



Students covering campus, Washington & the world

Select page

WORLD OFFERS DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON 9/11

3 YEARS AGO BY ADMINISTRATOR IN UNCATEGORIZED TAGGED: 9/11, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FOREIGN MEDIA, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Sept. 11 receives less attention and sympathy overseas as its 10th anniversary approaches.

While America prepares to commemorate the event, the world is more concerned with natural disasters and social uprisings than the day that forever marked American history. The aftermath of the [London riots](#) and the European Union economic crisis consumes the Europeans' attention; earthquakes and floods are Asia's concern, while the Middle East struggles with political changes.

9/11 'touched a fiber in all of humanity'

Despite being miles away from the events of 9/11, most foreigners can vividly recall how they felt when they heard the news, including Tulio Gavidia, 26, a dentist in Caracas, Venezuela. Gavidia woke up after the first airplane hit one of the towers; he remembers most networks tuning into [CNN en Español](#).

"It was one of the most surreal experiences of my life because it didn't affect me directly, but I think it touched a fiber in all of humanity," he said.

Europe's eyes were fixed on the news as well.

"I was shocked because innocent people suffered," said Olga Kuchura, a doctor from Belarus. "But if my relatives were affected, I would be much more hurt."

Similarly, Adrian Sanchez, a young broadcast journalist in Venezuela, remembers the devastation he experienced upon receiving the news.

"It was such a shock because we had to come to terms with the fact that any country is vulnerable to terrorism, even the first world power," he said.

*"That's what the World Trade Center was- a symbol of modernity, progress, civilization and strength."
- Adrian Sanchez, broadcast journalist in Venezuela*

However, some people were not as affected.

Jessica Mavare, 24, a Venezuelan entrepreneur, doesn't believe her life changed after the attacks. She

was in Florida and did not understand the magnitude of what was happening but remembers stores being closed and people crying.

But when she went back to Venezuela, people around her saw it as a distant problem.

“My boyfriend was at the beach, and he barely even found out,” she said. “We are a land of forgetting about big issues, and we have a very short-term historic memory. Venezuela is basically women and alcohol. We can’t face the hard stuff; we tend to focus on other things to make reality bearable.”

According to the [New York Times](#), Venezuela is the most dangerous country in the Americas. In 2009 alone, 16,000 civilians were killed, more than the number of people killed in Iraq and Mexico combined. Mavare admits that in her country, people tend to avoid problems and focus on fun instead.

“I’ve heard people talking about conspiracy theories, and I agree,” she said. “It makes sense so that Bush could have access to Arab lands and oil.”

Major events that impacted international com...



[Major events that impacted international communities in 2001; these events didn't receive as much media coverage.](#) Click on the icons to view more information.

In some areas of the world, 'people face violence ... almost everyday'

There are a number of people around the world whose lives were unaffected by the attacks. When compared to the economic, political and social situations their countries had faced, people were confused about the United States' reactions towards the Middle East. For instance, as the aftermath of the riots consume media attention in London, England, Siddart Singh, a student at the University of London, believes that it is important to focus on current events. “I didn't even think about it 'til just now,” said Singh. “Especially with everything that's going on here, I don't see them [the media] covering it a lot.” Financial, social and economic issues make it hard for people abroad to share American sentiments.

“As devastating as 9/11 was, I think our media is more focused on what we're facing,” said Singh. “Also, if we started remembering everything we'd been through, we'd have an event almost every day of the year.”

Similarly, Bhagyalakshmi Daga, 22, in Hyderabad, India, remembers her initial shock, but thinks that the United States overreacted.

“I think it’s different because the U.S. hasn’t really gotten attacked before,” said Daga. “I mean in India, especially Kashmir, people face violence by Pakistani terrorists almost everyday.”

Kashmir has been a historically disputed region between India and Pakistan. According to statistics from the [Council on Foreign Relations](#), more than 47,000 people have been killed since 1987; suicide bombings and religion-based violence is an everyday occurrence.

“From a global perspective, the United States should’ve considered its attack strategy more carefully before initiating a full-on attack,” said Daga. “There is something to be said about turning the other cheek. They should’ve waged a war on terrorism, not Iraq or Afghanistan.”

[Rick Rockwell](#) is the director of the International Media program at [American University](#) and is the co-author of “Media Power in Central America.” He has also worked as a correspondent in Central America and Mexico.

He said this reaction abroad is not unusual.

“We were a target, and it became the start of two wars,” he said. “We squandered the goodwill in how we processed those wars.”

According to Rockwell, certain countries’ leaders like Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez found a way to portray the United States as “the bad guy.”

“Did we win the cultural war? No. That is a great failing of the Bush administration,” he said.

He also admitted that even though it’s an important date that is worth remembering for Americans, he pointed out the U.S. expects the rest of the world to care about this anniversary as well.

“It doesn’t receive as much TV time as it did on the day that it happened, but that refers to any piece of news.”

– Irina Venduzen, Voice of America

On the other hand, the international media plans on covering 9/11 from a variety of perspectives.

Irina Venduzen, a foreign correspondent for [Voice of America](#), believes that they will cover the 10th anniversary extensively.

“We have a lot of reports and analysis devoted to this topic,” she said. “It doesn’t receive as much television time as it did on the day that it happened, but that refers to any piece of news.”

Simon Wilson, bureau editor for [BBC News](#) in Washington, D.C., said that on top of the day-to-day news, the network has a team working on the coverage of the anniversary in New York and D.C. They will devote time to it, he noted, to reflect on how America has changed since the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

“British citizens lost their lives that day as well,” Wilson said.

Overall, international media has little coverage of events commemorating the date, and most news websites plan on only publishing wires that mention the proximity of the anniversary.

Renata Karciauskaite, 24, is currently a student in Lithuania, but was in Germany on 9/11. She remembers thinking it was a movie at first; as soon as she realized it wasn’t, shock and sadness followed. But she admits that it’s a thing of the past.

“The memories are fading out,” she said. “It is like the Holocaust — it was terrible, but you have to move on. Current events are more important for people.”