Mystery text type

On the following pages you see three mystery texts. They have been stripped of all their contextual clues, such as heading, name of author and place of publication. What key, structural characteristics do all three texts have in common? Discuss the three texts and fill in the Venn diagram below.
Mystery text 1

The terrorist attacks in Mumbai seven weeks ago sent shock waves around the world. Now all eyes are fixed on the Middle East, where Israel's response to Hamas's rockets, a ferocious military campaign, has already left a thousand Gazans dead.

Seven years on from 9/11 it is clear that we need to take a fundamental look at our efforts to prevent extremism and its terrible offspring, terrorist violence. Since 9/11, the notion of a "war on terror" has defined the terrain. The phrase had some merit: it captured the gravity of the threats, the need for solidarity, and the need to respond urgently - where necessary, with force. But ultimately, the notion is misleading and mistaken. The issue is not whether we need to attack the use of terror at its roots, with all the tools available. We must. The question is how.

The idea of a "war on terror" gave the impression of a unified, transnational enemy, embodied in the figure of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida. The reality is that the motivations and identities of terrorist groups are disparate. Lashkar-e-Taiba has roots in Pakistan and says its cause is Kashmir. Hezbollah says it stands for resistance to occupation of the Golan Heights. The Shia and Sunni insurgent groups in Iraq have myriad demands. They are as diverse as the 1970s European movements of the IRA, Baader-Meinhof, and Eta. All used terrorism and sometimes they supported each other, but their causes were not unified and their cooperation was opportunistic. So it is today.

The more we lump terrorist groups together and draw the battle lines as a simple binary struggle between moderates and extremists, or good and evil, the more we play into the hands of those seeking to unify groups with little in common. Terrorist groups need to be tackled at root, interdicting flows of weapons and finance, exposing the shallowness of their claims, channelling their followers into democratic politics.

The "war on terror" also implied that the correct response was primarily military. But as General Petraeus said to me and others in Iraq, the coalition there could not kill its way out of the problems of insurgency and civil strife.

This is what divides supporters and opponents of the military action in Gaza. Similar issues are raised by the debate about the response to the Mumbai attacks. Those who were responsible must be brought to justice and the government of Pakistan must take urgent and effective action to break up terror networks on its soil. But on my visit to south Asia this week, I am arguing that the best antidote to the terrorist threat in the long term is cooperation. Although I understand the current difficulties, resolution of the
dispute over Kashmir would help deny extremists in the region one of their main calls to arms, and allow Pakistani authorities to focus more effectively on tackling the threat on their western borders.

We must respond to terrorism by championing the rule of law, not subordinating it, for it is the cornerstone of the democratic society. We must uphold our commitments to human rights and civil liberties at home and abroad. That is surely the lesson of Guantánamo and it is why we welcome President-elect Obama's commitment to close it.

The call for a "war on terror" was a call to arms, an attempt to build solidarity for a fight against a single shared enemy. But the foundation for solidarity between peoples and nations should be based not on who we are against, but on the idea of who we are and the values we share. Terrorists succeed when they render countries fearful and vindictive; when they sow division and animosity; when they force countries to respond with violence and repression. The best response is to refuse to be cowed.

Mystery text 2

The earth continues to get warmer, yet it's feeling a lot colder outside. Over the past few weeks, subzero temperatures in Poland claimed 66 lives; snow arrived in Seattle well before the winter solstice, and fell heavily enough in Minneapolis to make the roof of the Metrodome collapse; and last week blizzards closed Europe's busiest airports in London and Frankfurt for days, stranding holiday travelers. The snow and record cold have invaded the Eastern United States, with more bad weather predicted.

All of this cold was met with perfect comic timing by the release of a World Meteorological Organization report showing that 2010 will probably be among the three warmest years on record, and 2001 through 2010 the warmest decade on record.

How can we reconcile this? The not-so-obvious short answer is that the overall warming of the atmosphere is actually creating cold-weather extremes. Last winter, too, was exceptionally snowy and cold across the Eastern United States and Eurasia, as were seven of the previous nine winters.

For a more detailed explanation, we must turn our attention to the snow in Siberia.

Annual cycles like El Niño/Southern Oscillation, solar variability and global ocean currents cannot account for recent winter cooling. And though it is well documented that the earth’s frozen areas are in retreat, evidence of thinning
Arctic sea ice does not explain why the world’s major cities are having colder winters.

But one phenomenon that may be significant is the way in which seasonal snow cover has continued to increase even as other frozen areas are shrinking. In the past two decades, snow cover has expanded across the high latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere, especially in Siberia, just north of a series of exceptionally high mountain ranges, including the Himalayas, the Tien Shan and the Altai.

The high topography of Asia influences the atmosphere in profound ways. The jet stream, a river of fast-flowing air five to seven miles above sea level, bends around Asia’s mountains in a wavelike pattern, much as water in a stream flows around a rock or boulder. The energy from these atmospheric waves, like the energy from a sound wave, propagates both horizontally and vertically.

As global temperatures have warmed and as Arctic sea ice has melted over the past two and a half decades, more moisture has become available to fall as snow over the continents. So the snow cover across Siberia in the fall has steadily increased.

The sun’s energy reflects off the bright white snow and escapes back out to space. As a result, the temperature cools. When snow cover is more abundant in Siberia, it creates an unusually large dome of cold air next to the mountains, and this amplifies the standing waves in the atmosphere, just as a bigger rock in a stream increases the size of the waves of water flowing by.

The increased wave energy in the air spreads both horizontally, around the Northern Hemisphere, and vertically, up into the stratosphere and down toward the earth’s surface. In response, the jet stream, instead of flowing predominantly west to east as usual, meanders more north and south. In winter, this change in flow sends warm air north from the subtropical oceans into Alaska and Greenland, but it also pushes cold air south from the Arctic on the east side of the Rockies. Meanwhile, across Eurasia, cold air from Siberia spills south into East Asia and even southwestward into Europe.

That is why the Eastern United States, Northern Europe and East Asia have experienced extraordinarily snowy and cold winters since the turn of this century. Most forecasts have failed to predict these colder winters, however, because the primary drivers in their models are the oceans, which have been warming even as winters have grown chillier. They have ignored the snow in Siberia.

Last week, the British government asked its chief science adviser for an
explanation. My advice to him is to look to the east.

It’s all a snow job by nature. The reality is, we’re freezing not in spite of climate change but because of it.

**Mystery text 3**

The Occupiers are the immediate menace, never mind what they denounce. Not only should they be obliged to dismantle the tents, yurts, barbecues and portable bathrooms they've set up in a Toronto park, and leave between the hours of midnight and 5:30, as ordered by a judge – they should be told to get out altogether.

The Occupy movement is a lesson in why revolutions tend to become vicious inversions of their stated beliefs. Even as the Occupiers in Toronto, Vancouver and other cities in Canada denounce the powers of the rich, they stationed themselves with bullying force in neighbourhoods and public squares. They declaim about inclusivity and participatory democracy, yet those who wished to stroll in the square outside the Vancouver Art Gallery, or play with their children in St. James Park in Toronto, were not allowed a say.

The affidavits of 11 neighbours, as documented by Mr. Justice David Brown of Ontario Superior Court, are horrifying. Women are sworn at in the ugliest terms, simply for walking dogs. Men are assaulted. Porta-potties stink. Smoke hangs in the air from open fires. Protesters brawl, smoke marijuana in the open. One neighbour, refusing to be deterred, writes, “When I enter the Park with my daughter I feel the need to wear her in a carrier attached to my body rather than using a stroller in order to keep her safe.” An occupation dangerous to small children lacks moral authority.

The theorist of this tent city, a 24-year-old business management student named Bryan Batty, called it a symbol of “a true unification of all humankind.” Judge Brown put it differently: Parks are not places “where the stronger, by use of occupation and intimidation,” can exclude the weaker.

Even if these protesters were what they seem to believe they are, their supposed right to Occupy would mean that any group – neo-Nazis, pedophiles, even millionaire capitalists – could do the same. Does free speech mean a park can't just be a park?

St. James Park is a lovely downtown green space that, before the Occupiers came, granted permits to five weddings and Woofstock, a dog festival. It, and other public spaces across Canada, should be returned at all hours, not just the ones after midnight, to its original uses.