

# September Eleventh;

*What Kind of Holiday is It?*

An essay by

Joshua Michail

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Recently, about a week ago now, I noticed a new holiday on the calendar. On the anniversary of the day when one airliner crashed into a field in rural Pennsylvania, another flown into The Pentagon in Washington DC, and two more airliners were flown into the two tall towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, there is now a holiday? This new holiday is meant to commemorate the loss of almost 3,000 lives at the hands of 19 terrorists. It seems that someone convinced plenty of people that this was a good idea. So, now we have a holiday to commemorate the victims of the terrorist attacks on America. That seems okay, maybe fair enough. Any guesses, though, as to what this holiday is called? It's apparently "Patriot Day". It struck me quickly that there was something wrong with this holiday. I can, in fact think of a few things. Not problems necessarily with having a day on the anniversary to remember the victims of the terrorist attacks, but rather with that particular holiday. What kind of a holiday is a "Patriot Day"?

This new holiday was passed by a vote 407 in favor to none opposed, as US House of Representatives Joint Resolution 71 on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2001. The legal basis of this holiday is laws 107-89 and 111-13 of US Federal law. Under Bush, at first, the holiday was called "Prayer and Remembrance for the Victims of the Terrorist Attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001". President Barack Obama, on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2012 proclaimed the holiday is renamed "Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance". Though this is still cumbersome, it is at least somewhat improved. But, the best improvement was the removal of the word "prayer", thus diminishing the holiday's violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the US Constitution. "Prayer" in the name was a de-facto government endorsement of religion, at least in general. There are, still, several points that I take issue with. First, I want to look at what is a "patriot" realistically. Does a real patriot need to constantly defend him or her self against accusations of not appreciating his/her nation? As if it's reasonable to jump to the conclusion that one is not a patriot unless he or she says "I'm a patriot". I would think that the vast majority of Americans, even resident aliens, are generally patriotic. I suspect, further, that that is true for most nations. I'd think that most Brits are patriotic to Britain, and most Japanese people are patriotic to Japan, for example. But, perhaps this concept is lost on many of the loudest so-called "patriots".

But, there are more points to contend. Like the issue of redundancy. There is the issue of the fact that a "Patriot's Day" seems like it might, in America, be one of a few holidays that already exist.

Independence Day – the “Fourth of July” to those more vociferous of “patriots” – immediately comes to mind. Then there is also the opportunity for patriotic display on Veteran's Day, when we celebrate veterans of our armed forces and we say “thank you for your service to our nation and defending our freedoms”. Of-course another chance to tout one's patriotism is Memorial Day, when we are supposed to remember and appreciate all those who gave their lives to defend our nation. The war dead. It seems that there is a certain palette in America, which just can't get enough of faux patriotism. They have a taste for the tasteless. They're the ones, you know, who just love soaring eagles painted with the Stars and Stripes, over a “battlefield cross” – the rifle stuck in the ground with a helmet on top – and “God Bless, godity-god-god-god” printed over all things American.

Perhaps we could even have a “Terrorism Defiance Day” on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September? After-all, that would certainly be more fitting to the memory and honor of the victims of the terrorists than any pseudo-patriotism holiday. We ought to stand up to tell Muslim extremists, Islamists and religious bigots and terrorists worldwide that we will not cower. That they will never win. That we will always defy them and their malicious bullying. And this is more appropriate considering that again they have attacked the civilized world. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of September this year, 2012, we learned that terrorists staged an attack on US embassies in Cairo, Egypt and Benghazi, Libya, even killing the US ambassador to Libya and several other Americans. This violent assault on humanity and civilization was done under the pretense of “offense”, as if the exercise of freedom were a valid reason to justify murder. These barbarian Islamists must be defied. They must eventually learn that their efforts to dominate the globe and to destroy civilization and humanity are futile.

Now, I also think if there is to be a holiday for the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, then perhaps it should be a “Remembrance Day” instead. It would be fair to say “let us remember all those whose lives were taken by Islamist terrorists.” Almost three thousand lives were taken and 6,000 more were injured by suicide terrorist attacks on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, 2001, on United States soil, but they were not all Americans. In fact, many of the victims were from many other nations. Remember, it was the called the “World Trade Center” for a reason. Additionally, in 2005, there was the 7<sup>th</sup> of July attacks in London on Underground trains, which was also terrorism. 700 people were wounded and 52 were killed. And, there was the attacks in Madrid, Spain on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2004, in which 191 people were murdered and 1,800 other people were injured. Clearly, the issue is not about America. It's the

violent Islamist terrorists against the rest of the world. It's about their terrorism and violence. "Patriot Day" is simply invalid and inappropriate, but a "Remembrance Day" would be valid and much more appropriate. Indeed, such a Remembrance Day should be international. And, we should include on Remembrance Day, all the victims in London, Madrid and many other places in addition to those in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington DC.

I'm also a bit concerned with this patriotism bragging nonsense. "Patriotism" is cheapened severely by the readiness with which it is thrown around. Everything becomes an excuse to say "I'm a patriot" for those who are all too easily moved by their emotions. These people who cry "patriotism" so frequently and so needlessly are themselves exploited by those who would use them against themselves. Actual patriotism is not flying a flag, or posting a picture on one's page on a website. Real patriotism is not about incessantly announcing one's church membership or attempting to impose one's twisted religious beliefs on everyone else. Though those who mostly loudly tout their supposed "patriotism" tend to act as though that is the case. In fact, they often are only using the term to apply pressure on others to accept their beliefs. This makes the word become toxic. They are, as a matter of fact, disrespecting those who are serving their nation. They are making the very idea of a "Patriot Day" repulsive. As if simply supporting and defending one's nation is not their kind of patriotism. Real patriots do not need another day for deliberately displaying pseudo-patriotism. A Remembrance Day is far more appropriate.