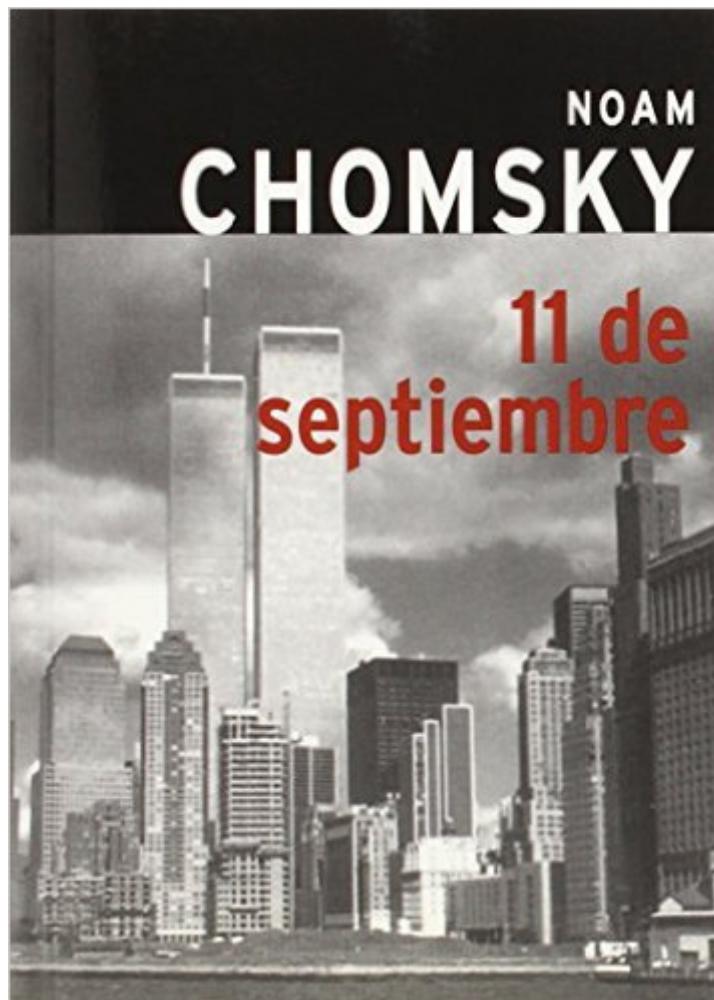


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11 De Septiembre (9-11, Spanish-Language Edition)



Synopsis

En 11 de septiembre Noam Chomsky disecciona las causas de raíz de la catástrofe del 11 de septiembre, sus precedentes históricos, y las posibles consecuencias mientras el mundo se mueve hacia la realidad de después del 11 de septiembre.

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Customer Reviews

This book is basically a reprint of Chomsky's "9-11" with a chapter added at the beginning written after the assassination of Osama Bin Laden. Contrary to the ravings of far right demagogues like David Horowitz or a buffoon like Christopher Hitchens, Chomsky does not argue that the US deserved to get attacked on 9-11 or that Osama Bin Laden was a freedom fighter. He quite appropriately labeled 9-11 a horrendous act and a springboard for the infliction of more misery against the Palestinians and other peoples that OBL claimed to fight for. Chomsky notes that the United States played a vital role in the creation of the jihadi network. In the 1980's in Afghanistan, the US and other countries joined with the Islamist dictatorships of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to organize, train and arm the most fanatic Islamic extremists--many of them not native to Afghanistan--in order to fight the Soviets. As Chomsky observes, the first visible demonstration of blowback from this policy occurred when jihadis assassinated President Sadat of Egypt in 1981. Since the end of the Soviet occupation, the jihadi veterans of the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan have spread out across the world and committed grizzly atrocities. After the Communist

regime fell in Afghanistan in 1992, Chomsky observes, quoting a Human Rights Watch official, Afghanistan descended into the worst period in its history. The fundamentalist warlords backed by the US in the 80's took to pillaging, raping and murdering with such intensity in the period 1992-96 that many Afghans welcomed the Taliban's takeover. These fundamentalist warlords, of course, are now back in power in Afghanistan. Chomsky notes that Bin Laden and other jihadis have explained their motives clearly.

Americans have a right to be mad-as-hell, but no right to bomb-the-hell out of anyone else. Nor do our politicians have the right to declare open-ended war against any country of their choosing. It's hard to keep perspective following an atrocity like the twin towers, but keep perspective we must if we are not to repeat the same slaughter of innocents as the perpetrators of the attack. Applying standards of procedural justice is crucial to a fair and effective reckoning. The atrocity should be treated as a crime against humanity, not as an opportunity to launch aggression against entries on an administration hit-list. As an international crime, the machinery of world justice should be brought to bear on the perpetrators wherever they may be hiding. They should be tried and punished in a world court of law, not in the dog cages of Guantanamo. What's good enough for victims in Kosovo should be good enough for victims in New York. The alternative, to wage war against suspect countries without clear standards or honest diplomatic effort, will only prolong the suffering, create more enemies, and militarize our society. Is the unhobbled supremacy of Corporate America worth that price. Chomsky makes the case in clear and consistent terms, refusing at the same time to undergo an historical lobotomy as prescribed by the president. Nor is the irony of an architect of global terrorism declaring war on itself lost on the author. Probably no word in our lifetime is now so exploited as that tortured term. Despite media filtration, there is an alternative, as Chomsky shows, to the present destructive course and its fog of misdirected jingoism. Though a quickie and somewhat disjointed booklet, 9-11 presents the kind of perspective unavailable in the mainstream, and for that reason should be read.

In other words, this is not the stuff of NBC News. I begin with a quote from the book: "Nothing can justify the crimes such as those of September 11th, but we can think of the United States as an 'innocent victim' only if we adopt the convenient path of ignoring the record of its actions and those of its allies, which are, after all, hardly a secret (p 35)." This short book is a transcript of email conversations with Chomsky. Many who are not familiar with Chomsky's work may be too quick to call him callous due to his style. He is not one to overzealously repeat obligatory statements so as

to appease and pacify possible critics who would question his patriotism. Instead, Chomsky wishes to illustrate the "B-side" of the current crisis which is often bankrupt in most media. Crucial premises among his talks include the idea that the U.S. did not take the legal route towards our response to 9-11 because it would lead to questions about the recent history of U.S terrorism (he gives a sampling) as defined by U.S. Codes and organizations such as the World Court. He discusses the comparability of 9-11 with other U.S. created disasters such as the Al-Shifa plant in Sudan (with its resulting death count reaching into the tens of thousands). Interestingly, he discusses U.S. intelligence failures that may have led to the prevention of 9-11, such as Clinton's refusal (due, according to the CIA, to his "irrational hatred" of the country) to accept Sudan's critical information regarding many members of the Al-Qaida network. Chomsky also questions the current Realpolitik phenomenon of American anti-Islamic Fundamentalism while we currently support Islamic Fundamentalist regimes, such as in Saudi Arabia, which are just as despotic, especially to U.S.

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