorized since.

The data collected for each incident is broken down into categories of Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known offenders. An incident is any criminal offense committed against persons, property, or society that are motivated by the offender's bias. There are 11 offense categories including murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larcenytheft, motor vehicle theft, and arson, plus simple assault, intimidation,

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<sup>21</sup> "Hate Crimes." FBI. May 03, 2016. Accessed April 21, 2020.  
<https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes>.

and destruction/damage/vandalism. The number of victims and offenders is the total number of each that is known to be involved in the incident.<sup>22</sup> By comparing the pre-2001 statistics to the 2001 and post-2001 statistics, it can be seen how much of an increase took place in hate crimes, specifically those towards Muslims and those of Middle Eastern descent, as a result of 9/11 and how the commitment of hate crimes would never again drop below the amount that were committed prior to 2001.

Provided below is the hate crime data collected for Anti-Islamic bias-motivated incidents from the years 1996-2018. The first year shown is 1996 because it is the first year that statistics are provided for hate crimes, despite the development of the Hate Crime Statistics Act in 1990. This Act required the collection and publication of data about crimes motivated by prejudices that were based on characteristics of an individual belonging to a certain group. Its intention was to keep track of such crimes against groups that were protected by the federal hate crime statute at the time. This is the legislation that would lead to The Justice Department taking the lead on the law, and assigning the FBI with the task that would result in the development of the UCR Hate Crime Report. Notice in the following chart that in the year following the 9/11 attacks, the numbers dropped significantly compared to 2001, but they would never return to pre-9/11 numbers.

Anti-Islamic	Incidents	Offenses	Victims	Known Offenders
Anti-Islamic 1996	27	33	33	16
Anti-Islamic 1997	28	31	32	16
Anti-Islamic 1998	21	22	23	12
Anti-Islamic 1999	32	34	34	14
Anti-Islamic 2000	28	33	36	20

<sup>22</sup> "Hate Crime." FBI. July 15, 2010. Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime>.



Anti-Islamic 2001	481	546	554	334
Anti-Islamic 2002	155	170	174	103
Anti-Islamic 2003	149	155	171	94
Anti-Islamic 2004	156	193	201	124
Anti-Islamic 2005	128	146	151	89
Anti-Islamic 2006	156	191	208	147
Anti-Islamic 2007	115	133	142	104
Anti-Islamic 2008	105	123	130	85
Anti-Islamic 2009	107	128	132	95
Anti-Islamic 2010	160	186	197	125
Anti-Islamic 2011	157	175	185	138
Anti-Islamic 2012	130	149	155	110
Anti-Islamic (Muslim) 2013	135	165	167	127
Anti-Islamic (Muslim) 2014	154	178	184	148
Anti-Islamic (Muslim) 2015	257	301	307	228
Anti-Islamic (Muslim) 2016	307	381	388	243
Anti-Islamic (Muslim) 2017	273	314	325	231
Anti-Islamic (Muslim) 2018	188	225	236	153

A similar trend can be seen in the anti-other ethnicity/national origin category, although this does not indicate a direct link to anti-Arab and anti-Middle Eastern hate crimes. Notice, while these numbers jumped significantly in 2001, they steadily decreased in the following years until returning to numbers similar to pre-9/11 around 2008. It is difficult to make a comparison to pre-2001 statistics after the category change took place in 2015.

Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin	Incidents	Offenses	Victims	Known Offenders
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 1996	376	453	479	361
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 1997	345	447	483	292
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 1998	272	324	336	283
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 1999	363	435	452	342
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2000	354	429	453	318
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2001	1501	1752	1822	1252
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2002	622	744	770	591
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2003	600	707	731	542
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2004	497	590	608	462
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2005	422	484	506	424
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2006	408	463	486	407
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2007	412	481	517	397
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2008	333	413	434	323
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2009	294	396	417	285
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2010	313	359	375	294
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2011	315	385	405	297
Anti-Other Ethnicity/National Origin 2012	283	334	352	246
Anti-Not Hispanic or Latino 2013	324	376	389	325
Anti-Not Hispanic or Latino 2014	349	414	432	343
Anti-Arab 2015	37	47	48	35
Anti-Arab 2016	51	56	57	60
Anti-Arab 2017	102	128	131	100
Anti-Arab 2018	82	100	100	80

### *Hate Crimes in the Aftermath of 9/11*

The following examples are of hate crimes that were committed immediately following 9/11. Balbir Singh Sodhi was a Sikh Indian-American who was shot in Mesa, Arizona outside of his gas station on September 15, 2001, just four days after the attacks, by Frank Roque.<sup>23</sup> In a New York Times article released two days after the murder, Tamar Lewin writes on the events that took place. Twenty minutes after shooting Sodhi, at a different gas station, Roque then shot at but missed a clerk of Lebanese descent. He later also fired several shots into the home of a family of Afghan descent but did not hit anyone. Roque was soon arrested for murder, attempted murder, and drive-by shooting and had bail set at \$1 million. While being handcuffed, Roque shouted “I stand for America all the way”. Despite this comment, law enforcement, at the time that this article was written, had not yet declared that the shootings were a result of the victims ethnicities but FBI officials who investigate hate crimes were notified.<sup>24</sup> This shooting rampage deliberately targeted individuals that Roque assumed were of Middle Eastern descent or of Islamic faith, and was an obvious immediate response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

The same day that Sodhi was shot, so was Waqar Hasan, a Muslim Pakistani-American. He was shot in his grocery store in Dallas, Texas by Mark Anthony Stroman. Nineteen days later, Stroman also killed Vasudev Patel, a Hindu Indian-American and gas station-owner in an armed robbery in Mesquite, Texas.<sup>25</sup> Unable to find sufficient reports on these two individuals' murders, an archive of Stroman's murders provides great details of the crimes and their motivation. Hasan

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<sup>23</sup> Bakalian, Anny P., and Mehdi Bozorgmehr. *Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Lewin, Tamar. “Sikh Owner Of Gas Station Is Fatally Shot In Rampage.” *The New York Times*. The New York Times, September 17, 2001. <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/17/us/sikh-owner-of-gas-station-is-fatally-shot-in-rampage.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Bakalian, *Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond*, 3.

was shot in his grocery store while he was grilling hamburgers. Patel was shot in an attempted robbery of his convenience store. Stroman admitted that these murders were only two among a series of other hate-related crimes, all done as a response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and out of anger towards those of Middle Eastern descent.<sup>26</sup> Roque and Stroman understood the victims and targets of their hate crimes to be somehow related to the terrorists that attacked the US, and used this association to justify the murders and attempted murders of these individuals.

The following cases come from a list generated by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) of anti-Muslim hate crimes and bias incidents collected from news reports beginning on 9/11 and continuing through 2011.<sup>27</sup> These cases specifically were found by searching either ‘9/11’ or ‘terrorist’ on the list provided by SPLC. On November 6, 2001, in Madison, Wisconsin, a twenty-one year old man was charged with a hate crime, criminal damage to property, and disorderly conduct for allegedly smashing the window of a bar after seeing two men who *appeared to be* of Middle Eastern descent. On November 7, 2001 in Tulelake, California, three white men allegedly fired gunshots while yelling racial slurs at a Latino man *they believed* was of Arab descent.<sup>28</sup> On July 15, 2002, in Detroit, Michigan, Brent D. Seever, a 38 year old man, was sentenced to life in prison for killing Ali Almansoop, an Arab-American man and native of Yemen, on September 19th. Seever claimed at the time that he killed Almansoop because he was enraged by the terrorist attacks.<sup>29</sup> On October 4, 2002 in Queens, New York, two men allegedly attacked a 17-year-old Middle Eastern teenager because of his ethnicity “while accusing him of

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<sup>26</sup> Blanco, Juan Ignacio. *Mark Anthony Stroman | Murderpedia, the Encyclopedia of Murderers*. Accessed May 19, 2019. <http://murderpedia.org/male.S/s1/stroman-mark.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> “Anti-Muslim Incidents Since Sept. 11, 2001.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, March 29, 2011. <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2011/03/29/anti-muslim-incidents-sept-11-2001>.

<sup>28</sup> Anti-Muslim Incidents Since Sept. 11, 2001.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*

<sup>29</sup> “Man Gets Life in Murder of Arab American.” *Los Angeles Times*. Los Angeles Times, July 16, 2002. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2002-jul-16-na-briefs16.1-story.html>.

being in the Taliban and blaming him for the 9/11 terrorist attacks". On June 23, 2003, in Salem, Oregon, a twelve-year old Israeli Arab boy was playing outside of his house when another twelve-year old boy allegedly called him a terrorist and punched him in the face.<sup>30</sup> Each of these cases show that perpetrators of hate crimes were drawing direct links between the 9/11 attacks and individuals who were or who they believed to be Muslim or of Middle Eastern descent.

### **Terrorist Attacks Affect on Hate Crimes**

A study done by Carol W. Lewis, titled 'The Terror that Failed: Public Opinion in the Aftermath of the Bombing in Oklahoma City', helps to explain why 9/11 caused the wave of hate crimes that it did, and previous terrorist attacks did not. Lewis argues that the Oklahoma City bombing failed as an act of terrorism because it failed to produce fear among the American public, which is an essential element in the definition and purpose of terrorism. She questions two aspects that lead her to this conclusion, which are whether the bombing affected the public's perception of terrorism as a political issue and if it affected their perceptions of individual risk and personal vulnerability. Data based on surveys showed that while the idea of terrorism as an abstract political issue increased, the Oklahoma City bombing did not cause an increase in individuals' assessment of their own personal risk. Since personal belief of risk did not increase and therefore did not lead to fear, Lewis concludes that Oklahoma City failed as an act of terrorism.

An important aspect of this conclusion is that the bombing did in fact heighten the public's awareness of the threat of terrorism. They did believe that it was an important and

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<sup>30</sup> "Anti-Muslim Incidents Since Sept. 11, 2001." *Southern Poverty Law Center*

increasing threat and one that was likely to occur again in the future. In terms of terrorism as an issue in the abstract, “public opinion polls indicate that the Oklahoma City bombing initially increased the general risk that the public associates with domestic terrorism” but “that the effect apparently had subsided by the summer of 1996, by which time far fewer Americans were very concerned or even worried”.<sup>31</sup> So, even if fear had increased, it did not last long. Surveys taken by both NBC and ABC from April 1995 to June 1997 showed that the idea of terrorism as a concern in the US increased immediately following the Oklahoma City bombing, but did not remain as a lasting concern in the years that followed. What is important about this initial increase of concern of terrorism as an abstract, is that it did not translate to Americans “personal concern or worry that they or their family, place of work, or community will be victims of terrorism”.<sup>32</sup> While survey results showed that 86% of those who responded believed further incidents of terrorism would occur in the future, 70% did not believe that such incidents would happen in their own community. In other words, they believed terrorism as an issue had increased in importance and should as a priority in the US, yet did not believe that they would be affected by it. This conclusion therefore points out that despite signs and discussion that indicated that an incident like Oklahoma City could happen to anyone, anywhere, anytime, Americans still believed that it could happen, just to someone else, and not to them.

This further supports the claim made by Dorfman, that Americans did not believe that they themselves could be the victim of a terrorist attack until after 9/11. They believed it was a threat but not one that they were at risk of. This aspect is what differentiates the aftermath of the

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<sup>31</sup> Lewis, Carol W. "The Terror That Failed: Public Opinion in the Aftermath of the Bombing in Oklahoma City." Wiley Online Library. December 17, 2002. Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/0033-3352.00080>, 204.

<sup>32</sup> Lewis, "The Terror That Failed: Public Opinion in the Aftermath of the Bombing in Oklahoma City.", 205.

Oklahoma City bombing, and the other incidents in the 90's, from 2001. If the Oklahoma City bombing, the largest act of terrorism on US soil at the time, and still the largest act of domestic terrorism, could not develop a fear among American society that an individual themselves could fall victim to a terrorist attack, then it would make sense that other, smaller incidents would not do so either. It was not until the attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, that the American public would believe that they could be the victim of a terrorist attack. With this acceptance of individual risk, came the development of fear; fear that did not exist in the previous decade, and fear that would lead to the rise of hate crimes in general and specifically towards those who were or believed to be Muslim or of Middle Eastern descent. The increase of hate crimes committed towards these individuals represented the connection that was made between them and the terrorist attacks. It is however necessary to emphasize that post-9/11 was not the first time that the US struggled with Islamophobia. Although the phenomena would come to be strongly associated with the aftermath of the 2001 attacks, it is important to emphasize it did not cause Islamophobia, but it did however ignite it.

### **Islamophobia in America**

Atlaf Husain, who writes on Islamophobia for the Encyclopedia of Social Work, and Chris Allen, who wrote 'Contemporary Islamophobia Before 9/11: A Brief History', both speak to the idea that 9/11 obviously increased the idea of Islamophobia as an issue, but that it was in fact one that existed prior to 2001. Both Husain and Allen would agree that while anti-Muslim bigotry in the United States dates back much further into the nations history, Islamophobia in its contemporary meaning began with the last two decades of the twentieth century. In addition,

while the term itself gained popularity and was commonly used following the 9/11 attacks, Islamophobia itself existed prior to 2001 and thus should not be related to a single event alone.

Husain wrote that

“this worldview existed since the 1980s and 1990s when the word terrorism became synonymous with Islam and that of *terrorists* with Muslims for two main reasons: the actual violence perpetrated by certain individuals in the name of Islam and the gross and inhumane violent acts in popular films attributed to Muslims outright or at least to individuals with a ‘Muslim-like’ appearance”.<sup>33</sup>

Not only is he suggesting the existence of this phenomena prior to 9/11 but he is also adding to the understanding as to why the terms terrorism and Islam have grown in association to one another.

Allen explains what he means by ‘contemporary Islamophobia’ which is “an ideological phenomenon - that emerged in the latter decades of the twentieth century”.<sup>34</sup> Husain believes that the history of anti-Muslim bigotry includes the slave trade in the 16th century, the post-civil war era in the late 1800s, the post-World War II era and Civil Rights Movement, leading up to immigration reforms in the end of the twentieth century. He notes the end of the Cold War as the shift to what is known as ‘contemporary Islamophobia’ in that “the conclusion of the Cold War and the defeat of communism ultimately shifted the attention of American foreign policy interests and, by the 1980s, it was clear that Islam and Muslims were increasingly portrayed as threats”.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Husain, Altaf. "Islamophobia." *Encyclopedia of Social Work*. February 02, 2015. Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://oxfordre.com/socialwork/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.001.0001/acrefore-9780199975839-e-964>, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Allen, Chris. "Contemporary Islamophobia Before 9/11: A Brief History." *Arches Quarterly: Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hatred: Causes and Remedies* 4, no. 7 (Winter 2010): 15.

<sup>35</sup> Hussain, "Islamophobia.", 6.



Furthering this idea, on the association between Islamophobia and 9/11, Allen writes that “Islamophobia is sometimes mistaken as consequential: consequential to events such as 9/11 and other terrorist atrocities... of course, Islamophobia existed on the 10 September 2001 as indeed it did on the 12 September 2001”.<sup>36</sup> In addition, that “much of what occurred post-September 11 drew heavily upon pre-existent manifestations of widespread Islamophobic and xenophobic attitudes”. As it went on, 9/11 merely “gave a pre-existent prejudice a much greater credibility and validity”.<sup>37</sup> In relation to Islamophobia as well as the hate crimes that were committed due to such beliefs, Allen suggests that 9/11 acted as a catalyst for people to act on already existent ideas. He notes the claim “that 9/11 strengthened Islamophobia can surely be without question...but it is necessary to remember that these realities - informed by an ideological Islamophobia - did not magically appear as a result of the events alone”.<sup>38</sup> While Islamophobia did in fact exist prior to 2001, 9/11 did however cause the largest increase in hate crimes overall, especially towards Muslims and those of Middle Eastern descent, and a rise in hate crimes that would never return to pre-9/11 numbers, as seen through the FBI UCR data provided earlier.

Hate crimes spiked dramatically in response to the September 11th attacks, especially in the first year that followed. While no other terrorist attack to its date had been of its scale, there were certainly ones that took place that could have evoked some level of fear among American society, but did not to a noticeable extent, at least statistically. However, that fear did not translate to the commitment of hate crimes in the 90s, as it did after 2001. It's not that this happened, and just not to the degree that it did after 9/11, but it did not even happen in any noticeable degree. The question presented then is why did 9/11 cause the rise in hate crimes that

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<sup>36</sup> Allen, "Contemporary Islamophobia Before 9/11: A Brief History.", 14.

<sup>37</sup> Allen, "Contemporary Islamophobia Before 9/11: A Brief History.", 14.

<sup>38</sup> Allen, "Contemporary Islamophobia Before 9/11: A Brief History.", 21.

it did, when four other significant terrorist attacks that took place within the previous decade did not? This paper suggests that part of the answer is that none of the attacks in the 1990s were recognized or acknowledged by the President, the government, or the media, on the scale that 9/11 was. Media is an important element of the story when it comes to connecting presidential rhetoric to hate crimes because with increased government discussion and action, comes increased media exposure, and therefore increased public exposure to an incident or issue overall. Media representation matches the level of government attention paid to an incident or issue, and so increased presidential rhetoric leads to increased media attention and as a result, the American public has an increased overall exposure in regards to different incidents and issues, including terrorist attacks. It was the mass conversation concerning the 9/11 attacks by both the government and media that helped create the significant difference in hate crimes following 9/11 in comparison to the previous four terrorist attacks.

## **Presidential Responses to Terrorist Attacks**

By looking at State of the Union Addresses and other presidential remarks given in the aftermath of the '90s attacks, and comparing them to those given in response to 9/11, a drastic difference can be seen in how the US government prioritized the threat of terrorism, and how much the American public feared it. The State of the Union addresses are used here because they are an address given by each president each year and are meant to reflect the major issues in the country that given year and to outline steps the government is going to take to address them. It highlights the priorities of the US government and if any of these issues or incidents were to be addressed, it would be in this annual address. Other statements by Presidents Clinton and Bush are utilized to show how they addressed the attacks, in addition to the State of the Union addresses, however more immediately following the incidents. It is found that as years passed and more terrorist attacks took place, the President grew to be more explicit when addressing the incidents themselves as well as what was being done by their administration to address the issue. In addition, some attention is paid to the issue of hate crimes in later years, slightly in 1997 and more explicitly in 1999, demonstrating the beginning and rise of hate crimes as a priority for the government.

Bill Clinton served as President of the United States from January 20th, 1993 to January 20th, 2001. This made him the President for the four pre-9/11 terrorist attacks being discussed, taking office just over a month before the first World Trade Center attack, and leaving office eight months before the September 11th attacks. In his State of the Union Addresses that followed each of these four incidents, it can be seen how differently he responded, or neglected

to respond, to each situation. In addition to looking at how President Clinton responded to each of these events in the State of the Union Address, they will then be compared to the State of the Union Address given by President George W. Bush in 2002. The intention of this is to show how differently the government itself acknowledged or reacted to the 9/11 attacks compared to the other four attacks. This is not done to compare the rhetoric of Clinton to Bush, rather to compare how the given President and government overall chose to respond to the different terrorism threats that faced the country at the time. It just so happens that one President was in office for the first four attacks, and that a different President was for the one that would be distinguished from the rest. No matter who was in office for these attacks, whether it were several different presidents between the five attacks or if all of them took place under the same president, it could be assumed that the responses to each of the attacks in the 90s would still have been drastically different from that of 2001.

### **1993 World Trade Center Response**

#### *1994 State of the Union Address*

The 1994 State of the Union Address was one day short of eleven months since the World Trade Center bombing. The address did not explicitly reference the incident at the World Trade Center. However, more than half way through the speech, Clinton began to address the different threats the nation was facing, stating:

“of course, there are still dangers in the world: rampant arms proliferation, bitter regional conflicts, ethnic and nationalist tensions in many new democracies, severe environmental degradation the world over, and fanatics who seek to cripple the world’s cities with terror. As the world’s greatest power, we must, therefore, maintain our defenses and our

responsibilities. This year, we secured indictments against terrorists and sanctions against those who harbor them”.<sup>39</sup>

This was not only brief, but it was the only time that Clinton addressed both the threat of terrorism, or what government was doing in order to deal with the threat. While the indictments and sanctions he was referring to may have been in reference to those who were found to be responsible for the World Trade Center bombing, in addition to others, there was still no direct mention of this. No reassurance was provided to the American people nor was direct and explicit information about what had taken place or how it was being handled. After this one sentence, Clinton goes on to address the several other international issues mentioned, and then transitions into the violence that exists within the US.<sup>40</sup> Of the four attacks considered, this may be the least acknowledged one in regards to the State of the Union Address. This is especially interesting considering this attack was the most related to the 2001 attacks, in terms of content and intention.

*1993 Immediate Response: Radio Address (2/28/1993)*

On February 28, 1993, two days after the World Trade Center bombing, President Clinton gave a radio address. In it, he addressed the “good people of New York City and to all Americans who’ve been so deeply affected by the tragedy that struck Manhattan yesterday”.<sup>41</sup> He goes on to say that “a number of innocent people lost their lives. Hundreds were injured and thousands were struck with fear in their hearts when an explosion rocked the basement of the World Trade Center”.<sup>42</sup> After discussing steps that were being taken by both New York and the FBI, he assures

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<sup>39</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 30 Issue 4 (Monday, January 31, 1994). Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/WCPD-1994-01-31/html/WCPD-1994-01-31-Pg148.htm>.

<sup>40</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 30 Issue 4 (Monday, January 31, 1994).

<sup>41</sup> "World Trade Center Bombing Radio Address." C. Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?38375-1/world-trade-center-bombing-radio-address>.

<sup>42</sup> "World Trade Center Bombing Radio Address."

Americans that by “working together, we’ll find out who was involved and why this happened. Americans should know we’ll do everything in our power to keep them safe in their streets, their offices, and their homes. Feeling safe is an essential part of being secure. And that’s important to all of us”.<sup>43</sup> These remarks combined consumed less than one minute of the twenty-four minute radio address. It is important that he utilized the address as a way to address the incident, and did so before speaking on any other issues. However, there is no other notable mention of the World Trade Center bombing in its aftermath, and when the State of the Union address takes place nearly eleven months later, there is no direct mention of the incident and the issue itself is only briefly covered. This shows that the 1993 World Trade Center bombing was not greatly discussed in any sense by the Clinton administration.

### **1995 Oklahoma City Response**

#### *1996 State of the Union Address*

In the 1996 State of the Union Address, which was nine months after the Oklahoma City bombing, this incident was much more highly represented in the address than the World Trade Center had been in its respective year. The two attacks were drastically different in context, which would explain this to a certain extent. For example, the World Trade Center bombing killed six people while the Oklahoma City bombing killed 168 people. Concern of the Oklahoma City bombing was also higher given the fact that the World Trade Center bombing had taken place two years previous. The two attacks were similar in type in that both were done by a truck bomb, however the form of terrorism is really what set the two attacks apart. The World Trade

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<sup>43</sup> "World Trade Center Bombing Radio Address."

Center was attacked by radical Islamist fundamentalists while the Murrah Federal Building was attacked by a right-wing terrorist with anti-government ideologies.

The first time that Clinton mentions terrorism in the State of the Union address is again in a list of threats that Americans face internationally. He states that the

“the threats we face today as Americans respect no nation's borders. Think of them: terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, drug trafficking, ethnic and religious hatred, aggression by rogue states, environmental degradation. If we fail to address these threats today, we will suffer the consequences in all our tomorrows”.<sup>44</sup>

This time, terrorism is first on the list of concerns rather than last, and the term itself is explicitly mentioned, unlike in 1994. Shortly after, Clinton mentions Oklahoma City directly, however he speaks of it primarily as a means of persuading Congress to pass an antiterrorism legislation. For instance, he states:

“we can intensify the fight against terrorists and organized criminals at home and abroad if Congress passes the antiterrorism legislation I proposed after the Oklahoma City bombing, now. We can help more people move from hatred to hope all across the world in our own interest if Congress gives us the means to remain the world’s leader for peace.”<sup>45</sup>

While President Clinton referenced the Oklahoma City bombing three separate times in his address, not all were done in reference to the threat of domestic terrorism.

Clinton mentioned a theme of ‘American community’ early on in the address, which is the theme that he will utilize the next two times that he mentions Oklahoma City. The first is a story that is used to both honor federal workers, and is used in a way to attempt to prevent government shutdowns. Clinton begins by saying that he wants “to say a special word now to those who work for our Federal Government”. He says that the number of Federal employees is

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<sup>44</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 32 Issue 4 (Monday, January 29, 1996). Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/WCPD-1996-01-29/html/WCPD-1996-01-29-Pg90.htm>.

<sup>45</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 32 Issue 4 (Monday, January 29, 1996).

continuing to decrease, being both lower than it was when he first became president, and the smallest it has been in 30 years. However, he mentions that this is probably a problem that fellow Americans are unaware of and the reason being that those employees that are remaining are extremely hard-working and currently working harder than they ever have due to these circumstances. He uses the example of Richard Dean, who is a 49 year old veteran of Vietnam who had worked for the Social Security Administration for 22 years at that point. Dean was working in the Murrah Federal Building when the bomb went off and “brought the rubble down around him”. That day, he reentered the building four times and saved the lives of three women. Clinton recognized and applauded “both his public service and his extraordinary personal heroism”. In addition to that day, Dean was removed from his office again during the government shut down. When the government shut down for the second time, Dean continued to help Social Security recipients and did so without pay. Clinton used this story of Richard Dean to address Congress saying “let’s never, ever shut the Federal Government down again”.<sup>46</sup>

Returning to the theme of an American Community again near the end of the address, Clinton says that “we can’t go back to the era of fending for yourself. We have to go forward to the era of working together as a community, as a team, as one America...we have got to work together if we want America to work”.<sup>47</sup> Following this, he acknowledges two people who he believes do exactly that. One of which is Sergeant Jennifer Rodgers, who is a police officer in Oklahoma City, and like Richard Dean, “helped to pull her fellow citizens out of the rubble and deal with that awful tragedy. She reminds us that in their response to that atrocity the people of Oklahoma City lifted all of us with their basic sense of decency and community”.<sup>48</sup> While

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<sup>46</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 32 Issue 4 (Monday, January 29, 1996).

<sup>47</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 32 Issue 4 (Monday, January 29, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 32 Issue 4 (Monday, January 29, 1996).



Clinton certainly acknowledges the incident in Oklahoma City, far more explicitly than he did the World Trade Center, he does not mention it in reference to the issue of terrorism as much as he does as something that showed the power of Americans working together, in true American spirit. By the time that this address was given, the trials against McVeigh were well underway for several months. It was well-known that the Oklahoma City bombing was a case of domestic terrorism and there was extensive media coverage of the trials. Unlike what may have been the case for other presidential remarks concerning different attacks, at this point there were not many unanswered questions about what had taken place. Therefore, Clinton did not have to speak about the Oklahoma City bombing in terms of terrorism, as this could have increased fear among society, but did so rather as a source of American strength and unity.

*1995 Immediate Response: Time for Healing Ceremony (4/23/1995)*

An address was given on April 23, 1995, four days after the Oklahoma City bombing, which was dedicated entirely to the incident itself. Clinton gave this speech at the Time of Healing Ceremony, which was a prayer service held in Oklahoma as a response to the terrorist attack and was intended to be an outlet where people could express their grief. Much like the theme utilized in the State of the Union address, Clinton wanted to help the grieving process by showing that Americans can come together in this moment of tragedy. He stated “let us let our own children know that we will stand against the forces of fear. When there is talk of hatred, let us stand up and talk against it. When there is talk of violence, let us stand up and talk against it. In the face of death, let us honor life...let us not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with

good”.<sup>49</sup> Gatherings and responses like this one that took place in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing help to show how much greater this incident was spoken of in comparison to the World Trade Center bombing. While this is due to the drastic difference in the number of American lives lost and affected, as well as it now being the second bombing in a little over two years, Lewis reminds us that even this attack did not result in increased American fear, despite what seemed to be massive media and political attention.

### **1996 Olympic Park Response**

#### *1997 State of the Union Address*

The bombing at Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta during the 1996 Olympics was another case of domestic terrorism, a little over a year after the Oklahoma City bombing. In the 1997 State of the Union Address, Clinton makes no direct mention of the bombing in Atlanta. He does however speak to new and developing issues concerning terrorism and if possible, places an even greater emphasis on America’s sense of community than he did in the previous address. Concerning terrorism, he says that “we are working with other nations with renewed intensity to...stop terrorists before they act and hold them fully accountable if they do”.<sup>50</sup> He goes on to say that “we must rise to a new test of leadership, ratifying the Chemical Weapons Convention. Make no mistake about it, it will make our troops safer from chemical attack; it will help us to fight terrorism. We have no more important obligations”.<sup>51</sup> Both of these statements were in

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<sup>49</sup> "April 23, 1995: Time for Healing Ceremony." Miller Center. May 04, 2017. Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/april-23-1995-time-healing-ceremony>.

<sup>50</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 33 Issue 6 (Monday, February 10, 1997). Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/WCPD-1997-02-10/html/WCPD-1997-02-10-Pg136.htm>.

<sup>51</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 33 Issue 6 (Monday, February 10, 1997).

reference to terrorism mainly as an international threat, even though there had been two major cases of domestic terrorism over the last two years.

In the remainder of the address, Clinton builds on the theme that he had focused his previous address on, which was American community, stating that “our world leadership grows out of the power of our example here at home, out of our ability to remain strong as one America”.<sup>52</sup> He focuses on America's diversity as its greatest strength, stating that “all over the world, people are being torn asunder by racial, ethnic, and religious conflicts that fuel fanaticism and terror. We are the world’s most diverse democracy, and the world looks to us to show that it is possible to live and advance together across those kinds of differences”.<sup>53</sup> He goes on to say that “we must never, ever believe that our diversity is a weakness. It is our greatest strength. Americans speak every language, know every country”.<sup>54</sup> Not only does Clinton emphasize the ability of Americans to come together based on this strength, but that America should be the world's prime example of this. Alluding to the connection that this theme had in relation to the issue of domestic terrorism, Clinton acknowledges that “we’re not there yet. We still see evidence of abiding bigotry and intolerance in ugly words and awful violence, in burned churches and bombed buildings. We must fight against this, in our country and in our hearts”.<sup>55</sup> This statement hints at the idea of addressing the issue of hate crimes, but is far too vague to be taken this way. As will be pointed out later, the issue of hate crimes is not explicitly stated in an address until it is mentioned in regards to the 1998 embassy bombings. This slight reference here

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<sup>52</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 33 Issue 6 (Monday, February 10, 1997).

<sup>53</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 33 Issue 6 (Monday, February 10, 1997).

<sup>54</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 33 Issue 6 (Monday, February 10, 1997).

<sup>55</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 33 Issue 6 (Monday, February 10, 1997).

however helps to show a gradual rise in government attention paid to the issues of both terrorism and hate crimes, and where they lie in priority for the government.

*1996 Immediate Response: Radio Address (7/27/1996)*

Clinton gave a radio address on the same day of the Atlanta Olympic bombing. When asked about his own personal reaction to the bombing and if he feels a sense of anger over what could have been done to prevent the tragedy, part of Clinton's response was the following: "I don't think anyone believes that we live in a risk-free world. And I think it's important not to jump to any conclusions about who did or didn't do what here. We will look into this and we will find who is responsible. But on balance, I still would say to you I feel good about the efforts they have made there".<sup>56</sup> He makes it a point to highlight the work done by first responders and those at the scene of the attack, and how their efforts caused this incident to be a smaller tragedy than it could have been. He goes on to say that "(he wants) to make clear our common determination: we will spare no efforts to find out who was responsible for this murderous act. We will track them down, we will bring them to justice, we will see that they are punished".<sup>57</sup> We can see here that a greater attention was brought to the Atlanta Olympic bombing in Clinton's radio address than it was in the address following the World Trade Center bombing. He spent much more time discussing the incident and placed a greater attention on it, reflecting the importance on it that the government held. As the addresses that followed the US embassy bombings will continue to show, responses to and the explicit mentioning of these incidents by government will increase as the years go on and as more incidents take place.

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<sup>56</sup> "Atlanta Olympic Bombing." C. Accessed April 03, 2020.  
<https://www.c-span.org/video/?73924-1/atlanta-olympic-bombing>.

<sup>57</sup> "Atlanta Olympic Bombing."

## 1998 Embassy Response

### *1999 State of the Union Address*

The 1999 State of the Union Address was given five months after the simultaneous bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. While this address did not speak on the embassy bombings extensively, it did mention them briefly and directly. It emphasized terrorism more greatly than the other State of the Unions did and also was the first to have any mention of hate crimes. Over the course of these four attacks and each of these addresses, the attacks are increasingly spoken about as the years go on. The increase of discussion and the direct mention of the events and the government's responses simultaneously began to build up both the awareness of and the fear within the American public. Upon the first mention of terrorism in this address, Clinton also mentions the embassies directly. He states that,

“as we work for peace, we must also meet threats to our Nation’s security, including increased dangers from outlaw nations and terrorism. We will defend our security wherever we are threatened, as we did this summer when we struck at Usama bin Laden's network of terror. The bombing of our Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania reminds us again of the risks faced every day by those who represent America to the world. So let’s give them the support they need, the safest possible workplaces, and the resources they must have so America can continue to lead”.<sup>58</sup>

Here, Clinton also mentions, unlike in the response to any of the other attacks, those held responsible for the attack and direct action taken by the US as a response. This was not done in the two cases of domestic terrorism, nor was it done for the much smaller scale attack on Americas homeland. This further supports the notion that the incidents and their responses were increasingly mentioned in these addresses and in a more explicit and direct way, as time and more incidents passed. In an attempt to emphasize terrorism as a higher priority than it had been

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<sup>58</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 35 Issue 3 (Monday, January 25, 1999). Accessed April 03, 2020. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/WCPD-1999-01-25/html/WCPD-1999-01-25-Pg78-2.htm>.

in the past, Clinton states that “if we do these things- if we pursue peace, fight terrorism, increase our strength, renew our alliances- we will begin to meet our generations historic responsibility to build a stronger 21st century America in a freer, more peaceful world”.<sup>59</sup> Here, Clinton is recognizing and acknowledging the increase in priority of the issue of terrorism as a problem within America and for the US government. In comparison of the level of mass destruction, devastation, and meticulous planning, this attack was the most similar to 9/11, and so, as was the level of priority given to the issue of terrorism by the government.

Unlike the other State of the Union addresses which followed the year after a significant terrorist attack, this one directly addresses, although slightly, the hate crime issue. Clinton says that “discrimination or violence because of race or religion, ancestry or gender, disability or sexual orientation, is wrong, and it ought to be illegal. Therefore, I ask Congress to make the ‘Employment Non-Discrimination Act’ and the ‘Hate Crimes Prevention Act’ the law of the land”.<sup>60</sup> While this can not point to the fact that hate crimes are being recognized as a reaction to terrorist attacks, it at the very least shows that the President intends to place an emphasis on Hate Crime prevention, which is an action that had not taken place in years past. Part of what the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which was introduced in 1997 but would go through several amendments through 2009, did was set penalties for those who “willfully cause bodily injury to any person or, through the use of fire, firearm, or explosive device, attempt to cause such injury, because of the actual or perceived: (1) race, color, religion, or national origin of any person; and (2) religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability of any person”.<sup>61</sup> The introduction of this act and

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<sup>59</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 35 Issue 3 (Monday, January 25, 1999).

<sup>60</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents Volume 35 Issue 3 (Monday, January 25, 1999).

<sup>61</sup> Schumer, Charles E. "H.R.3081 - 105th Congress (1997-1998): Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1997." Congress.gov. July 22, 1998. Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/105th-congress/house-bill/3081>.

Clinton's mention of it shows prioritization of the issues of both hate crimes in general and their increase, and that change in priority is being clearly shown from the government to the public. This response can be distinguished from that of previous attacks because of how it prioritizes the issues of terrorism and hate crimes in a greater way than had been done at any other previous point in the decade.

*1998 Immediate Response: Radio Address (8/8/1998)*

The day after the embassy bombings, President Clinton gave a radio address to the nation. Much like the responses to previous terrorist attacks, and the way in which the government would respond to 9/11, Clinton uses the tragedy of the incident to create a stronger sense of unity among Americans. He says that "Americans are targets of terrorism in part because we have unique leadership responsibilities in the world, because we act to advance peace and democracy, and because we stand united against terrorism".<sup>62</sup> He goes on to say that "the bombs that kill innocent Americans are aimed not only at them, but at the very spirit of our country and the spirit of freedom. For terrorists are the enemies of everything we believe in and fight for -- peace and democracy, tolerance, and security".<sup>63</sup> Perhaps Clinton was able to respond to the embassy attacks in a stronger way and more directly than previous terrorist attacks because it was an attack on America that was not on US soil. Therefore, it was a clearer case of international terrorism, and one that made it easier and less of a risk to develop the idea of the evil being foreign and outside of America. Again, it was also the largest attack in terms of size and number of lives lost in regard to the previous terrorist attacks that the nation had witnessed that decade.

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<sup>62</sup> U.S. Department of State. Accessed April 03, 2020.  
[https://1997-2001.state.gov/www/regions/africa/bombing\\_clinton\\_980808.html](https://1997-2001.state.gov/www/regions/africa/bombing_clinton_980808.html).

<sup>63</sup> U.S. Department of State.

## **2001 September 11th Response**

### *2002 State of the Union Address*

The State of the Union Address given by President George W. Bush on January 29th, 2002 was strikingly different from the previous four addresses mentioned above, as well as from the average format of any address of its kind. Others would begin by addressing topics such as the economy, employment, medical care, and education, before addressing the threats facing the country, including domestic crime violence and international threats including terrorism. The 2002 address that came four months after the September 11th attacks had an entirely different format. It started with and spent the better half speaking on the day itself, and what actions had been taken in the months that had passed towards those responsible. In order to illustrate how heavily this address focused on September 11th and its aftermath, note that it mentions the words ‘terror/ists/ism’ 36 times, ‘war’ 12 times, and specifically the ‘war on/against terror/ism’, as well as ‘enemy/ies’, and ‘evil’ each five times, and ‘dangerous’ eight times.<sup>64</sup>

Much like the address that followed the Oklahoma City bombing, as well as the Atlanta bombing, Bush’s address also emphasized the overarching sense of unity that Americans had in the aftermath of the attacks. He uses three heart-felt stories of Americans to highlight the importance and justification of the priorities he will outline. Stories of a retired firefighter who returns to Ground Zero everyday to feel closer to his two sons that died there, of a little boy who left a football at a memorial for his Dad, saying that he didn’t want to play until he could play with him again, and of a woman speaking at her husband's grave, were used in a way to remind Americans of all those who were affected by the attacks, whose lives changed forever that day,

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<sup>64</sup> National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed April 03, 2020.  
<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>.



and why the following had to be done in honor of them and the loved ones they had lost. Bush states that

“our nation will continue to be steadfast and patient and persistent in the pursuit of two great objectives. First, we will shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice. And, second, we must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world”.<sup>65</sup>

Here, Bush is emphasizing the issue of terrorism as a global one. In previous addresses, terrorism is mentioned much more heavily in regards to an American threat and less as a global one.

Elevating the issue to a world issue is an important change to make because it portrays the problem as something larger than just the US. While emphasizing the issue of terrorism in such a way helps to present the severity of the issue to the American people, this is also what could have aided in the noticeable backlash of hate crimes following 9/11, which was not seen in the aftermath of other terrorist attacks which were not recognized on a global-scale nor discussed globally.

It was only after fully addressing the impact of and the response to the attacks that Bush moved onto the other issues within the country such as the economy, employment, medical care, and education. Still, he related most of these issues back to the priorities that were highlighted and related to the war on terror, as a response to September 11th. When introducing the budget, he says that “our first priority must always be the security of our nation, and that will be reflected in the budget I send to Congress. My budget supports three great goals of America: We will win the war; we’ll protect our homeland; and we will revive our economy”.<sup>66</sup> He also includes that

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<sup>65</sup> National Archives and Records Administration.  
<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>.

<sup>66</sup> National Archives and Records Administration.  
<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>.

“whatever it costs to defend our country, we will pay”.<sup>67</sup> This showed a complete switch in government priorities between then and previous years. No other terrorist attack in the previous decade had caused the government to shift their priorities so drastically, and emphasize that shift so transparently to the American public. Nor did others cause such a shift to be discussed in a global context, where the US and countries across the world were reaching out to each other for help and support on tackling the issue of terrorism.

*2001 Immediate Responses: (9/11/01), (9/16/01), and (9/20/01)*

This notion will be evident in the multitude of presidential remarks that were given in the aftermath of September 11th. Three speeches specifically, those being the Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation (09/11/01), Remarks by the President Upon Arrival (09/16/01), and the Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People (09/20/01), emphasize the global effect of September 11th, as well as other major themes that help to highlight the change in US response between this terrorist attack, and those prior. Throughout these three speeches, all of which took place within nine days of the attacks, Bush is sure to include many of the same ideas. He acknowledges the day itself in regards to the suffering of the American people, while also shedding a positive light on the unity and kindness towards each other that resulted from it. He will also speak directly regarding those responsible for the attacks as well as what his administration has done and what they will do in response and in doing this, reminds Americans about the global aspect of the attacks.

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<sup>67</sup> National Archives and Records Administration.  
<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>.

In the address given the same days of the attack, Bush states that “thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror. The pictures of airplanes flying into buildings, fires burning, huge - huge structures collapsing have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and a quiet, unyielding anger. These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat. But they have failed. Our country is strong”.<sup>68</sup> Through addressing the acts of terror that occurred that morning, he also attempts to provide reassurance of the strength and unity of America. He does this further by stating later that “today, our nation saw evil -- the very worst of human nature - and we responded with the best of America. With the daring of our rescue workers, with the caring for strangers and neighbors who came to give blood and help in any way they could”.<sup>69</sup> Here, Bush shines a positive light on an issue that is hard to find positivity in.

Remarks given on September 16th were similar to those following the Oklahoma City bombing, in that Bush intended to provide a time for mourning and an outlet for grief for the American people. In the process of healing, Bush continues to emphasize a positive from the situation which is the coming-togetherness of the American people. He states “I’ve got great faith in the American people. If the American people had seen what I had seen in New York City, you’d have great faith too. You’d have faith in the hard work of the rescuers; you’d have great faith because people do what’s right for America; you’d have great faith because of the compassion and love that our fellow Americans are showing each other in times of need”<sup>70</sup>. He highlights the same moments of positivity in his September 20th address, stating that “we have

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<sup>68</sup> Eidenmuller, Michael E. George W. Bush - Address to the Nation on 9-11-01 - The Rhetoric of 9/11. Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911addresstothetation.htm>.

<sup>69</sup> Eidenmuller. George W. Bush - Address to the Nation on 9-11-01 - The Rhetoric of 9/11.

<sup>70</sup> The Avalon Project : Remarks by the President Upon Arrival The South Lawn.

seen the decency of a loving and giving people who have made the grief of strangers their own” and recalls a specific moment when “all of America was touched on the evening of the tragedy to see Republicans and Democrats joined together on the steps of the Capitol singing ‘God Bless America’”.<sup>71</sup>

While he always points out this idea of unity first in an address, he would also go on to be direct in addressing those held responsible for the attacks and what the US was doing in response to the attacks. He began with providing answers on the very day of the attack. In order to inform Americans about government action, he assured that “immediately following the first attack, (he) implemented our government’s emergency response plans” and stated that “the search is underway for those who were behind these evil acts. (He) had directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them”. This provided assurance of direct action being taken immediately by the US government and attempts to answer the questions that Americans were sure to have had.

On September 16th, while answering questions that followed his remarks, Bush would call-out the offender of the attacks directly. When asked if Bush believes Osama Bin Laden’s denial of the attack, he responded that there was “no question he is the prime suspect. No question about that”. Four days later, when presenting the idea that “Americans are asking ‘who attacked our country?’” He responds that “the evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as Al Qaeda. They are some of the

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<sup>71</sup> Eidenmuller. *The Rhetoric of 9/11: President George W. Bush -- Address to Joint Session of Congress and the American People (9-20-01)*.

murderers indicated for bombing American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya and responsible for bombing USS Cole".<sup>72</sup>

Throughout these addresses, Bush continues to emphasize the global reach that 9/11 has had in an attempt to highlight its level of priority. On the day of the attacks, Bush says "on behalf of the American people, I thank the many world leaders who have called to offer condolence and assistance. America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the war against terrorism". Bush concludes the address stating that "none of us will ever forget this day, yet we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world". He highlights the importance that this day will have in history, something that is able to be said on the very day, and in doing so emphasizes the lasting effect it will have.<sup>73</sup> There are other moments too, where he acknowledges countries around the world that have united with America over this attack. Speaking on the leaders of countries who have shown full American support in the effort to fight terrorism, Bush states that "this administration, along with those friends of ours who are willing to stand with us all the way through will do what it takes to rout terrorism out of the world".<sup>74</sup> Here, Bush is demonstrating the level of priority that the issue of terrorism now has not only in the US, but across the world.

He emphasizes the global unity and priority that has resulted from 9/11 most evidently in his address on September 20th. He states: "my fellow citizens, for the last nine days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of union, and it is strong". He adds, "on behalf of the American people, I thank the world for its outpouring support. America will never forget the sounds of the

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<sup>72</sup> Eidenmuller. The Rhetoric of 9/11: President George W. Bush -- Address to Joint Session of Congress and the American People (9-20-01).

<sup>73</sup> Eidenmuller. George W. Bush - Address to the Nation on 9-11-01 - The Rhetoric of 9/11.

<sup>74</sup> The Avalon Project : Remarks by the President Upon Arrival The South Lawn.

national anthem playing at Buckingham Palace, on the street of Paris and at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate. We will not forget South Korean children gathering to pray outside our embassy in Seoul, or the prayers of sympathy offered at a mosque in Cairo. We will not forget moments of silence and days of mourning in Australia and Africa and Latin America.”

These are just three examples of speeches given to the American people, all within nine days of the attack, and all portraying very similar ideas. These messages and themes were constantly being spoken to the American people, which continued to emphasize the severity of the issue, the importance that the day and the attacks would hold, and how it was in fact changing America forever. Not only in terms of policy, but as far as sense of risk and fear, the US government and American society would never be the same, and they were aware of this immediately. Specific changes in policy such as the creation of the Office of Homeland Security, which was also announced in the September 20th speech, helped show to Americans that their government was changing drastically in direct response to the September 11th attacks. However, despite the massive attention and discussion in regard to the attacks, nowhere in these speeches does Bush mention the issue of the rise of hate crimes as a result of the attacks. Yes, it had only been nine days but already there were several incidents that had taken place, many of which directly indicated being done as a result of 9/11.

While hate crimes like those committed against Sodhi, Hasan, and Patel, as well as others like them that were taking place throughout the country, the only time within these addresses that Bush may have been hinting at this issue, was at the end of the address given on September 20th. In presenting the question that many Americans had, ‘what is expected of us?’, Bush's response was “to uphold the values of America and remember why so many have come here. We're in a

fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them, no one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith”.<sup>75</sup> At the same time that he points directly towards the problem, he also does not mention or explain it directly.

When looking at the many examples of presidential rhetoric used to compare responses to the terrorist attacks on September 11th and prior, major takeaways are that 9/11 resulted in a much more massive response, including simply the volume of responses as well as the global reach that it employed. Noticing the different response that was taking place, which included policy changes that were not done in previous attacks, fear among Americans grew in levels that were not induced by previous terrorist attacks. The US government was making changes to things they had done the same for so long, as a result of this major incident and in order to prevent another of its kind from taking place. Bush was also giving several addresses in regards to the attacks, when other attacks had caused only one, if that. With these drastic differences in response to the attacks, also came increased fear among Americans, and what followed was the increase of hate crimes, specifically towards those who were perceived to be Muslim or of Middle Eastern decent.

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<sup>75</sup> Eidenmuller. The Rhetoric of 9/11: President George W. Bush -- Address to Joint Session of Congress and the American People (9-20-01).

## Stochastic Violence

### What is Stochastic Violence?

The term 'stochastic violence' derives from the idea of stochastic terrorism. 'Stochastic' itself, which is most commonly used in math and probability theory, "refers to a problem involving a random variable that can only be predicted at levels of probability, not with certainty".<sup>76</sup> The idea is based on probability, in that the reaction can not be predicted, it can just be assumed that there will be one. The way this translates to terrorism is through the idea that "terrorists (are) using digital communication to incite violence in service of their aims". Specifically, stochastic terrorism is "the use of mass communications to stir up random lone wolves to carry out violent or terrorist acts that are statistically predictable but individually unpredictable". For example, when ISIS "releases videos or online messages urging people to commit terrorist acts, they cannot know who will find their message inspiring and decide to take action. But they do know that it is likely someone will." In other words, terrorists can influence others by instigating the act, without doing the physical act themselves. By spreading their message, they rely on the idea that "eventually someone random will act on their suggestions, and they can take the credit." This is how ISIS can cause terrorist attacks to occur, and take the credit for them, without having to physically orchestrate or perform the act themselves.<sup>77</sup>

Similar to how this idea is utilized for terrorism, it can be used in other forms of violence as well. This paper argues presidential rhetoric can be used as a form of stochastic violence and

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<sup>76</sup> McGee, Jennifer. "Sad!: Donald Trump and the Political Uses of Twitter." *Aichi Shukutoku University review. Faculty of Global Communication*, no. 1 (March 27, 2017): 13-24.

<sup>77</sup> McGee, "Sad!: Donald Trump and the Political Uses of Twitter.",



acts as a factor that leads to the commitment of hate crimes. Joanne Zuhl helps to relate the idea of stochastic violence to presidential rhetoric by explaining “the idea is that someone who is a leader or has a voice in the media puts out messages that there's a reasonable certainty someone will act on. You have no idea who that person is, but someone, somewhere will act on those ideas”.<sup>78</sup> If rhetoric can in any way be taken as hateful, then according to stochastic violence, it is likely to lead to the commitment of hate crimes. Zuhl adds: “when you're feeding people who agree with you this rhetoric, it's just a logical next step that they're going to do something”.<sup>79</sup> Stochastic violence, while random and uncertain to what extent, assumes that someone, somewhere will react to messages that are being sent to mass amounts of people.

### **How Hate Speech Leads to Hate Crimes**

There is an important distinction to be made about what is meant by a hate crime and hate speech. A hate crime is motivated by a bias that the perpetrator holds. This means that the crime was committed ‘because of’ a specific group that the victim may be a member of. Whether that be their race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. A hate crime is an act of violence committed, while hate speech are hateful thoughts or ideas that may have been said, but are protected by the first amendment. While hate speech is often the leading evidence in the prosecution of a hate crime, it is not a crime in and of itself. In fact, defendants have challenged hate crime legislation for violating their constitutional right to free

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<sup>78</sup> Zuhl, Joanne. "How Trump Incites Violence with Stochastic Terrorism." October 23 - 29, 2019 | Real Change. October 23, 2019. Accessed April 10, 2020.

<https://www.realchangenews.org/2019/10/23/how-trump-incites-violence-stochastic-terrorism>

<sup>79</sup> Zuhl, Joanne. "How Trump Incites Violence with Stochastic Terrorism."

speech. However, hate crime laws are drafted carefully for the specific purpose of not criminalizing hateful or offensive speech.<sup>80</sup>

A paper written in 2001 by Dhammika Dharmapala titled, *Words that Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes*, uses a stochastic theory of economic analysis to help explain what factors may contribute to bias-motivated crimes being committed, and in doing so, helps to draw the link between hate speech and hate crimes. The specific crimes that inspired this research were a series of mass shooting incidents that were perpetrated by offenders motivated by racist ideology in 1999 and 2000. In the Summer of 1999, Benjamin Nathaniel Smith committed multiple drive-by shootings that targeted minorities in both Illinois and Indiana. He injured several individuals when he fired on a group of Orthodox Jews in Chicago. He then shot and killed an African-American man in Evanston, Illinois who was a coach at Northwestern University. In Bloomington, Indiana, he then shot and killed Won-Joon Yoon, a Korean student at Indiana University, as he was about to enter church for morning services. Smith then committed suicide following a police chase. The same Summer, Buford O'Neal Furrow Jr. opened fire on a Jewish community center, injuring several children. He described this act as a "wake-up call for Americans to kill Jews".<sup>81</sup> Later, Furrow shot and killed a Pilipino-American mailman, and then gave himself up to the police. In Spring 2000, Richard

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<sup>80</sup> Mince-Didier, Ave. "Hate Crimes: Laws and Penalties." *www.criminaldefenselawyer.com*. Nolo, March 22, 2017. <https://www.criminaldefenselawyer.com/resources/hate-crimes-laws-and-penalties.htm>

<sup>81</sup> Dharmapala, Dhammika, McAdams, and Richard H. "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes." SSRN. February 14, 2002. Accessed April 10, 2020. <https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=526026122121115004072073016067005004053019084010061003029099011104086123034031003003121009052087087111110010092044027094077038006031110114006100017106006079081001067088107071102084087091031095115123099015112023068093094097100115106124092022025>.

Scott Baumhammers targeted minorities in the Pittsburgh area. The five victims that were killed by the shootings were of African-American, Jewish, Chinese, Indian, and Vietnamese origin.<sup>82</sup>

While Dharmapala does not utilize the term stochastic violence, a term not coined until 2011, the way in which their research builds on the economic analysis model and applies it in order to show factors that influence bias-motivated crimes, is precisely the same idea as. The paper suggests how several variables such as utility, disutility, esteem, and disteem of the potential offender can affect that individual's desire to commit an act. Inspired by the above-mentioned incidents, and providing them as examples of other bias-motivated crimes, the research builds on the economic analysis model, in which potential offenders of crime care “about the intrinsic benefits from the crime and the expected costs of punishment”, and adds that the potential offender cares “also about the esteem conferred by those who share the potential offender’s ideology”.<sup>83</sup> The potential offender relies on the fact that others share the same ideology as they do, and therefore by committing an act that they believe others also want committed, then they believe that others will think well of them. The probability that the potential offender will commit an act is therefore propagated on how certain or uncertain they are that enough people will think well of them by doing so.

Where Dharmapala’s research adds to the theory is that “in addition to conventional consumption goods that are assumed to enter into individuals utility functions in standard economic theory, people also care about the esteem that others confer on them”.<sup>84</sup> Esteem works as a motivation, where individuals gain utility directly from having others think well of them. The potential offender intends to gain something from their action. In economic analysis, that

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<sup>82</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 2.

<sup>83</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 1.

<sup>84</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 3.

something that they desire is some good, but in the theory of stochastic violence, the gain is that others will think well of them for committing the act. An essential component of this theory is the amount of certainty or uncertainty that exists among the potential offender that there are others that will either think well or unwell of them for committing the crime. The model is stochastic, or random, in that “the number of such individuals is not known to the potential offender with certainty; it is a random variable, the distribution of which enters into the potential offender’s expected utility from committing the crime”.<sup>85</sup> How certain or uncertain they are that others will think well of them, affects the utility or disutility of committing the crime, and the esteem or disteem they will receive from doing so. The potential offender gains utility, or benefits from committing the act, “not only from satisfying (their) taste for committing the crime (net of the expected disutility of punishment) but also from the esteem that is conferred on (them) by like-minded individuals”.<sup>86</sup> The factors that affect whether or not an individual will commit a crime, include their sheer desire to do so, combined with the punishment they will receive from doing so. The utility factor relies on the notion that people care about what others think of them. They note that “for perpetrators of high-profile hate crimes, one of the expected rewards of their actions is the esteem conferred on them by like-minded people”.<sup>87</sup> This relates to the sharp increase of hate crimes immediately following 9/11, as there was now an increased belief in offenders that others were ‘like-minded’.

Dharmapala’s study comes to the conclusion that, when there is increased uncertainty, the potential offenders estimated utility of the crime is decreased, and therefore so are the chances that they will commit that crime. Inversely, when certainty is increased, so is the estimated utility

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<sup>85</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 1.

<sup>86</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 4.

<sup>87</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 11.

of the crime and the chances that the potential offender will commit that crime. The way in which this theory aids in the fight against hate crimes is that it argues that by “increasing the variance of the distribution of this random variable lowers the utility of the crime, and thus potentially ‘deters’ it”.<sup>88</sup> If the government can increase uncertainty, then the act of committing hate crimes may be deterred. This brings into the discussion the effect that hate speech has on hate crimes, as presidential rhetoric has an effect on the public's certainty or uncertainty of approval. If offenders believe that their actions will be well-received, and at a low individual risk to them, then they are more likely to go through with their actions. If offenders believe that they will not receive esteem from their actions, and that there is a high individual risk of committing the act, then they are less likely to commit that act. So, if the government were to act in ways that would lower the esteem of the potential offender, and/or in ways that would increase the risk or punishment of committing a hate crime, then they have a good chance of affecting hate crime trends. Positive presidential rhetoric, like speaking out against hate, would lower the esteem a potential offender would feel, while negative presidential rhetoric, like hate speech, would raise the esteem of the potential offender. In addition, increasing the threat of consequence for committing hate crimes, which raises the punishment risk to the potential offender, would lower the expected utility and esteem for committing the crime, and therefore decrease the chances that they will go through with the hate crime. This suggests that presidential rhetoric and the enforcement of hate crime law each have an affect on hate crimes that are committed, and improving both factors can thus contribute to deterring the hate crimes being committed.

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<sup>88</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 1.

Dharmapala's research suggests that the less confidence a potential offender has in the number of 'supporters' they have, who would both share their ideology and agree with them committing a hate crime, then the less likely that the individual is to commit the crime. This is important in the conversation of presidential rhetoric, especially in the current political climate of the country. Under the Trump administration, there has been a noticeable increase in both the amount of individuals that are supportive of hate speech, especially concerning Muslims and those of Middle Eastern descent, as well as the amount of hate crimes that have been committed towards these individuals. In the part of Dharmapala's model that analyzes circumstances in which hate speech regulation can affect certainty, he concludes that speaking out against hate speech would deter hate crimes because it increases the certainty of the public's feelings about it. At the same time, encouraging hate speech would decrease the uncertainty, increasing the desire to commit hate crime.

Dharmapala notes that "an individual's hate speech will plausibly decrease uncertainty over the level of esteem (they) will confer on one who commits a hate crime. Where the cost of hate speech is low, we assume that each sympathizer will select a level (amount and intensity) of hate speech that corresponds to the level of esteem she will confer on hate offenders".<sup>89</sup> Decreased or little hate speech discourages the potential offenders certainty and causes disteem. Increased or a large amount of hate speech supports the potential offenders certainty and causes esteem. Through all variables of hate speech regulation, the research concludes that "in each case, hate speech decreases the uncertainty about these matters and thereby raises the expected utility for hate offenses".<sup>90</sup> Therefore, increased hate speech decreases uncertainty and increases

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<sup>89</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 13.

<sup>90</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 13.

utility and with it, the likeliness of committing hate crimes. At the same time, decreased hate speech increases uncertainty, decreasing utility and esteem, and therefore lessening the chances that a hate crime would be committed.

Dharmapala acknowledges there is a range of possible hate speech that includes three different types. Those being:

“(1) an explicit statement that one approves of racially motivated murder, (2) an explicit statement that one despises all members of a particular racial group, whom one asserts to have strongly negative traits, and (3) a ‘coded’ message about ‘affirmative action’ or ‘inner city welfare recipients’ that may convey stereotypical beliefs about a particular racial group”.<sup>91</sup>

He goes on to note that while it may be obvious which types of statements would be more effective in conveying approval, he adds that, “we might imagine that the first class of statements causes those who hear it to believe it 95% likely that the speaker approves of such crimes, that the second class of statements causes hearers to believe it 75% likely the speaker approves, and that the third class creates only a 5% chance”.<sup>92</sup> This shows how hate speech works in the form of stochastic violence to impact the commitment of hate crimes and depending on how explicit the hate speech is, affects the amount of people that will absorb and react to the message.

Further, Dharmapala acknowledges the difference between speakers and potential offenders. There are likely many more people that will engage in hate speech than those who will engage in committing a hate crime. In terms of utility and risk, there is no individual consequence of speech, and at the same time the reward may be another individual acting on that speech to commit an act. It is not always the case that this is the intention of the speaker, nor is the intention of the speaker usually known. While attempts to regulate hate speech are aimed at

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<sup>91</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 22.

<sup>92</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 22.

preventing hate speech all together, the goal is not so much in punishing those engaging in it, as it is in preventing hate speech so that those who may find it as motivation to commit a hate crime, are deterred from doing so.

### *Link from Presidential Rhetoric to Hate Crimes*

The idea of stochastic violence utilized by Presidents is that the amount of hateful rhetoric being spoken and the size of the audience that has received it translates to the increase of hate crimes being committed. This paper acknowledges that each of the three post-9/11 administrations have seen the implications of stochastic violence on hate crimes, whether intentionally or unintentionally, while the administration prior to 9/11 experienced a lack of stochastic violence that did not result in the increase of hate crimes. The increased rhetoric of Bush concerning September 11th and the issue of terrorism, as well as the large amount of people paying attention to the issue, helped lead to the massive amount of hate crimes that were committed in the immediate aftermath of the attacks . The utilization of stochastic violence marks a distinction between pre-9/11 and post-9/11 America as it is used in relation to terrorism and hate crimes towards Muslims and individuals of Middle Eastern descent as a result. Stochastic violence is not only what connects the link from terrorist attack to presidential rhetoric to hate crimes, but it is also what explains the existence of this link in relation to September 11th, and the lack there of in relation to previous terrorist attacks on the US in the decade prior.



## **Power of Presidential Rhetoric: Responsibility and Intentionality**

The reason that presidential rhetoric is so important is because as the leader of the nation, the President's words hold great value. There is a great responsibility attached to their position because their words and actions can have a large impact on what society believes and does, such as their Islamophobic views or their commitment of hate crimes. Therefore, recognizing the power and responsibility they have is essential when choosing how to respond to certain incidents and issues, like terrorist attacks and the issue of terrorism. Further, in the event that their rhetoric begins to have an effect on hate crimes, the President has the chance to not only recognize this, but also to recognize the responsibility they have once again to speak out on this matter. Intentionality plays a role in whether or not Presidents make the choice to recognize the effect that their rhetoric may have on others, and use their voice again to speak out on it. This is where the difference lies between how President Bush and President Obama recognized the power of their rhetoric and their responsibility to speak out against hate crimes, and how President Trump failed to recognize that responsibility and do the same. By failing to speak out against hate crimes, President Trump makes it seem as though his hateful rhetoric is intentional. Inversely, by choosing to speak out against hate crimes, President Bush and President Obama proved that this was not at all their intention. In the case of President Clinton, he did not recognize terrorist attacks or terrorism to the extent that the following three administrations did. Since this was not done, and therefore a recognizable link to hate crimes did not take place, then he did not hold the same responsibility to speak out against hate crimes as the following three presidents did.

### *The Trump Presidency*

The idea of stochastic violence has gained popularity as a result of Trump's entrance into the political arena, as it is believed his rhetoric is a cause for the spike in hate crimes in the years of his campaign run and time in office. This idea has gained popularity because it is believed that Trump is using his rhetoric intentionally to have this effect. Some study's have attempted to show that Trump's rhetoric has helped to validate Islamophobic mentalities and contribute to the recent rise in hate crimes by drawing links between specific rhetoric and hate crimes that prove to be motivated by and showing support of Trump rhetoric. The Anti-Defamation League and the Washington Post found that counties that hosted campaign rallies for Trump in 2016 saw a striking increase in reported hate crimes compared to counties that did not host such a rally. Using ADL's HEAT map data (standing for Hate, Extremism, Anti-Semitism, Terrorism, is a map detailing extremist incidents across the nation provided by data from news and media reports, government documents, police reports, victim reports, extremist-related sources, and other investigations)<sup>93</sup>, Washington Post "examined whether there was a correlation between the counties that hosted one of Trump's 275 presidential campaign rallies in 2016 and increased incidents of hate crimes in subsequent months".<sup>94</sup> By analyzing hate-crime incident data and Trump rally data of different counties in regard to different county factors, the research concluded that "counties that had hosted a 2016 Trump campaign rally saw a 226 percent increase in reported hate crimes over comparable counties that did not host such a rally".<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> "ADL H.E.A.T. Map." Anti-Defamation League. Accessed April 21, 2020.

<https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resource-knowledge-base/adl-heat-map>.

<sup>94</sup> Feinberg, Ayal and Regina Branton. "Analysis | Counties That Hosted a 2016 Trump Rally Saw a 226 Percent Increase in Hate Crimes." The Washington Post. March 22, 2019. Accessed April 21, 2020.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/03/22/trumps-rhetoric-does-inspire-more-hate-crimes/>.

<sup>95</sup> Feinberg, Ayal and Regina Branton. "Analysis | Counties That Hosted a 2016 Trump Rally Saw a 226 Percent Increase in Hate Crimes."

California State University's San Bernardino's Center for Hate and Extremism conducted a study on how political rhetoric inspires Islamophobic hate crimes and found a correlation between politicians reactions to attacks perpetrated by Muslims and the increase in number of hate crimes towards Muslims that followed. A key finding is that in 2015, hate crimes overall increased by 5% while hate crimes against Muslims surged by 78%.<sup>96</sup> Research done in both of these studies demonstrate an important link between the Trump campaign and presidency and an increase in hate crimes.

What is crucial then when speaking from a position of power and authority, is understanding that there is a great level of responsibility attached to one's rhetoric. The greater reach that someone has, the more important are the messages that they are spreading. Jennifer McGee, in her article "*Sad!: Donald Trump and the Political uses of Power*", speaks to the reach that the President has through his Twitter account. She calls Trump's Twitter activity "alarming and unprecedented" and notes that "there has never been a president who uses Twitter in this way".<sup>97</sup> She makes the important point that Trump is the first president whose "Twitter pre-existed his political career".<sup>98</sup> What is meant by this is that Twitter itself was not founded until 2006, and President Obama, who was the first to use Twitter as a sitting President, created a personal account while senator in 2007 and did not create the '@POTUS' Twitter handle until 2013. At the transfer of the '@POTUS' Twitter account, the account had 13 million followers,

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<sup>96</sup> Rao, Sameer. "STUDY: Political Rhetoric Inspires Islamophobic Hate Crimes." Colorlines. September 23, 2016. Accessed April 21, 2020.

<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:CsjFNeNA1IUJ:https://www.colorlines.com/articles/study-political-rhetoric-inspires-islamophobic-hate-crimes>.

<sup>97</sup> McGee, "Sad!: Donald Trump and the Political Uses of Twitter.", 4.

<sup>98</sup> McGee, "Sad!: Donald Trump and the Political Uses of Twitter.", 2.

while Trump's personal account, '@realDonaldTrump', had 20.4 million followers.<sup>99</sup> Meaning that Trump had a much greater reach through his personal account than he would by switching entirely to the new '@POTUS' account. Now in 2020, Trump has 29.4 million followers through the '@POTUS' account, and 77.4 million followers through his '@realDonaldTrump' account. Since his reach is still much larger through his personal account, he tweets directly from his personal account, and the '@POTUS' account retweets all '@realDonaldTrump' tweets.

This is what makes Trump's Tweets such a highly discussed topic, as the amount of reach the President has by speaking on a social media platform. President Trump's use of Social Media, specifically Twitter, is a way for the American public to receive the words and viewpoints of the President in a much more direct way, not just through official addresses and legislation. Trump has often posted criticisms and racist content that promotes Islamophobia. In an article written with the help of the National Immigration Law Center, Georgetown University's Bridge Initiative, and MPower Change, a Muslim grassroots Movement, a long list was compiled of moments in which President Trump has displayed and promoted Islamophobia. While on the campaign trail, some of Trump's tweets included: "refugees from Syria are now pouring into our great country. Who knows who they are -- some could be ISIS." As well as several statements at rallies and retweets that supported the claim that Muslims were celebrating as the Towers fell on 9/11. Trump also stated "Islam hates us", and had several follow-up statements and tweets in regards of justifying this statement.<sup>100</sup> Statements like these, in the form of tweets, are

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<sup>99</sup> Jarvey, Natalie. "Twitter Transition to Begin Friday as Obama Hands @POTUS Account to Trump." *The Hollywood Reporter*. January 20, 2017. Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/how-potus-twitter-transfer-obama-trump-will-work-966048>.

<sup>100</sup> MPower, and MPower. "86 Times Donald Trump Displayed or Promoted Islamophobia." *Medium*. National Immigration Law Center, April 19, 2018. <https://medium.com/nilc/86-times-donald-trump-displayed-or-promoted-islamophobia-49e67584ac10>.

suggesting direct lines between Muslims and those of Middle Eastern descent, to terrorists. Once in office, Trump continued to use this anti-Muslim language. The majority of these were in relation to the Travel Ban, also referred to as the Muslim Ban, in which Trump constantly refers to the people from Muslim-majority countries in which the ban is intended to keep out of the US, as 'dangerous'.<sup>101</sup> If Americans are seeing their President associating these ideas and legitimizing them, it justifies their own beliefs of these connections, and the hate-crimes that may result from these beliefs.

In response to this language, several people have spoken out on the effects that such statements have on the American public. Several politicians and news reporters have not only condemned Trump's Islamophobic language, but they have spoken to the association that this language has with the hate crimes that have taken place across the nation. In an opinion article in the Washington Post following the terrorist attacks on two mosques in New Zealand in 2019, Brian Klaas speaks to the effect that Trump's tweets have on the American public's views and actions. Klaas states that "as president, his words matter. He is using them to spread hatred. And deranged, unwell or evil people have allegedly been inspired by those words to target the very people that Trump targets in his speeches and his tweets".<sup>102</sup> In a PBS news article, Erica R. Hendry compiled a list of several professionals reactions to Trump's tweets. Shadi Hamid, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, stated that "what the president is doing is inciting [hate] against an entire group of people...if you're already predisposed to not liking Muslims,

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<sup>101</sup> MPower. "86 Times Donald Trump Displayed or Promoted Islamophobia."

<sup>102</sup> Klaas, Brian. "A Short History of President Trump's Anti-Muslim Bigotry." *The Washington Post*. WP Company, March 15, 2019. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/03/15/short-history-president-trumps-anti-muslim-bigotry/?utm\\_term=.ec625903205c](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/03/15/short-history-president-trumps-anti-muslim-bigotry/?utm_term=.ec625903205c).

how could you not end up hating Muslims more?”.<sup>103</sup> Ibrahim Hooper of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, associated Trump directly with hate crimes stating that his tweets have “given the green light to his followers to go after American Muslims”.<sup>104</sup> Trump's continued Islamophobic remarks continue to fuel American anger, whether it be to actually commit hate crimes or to condemn Trump's role in legitimizing these actions.

McGee also speaks about correlations found between Trump's Twitter rhetoric and hate crimes committed and uses these examples to emphasize the power of his rhetoric. She references an Anti-Defamation League report that provides support beyond anecdotal evidence. The ADL found that there were 2.6 million tweets that utilized anti-Semitic language between August 2015 and July 2016. Of those, there were 20,000 tweets directed at 50,000 US journalists. More than two-thirds of the tweets were sent by 1,600 accounts that each had the words ‘Trump’, ‘nationalist’, ‘conservaitve’, and ‘white’ appearing frequently on their accounts. The harassment focused on those journalists that criticized Trump, and especially those that were mentioned directly by him. McGee adds that in the same way that terrorist groups act by “reaping the benefit of the act -increased terror- without any of the legal or moral responsibility”, Trump does the same, by not having to carry the burden of or receive punishment for his hate speech.<sup>105</sup> It is important to note, as McGee does, that Trump does not commit any of these acts. However, this is where the issue of intentionality plays a role.

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<sup>103</sup> Hendry, Erica R. “Trump's Anti-Muslim Retweets Make Americans Less Safe, Analysts Say. Here's How.” *PBS*. Public Broadcasting Service, November 30, 2017. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/trumps-anti-muslim-retweets-make-americans-less-safe-analysts-say-heres-how>.

<sup>104</sup> Hendry. “Trump's Anti-Muslim Retweets Make Americans Less Safe, Analysts Say. Here's How.”

<sup>105</sup> McGee, "Sad!: Donald Trump and the Political Uses of Twitter.", 7.

Zuhl speaks on the issue of intentionality. When asked if stochastic violence is done intentionally, her response was “I don’t know if it’s done intentionally. It’s more likely done with a blind-eye or a wink-wink to the risk” and specifically in relation to Trump, she says that “he turns a blind-eye to the serious risk”<sup>106</sup>, which relates back to the responsibility attached to presidential rhetoric. Zuhl adds that Trump is “inciting violence by talking about things in a way that he knows- or he should know - that someone among the people listening is going to do something about this”.<sup>107</sup> Whether or not there lies the intention for something to happen as a result of his words, as the President, Trump must know this risk.

Just as one can use their power and voice to demonstrate hateful speech, one can also use it to speak out against hate speech. Dharmapala suggests the notion that silence equals approval. He states that “silence on an event of public concern communicates approval, and is generally understood to communicate approval”.<sup>108</sup> Zuhl would agree, claiming that “American politicians who don’t do anything to denounce (hateful acts) or just denounce (hateful acts) by saying ‘thoughts and prayers’ and then move on to the next topic... they contribute to (them). So that people know that there's not going to be any change or consequences in a bigger way.” By demonstrating such approval, it shows potential offenders that there is a low risk of receiving punishment for committing the act, and then increases the likelihood that they will do it. By being silent about hate speech, it is as if one is approving it. By speaking out against hate speech, it shows disapproval. Trump has a large platform which comes with power and responsibility. By both demonstrating hateful speech and failing to speak out against the effect that it has on hate

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<sup>106</sup> Zuhl, Joanne. "How Trump Incites Violence with Stochastic Terrorism.", 2.

<sup>107</sup> Zuhl, Joanne. "How Trump Incites Violence with Stochastic Terrorism.", 2.

<sup>108</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 27.

crimes, he is sending the message that he is supportive of both hateful speech and the hate crimes that come as a reaction to it.

What Dharmapala contributes to the literature on this topic and what he hopes this approach leads to is “a fuller appreciation of the social costs of unregulated hate speech”.<sup>109</sup> This is the aspect of his research that this paper attempts to utilize and build upon. The rhetoric being utilized by President Trump throughout both his campaign and time in office is believed to have had a considerable impact on hate crimes that have been committed in the country, especially towards Muslim individuals and those of Middle Eastern descent. Hate crimes that are targeted at Muslims and Middle Easterners, as well as those who appear to fit this image, undoubtedly spiked with the campaign and then election of President Trump. The FBI reported in 2018 that hate crimes had increased for the third consecutive year, the first year of increase being 2015.<sup>110</sup> In addition, the FBI reported that “anti-Muslim hate crimes in the US surged 67% in 2016, to levels not seen since 2001”.<sup>111</sup> 2016 showed the highest number of ‘anti-Islamic (Muslim)’ hate crimes since 2001, with 307 incidents. In 2001, the number of incidents reached 481, and until 2015, the number of incidents never even reached 200, with the highest number of incidents being 160 in 2010, until 2015, 2016, and 2017, all passed 200 incidents with 257, 307, and 273, respectively.<sup>112</sup>

The connection between Trump's rhetoric and hate crimes that have taken place can often be seen through the hateful acts themselves. For example, in Manhattan in 2017, a man who first

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<sup>109</sup> Dharmapala, "Words That Kill: An Economic Perspective on Hate Speech and Hate Crimes.", 27.

<sup>110</sup> Eligon, John. "Hate Crimes Increase for the Third Consecutive Year, F.B.I. Reports." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, November 13, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/13/us/hate-crimes-fbi-2017.html>.

<sup>111</sup> Spodak, Cassie. "Hate Took His Brother's Life, but He Says Forgiveness Was the Only Option." *CNN*. Cable News Network, June 4, 2018.

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/11/politics/bridging-the-divide-teaching-americans-sikhism/index.html>.

<sup>112</sup> "Hate Crime." FBI. July 15, 2010. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime>.



assaulted a woman and then began to mock her by imitating Muslim prayers, said to her "Trump is here now. He will get rid of all of you." At New York University (NYU) in 2016, Muslim students awoke to discover that the door to their prayer room had been defaced with the word "Trump!".<sup>113</sup> In Los Angeles in 2016, Mark Feigin was arrested for posting anti-Muslim and threatening statements to a mosque's Facebook page. In court, his attorney argued that he was "using similar language and expressing similar views" to "campaign statements from then-candidate Donald Trump." The attorney added that "Mr. Feigin's comments were directed toward a pressing issue of public concern that was a central theme of the Trump campaign and the 2016 election generally: the Islamic roots of many international and U.S. terrorist acts."<sup>114</sup> In 2019, the FBI arrested Patrick Carlineo Jr. of upstate New York for threatening to kill Representative Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, one of the first two Muslim women elected to the U.S. Congress. Omar is an outspoken critic of Trump, who Trump has frequently launched public attacks on. Two weeks before his arrest, Carlineo called Omar's office in Washington labeling the congresswoman a terrorist and declaring that he would put a bullet in her head. When an FBI agent then traced the call to Carlineo and interviewed him, Carlineo "stated that he was a patriot, that he loves the President, and that he hates radical Muslims in our government" according to the FBI agent's summary of the interview.<sup>115</sup> These cases, among countless others of their kind, draw direct lines between the hateful speech utilized in Trump's rhetoric and the commitment of hate crimes that utilize hateful speech in its defense.

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<sup>113</sup> *Google My Maps*. Google. Accessed May 19, 2019.

[https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1bvRvP4\\_oWEVqtbwsI2Poq3W7vkI](https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1bvRvP4_oWEVqtbwsI2Poq3W7vkI).

<sup>114</sup> "Man Pleads No Contest to Disparaging Muslims on Islamic Center's Facebook Page." *Los Angeles Times*. January 27, 2018. Accessed April 26, 2020.

<https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-muslim-threats-guilty-20180126-story.html>.

<sup>115</sup> ABC News. Accessed April 26, 2020.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/york-man-arrested-threatening-murder-us-congresswoman/story?id=62215726>.

In addition to the hateful messages that Trump is spreading on his own, he also fails to speak out against acts of hate and hate speech. By acting silent toward hate crimes, and therefore showing approval on this matter, his actions are aiding in the commitment of hate crimes rather than helping to deter them. In relation to how Presidents Bush and Obama acted on these matters, their choice not to be silent and the intentionality of their rhetoric is where the difference lies. While their rhetoric was not demonstrating hateful speech in ways that Trumps was, they were also not silent on the issue of hate crimes towards Muslims and those of Middle Eastern descent.

### *The Bush Presidency*

Although the Bush administration experienced the largest increase of hate crimes overall, as well as those directed at Muslims and Middle Easterners, as a result of the 9/11 backlash, he was not silent on the matter and was intentional in his efforts to stop the issue. One way this was done was through his “Islam is Peace” speech, given only six days after the attacks on New York and Washington, at the Islamic Center of Washington D.C. Given the topic at hand and the location chosen, this speech was clearly given with the intention of bridging the gap between Muslims and the rest of American society by giving a more clear understanding of Islam to those that were making poor associations between the religion and the terrorist attacks that took place a week prior. Although Bush may have fallen short of this goal by not explaining far enough the difference between what was considered to be ‘good islam’ and ‘bad islam’, the intentions of the speech are clear. There were clear intentions to shine a positive light on the religion of Islam. Bush stated that “these acts of violence against innocents violate the fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith. And it’s important for my fellow Americans to understand that...the face of terror is

not the true faith of Islam. That's not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don't represent peace. They represent evil and war". While it was important and necessary for the President to speak positively about Islam, it was not done in a clear way that people would understand the difference between the Islam practiced by the terrorists who committed the acts on 9/11, and the Islam practiced by the overwhelming majority of Muslims.

Bush would go on to make a few statements that point directly to the issue of the outbreak of hate crimes targeted at Muslims over the week that passed since the attacks. To those that are targeted, Bush states that "women who cover their heads in this country must feel comfortable going outside their homes. Moms who wear cover must not be intimidated in America". In addition, Bush says that he has "been told that some fear to leave; some don't want to go shopping for their families; some don't want to go about their ordinary daily routines because, by wearing cover, they're afraid they'll be intimidated". To those that are committing hate crimes that are causing the fear among Muslims, Bush states that "those who feel like they can intimidate our fellow citizens to take out their anger don't represent the best of America, they represent the worst of humankind, and they should be ashamed of that behaviour".<sup>116</sup> While these acknowledgements portray an obvious awareness of the issue, there could have been a much more direct acknowledgement of the hate crimes, rather than just hinting at it. Nowhere did he condemn the actions of those that were intimidating Muslims, or suggest that those that did so would be punished. This may be the greatest flaw of this speech. At the same time that he is clearly addressing the issue, he makes no direct mention of hate crimes even though there is an obvious awareness of them, as they would have prompted the need for this address. Bush instead

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<sup>116</sup> *National Archives and Records Administration*. National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed December 6, 2019. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010917-11.html>

spoke out against the issue of Islamophobia indirectly, when he could have spoken out against hate crimes, emphasized their punishment and discouraged them. This however is precisely what Obama will do later with the passing of the 2009 Hate Crime Prevention Act.

While Bush made several efforts to portray Islam positively, he did not go far enough to explain how it is a very small amount of radical groups that make up the terrorism seen in the public sphere, in order to show the differentiation between the ideology of terrorists and the peaceful religion of the overwhelming majority of practicing Muslims. This unclear understanding of what is ‘good’ Islam and what is ‘bad’ Islam, led so much of American society to group all Muslims, and with that anyone they assumed to be Muslim, and link them to the ‘enemy’ and the ‘evil’ that Bush so often referred to. Through the constant use of words like ‘enemy’, ‘evil’, ‘fear’, ‘hate’, ‘war’, and their constant juxtaposition, to ‘terrorists’, ‘Islam’ ‘Muslims’, and later, the ‘Middle East’, in other post-9/11 remarks, it is not difficult to see why this became the understanding and the associations that were made in society. Such association was seen immediately through Bush’s address to the nation on the same day of the attacks, and was only further reinforced throughout subsequent speeches. Still, the ‘Islam is Peace’ speech represents a moment in which Bush attempts to use his rhetorical power to reverse the negative effect of the 9/11 attacks on hate crimes within the country. Although it may not necessarily fix it, it shows an effort to do so. While it likely would not change people’s minds who would have thought otherwise about the Islamic faith, it also does not encourage those same people to act on their thoughts of hate.

*The Obama Presidency*

A time in which President Obama demonstrated disapproval of hate crimes and hate speech was through enactment of the ‘Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act’. Where Bush fell short of recognizing and enforcing the punishment of hate crimes, Obama took a major step forward in this effort. This piece of legislation, signed on October 28, 2009, is considered to be groundbreaking, especially in regard to what it does for hate crime prosecution. Hate crime prosecution is hard enough in situations where the legal system in place acknowledges and understands the difference between a hate crime and other violent crime. It is even more difficult, in a jurisdiction where hate crime laws do not exist. This law expanded the federal definition of hate crimes, enhanced the legal resources available to prosecutors so that they can enforce hate crime law, and increased the ability of the federal law enforcement to support state and local law enforcement.<sup>117</sup> It is the first law that allows federal criminal prosecution of hate crimes. Under this act, it became a federal crime to cause or attempt to cause injury to an individual based on their actual or perceived belonging to a specific group. This act offers greater protection to individuals than some state laws, which are especially important for hate crimes committed in states that do not have any hate crime legislation.<sup>118</sup>

In remarks given on the day the Act was signed, Obama emphasizes the importance of the act in relation to the issue it addresses. In thanking all those who contributed to the creation of this law, especially the families of the victims in which it honors, Obama says: “you understood that we must stand against crimes that are meant not only to break our bones, but to

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<sup>117</sup> "Hate Crime Laws." The United States Department of Justice. March 07, 2019. Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/hate-crime-laws>.

<sup>118</sup> "Laws and Policies." The United States Department of Justice. January 17, 2020. Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/laws-and-policies>.

break spirits -- not only to inflict harm, but to instill fear. You understand that the rights afforded every citizen under our Constitution mean nothing if we do not protect those rights -- both from unjust laws and violent acts. And you understand how necessary this law continues to be".<sup>119</sup> In order to make known what it is that the law does, he states that "through this law, we will strengthen the protection against crimes based on the color of your skin, the faith in your heart, or the place of your birth...and prosecutors will have new tools to work with states in order to prosecute to the fullest those who would perpetrate such crimes. Because no one in America should...be forced to look over their shoulder because of who they are".<sup>120</sup> The actions that both Obama and Bush took to intentionally speak against the issue of hate crimes and even those specifically against Muslims and those of Middle Eastern descent is an action that has not been taken by Trump. This speaks to the difference in how each has either acknowledged or failed to acknowledge both the power of their rhetoric and the responsibility they have as President to utilize it to impact the hate crime problem in a positive, rather than negative way.

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<sup>119</sup> "Remarks by the President at Reception Commemorating the Enactment of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act." National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-reception-commemorating-enactment-matthew-shepard-and-james-byrd->

<sup>120</sup> "Remarks by the President at Reception Commemorating the Enactment of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act."

## Conclusion

This research was born out of questioning exactly why the September 11th terrorist attacks caused the massive spike in hate crimes that it did. The fact that hate crimes reached record-breaking numbers in 2001 is widely known. As is the notion that lines are commonly drawn between terrorist attacks, Islamophobia, and hate crimes, specifically in the case of 9/11. While these associations may be known to exist, the reason for their existence is much less understood, as it is far more difficult to explain. Understanding stochastic violence helps provide a new explanation for these associations. Deriving from the idea of stochastic terrorism, a term not coined until 2011 and one that only gained significant popularity with the entrance of Donald Trump into the political arena, stochastic violence helps to provide answers through a lens with nineteen years of retrospect, and an idea that was not recognized at the the time of the September 11th attacks.

The significance of the first World Trade Center attack, the Oklahoma City bombing, the Olympic Park bombing, and the US Embassy bombings are obviously looked at in a different light after knowing what took place on September 11th. It is easy to see now how responses to the previous attacks may have been downplayed at the time, even though this would not have been the thought then. Still, the fact that these attacks were not recognized or discussed to a large extent, compared to the 9/11 response, helps to explain the relatively low expression of hate, hate crimes, and Islamophobia that existed prior to 2001. Inversely, the massive response to the 9/11 attacks demonstrates how stochastic violence can act, even if unintentionally, as a factor that helped lead to hate crimes committed in the aftermath of the attacks. Comparing the Bush and

Obama administrations to the Trump administration helps to show that while stochastic violence may always have the potential of working to some extent, the difference of whether it is used intentionally or unintentionally, or whether or not the president acknowledges the effect of their rhetoric on hate crimes, says a lot about their intentions to either negatively or positively affect the hate crime problem in the country.

Involving Trump in the discussion helps to highlight the severity of a post-9/11 problem, despite it being almost twenty years later. While it is important to show that Trumps anti-Muslim and anti-Middle Eastern rheotric is contributing to the problem, it is also important to note that Islamophobia in America and hate towards these individuals is an issue that has spanned over three administrations since the September 11th attacks, and is not one that will go away with the end of the administration either. By proving the ways in which presidential rhetoric can have both a negative and positive effect on hate crimes, this research aims to highlight the importance of recognizing and acknowledging the power and responsibility that comes with the position. Presidential rhetoric may only be the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the Islamophobia and hate crime problems in America, but if this is not under control, then there is little chance of being able to confront the other components of the problem either.



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