abandoned and the classic problem of tyranny revisited." From the ancient Greeks down to the Enlightenment, there was "a continuous tradition of political theory . . . that took the phenomenon of tyranny as its theoretical starting point, and the establishment of barriers against tyrannical rule as its practical aim. That tradition came to an effective halt with the French Revolution," when political tyranny, understood chiefly as a deformation of absolute monarchy, seemed to disappear.

The ancient concepts of tyranny cannot simply be dusted off for use today, says Lilla, though many features of contemporary bad regimes—"political assassination, torture, demagoguery, contrived states of emergency, bribery, [and] nepotism"— would be very familiar to earlier political thinkers. But the ancient Greeks limited their analysis of tyranny to areas where Greek was spoken, and medieval and early modern political thinkers mainly confined theirs to Europe. The need today is for concepts that apply universally.

"We live in a world," Lilla says, "where we will be forced to distinguish, strategically and rhetorically, among different species of tyranny, and among different sorts of minimally decent political regimes that might not be modern or democratic, but would be a definite improvement over tyranny. As yet, we have no geographers of this new terrain."

America's Pro-Arab Past

"The Real Roots of Arab Anti-Americanism" by Barry Rubin, in *Foreign Affairs* (Nov.–Dec. 2002), 59 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

The 9/11 terrorist attack was "undertaken as a consequence of specific American alliances and actions." So asserted Susan Sontag—and the first lady of American letters was not alone in her opinion. In this view, anti-Americanism in the Arab world is a rational response to U.S. policies. The problem, contends Rubin, editor of the *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, is that those policies, "if anything, have been remarkably pro-Arab and pro-Muslim over the years."

Of the dozen major conflicts during the last half-century that have pitted Muslims against non-Muslims (e.g., Turkey versus Greece, Pakistan versus India, Bosnia versus Yugoslavia), Muslims against secular forces (e.g., Saudi Arabia and other monarchies versus Egypt), or Arabs against non-Arabs (Iraq versus Persian Iran), the United States almost invariably has sided with the Muslims or Arabs. The only important exception has been U.S. support for Israel, says Rubin, and "the United States has merely helped Israel survive efforts from Arab neighbors to remove it from the map." In 1973, at the end of the October War, the United States forced a cease-fire on Israel, rescuing Egypt. "Washington then became Cairo's patron in the 1980s, providing it with massive arms supplies and aid while asking for little in return."

Throughout the Cold War, writes Rubin, the United States "maintained its pro-Arab policy," fearing that Arab regimes would side with the Soviet Union. Washington "wooed Egypt, accepted Syria's hegemony over Lebanon, and did little to punish states that sponsored terrorism." U.S. forces long stayed out of the Persian Gulf in order to avoid giving offense, finally entering "only when invited in to protect Arab oil tankers against Iran and to save Kuwait from Iraq. In Somalia, where no vital U.S. interests were at stake, the United States engaged in a humanitarian effort to help a Muslim people suffering from anarchy and murderous warlords."

Why the prevalence of Arab anti-Americanism? Everybody from radicals to "moderate regimes" finds America-bashing a very useful, low-cost way of rallying support and distracting attention from their own shortcomings. Why the terrorist attacks? It's the perception that America is not just a bully but a " paper tiger," Rubin says, "that has encouraged the anti-Americans to act on their beliefs."