

FRONT PAGES FROM HISTORY

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Was it a Hollywood movie or a real tragedy? It was real. Incredibly real, even if on television it looked at times like one of these famous spectacular catastrophe films. "Nine eleven" was a long day, a day that would change politics around the world for many years to come. The centre of economic power, Wall Street, and the centre of military power, the Pentagon, in the most powerful country on Earth seemed like an easy target when suicidal fanatics decided to strike. And the centre of political power, the White House, barely escaped. The plan was amazing in its wickedness and its scale.

The world was stunned. And yet, there was much more to come, as if it were a nightmare from which we could

never wake up.

The immediate reaction of some politicians on hearing of the attack and its perpetrators was "we have to do something about the Palestinian problem". But this was quickly forgotten, lest a justification be given to that dreadful mass-murder of innocents.

The Washington Post was one of the very few newspapers that published a special edition the same day the attack happened, and this is how it explained the scenes in New York: "Jet-fuel fireballs billowed orange when two jetliners powered into the tallest building on the New York City skyline. The air fast turned black and acrid, and some workers jumped from shattered windows of the World Trade Center's twin towers as debris and shredded of-



fice supplies showered the streets of lower Manhattan. Refugees from the burning buildings raced and staggered outside into what had been, a few minutes earlier, a crystalline day. Some screamed, others cried out, others sat on curbsides in mute shock, their faces and their business suits streaked with soot. The unhurt supported the wounded, with one man helping a stranger who had lost much of his skin. Terrorists had exploded their bombs before, including one at this very same place, but no one had ever experienced anything as stunning as today's attack on the World Trade Center. Witnesses described watching one of the towers collapse, saying it looked as though one of the best-known landmarks in the country had simply melted".