

# Fragile Democracy: Twenty Years On



## New South African Review 4: A fragile democracy – Twenty years

on by Steven F. Hayward

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5



On September 11, 2001, the United States suffered the worst terrorist attack in its history. Nearly 3,000 people were killed when terrorists hijacked four planes and crashed them into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

In the wake of the attacks, the United States launched the War on Terror, a global campaign to defeat al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. The war has been fought in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries, and has resulted in the deaths of thousands of American soldiers and civilians.

Twenty years after 9/11, democracy is still fragile. The War on Terror has led to the erosion of civil liberties, the rise of authoritarianism, and the spread of disinformation.

## The Erosion of Civil Liberties

In the name of national security, the United States government has enacted a number of laws that have eroded civil liberties. The Patriot Act, for example, has given the government broad powers to surveil its citizens without a warrant. The NDAA has authorized the government to detain American citizens indefinitely without charge or trial.

These laws have been used to target Muslims, immigrants, and other marginalized groups. They have also been used to suppress dissent and silence critics of the government.

### **The Rise of Authoritarianism**

The War on Terror has also led to the rise of authoritarianism around the world. In the name of fighting terrorism, governments have cracked down on dissent, restricted freedom of the press, and undermined the rule of law.

This trend is particularly alarming in countries that are already struggling with democratic institutions. In Egypt, for example, the military has seized power and cracked down on political opposition. In Russia, the government has jailed opposition leaders and suppressed independent media.

### **The Spread of Disinformation**

The War on Terror has also been accompanied by the spread of disinformation. This disinformation has been used to justify the war, promote fear and division, and undermine trust in democratic institutions.

Disinformation is spread through a variety of channels, including social media, television, and the internet. It is often designed to appeal to people's emotions and prejudices.

## The Future of Democracy

The future of democracy is uncertain. The erosion of civil liberties, the rise of authoritarianism, and the spread of disinformation are all serious threats to democratic institutions.

However, there are still reasons to be hopeful. There are people around the world who are fighting for democracy and the rule of law. We must continue to support their efforts and work together to build a more just and equitable world.

Twenty years after 9/11, democracy is still fragile. We must continue to fight for our freedoms and the rule of law. We must also be vigilant against the threats that democracy faces, including the erosion of civil liberties, the rise of authoritarianism, and the spread of disinformation.

The future of democracy depends on our ability to defend these core values. If we fail, we will lose the freedoms that we have fought so hard to achieve.



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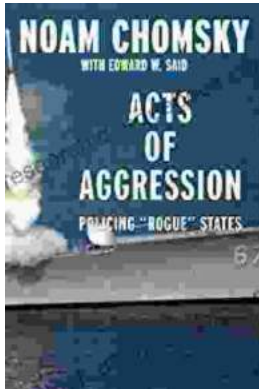
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