

Thoughts on the 19th Commemoration of 9/11



By Jerry Gordon [\[i\]](#)

The 19th Anniversary of 9/11 – the Pearl Harbor of the 21st Century- commemorates the loss of more than 2,977 Americans and foreigners in attacks by 19 Egyptian, Saudi Arabian and Yemeni Al Qaeda Jihad extremists. They seized four airliners and crashed them as flying bombs in what were the twin towers in Lower Manhattan, the Pentagon in Washington. A struggle with passengers aboard the fourth plane forced it to crash in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The death toll now exceeds 3, 557 if you include the 582 NYPD, NYFD and EMS personnel who succumbed to cancer through 2018 arising from toxic exposures at the former site of the twin towers of the destroyed World Trade Center. My son and I have a special interest in this as we were in Manhattan that fateful day with his law firm colleagues viewing the fall of the twin towers and later meeting some of its victims escaping from the

catastrophe.

This year, the commemoration of 9/11 is muted by the deaths of more than 190,000 Americans, as of this writing during the Covid-19 Pandemic -a toll over 50 times greater than that of 9/11. A Pandemic that has yet to reach an end. It has disrupted normal daily activities requiring many to remain isolated in quarantine, forcing us to work from home, businesses to close resulting in tens of millions unemployed and a severe economic recession. Public health protocols have forced us to become masked, keep social distances and don personal protective equipment in the hope of keeping the dreaded virus from taking loved ones, colleagues and hero front line health and EMS workers. We now work remotely holding meetings and attending religious and national observances virtually through Skype and Zoom. We make attempts at reopening schools and colleges, only to find them as venues for spreading the dreaded airborne virus. We conduct sporting activities, whether baseball, basketball, hockey, or tennis in so-called "bubbles" without audiences. The return of both college and professional football will test the "bubble" concept. We anxiously await news on the development of vaccines to inoculate and save us without the prospect of knowing when they may complete critical testing to be produced and distributed in the hundreds of millions of dosages.

This 19th Commemoration of 9/11 has witnessed some ironies. There is fresh hope of normalization in the Middle East between Arabs and Israelis given the Abraham Accords to be formally signing on September 15th at the White House. This treaty between the Sunni United Arab Emirates and the Jewish Nation of Israel has been called a "warm peace" unlike the "cold peace" agreements with both Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. Ironic, as Abu Dhabi was where the 15 Saudi Arabian 9/11 perpetrators departed on their deadly Jihad mission. Saudi Arabia gave permission for US and Israeli delegations to transit to Abu Dhabi. There are signs that similar agreements

between Israel and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and other Gulf Emirates may soon follow, giving rise to cautious optimism.

The irony is the Palestinians who "cheered" the 9/11 attackers are now chastised by fellow Sunni Arabs for criticizing the Abraham Accords. They have lost support for their cause as Gulf Arab emirates and Saudi Arabia deem Israel as the strong horse in the Middle East capable of dealing with the threat of an aspiring nuclear Iran. A Shia Iran that trained and transported the Saudi perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks and was tried in a New York Federal Court case that awarded \$7 billion in compensation to 1,001 9/11 victims.

President Trump, whose special envoys assisted in brokering these agreements is being considered for a possible Nobel Peace Prize. He is also endeavoring to wind down US forces in Syria and Iraq. In Afghanistan, the Administration is trying to end the 19-year war and draw down more US forces by facilitating a peace agreement between the Taliban and the Afghan government. Ironic as it was the Taliban who gave safe harbor to Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, who perpetrated 9/11. Bin Laden was eventually killed by US Navy Seals in 2011 in neighboring Pakistan, supposedly an ally of the US in combatting Islamic terrorism.

Despite these problems, 9/11 commemorations will be held at the Shanksville, Pennsylvania memorial honoring the passengers aboard United Flight 93, who made what many of us considered the first counterterrorism attack. Led by passenger Todd Beamer they overpowered the Al Qaeda skyjackers who seized the flight sacrificing their lives so that our nation's capital was spared. There will also be a commemoration at the memorial for the victims of American Air Flight 77 that Al Qaeda Jihadis took over and crashed into the Pentagon. In lower Manhattan, at the 9/11 memorial in the shadow of the Freedom Tower there will be a gathering of families and relatives to witness the annual tolling of the bell and reading the names of those killed when Al Qaeda Jihadis

seized American Air Flight 11 that took down the North Tower and United Flight 175 that destroyed the South Tower. The City of New York started the 9/11 commemoration by turning on the ghostly twin beacons reflecting the loss of the twin towers of the World Trade Center.

Let us revere the memories of the 9/11 victims offering prayers of solace and comfort to their surviving families and loved ones.

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