Excerpt from *Commanding Heights* by Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw, 2002 ed., pp. 379-380.

In November 2001, the dusty city of Doha, capital of the emirate of Qatar, next door to Saudi Arabia and set at the very tip of a peninsula that juts out into the Persian Gulf, played host to a gathering of dignitaries form 142 countries. They were there to hammer out the rules of engagement in the global economy for the next decade or more. Together, the 4,000 attendees of the World Trade Organization summit—trade ministers and their delegations, representatives of international organizations, and a legion of journalists—overflowed the capacity of the country's hotels. Those with the least pull found themselves in apartment complexes several miles into the desert. Those at the top were ensconced in the conference hotel, a handsome, pyramid-shaped structure with stunning ocean views and an extensive concourse of boutiques that could be in any such hotel almost anywhere in the world. A nearby mall boasted, incongruously, an ice-skating rink. But the delegates had little time for ice skating. For the four days of the meeting, they were locked in intense debate that could have a far-reaching impact on the destinies of all the countries represented in Doha. For that reason, the negotiations were difficult and lasted deep into each night. The stakes were so high that, no matter how late the delegates caucused, there were no 11th-hour compromises. Rather, the conference had to be prolonged by a day. But finally there was an agreement. This time failure was not an option.

From the beginning, Doha's isolated location had much to recommend it, considering that the last meeting of the WTO in Seattle, two years earlier, had been disrupted by violent street protests. It was hard to get to Doha in the first place, let alone near the conference hotel. But while the security planning for Doha had been targeted at preventing violent demonstrations of the Seattle flavor, a wholly different kind of security threat hung over the meeting. Two months earlier, on September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda terrorists had struck both the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon outside Washington, D.C. In response, an American-led coalition had carried the war back to Afghanistan, which had been Al Qaeda's safe haven and from which it ran its global terror network. Although the battle was now being fought in Afghanistan, the main targets of the Al Qaeda leadership—in addition to the United States—were the regimes on the Arabian peninsula, on whose fringe Doha sat. Moreover, if Al Qaeda wanted to strike out again at the world economy, what better target than a WTO meeting in Doha?

Although there was talk about postponing the meeting, in the end it went ahead. Security was incredibly tight. Some delegations brought their own medical personnel and carried their own antibiotics, for fear of anthrax. Yet despite the jitteriness, Doha turned out to be a landmark in the post-World War II saga of trade negotiations—and in the new debate about globalization. Notwithstanding the media images, Seattle had failed two years earlier not on the streets but in the negotiating rooms—in the clash between the industrial countries and the developing countries over the latter's drive to become more fully integrated into the new world trading system by gaining freer entry to the markets of the rich countries. The costs of another "Seattle" could be enormous. But at Doha, such leading developing nations as India and Brazil—now becoming known as the "new globalizers"—had forged a common front to pursue the objectives of the developing world. Most notably, they sought improved access to the markets of industrial countries for the agricultural and manufacturing exports of developing nations. As a result of Doha, their priorities would now be enshrined in the mandate of the next round of trade negotiations and the "Doha Development Agenda." And the WTO itself had been further strengthened by the accession of two economic power houses, a day apart, to the organization—member numbers 141 and 142 respectively—China and Taiwan.

September 11 had made a difference in the outcome: It had changed the tenor of the negotiations and, indeed, of the overall globalization debate. Though a few opponents bobbed in boats offshore, almost all of the would-be demonstrators had decided, in light of circumstances and the new war, that it was better to stay home. And for the delegates who were in Doha, it had become all the more important to have a success. To have walked away from Doha without an agreement would have been another shock to confidence both for the world economy and for the international community, at a time when the rebuilding of confidence was essential to heading off a deep and protracted global recession.