

The Politics of Canadian National Memory: An Analysis of Canadian Parliamentary Responses to the September 11 Attacks¹

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The parliamentary debate that took place in the Canadian House of Commons following the September 11 attacks is a rich source of claims about Canada's national past. This article analyzes the use of historical memory in the speeches delivered by the leaders of the five Canadian federal political parties in response to the attacks. Political leaders drew upon the public memory of World War II as a just war to articulate one of two narratives about the Canadian national past and identity on the world stage. One narrative held that Canada is a nation that has been committed to upholding human rights and international law. A second narrative held that Canada is a nation historically dedicated to fighting for freedom and democracy in wartime. Each politician mobilized these narratives in unique ways to make arguments for or against Canadian involvement in the emerging U.S.-led military intervention in Afghanistan.

Much has been written in recent years on the global impact of the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon that took place on September 11, 2001. For many people in North America, the events of "9-11" shattered basic assumptions about personal and national security and raised the specter of a new, diffuse global threat. In the weeks following September 2001, a public discourse on anti-terrorism became highly influential within a variety of cultural, public, and state arenas. This article explores the influence of this invigorated anti-terrorism discourse on the public memory of Canada's national past and identity in the international arena.

This article examines one particular public arena, the Parliament of Canada, as a site of national and transnational memory processes. How did parliamentarians appeal to the past in their responses to the September 11 attacks? What stories about Canada's national past did they tell as they debated various policy changes and government actions, particularly military participation in the emerging U.S.-led "war on terror"? I analyze the speeches made by the leaders of each of the five major political parties in the first parliamentary session after the attacks, held on September 17, 2001. My analysis suggests that parliamentarians

¹ My sincere thanks to Alexander Freund for providing feedback that strengthened this article. I am also grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their helpful insights.

drew upon national, transnational, and cosmopolitan memories to articulate their responses to the attacks and their proposals for Canadian action.

I argue that political leaders drew upon two narratives about Canada's national past with regard to its role in international affairs. These two narratives articulate different national memories of Canada's international achievements on the world stage. One narrative foregrounds Canada's support for international law and human rights as central to a national vision of Canada as "an engineer and custodian of global civility."² A second narrative emphasizes Canada's history of fighting wars, and its military tradition, as central to the nation's identity and international status. The leaders' statements were framed either in terms of a human rights narrative concerned with bringing the perpetrators to justice, or a militarist narrative advocating the use of military force to protect "freedom and democracy." There are discernible patterns that link particular political agendas with each of these narratives. While Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe, and leader of the New Democratic Party Alexa McDonough tended to frame their comments primarily in terms of the human rights narrative, Canadian Alliance Leader of the Opposition Stockwell Day, and to a lesser extent Joe Clark of the Progressive Conservative - Democratic Representative Caucus,³ tended to emphasize the militarist narrative. Both Day and Clark, despite striking differences in their appeals to the militarist narrative, argued that the Canadian response to the attacks should give priority to Canada-U.S. solidarity, national security, and (in Day's case) military intervention. Chrétien drew upon the human rights narrative to defend his government's support of the emerging U.S.-led "war on terror." In contrast to Chrétien's

² Heike Härting and Smaro Kamboureli, "Introduction: Discourses of Security, Peacekeeping Narratives, and the Cultural Imagination in Canada," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 78, no. 2 (2009): 659-686, 660.

³ The Liberal Party was the governing federal party in 2001. It espouses liberal principles and occupies a position between centre and centre-left on the political spectrum. It was the dominant federal party in Canada for much of the 20th century; since 2003, however, it has fallen into decline. The Bloc Québécois, established in 1990, was founded to advance the interests of Quebec at the federal level, and to promote Quebec sovereignty. The New Democratic Party is a social democratic party with historic ties to organized labour and the political left in Canada. The Canadian Alliance Party was the Official Opposition party in 2001. The successor to the neoconservative Reform Party, the Alliance existed from 2000 to 2003. The party espoused social conservatism and neoliberal economic principles. The Progressive Conservative - Democratic Representative Caucus was a short-lived alliance between the marginalized Progressive Conservatives and dissident former members of the Canadian Alliance. The Progressive Conservative Party was a centre-right party that existed from 1942 to 2003, the successor to the Conservative Party that had been the first governing party of Canada. Throughout the 20th century, the Progressive Conservatives had either formed the government or occupied the position of Official Opposition. By 2001, however, the Progressive Conservatives had lost a significant level of support. In 2003 the party was dissolved and its members voted to merge with the Canadian Alliance Party to form the new Conservative Party of Canada.

mobilization of human rights in support of war, both Duceppe and McDonough appealed to the human rights narrative to argue against military intervention and to call for a multilateral response grounded in international law.

While it is possible to simply argue that these two narratives of national history were mobilized in the service of particular party platforms in these debates, I think it is important to identify the shared memory underlying these two narratives about the past. I suggest that the two distinct narratives draw upon a shared transnational memory common to a number of Western liberal democratic states: the memory of World War II as a “good” war to defeat fascism. Whether leaders narrated Canada as a nation committed to human rights, or as a nation with a proud military tradition of defending Western democracy, they all articulated the memory of World War II as a just war that was necessary despite the heavy costs. This transnational memory of World War II simultaneously supports the story of Canada as a nation committed to human rights, and also the story of Canada as a nation that has always been ready to fight in the name of freedom and democracy. Thus, while the parliamentary debates on the September 11 attacks reveal Canadian public memory at this historical juncture to be a contested terrain in which different versions of the human rights and militarist narratives of the Canadian past vied for dominance, it is important to recognize that the conflicting narratives reinforced a shared memory framework. Simply put, this framework could be described as the shared belief that Western liberal democracy must be upheld against grave threats, using military force if necessary.

That proponents of the human rights and militarist narratives of the Canadian past shared a common view of the significance of World War II and the triumph of the Western liberal democratic order is perhaps not surprising, given the historical importance of the war for the development of the modern human rights framework that was institutionalized within the United Nations. While modern human rights ideas were first promoted by civil society groups and articulated in the system of international law developed at the 1899 and 1907 Hague Peace Conferences and later by the League of Nations, they did not become a dominant force in the international arena until World War II. During this war, human rights ideas about the need to protect citizens from oppressive states were used by Allied governments to justify and promote their military offensive against the growth of fascism. In the postwar period, human rights concepts were institutionalized and legalized through the establishment of the United Nations. The war’s victors—particularly the United States—had a dominant influence on the institutional development of this human rights framework. As Roger Normand and Sarah Zaidi argue, U.S. efforts to control the institutionalization of human rights was shaped by its concern to promote a global order based on U.S. ideas about the primacy of individual rights and liberal democracy. The Allied governments as a whole were concerned to perpetuate

their domestic and imperial projects of dominance, and successfully resisted the establishment of meaningful multilateral enforcement mechanisms. The human rights framework that took shape within the UN thus reflected the priorities of powerful state interests more than civil society concerns for the achievement of international justice.⁴

Normand and Zaidi's work points to the historical significance of World War II for the development of a globalized human rights culture. For Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, the memory of the Holocaust played a key role in the creation of this "rights" culture, particularly in the post-Cold War era. They argue that the Holocaust has become a "cosmopolitan" memory: a universalized, de-contextualized narrative removed from its specific historical origins, a narrative available to be appropriated and shaped by particular national or local memory cultures.⁵ They suggest that the cosmopolitan memory of the Holocaust, created through a process of Americanization mediated by the proliferation of mass culture, functions as "the transnational symbol of human-rights abuse and the need to protect such rights."⁶ Levy and Sznaider view the emergence of cosmopolitan Holocaust memory as a positive phenomenon that points to the emergence of a global, ethical culture of compassion capable of transcending nationalist politics.⁷

This article draws on Levy and Sznaider's concept of cosmopolitan memory to suggest that many Canadian political leaders' statements reflect the influence of cosmopolitan Holocaust memories, along with national and transnational memories of World War II. Most party leaders drew on cosmopolitan Holocaust memory in order to frame the attacks as a violation against the democratic, freedom-loving world, symbolized by the United States. Some leaders constructed the "terrorists" as embodiments of evil that must be eradicated, using a range of political, economic, and military measures. Some employed the language of international justice to argue either for or against Canada's participation in the mission to Afghanistan. My analysis demonstrates

⁴ Roger Normand and Sarah Zaidi, *Human Rights at the UN: The Political History of Universal Justice* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 22-4.

⁵ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 2-5.

⁶ Levy and Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory*, 180.

⁷ However, they gloss over the complex problem of the persistence of significant power imbalances in the narration of victimhood. It may be true that in the post-Cold War era "all victims have become Jews"; yet not all peoples who suffer collective injustices receive global status as "victims" given the dominance of Western news networks and cultural media in shaping the development of cosmopolitan memory. Levy and Sznaider also do not address another problematic aspect of cosmopolitan Holocaust memory; namely, that in addition to fostering global compassion for particular victims, it also appears to encourage the demonization of particular leaders and whole societies and cultural groups as perpetrators of evil. See Levy and Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory*, 184-88.

that cosmopolitan Holocaust memory can be appropriated by diverse political visions and agendas. This study of Canadian political responses to the September 11 attacks calls into question Levy and Sznajder's optimistic view that Holocaust memory inevitably enables a compassionate human rights culture. While Holocaust memory can be used to support an ethical culture of compassion, it can also be mobilized in the service of retributive nationalist politics.

Canadian support for military intervention in response to human rights abuses in other states is not a new phenomenon. As previously noted, World War II was widely perceived as a war fought to halt the fascist movement's repressive policies. Canadian military involvements in UN peacekeeping between the 1950s and the 1990s have been popularly understood as contributions to the realization of international legal and human rights objectives, such as providing stability in volatile conflict zones, ensuring peaceful transition to democratic governance, or preventing large-scale violations of human rights. The fact that the Canadian government has typically participated in peacekeeping missions for strategic not altruistic reasons is a reality not usually acknowledged or emphasized in public discourse.⁸ Canada's international status as a model peacekeeping nation was solidified by Lester B. Pearson's pivotal diplomatic role in creating the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) to defuse the Suez crisis, a role that won him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957. As Heike Härting and Smaro Kamboureli argue, Canadian public discourse on peacekeeping since the 1950s has helped to create a popular national myth of Canada as a benevolent and morally upright nation that is uniquely suited to the task of peacekeeping.⁹

Certain incidents, however, have sparked sporadic public awareness of the tensions between a strategic military mandate oriented toward the containment of enemies, and a peacekeeping mandate centred on the protection of human rights. In Canada, the Somalia Affair—the public investigation into the torture and murder of Somalis by Canadian peacekeepers in 1993—temporarily revealed serious problems in peacekeeping's marriage of military institutions and practices with human rights goals. As Sherene Razack argues, the popular perception of peacekeeping as an expression of Canadian international humanitarianism prevailed within a discourse that explained the incidents in Somalia as the acts of a few rogue soldiers rather than as evidence of a deeper incompatibility between racist Canadian military institutions and a human rights agenda.¹⁰ Razack's work suggests that, despite popular Canadian national self-identification with UN peacekeeping as a positive contribution to a just international world order, it is

⁸ Heike Härting and Smaro Kamboureli, "Introduction," 660-2.

⁹ Härting and Kamboureli, "Introduction," 659-60.

¹⁰ Sherene Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

very difficult to place military institutions in the service of a human rights agenda without seriously undermining that agenda.

Given the paucity of research on Canadian national memory, it is difficult to assess the evolution of public memory in Canada as it relates to world affairs since World War II. Razack's work on Canadian mythic narratives of peacekeeping stands out as a singular example. Jonathan Vance's study of popular memory of World War I, though it focuses primarily on the wartime and interwar period, is also relevant. He demonstrates that the generation of Canadians who lived through World War I actively created a mythic popular memory of the war as a formative event in the development of the Canadian nation, a just war waged by heroic soldiers who sacrificed their lives to defend Christianity and Western civilization. Writing in 1997, Vance suggested that this optimistic war myth had died out by the 1960s and 70s, when Canadians began to view the barbarity of war in a negative light.¹¹ My research on the post-"9-11" parliamentary debates reveals that some of the language used by political leaders advocating the militarist narrative of the Canadian past shares some common themes with this World War I myth. This finding is significant and suggests that the memory of Canada's military past did not die out in the age of UN peacekeeping but remained active, ready to be invoked by politicians to argue in favour of military intervention to fight terrorism.

The Canadian parliamentary debates that followed the September 11 attacks took place in a complex historical moment, in which multiple institutional, political, economic, and cultural forces shaped expressions of national memory. While fully addressing these complex dynamics is beyond the scope of this article, it is important to emphasize that parliamentarians were responding to political statements and policy decisions being made outside the House of Commons and in the international arena. The day following the attacks, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)—an intergovernmental military alliance founded on the principle of collective defense—decided to invoke Article 5 of the Treaty of Washington, which interprets any attack against a NATO state that originates from abroad as an attack on all NATO states. This was the first time that NATO had ever invoked Article 5 in its fifty-year history. Although it was another two weeks before NATO determined that the September 11 attacks met all the conditions of Article 5, its September 12 announcement set the tone for all debates within member states, including Canada.¹² Canadian debates were also shaped by the United Nations Security Council's adoption of Resolution 1368, which condemned the attacks, expressed condolences to the victims, citizens and

¹¹ Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 10-1.

¹² NATO, "NATO and the Scourge of Terrorism: What is Article 5?" <http://www.nato.int/terrorism/five.htm>, accessed 8 Feb. 2011.

Government of the United States, and called on the international community to bring the perpetrators to justice and work harder to combat all acts of terrorism. Significantly, this resolution also affirmed the right of individual and collective self-defence in accordance with the UN Charter.¹³ Evidence suggests that the Liberal government had decided in principle to support the emerging U.S. anti-terrorism campaign within days of the attacks, even before Parliament had an opportunity to debate the question. As early as September 16, for example, Minister of Foreign Affairs John Manley told the media that Canada would stand “shoulder to shoulder” with the United States in any anti-terrorist military action.¹⁴

The House of Commons debate held on September 17 was influenced by Canadian government and NATO statements in the context of a broad public and media discourse. Much of this discourse seemed to point in the direction of a military response. While Parliament did hold a number of debates on terrorism, security, and Canada’s military participation in the emerging campaign in those first weeks, the Liberal government’s decision to commit Canadian Forces to the military campaign in Afghanistan was taken without a parliamentary vote despite the efforts of most opposition parties to insist that a vote be held. On September 20, Minister of National Defense Art Eggleton authorized all Canadian Forces personnel serving on exchange programs with the U.S. military or other allied states—over 100 military personnel—to take part in U.S.-led counter-terrorism operations. NATO military operations in Afghanistan began on October 7. On that day, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announced the beginning of a formal Canadian contribution to the U.S. led international force in Afghanistan. This mission, dubbed Operation Apollo, was to include Canadian land, sea, and air forces in the U.S.-led campaign.¹⁵

Despite the apparently marginal influence of the House on the government’s decision to commit Canadian military forces to the “war on terror,” the Canadian parliament was an important forum for the articulation of divergent perspectives and commentaries on issues of national security, national defense, responses to terrorism, and Canada’s role in the international context in September 2001. Parliamentary debates are a rich source of perspectives on Canada’s national past, given that the House of Commons consists of elected members from across the political and geographic spectrum who meet to debate and legislate on concerns that affect Canadians across the country. The regional

¹³ United Nations Security Council. *Resolution 1368(2001)*. September 12, 2001. Accessed 8 February 2011 at <http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/2001/sc2001.htm>.

¹⁴ Minister of Foreign Affairs John Manley, quoted in David Bercuson, *The Fighting Canadians: Our Regimental History from New France to Afghanistan* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2008), 309.

¹⁵ Department of National Defense, *The Canadian Forces Contribution to the Campaign against Terrorism*, Background, BG-01.035, October 9, 2001.

and political diversity represented in the House does not imply, however, that every view of Canada's past is necessarily articulated in the debates. But the Canadian Parliament does constitute a significant national "arena"—to use the formulation of Timothy Ashplant and colleagues in their discussion of war memory—for the articulation of shared and oppositional narratives about the past.¹⁶ This article analyzes Canadian politicians' mobilization of national, transnational and cosmopolitan memory to make political arguments in response to the September 11 attacks. While my main concern is to illuminate party leaders' uses of memory, this analysis is animated by a broader concern to understand how political and governmental use of historical memory shapes public discourse on Canada's past, present, and future role in world affairs.

Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal Party Jean Chrétien opened the debate in the House of Commons with a speech that narrated the Canadian past in terms of transnational human rights.¹⁷ His statement is striking for the way it framed the attacks as a global event requiring a global response.

In the sad and trying days since the awful news came from New York and Washington, it has been clear that the civilized nations of the world have a solemn duty to speak as one against the scourge of terrorism....

I look forward to hearing the views of members on the role that Canada should play in shaping a firm and just global response to an unprecedented global threat.¹⁸

This statement invoked Canada as one of those "civilized" nations that should play a role in ensuring a just global response. He went on to describe the attacks using an image that erased all historical and political context of the event:

There are those rare occasions when time seems to stand still, when a singular event transfixes the world. There are also those terrible occasions when the dark side of human nature escapes civilized restraint and shows its ugly face to a stunned world. Tuesday, September 11, 2001 will forever be etched in memory as a day when time stood still.¹⁹

¹⁶ T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, "The politics of war memory and commemoration: Contexts, structures and dynamics," in *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 3-85, 17-8.

¹⁷ A professional speech writer likely wrote Chrétien's speech, and the speeches of most of the other party leaders. However, my analysis begins from the assumption that by delivering these speeches in Parliament, party leaders made the speeches their own.

¹⁸ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1105.

¹⁹ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1105.

The trope of “time standing still” is a familiar one in the English-speaking world. Steven Biel, in his cultural history of the Titanic disaster, suggests that stopping time is a textual strategy that enables the possibility of human action and meaning creation in the face of overwhelming events.²⁰ In this sense, Chrétien’s claim that time stood still on September 11 can be interpreted as an acknowledgement of the horrific nature of the attacks and, simultaneously, an affirmation of the capacity of the global community to fully grasp the significance of the event and to respond appropriately.

Yet framing the attacks as an event for which time stopped carries a further implication: it represents the attacks as a global event outside of history. Chrétien claimed that the attacks would be universally perceived around the world as an expression of the human capacity for evil, rather than as a political act. This construction of the attacks drew on a globalized discourse on human rights that, as Levy and Sznajder suggest, has employed the cosmopolitan memory of the Holocaust as a globalized symbol of human rights violation that can be appropriated within local and national contexts. Although Chrétien’s statement did not directly mention the Holocaust, he nonetheless constructed the attacks as an expression of evil that required a globalized response framed in the language of human rights.

The evil perpetrators of this horror represent no community or religion. They stand for evil, nothing else...this is a struggle against terrorism not against any one community or faith. Today more than ever we must reaffirm the fundamental values of our charter of rights and freedoms: the equality of every race, every colour, every religion and every ethnic origin.²¹

This passage is fascinating for the way it constructs human rights principles embodied in the Charter as the basis for the global social order. In this reading, the “evil perpetrators” become a faceless symbol of all that stands outside the liberal human rights framework, as represented by the Charter. As the incarnation of evil, the attackers stand beyond values, reason, and human comprehension; framing them as evil forecloses the possibility that they can be perceived as people with particular historical grievances, perspectives, and agendas. In Chrétien’s human rights narrative, the September 11 perpetrators were written out of the “civilized” world, relegated to a terrain beyond human rights, a realm constructed as both terrifying and unknowable: a realm of evil.

²⁰ Steven Biel, *Down with the Old Canoe: A Cultural History of the Titanic Disaster* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996), 154-7. I am grateful to OHF’s anonymous reviewer for pointing me to this work.

²¹ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1120.

Chrétien's commentary on the global nature of the attack and his invocation of a human rights response was paralleled by a strong emphasis on the national significance of the attacks. He highlighted the fact that 100,000 Canadians had participated in a "National Day of Mourning" several days earlier on the Hill. His statement, taken as a whole, collapsed the distinctions between global and national memory. Chrétien spelled out the Canadian implications of this global event when he declared:

let us be clear: this was not just an attack on the United States. These cold-blooded killers struck a blow at the values and beliefs of free and civilized people everywhere. The world has been attacked. The world must respond. Because we are at war against terrorism[,] and Canada, a nation founded on a belief in freedom, justice and tolerance, will be part of that response.²²

This statement is particularly interesting because it is the only sentence of his lengthy speech in which the word "war" appears. Yet the fact that he does use the language of war even once is significant. It suggests that Canada, as a nation with an historic commitment to "freedom, justice and tolerance," must intervene with military force to protect those principles.

Chrétien made every effort to affirm the centrality of the human rights narrative, and to reassure his audience of the Liberal government's commitment to democratic freedoms even in a time of war. As he put it,

Our actions will be ruled by resolve but not by fear. If laws need to be changed they will be. If security has to be increased to protect Canadians it will be. We will remain vigilant but will not give in to the temptation in a rush to increase security to undermine the values that we cherish and which have made Canada a beacon of hope, freedom and tolerance in the world.

We will not be stampeded in the hope, vain and ultimately self-defeating, that we can make Canada a fortress against the world.²³

²² House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1115. This passage was originally delivered in French, as follows: "Soyons clairs. Cette attaque ne visait pas seulement les États-Unis. Les tueurs ont agi de sang-froid et porté un coup aux valeurs et aux convictions des peuples libres et civilisés de la terre entière. Le monde a subi une attaque. Le monde doit riposter. Et le Canada--un pays fondé sur un idéal de liberté, de justice et de tolérance--participera à cette riposte car nous sommes en guerre contre le terrorisme."

²³ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1115.

This statement established a tension between national security priorities and democratic values, which Chrétien resolved by asserting that his government would take a measured approach to any policy changes. In taking this stance Chrétien resisted the idea that Canada should embrace the intensified national security apparatus then being advocated by the US government. Rejecting the idea that Canada should become “a fortress against the world,” he went to great lengths to establish Canada’s moral identity and the need to protect that identity. He defined that identity in terms of Canada’s commitment to diversity:

Canada is a nation of immigrants from all corners of the globe, people of all nationalities, colours and religions. This is who we are. Let there be no doubt. We will allow no one to force us to sacrifice our values or traditions under the pressure of urgent circumstances.²⁴

Chrétien’s celebration of a multicultural vision of Canada drew heavily upon a human rights vision of the Canadian past. His statement represents the government as unequivocally dedicated to the pursuit of this vision, with a commitment to ensuring that the demands of war and national security not be permitted to erode Canada’s commitment to human rights.

Chrétien’s affirmation of a human rights vision of Canadian national identity was the vehicle that made it possible for him to construct Canada as a “good” nation forced to join a war against the evil of terrorism. This moral Canada could not stand idly by when family members had been attacked:

We are all Canadians. We are a compassionate and righteous people. When we see the searing images of mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, many of them Canadian, wandering the streets of New York looking for their missing loved ones, we know where our duty lies.

We have never been a bystander in the struggle for justice in the world. We will stand with the Americans as neighbours, as friends, as family. We will stand with our allies. We will do what we must to defeat terrorism.²⁵

Here Chrétien articulated two visions of Canadian identity: the first rooted in compassion and justice, and the second built upon a political, economic, and military alliance with the United States. Presenting these two identities as compatible, he framed the struggle for justice as a struggle to defeat terrorism in alliance with the United States. The prospect of military intervention in Afghanistan, with all of the troubling questions of efficacy, economics, and

²⁴ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1115.

²⁵ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1120.

morality raised by such a response, was rendered benign and unquestionable by the evocative symbolism of loyalty to neighbours, friends, and family. The structure of this argument mirrors the narratives that undergird popular memory of Canada's participation in World War II. Chrétien framed the war against terrorism, like the war against fascism, as the campaign of free, civilized, democratic nations to defeat evil. The fact that Chrétien did not directly invoke this historical memory is perhaps the most intriguing aspect of his speech. In his concern to frame the Canadian response to the attacks in terms of the demands of justice and requirements of friendship with the United States, he scrupulously avoided any mention of Canadian historical involvements in past wars.

Chrétien's global human rights narrative articulated a view of Canada's national past quite different from the militarist narrative of Canadian history articulated by Leader of the Opposition Stockwell Day of the Canadian Alliance Party. Day began his speech, like Chrétien, arguing for global solidarity against terrorism. He viewed the attacks as the embodiment of evil aimed at all democratic and freedom-loving peoples:

Last week the world saw the face of evil. However good may yet be able to arise out of the evil if the citizens of the free countries of the world rise as one, say that this evil shall not stand, and work together to eliminate it from the earth.²⁶

Unlike Chrétien, however, Day's narrative specifically constructed the attacks as "barbaric acts of war."²⁷ Where Chrétien constructed Canada as a "nation of immigrants from all corners of the globe" committed to values embodied in the charter of rights and freedom, Day narrated Canada as a country with a proud history of fighting wars to protect Canadian freedom and democracy:

In the past when summoned to action in World War I when we were a nation of only some eight million people, 625,000 soldiers went into action from Canada. In World War II we again made a huge effort, especially in relation to the size of our population. As well, in Korea and in the gulf, Canada proved itself ready. We joined with our allies and did our share, sometimes at great cost.

Now it is no different. The war on terrorism will require real sacrifices and new priorities. Now we must face the difficult question of whether Canada is ready to face this new struggle. Canada is a free and democratic society. It is precisely because we are a free and democratic society with

²⁶ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1155.

²⁷ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1125.

values and desires to protect our way of life that we cannot avoid the awful responsibility of joining the war on terrorism.²⁸

In this key statement, Day linked the need for Canada's participation in the "war on terrorism" to Canadian participation in other twentieth century wars, suggesting that all of these wars were defensive wars necessary to protect Canadian values and way of life. Day's reference to "new priorities" should be read as a critique of Canada's declining commitment to military preparedness and a claim about the need to reverse this trend. Later in his speech, Day called on the government to implement comprehensive anti-terrorism legislation, tighten border and airport security, and allocate more resources to military, police, and intelligence institutions.²⁹ To rationalize the need for these measures, Day appealed to the recent history of similar legislation and resource allocation in the United States and the United Kingdom. He linked the U.S. anti-terrorism legislation implemented in the aftermath of the 1996 Oklahoma City bombing to the comprehensive Anti-Terrorism Act implemented by the U.K. in 2000, suggesting that Canada was remiss in not enacting similar legislation. This narrative framed Canada's recent history as a story of failure to keep up with Anglo-American security priorities.

At the root of Day's overall narrative is the claim that the past that matters is a shared Anglo-American past concerned primarily with protecting democracy by eliminating security risks through war and "get-tough" legislation. Day's effort to foreground Canadian historic allegiances to Anglo-American military alliances was a dominant feature of his speech. Asserting "NATO is perhaps the most successful military and political alliance in history,"³⁰ Day argued forcefully that Canada, as a NATO member, had a duty to make a clear military commitment to the United States and NATO's coalition to combat terrorism. One particularly intriguing feature of Day's appeal to Anglo-American solidarity is his invocation of Canadian loyalty to the British crown. Day noted that Canadian democracy was modeled on the "Westminster parliamentary system" in which "it falls to the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to ask difficult and at times painful questions and to pose alternatives".³¹ Such a phrasing indirectly invokes Canada's historic allegiance to the British monarchy, and obliquely critiques the Liberal government for its lack of loyalty to the crown. At first glance this language appears quaint and even misplaced, given the deeply attenuated and contested relationship between the Canadian political system and the British monarchy and also Day's unquestioning allegiance to the United States. Yet his invocation of

²⁸ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1135.

²⁹ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1140-1150.

³⁰ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1150.

³¹ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1135.

loyalty to the British crown can be read as an attempt to commemorate Canada's past loyalties to the British Empire, and to suggest that there is historical continuity between this imperial project and the American global order. The unspoken context of Day's affirmation of Canada's status within the British Empire is racial, cultural, and religious: he was commemorating Canada's proud status as a settler colony within an empire built upon ideas and institutions committed to white, English, and Christian dominance. Read in this light, Day's final words to Parliament are a poignant reminder of the symbolic power of the imperial narrative: "In these next days and weeks may God grant wisdom to our Prime Minister and to this parliament. God save our Queen. God keep our land glorious and free."³²

Day's militarist version of Canada's past stands in sharp contrast to Chrétien's view of Canada as an historic exemplar of justice and tolerance. For Day, the Canadian past needed to be understood in particularist rather than global terms: he suggested that national self-interest, not the desire for global justice, had motivated Canadian participation in the wars of the past. The "war on terror" was no different from past wars fought in the name of protecting the Canadian "way of life" from the enemies of democracy and freedom.³³ For Day, the enemies of Canada were not abstract terrorists but real people, whom he specifically identified as Osama bin Laden, his al-Qaeda movement, and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan implicated in sheltering the movement.³⁴

Yet Day chose not to completely ignore the discourse of human rights in his statement. In his speech he urged Parliament to remember that Canada's Muslim and Arab communities were not the enemies of Canada:

At this hour of darkness, let us reach out in a special way to our peaceful Arab and Muslim friends and neighbours here in Canada and let us reject any backlash against the innocent even as we strive to bring the guilty to justice.³⁵

In spite of his reliance on the language of war and national defence, here Day turned to the language of justice and human rights in his effort to align with Canadian human rights commitments. In this he echoed a similar statement by Chrétien, who expressed sadness at public expressions of hostility against Muslim Canadians and other minority groups, calling such acts "completely unacceptable."³⁶

³² House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1155.

³³ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1135.

³⁴ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1130.

³⁵ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1130.

³⁶ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1115.

I have dwelt in some detail on the differences between these two speeches by Chrétien and Day in order to show how differently the leaders of Canada's two major political parties in 2001 narrated Canada's national past. The fact that Day would choose to employ the human rights narrative to affirm the rights of Arab and Muslim Canadians highlights the fact that Canada's historical commitments to human rights and to military preparedness have not typically been viewed as mutually exclusive. On the contrary, these two distinctive narratives are both strongly rooted in a shared memory of World War II as a just war required to safeguard liberal democracy against the rise of fascism.

While this shared memory made its appearance in the statements of other party leaders, there were also significant differences in the way this memory was used to support particular party platforms. Joe Clark's speech to the House provides an informative contrast to Day's narration of a militarist Canadian past, and also Chrétien's emphasis on a human rights narrative. Clark, speaking as the leader of the marginalized Progressive Conservative – Democratic Representative Caucus, began his speech by invoking a globalized human rights narrative, declaring that on September 11 "all of us became victims, victims of acts of horrific cruelty aimed at creating upheaval in public order and all of humanity."³⁷ Clark was quick to join other leaders in urging caution in assigning blame on the basis of ethnicity or religion: "We must be very careful that in responding to this crisis that we do not create new victims or blame whole communities for the acts of people who in any society would be judged extremists ... no one is more shocked or more offended by this atrocity in the United States than members of the Canadian Arab and Muslim communities."³⁸ Clark's opening appeals to Canadian commitments to human rights conveyed an intention to distinguish his response from Stockwell Day's more explicitly militarist narrative.

Clark's vision of Canada, however, was not predominantly a rights-oriented vision. His vision of Canada's role in the world was of a country committed to ensuring "that freedom and order prevail and prevail together."³⁹ In this vision, Clark narrated Canadian values in terms of a dual commitment to democratic freedoms and social order. His proposal for a Canadian response to the September 11 attacks was framed in terms of Canada's historical commitment to NATO internationalism, economic liberalism and solidarity with the United States:

³⁷ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1225. This passage was originally delivered in French, as follows: "nous sommes toutes et tous devenus victimes, victimes d'actes d'une horrible cruauté destinés à ébranler l'ordre public et l'humanité toute entière."

³⁸ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1225.

³⁹ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1225.

This nation, our people, our traditions, our parliament and government can play leading roles in shaping the world's response to this new terror. That is what Canada does in this difficult world. We put our values to work. We did that when NATO was formed, when peacekeeping was established, when new treaties of trade were framed and when apartheid was fought. We must do that now with our closest friends next door and with our allies against terror around the world.⁴⁰

This passage is interesting for the particular way it narrates Canadian involvements in international affairs. Clark invoked Canada's role in establishing the NATO alliance as the seminal historical moment of Canadian support for international freedom and order. He alluded to the history of Canadian military involvements in peacekeeping missions, but avoided any reference to the United Nations. He celebrated the establishment of the free trade agreements that fostered greater economic integration between Canada and the United States, while also pointing out that the Canadian government was willing to take a position independent of both the U.S. and the U.K. when it came out in support of racial equality in South Africa. The historical memory that Clark drew upon is a story of Canada's unique military, political, and economic contributions to the fight for freedom and the preservation of the social and international order as defined by North American and European states.

Clark mobilized this narrative about the Canadian past to strongly urge the government to involve Parliament in reviewing all areas of federal jurisdiction with the aim of increasing national security. He urged that CSIS should receive increased levels of funding as a part of this effort. Clark stopped short of explicitly advocating war in his appeal, yet his language invoked strong militarist images. His use of the image of Canada as a "fortress" was a subtle challenge to Chrétien's framing of Canadian identity:

The Prime Minister said that Canada should not become a fortress against the world. That is true. However, Canada should be a fortress in the world, a nation known by our friends and allies to be strong and reliable.⁴¹

With this imagery, Clark reframed the militarist narrative. In contrast to the Alliance emphasis on a "war on terror," Clark's concern for both freedom and order led him to promote an image of defensive strength buttressed by stricter national security policy. Yet the distinctions between the two narratives should not be overemphasized. Clark also spoke of Canada as having "a reputation as a

⁴⁰ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1225.

⁴¹ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1225.

nation that stands on the frontline of defending and advancing free societies”⁴² and ended his speech with the forceful assertion that the September 11 attacks were “a direct attack on us, on all of us, and we must be prepared to respond directly.”⁴³ Thus while he did not explicitly advocate war against bin Laden and the Taliban, he nonetheless promoted the historical memory of Canada as a nation willing to put its military forces into action in defense of freedom and order.

Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe signaled his intention to reframe the militarist and human rights narratives by opening his speech with a note of caution: “We must provide the best leadership we can, calmly, serenely, peacefully, remembering that anger is legitimate. It most certainly is legitimate, but it is not to be trusted.”⁴⁴ As his speech made clear, Duceppe’s concern was to raise questions about the wisdom of military intervention as an appropriate response to the September 11 attacks. He articulated the Canadian past in terms of its commitment to democratic values and human rights, and his resistance to military intervention was framed in these terms.

Duceppe, like Chrétien, appealed to a globalized human rights narrative in his response to the September 11 attacks. He argued that this was an attack “not only on the United States, but on democratic values, on freedom and on every country that defends these values.” However, he also suggested that it was

an attack on all peoples of the world who aspire to justice, freedom and democracy and especially those living under the yoke of tyrants and cranks, such as the people of Afghanistan, who face the totalitarian terror of the Taliban daily.⁴⁵

By invoking the people of Afghanistan as victims of both the September 11 attacks and the Taliban government, Duceppe separated the Afghani people from the actions of their government, and de-emphasized the image of the United States as victim. This narrative strategy complicated both the Alliance and Liberal narratives about the need to support military intervention to uphold Canada’s democratic commitments.

⁴² House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1225.

⁴³ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1235.

⁴⁴ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1200. Duceppe’s speech was delivered in French. This original text of this passage is as follows: “Nous devons assurer le leadership dans la mesure de nos possibilités, sereinement, en nous rappelant que la colère est légitime. Elle est certes légitime, mais elle est mauvaise conseillère.”

⁴⁵ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1200. The original text in French reads “une attaque contre toutes les populations du monde qui aspirent à la justice, à la liberté, à la démocratie, surtout les populations qui subissent le joug de tyrans et d’illuminés, telle la population afghane qui subit chaque jour la terreur totalitariste des talibans.”

Duceppe also invoked the human rights narrative of the Canadian past by explicitly urging a multilateral response rooted in international law. He viewed international organizations such as the UN and the International Criminal Court as the most appropriate bodies to ensure that terrorists “be brought to justice.”⁴⁶ Significantly, Duceppe narrated Canada’s responsibilities as a member of NATO in terms quite different from those of Day:

I support the fact that Canada adheres to article 5 of the NATO Treaty; however, this does not mean that we should give carte blanche to any and all measures. Parliament and our democratic institutions must always debate issues, be consulted, and decide on them. This is the democratic example that we must set to the rest of the world.⁴⁷

Duceppe was suggesting here that membership in NATO did not imply that democratic process within Canada should be subordinated to NATO’s priorities. At stake was Canada’s identity as a country committed to democratic values. Duceppe did not mince words in his refutation of the idea that the September 11 attacks required a military response. He argued that framing the attacks in the language of good and evil was problematic because such language promoted the idea of a religious and cultural war:

We must not fall into the trap of a civilization or religious war. Let us be respectful of God and Allah. Let us not get them involved in the wars of men. This is not a war between good and evil. We must avoid this reasoning, which only serves the bin Ladens of this world too well. Too often, we resort to evil to justify the empire of the good. But empires can never serve the good.⁴⁸

The historical memory that Duceppe articulated in this passage drew upon a popular anti-imperial narrative within Quebec society. As Jocelyn Létourneau

⁴⁶ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1200.

⁴⁷ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1200. The original passage in French is as follows: “J’appuie le fait que le Canada adhère à l’article 5 du Traité de l’OTAN, mais cela ne signifie pas, et soyons clairs, carte blanche à toutes mesures. En tout temps, le Parlement, nos institutions démocratiques doivent en débattre, être consultées et en décider. C’est là l’exemple démocratique que nous devons donner à l’ensemble de la planète.”

⁴⁸ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1200. This passage was delivered in French as follows: “Il ne faut pas tomber dans le piège d’une guerre de civilisation ou de religion. Soyons respectueux envers Dieu et Allah. Ne les mêlons pas aux guerres des hommes. Ce n’est pas une guerre entre le bien et le mal. Il faut sortir de cette dialectique qui sert justement les ben Laden de ce monde. Trop souvent, on fait le mal pour justifier l’empire du bien. Les empires ne peuvent jamais servir le bien.”

points out, this memory narrates the history of the Québécois as a long struggle for French Canadian liberation from the domination of the British Empire and later, Anglophone Canada.⁴⁹ Rooted in this historical narrative, Duceppe's statement is a critique of the historical and contemporary linkages between religion, culture, and empire. His call to leave "God and Allah" out of the debate also evoked a popular memory of the Quiet Revolution, specifically the Québécois rejection of the dominance of the Catholic church in public affairs. In the context of the parliamentary debate, it can be read as a direct challenge to Stockwell Day's explicit use of Christian imagery to argue for war. It is clear from this passage that Duceppe soundly rejected the religious and imperialist imagery of the militarist narrative of Canadian identity proposed by Day.

Duceppe also reframed the human rights narrative employed by Jean Chrétien with the suggestion that there is no universal agreement on what constitutes "good" and "evil." Instead, he argued that empires employ such moral language to justify their power. For Duceppe, the September 11 attacks constituted an attack on democratic values worldwide, but should not be viewed as an "evil" framed in terms of either a religious war or human rights. Instead, Duceppe narrated the attacks as a product of oppressive socioeconomic and political conditions:

Fanaticism develops in a fertile ground, just like mushrooms thrive on rot. If we want to eliminate not only bin Laden but others who may manifest themselves, we must tackle the rotten situations that allow fanaticism to develop, including poverty, the absence of democracy and dictatorship. Such is the challenge we must meet.⁵⁰

The use of an organic metaphor likening fanaticism to mushrooms thriving on rot narrates the attacks as an inevitable product of domination and inequality in Afghanistan and around the world, not religious agency. Implied in this statement is the claim that the defense of Québécois and Canadian democracy requires Canadian efforts to eliminate poverty and dictatorship and encourage democracy worldwide.

⁴⁹ Jocelyn Létourneau, "Remembering Our Past: An Examination of the Historical Memory of Young Québécois," in *To the Past: History Education, Public Memory, and Citizenship in Canada*, ed. Ruth W. Sandwell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 70-87, 74-5.

⁵⁰ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1200. This passage was delivered in French as follows: "Le fanatisme se développe à partir d'un terreau fertile, tels les champignons sur la pourriture. Si nous voulons éliminer non seulement ben Laden mais d'autres qui risquent de surgir, il faut s'attaquer aux situations pourries qui permettent au fanatisme de se développer: la pauvreté, l'absence de démocratie, la dictature. Voilà le défi auquel nous sommes confrontés."

Duceppe's call to "tackle" the "rot" of poverty and dictatorship, however, remained mired in ambiguity on the question of the role of military intervention in carrying out this project. In a fascinating statement, he linked historical memory of World War II to the memory of the 1991 bombardment of Iraq, to contradictory effect:

We must also avoid falling into blind pacifism and reacting to effects rather than to causes. The pacifists of 1939 were wrong and we ended up with Hitler. In 1991, we went to war against Saddam Hussein. He is still in office, his people are still suffering and he is taking advantage of the situation like other despots who are leading countries in a dictatorial fashion while being billionaires.⁵¹

This statement is, first of all, a clear articulation of the shared memory of World War II as a just war. Duceppe's reference to the "pacifists of 1939" invokes the Allied memory of the Munich Pact,⁵² which has come to symbolize British and French resistance to declaring war against Germany before 1939 despite early awareness of Nazi internal repression and plans for territorial conquest. This phrasing draws upon the popular memory, prevalent within former Allied states, that reads British and French "appeasement" of Nazi Germany as a fundamental mistake that facilitated Hitler's growing dominance. Duceppe's use of the term "blind pacifism" is rhetorical and pejorative, since British and French leaders were clearly far from being pacifist in a principled sense. By invoking this shared historical memory, Duceppe was suggesting that military intervention is sometimes necessary to halt the "rot" of dictatorship. Yet in the next sentence, he admitted that military intervention had been ineffective in halting Hussein's dictatorship in Iraq. The conflicting implications of these two historical narratives suggest that a fundamental ambivalence about war and militarism lies at the heart of Duceppe's human rights narrative of the Canadian past.

Alexa McDonough, leader of the New Democratic Party, drew heavily upon a human rights narrative of the Canadian past. Her opening comment to the House affirmed that the NDP joined people around the world in "demanding that the perpetrators of these heinous crimes be tracked down and punished."⁵³ McDonough's proposal for a multilateral response anchored in international legal

⁵¹ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1200. The original passage in French reads as follows: "Nous ne devons pas verser--non plus dans le pacifisme aveugle--les pacifistes de 1939 ont eu tort; cela a donné Hitler--ni tomber dans des réactions qui s'attaquent aux effets plutôt qu'aux causes. En 1991, on a fait la guerre à Sadam Hussein. Il est toujours en place, son peuple souffre toujours et il profite de la situation comme d'autres potentats qui dirigent des pays de façon dictatoriale tout en étant milliardaires."

⁵² The Munich Pact was signed in 1938, not 1939.

⁵³ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1205.

conventions formed the backbone of her speech. Like Duceppe, she cautioned against a military response, and pointed out the need to address underlying problems of power, inequality, and poverty that gave rise to the attacks. Calling for “reflection and restraint” in the Canadian response, she constructed Canada as a country committed to “pursuing peaceful solutions to the tensions and hostilities that breed such mindless violence in our world.”⁵⁴

For McDonough, Canada’s response to the attacks needed to reflect Canada’s unique relationship with the United States, as well as its special role in the international community. Her invocation of the memory of former Liberal Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson and former NDP leader Tommy Douglas may be read as an effort to narrate Canada as a nation with an historic commitment to peace, international diplomacy and social welfare policy. McDonough argued that

We need to call upon our earlier traditions of having a more independent foreign policy. We need to always think in terms of multilateralism. We need to use our special relationship with the United States to represent all progressive and peace loving countries that want to build lasting solutions to the conditions that breed such horrendous violence.⁵⁵

This vision emphasized Canada as distinct from the United States in its foreign policy orientation. McDonough represented Canada not as a friend and ally of the United States, but rather as a country dedicated to the pursuit of peace, a state uniquely positioned to advocate for progressive policy alternatives in Washington. Given this stance, it is not surprising that McDonough did not use the language of victimhood with reference to “our neighbour to the south.”⁵⁶ Of all the party leaders, McDonough was the most directly critical of international and especially U.S. culpability in fostering conditions of inequality:

In the wake of these terrifying events, we need to reflect on the kind of international community we have created, where the images of mass destruction in the United States last week saw some Palestinian children actually dancing in the streets, where an international community can allow 5,000 children a month to die of malnutrition in Iraq, or hunger and preventable disease can claim the lives of thousands and thousands of children in the too many impoverished nations of the world.

We have to ask ourselves and consider what it means. What kind of political leadership funds and trains the likes of the mujahedeen and Osama bin Laden to overthrow the Afghanistan government and then gets

⁵⁴ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1205.

⁵⁵ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1220.

⁵⁶ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1205.

caught out when these same people turn their evil skills on their former supporters?⁵⁷

McDonough's comments reflect the view that the attacks were a product of conditions of impoverishment, inequality and oppression, a view that Duceppe also articulated. Yet while Duceppe identified these problems and warned of the dangers of empire in general terms, McDonough was much more direct in assigning responsibility to the United States government and the international community for creating and perpetuating conditions of injustice and violence. By invoking the U.S. and international role in the impoverishment of Palestinian and Iraqi children, and linking these conflicts to U.S. support for bin Laden and his supporters during the Cold War, McDonough made the point that the September 11 attacks must be understood in the context of global structures of political, economic, and military power.

McDonough urged that the attacks should be addressed as a "crime against humanity" and that the perpetrators be tried in an international criminal court.⁵⁸ While she eschewed the language of "good" and "evil", she nonetheless drew upon cosmopolitan Holocaust memory when she asserted "The cry from America today and from around the world is that this can never be allowed to happen again."⁵⁹ McDonough also drew upon the shared memory of World War II to articulate her view of Canada as a country committed to human rights. However, her narration of World War II memory was used not to argue for war, but rather to advocate for the application of international law:

Let me be clear. I am not advocating pacifism or appeasement in the face of aggression. The international community must spare no effort in bringing to justice all those responsible for these atrocities and rid the world of the scourge of terrorism.⁶⁰

Through the reference to appeasement McDonough invoked the shared memory of World War II as a just war that ended fascism and the Holocaust. In a complex reframing, however, she suggested that the "scourge of terrorism" could be stopped using international legal mechanisms, not war. The explicit rejection of "pacifism" and "appeasement"—a narrative move also employed by Duceppe—can be interpreted as a rhetorical strategy of alignment with the dominant, shared memory of the "good" World War II in order to mobilize it against the "war on terror." McDonough made her anti-war objectives clear when she declared:

⁵⁷ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1210.

⁵⁸ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1210.

⁵⁹ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1205.

⁶⁰ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1210.

We must resolve to see that this can never happen again but if we pursue the path of blind vengeance, the path of the clenched fist, we are guaranteeing that this will happen again. Military strikes, while they may satisfy an understandable desire for vengeance, will solve nothing if thousands more innocent people are victimized in some other part of the world.⁶¹

In this reading, militarism and war do not serve a human rights vision, but only feed a cycle of retributive violence that produces more human rights abuses on all sides.

This analysis of party leaders' responses to the September 11 attacks reveals that all five political leaders mobilized historical memory in diverse ways to support different political agendas. Both Stockwell Day and Joe Clark drew upon a militarist understanding of the Canadian past and role in the world, yet they articulated quite distinctive visions of Canada. Day narrated Canada as a country with a proud military history dedicated to fighting wars for freedom and democracy. He suggested that Canada should unequivocally support the U.S.-led military intervention against terrorism and institute sweeping policy changes to improve domestic national security. Clark, by contrast, narrated Canada as committed to the twin pillars of social order and freedom, and placed the weight of his argument in favour of improved national security and solidarity with NATO and U.S. actions, while stopping short of an explicit call for war in his concern to uphold Canadian democratic values. Indeed, Clark's use of historical memory posed a subtle challenge to Day's unabashed celebration of Canada's military past. However, despite his less strident tone, Clark's narrative relied on a militarist image of Canadian identity and ultimately sanctioned a military response to the September 11 attacks.

Chrétien, Duceppe, and McDonough all drew upon a human rights vision of the Canadian past. As this analysis makes clear, each of these political leaders attributed very different meanings to this human rights narrative. While Chrétien argued that Canadian human rights commitments imposed a duty to stand in solidarity with the U.S. military campaign to defeat terrorism, Duceppe and McDonough argued the opposite: that a human rights commitment necessitated a multilateral response based in international law, not a military response. Duceppe placed Canadian democratic values at the centre of his narrative, and expressed his concerns about the "war on terror" in the language of anti-imperialism that drew upon the Québécois popular memory of French Canadian oppression under English rule. McDonough, by contrast, drew upon the memory of the left-liberal

⁶¹ House of Commons Debates 137, no. 79 (September 17, 2001), 1205.

pursuit of peace, international diplomacy, and social welfare policy to argue forcefully against Canadian participation in U.S.-led military intervention.

Chrétien's mobilization of a human rights narrative to defend his government's pro-war position is striking for the virtual absence of military images and rhetoric. That Chrétien did take a pro-war stance is perhaps not surprising; as Prime Minister, he was subject to domestic, NATO, and U.S. political pressures in ways that the other party leaders were not. What is significant is his use of moral language that invoked a "civilized" world pitted against the "evil" forces of terror. I have suggested that this language drew upon cosmopolitan Holocaust memory, and also the dominant popular memory of World War II as a just war against fascism. But this was not only a language of war; it was also a language of empire, a discourse of global power that constructed Western human rights and liberal democracy as "civilized" and everything outside that paradigm as "terrorist." In this discourse, "terrorists" are by definition insensitive to international law and ethical standards: military force is the only thing "they" will understand. It is notable that while Stockwell Day was the only leader to openly celebrate Canada's military, Christian, and British imperial past, it was Chrétien who most thoroughly established the universal evil of the September 11 "terrorists", whom he constructed in opposition to Canada's moral virtue as an exemplary nation dedicated to human rights.

Of course, these were early days in the "war on terror." In the context of the eleven-year war in Afghanistan and the growth of Canadian government support for militarism, it is worth asking how political narratives and public memory of Canadian national identity has evolved. This is a topic that needs further investigation. In the parliamentary debates that occurred immediately after the September 11 attacks, public memory of Canada's national past on the world stage was in flux; neither a human rights nor a militarist version of Canadian identity appeared to dominate the House at this historical moment. Yet I think that Chrétien's mobilization of human rights language to justify war prefigured a shift toward a more militarist emphasis in the human rights narrative of post "9-11" public discourse. When Chrétien declared that Canada must defend "freedom, justice, and tolerance" in the war against terrorism, he invoked popular memory of Canada's participation in the "good" World War II against fascism. In this memory, war was the only means to achieve justice. The narrative of Canadians fighting for freedom is a familiar one; Day mobilized it to argue forcefully for Canada's participation in the US-led mission to Afghanistan. Yet Chrétien needed a new narrative to support his claim that postwar Canada—a nation that had not gone to war for fifty years, and that had come to view peacekeeping as a distinctly Canadian response to international crises—was duty-bound to fight terrorism. This narrative did not emphasize war, or fighting, but rather Canada's obligation to join a global struggle against the faceless evil of terrorism. By unequivocally

harnessing human rights language to this new anti-terrorism discourse, Chrétien shaped a new story for Canada: one that touted the need to go to war for global justice, and simultaneously attempted to deemphasize the memory of Canada as a war-fighting nation. This reframing of Canadian national identity linked just war with human rights ideas for the generations of Canadians whose memories of peacekeeping missions were stronger than the public memory of World War II. In the emotionally charged parliamentary debate that followed the September 11 attacks, this new story powerfully undermined alternative, antiwar versions of the human rights narrative.