

C. The First Anchor Fact: 9-11

1. Among all the facts of American history that explain how the United States acts as the world police power, none stands out more dramatically than the terrorist attacks of “9-11” (which stands for September 11th, 2001).
2. Following a violent interpretation of the religion of Islam, terrorists hijacked four passenger airplanes and used them as bombs to destroy the twin towers in New York, as well as two other locations. The attack was a form of “jihad” (“holy war” in Islam).



September 11, 2001: the day the world changed from what it was before into what it is today — the first of the anchor facts in the story of America as the world police power.

3. From that day forward, the United States became focussed on fighting what has come to be known as the “War on Terror.” It invaded Afghanistan (where the government was known to support terrorists, including the organizer of the 9-11 attack, Osama Bin Laden, and then Iraq, which was supposed to be hiding weapons of “mass destruction” that could be placed in the hands of Jihadist terrorists.
4. Since 2001, other countries have suffered greatly in the conflict against terrorism, in part because of America’s actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, but also, as in Syria and Libya, where terrorists have started civil wars against the previous governments of those countries.
5. If you look again on the map of wars today, you will see all these locations in the Islamic world.
6. *One* of the reasons Americans voted for Donald Trump as president was the belief that he would take more effective actions against terrorism than his predecessor, Barack Obama.
7. It is difficult to exaggerate how much the world has changed since 9-11. That is why it is our first anchor fact.

D. Back to the Beginning Again: 1776

1. We have already explored the importance of the *Declaration of Independence* as a milestone in the history of the American social contract. Now we must learn to see it as an anchor fact of the story of America’s relationship to the wider world.

2. Evidently, in the *Declaration* we find the reason for the creation of a new country—in words of Thomas Jefferson: the protection of the “unalienable” rights of Americans to “*life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*”
3. In it we also find the clearly stated intention for this new country to stand alone by severing its bonds with its mother country.
4. Independence is the ability to think and act for oneself. It means not relying on others to support oneself and achieve one’s own values.
5. Evidently, since America was rejecting its mother country in the name of individual rights, it would have to stand on its own.

#### E. Political Separation: The Monroe Doctrine of 1823

1. The original set of principles that America lived by is captured in part by the *Declaration of Independence*, but it also includes the “Monroe Doctrine,” announced by James Monroe as president in 1823. (A “doctrine” is a set of ideas. In history, if a country follows a certain set of ideas announced by a president for a long time, it is named after him.)
2. Monroe identified that America’s government (based on individual rights) was essentially different from that of Europe, and because of that America should not merely be independent, but in addition strive for *political separation* from the rest of the world.
3. The first part of this doctrine is a warning to European empires to stay out of the Americas. This warning was issued because the Ibersphere had been formed as a distinct cultural block when the colonies of Spain and Portugal achieved their independence because their mother countries were swamped by the European wars against Napoleon.
4. The second part—which is especially significant today—is a commitment by America to stay out of the wars of others.
5. Monroe said that the United States had no desire to fight in European wars or to take any territory away from any European empire, but that Europeans should not fight wars near the United States, because that would be viewed as a threat to America itself.
6. The Monroe Doctrine was followed consistently and successfully for nearly a century. How then did America become what it is today?

