

# Opinion

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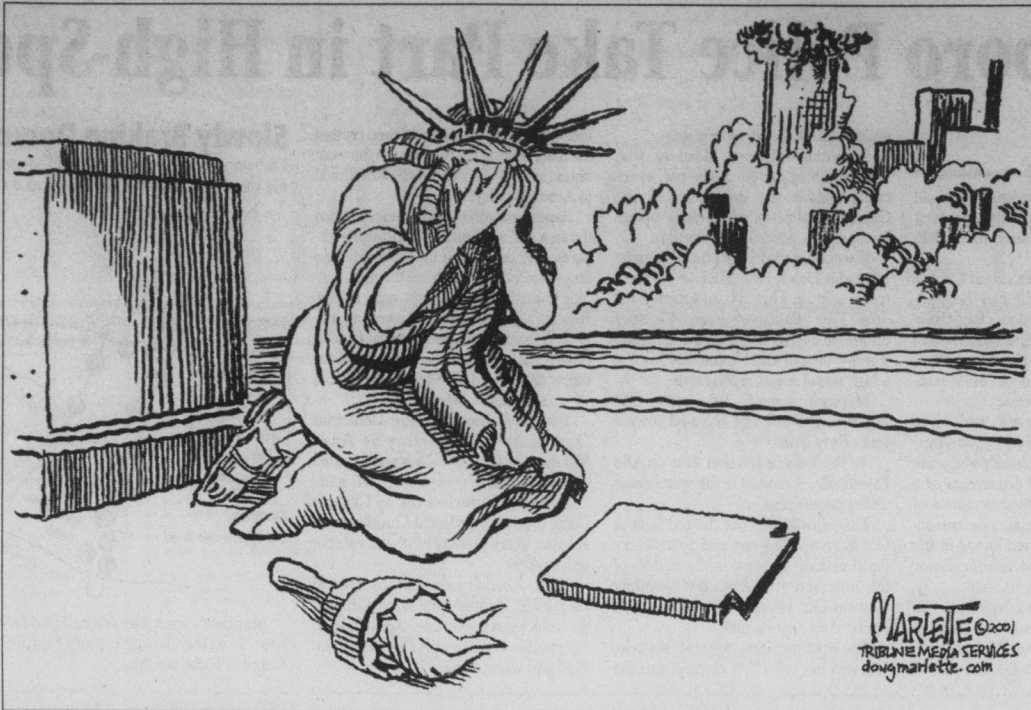
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## Board Editorials

# Context for Tragedy

The DTH interviews Professor Richard Kohn, Peace, War & Defense chairman, to better grasp Tuesday's events.

**DTH:** How could something like this happen, and could U.S. intelligence have predicted or prepared for such an attack?

**Kohn:** U.S. intelligence has been predicting major terrorist attacks on the U.S. for some years and has been studying the groups likely to do it, tracking them, taking steps in conjunction with other U.S. agencies to prevent them and respond to them if they occur. The U.S. has aborted several terrorist attempts on American soil and probably others we don't know about. However it's virtually impossible to predict specific attacks - place, time, method - without penetrating these groups or having advanced warning through other intelligence agencies, plants inside the organizations or a mistake by the perpetrators. The people who pulled off the attacks on Tuesday were extremely sophisticated and undoubtedly took extraordinary precautions to safeguard their operational and communications security. And the United States, as an open society, simply cannot surveil everyone in this society or arrest people without cause even if there are suspicions.

**DTH:** What additional precautions should be taken in our day-to-day lives now?

**Kohn:** Most Americans will go about their business without much change. Air travel and access to government buildings will be more time-consuming thus more inconvenient. Most airports warn people to keep their luggage close and not accept packages or materials from strangers. People traveling overseas will have to be more vigilant about their personal security, particularly in those areas of the world which the State Department believes puts Americans more at risk. But I think that for the foreseeable future, Americans will feel less secure and more concerned about travel and about visiting the symbols of American nationhood and power.

**DTH:** As students, and young people of this generation, we have never experienced an attack of this sort, or the aftermath of a large war. Is there anyway for us to prepare and attempt to better understand the implications of this event?

**Kohn:** Students should take a greater interest in foreign cultures and affairs - to understand other countries and societies.

Our own country is far more diverse and multicultural than it was fifteen years ago. There are more Americans who come from foreign countries. As people destined for a leadership role in our society, UNC students should make and keep themselves informed about the United States' role in the world, our foreign and defense policies, our international activity not only with other nations but with international groups, business and commerce abroad, and the kaleidoscope of ways in which the United States and its citizens involve themselves outside our borders. Our economy and society is much more international now.

Students should study abroad to gain a familiarity with other cultures, to find out how much they don't know and to understand our own country by means of comparative perspective. If UNC students devoted only 20 percent less of their time thinking about, talking about and watching UNC football and basketball - a mere 20 percent less - they could improve their own education substantially.

**DTH:** To most Americans, and to many around the world, the images of Palestinians celebrating is disturbing. Can you attempt to explain, briefly the context of this response, and help us understand why?

**Kohn:** With the end of the Cold War, the United States assumed a much larger role in world politics and symbolically began to appear as a more aggressive and assertive force in shaping events - particularly in the Middle East with the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91. Our system of government and our economic institutions began to spread. And the United States has pursued, sometimes aggressively and occasionally arrogantly, the expansion of democracy and market capitalism. Our culture - language, entertainment, food, sports, media, even our values and dress and popular culture - seem to be flooding the world.

Other nations and groups have reacted to this, find it threatening to their values or culture (perhaps even their independence),

oppose American foreign policy, fear some of what appear to be our hegemonic behaviors - and in the Middle East, oppose our isolating of Iran and Iraq, our sanctions, what seems to many as our unbalanced favoring of Israel and our propping up of some of the more conservative regimes in the area. This magnification of our role and influence - no longer justified in competition with the Soviet Union and communism - now appears to some as an effort to Americanize the world. Some folks don't want to be Americans.

*"... UNC students should make and keep themselves informed about the United States' role in the world."*

**RICHARD KOHN**  
Peace, War & Defense Curriculum Chairman

**DTH:** How is this going to affect American life?

**Kohn:** Less, I think, than many pundits predict. Our foreign policy will now be re-oriented in part to identify the terrorists, subvert their networks and organizations and retaliate for the attacks on American soil in such a way as to forestall or deter future assaults. We are likely to spend more on national defense and intelligence and expand and reorganize some of these agencies. The focus on the attacks and their aftermath will dominate the news for days and weeks to come.

Americans will become more conscious of our vulnerability and, hopefully, more knowledgeable and involved in foreign affairs. There may even ensue a debate about our role in the world and our behavior internationally. And there may be subtle changes that over time, looking back years from now, might be seen to have originated in this dramatic event. But for the foreseeable future, the changes will be most noticeable in transportation and contact with governmental institutions and installations. Hopefully our nation will not over-react and compromise the principles of individual freedom and personal liberty our security institutions are designed to protect. If we do, then we will have surrendered to the terrorists and be the lesser for it.

Richard Kohn is a history professor specializing in American military history and chairman of the Curriculum in Peace, War & Defense.

# Started Out as Just a Second Day at Work

ARLINGTON, Va. - I woke up Tuesday morning anxiously anticipating my second day of work. I scrambled out of bed and desperately tried to make sense of the Washington metro system so that I wouldn't be late this soon after my job had started. After agonizing over which bus to catch and where to take it, I groggily headed to what I hoped was the right bus stop.

After fumbling around trying to find correct change, I finally got on the bus. Unlike the rest of the passengers, for whom the Washington landscape had become commonplace, I looked around with the amazement of a kid making his first trip to a big league ballpark. As I got off at the Pentagon metro station, I remember marveling at how vast, yet accessible, our nation's nerve center seemed to be.

Twenty minutes later, a hijacked plane full of innocent people crashed into that very building.

September 11, 2001 - you've seen the TV coverage, we all felt the horror of Americans perishing in our two most significant cities. The mood here in the District was surreal. At first, we huddled around the office TV, watching in disbelief as one of the World Trade Center towers had been hit by a plane. What in God's name was going on? Was it some sort of inexcusable navigation mistake? Then a second plane hit the other tower. OK, this obviously isn't some sort of cruel coincidence.

Before we can even begin to comprehend what's happened in Lower Manhattan, a news flash streams across the bottom of the screen - a plane has crashed into the Pentagon. The Pentagon? Wait a minute, that's just down the street. Look, you can see the smoke billowing off the building in the distance. This is unbelievable, this can't be happening.

Suddenly the phones, which have been silent for the past few minutes, are ringing off the hook. The sounds of others reassuring their loved ones that they were unharmed jolt me out of my daze. Even though we know that we're perfectly safe we scurry around, frantically trying to reach our loved ones so that they know not to worry.

Busy signal. Cell phone is dead. Busy signal. Finally, I get through. "Yes, Mom, I'm all right. You're right, it's good I don't really go anywhere near the Pentagon." (I figured if there was anytime to tell a lie it was then.)

The smoke from the Pentagon gets thicker. All domestic flights are grounded and accounted for except for one over the Pittsburgh area. The plane, a news anchor nonchalantly tells us, is likely headed for Washington. More futile attempts to contact friends and family that live and work downtown or in Manhattan. The large towers that face our building are evacuated. It doesn't seem like they'd be the next targets of the terrorists, but somehow that doesn't matter. A man in an air force uniform tells us to leave the building if the fire alarm goes off. Should we be worried?

No time to worry, got to get back to the TV. The Associated Press is reporting a car bomb went off at the State Department. Someone gets an e-mail saying the mall, the National Mall, is on fire. Now the West Wing of the White House is supposedly engulfed in flames. Is this really happening?

The World Trade Center towers collapse in front of the world on live television. The President is taken to Louisiana, then to somewhere in Nebraska. Someone comments that this is the second Pearl Harbor, no even bigger than Pearl Harbor. "This is America's darkest hour," says a fatigued talking head on television, as if on cue. Is this really happening?

Finally things start to settle down. The unaccounted for plane has crashed south of Pittsburgh. All of the rumors of doom downtown turn out to be false. The president is on his way back to Washington. Even the roads have cleared up, so much so that its eerie how a business district could be so empty on what would normally be a working day. Everything's come to a screeching halt, kind of like a snow day, except with gorgeous weather.

The day's over, and it's time to go home. As we pull away I once again look at the scenery over our nation's capital. It's all there - the Capitol, the Washington Monument, the National Cathedral. Other than the haunting stream of steady smoke over the Pentagon, the city is exactly the same as it was this morning, yet it's completely different.

A couple hundred miles to the north, somebody is looking back at what used to be Manhattan.

Amol Naik, a 2001 UNC graduate in journalism and history, now works at the Student Press Law Center.



**AMOL NAIK**  
GUEST COLUMNIST

## READERS' FORUM

### Student Emphasizes That Violence Shouldn't Come Out of Anger About Event

TO THE EDITOR:

I believe that many of us are still trying to sift through the chaos of Tuesday's events. Not surprisingly, the grief many are communicating is mingled with anger. In some cases, this anger seems almost hostile. Some people are expressing their anger as hatred.

I believe our real enemy lies within. It is the hatred we feel. I further believe that by harboring it, we are just as evil as the terrorists that piloted the planes.

The only difference between them and us is that they acted on their hatred. Jesus said in the book Matthew, "You have heard the Law of Moses says, 'Do not murder. If you commit murder you are subject to judgement.' But I say, if you are angry with someone, you are subject to judgement...You have heard that the Law of Moses says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. But I say love your enemies! Pray for those that persecute you!"

There are weapons mightier than both pen and sword. They are weapons of love and compassion. Even now, in a time when we have been greatly wronged, we must

put aside our weapons of hatred and destruction. We must, instead, take arms against the enemy within.

**Luke Jones**  
Sophomore

Journalism and Mass Communication

### Student Urges Others to Help Out Relief Efforts by Giving Blood, Donations

TO THE EDITOR:

As we collectively struggle to deal with horrific terrorist attacks from Tuesday, we should remember the many who need assistance in many ways.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the remainder of the week, a table will be set up in the Pit where you can learn about helping those harmed by this tragedy.

Up-to-date information about blood drives will be on hand, as well as information on how to volunteer towards helping others. You can also donate money for the local and national American Red Cross.

Also, blood drives are currently overwhelmed with willing donors, and it is important to remember that blood can only be used within a few days of donation. Therefore, if you cannot donate in the next

few days, it is essential to remember to donate later in the coming weeks as the need for blood will remain high. I hope that each of you will come by the Pit and show your support.

**Maneesha Agarwal**  
Junior

Biology and Psychology

### Backlash Against Muslims Unjustified; Faith Doesn't Justify Acts of Violence

TO THE EDITOR:

Tuesday's events have launched an all-out investigative force to determine those responsible for the atrocities. Yet the main suspect in this investigation is Osama bin Laden, a Muslim and a known terrorist. However, regardless of whether he is responsible for this crime, what was done Tuesday is the work of a madman or several.

Regardless of their religious affiliation, their actions do not reflect the beliefs and practices upon which their religion is based. Generalizing that the entire Muslim faith believes and would act in ways similar to those undertaken by the perpetrators is a ridiculous claim - a claim that the Informed Christian News Service makes

through a flier they have posted around campus. The flier asserts, "We must not let down our guard concerning the violent nature of Islam."

Friends, please do not be fooled by the false face which Islam puts on in nations where it does not rule! This is indeed a very ridiculous claim, yet this thought seems to be a national trend, as there has already been a tremendous backlash against the Muslim population. Since yesterday, radio and television broadcasts have warned that Muslims wearing the traditional attire should stay away from public places and should not visit mosques for fear of persecution or even violence.

Our solemn President stated of yesterday's events: "our way of life and our freedom [is] under attack." The American way of life is built upon the notion of liberty and acceptance of people's beliefs and practices, provided those beliefs do not encroach on others' rights. There is nothing in the Muslim faith that would encourage or even allow condoning such a terrorist act.

Let us not turn what is an American tragedy into a racist regime and let us instead work on helping each other as much as we can in whatever ways we can. Racism will undermine every notion of personal freedom this country has fought for through its 225 years.

While this tragedy has threatened our safety and security, let it not threaten the principles of liberty and personal rights upon which our country was founded.

**Jason Idilbi**  
Sophomore

Philosophy and Political Science

### UNC Organization Lends Its Condolences to Those Affected by the Tragedy

TO THE EDITOR:

On Tuesday, our great nation suffered an overwhelming loss of life and a horrendous attack on its freedom.

No words can begin to describe the way people across the nation and the world feel, as hundreds, possibly thousands of people lie dead, their lives brought to a sudden, violent and senseless end.

UNC-CH's Arab Club strongly condemns the actions committed by the vile individuals responsible for this heinous crime. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and their families, and we can only hope that those responsible will be brought to justice.

**Hani Alkhalidi**  
UNC Arab Club President



The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticism. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 300 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff should include their title, department and phone number. The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity. Publication is not guaranteed. Bring letters to the DTH office at Suite 104, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail forum to: [editdesk@unc.edu](mailto:editdesk@unc.edu).