

Opinion



GAVE PROOF THROUGH THE NIGHT THAT OUR FLAG WAS STILL THERE...

Still Raging — And Trying to Find Answers

I wanted to write about football. I wanted to write some college student piece, full of sweetness and light, about a random element of UNC life — one of the incidentals that we give grand importance to here.

But on Tuesday our American world was torn apart and the things we are concerned with — the daily minutiae we have the luxury of worrying about — became instantly insignificant.

And we are still reeling. There has been some talk of how we must seek peace: peace in the world, peace within ourselves.

But I am raging. I am raging because it is so damn difficult to love one's enemies. I am raging because I feel so little faith in the leader of my country. I am raging because I can find so few lessons in all of this.

And I am raging because a search for peace goes against every initial human reaction to the attacks — we are deeply hurt and frustrated, our grief has quickly coalesced into anger, and we are aching to have a target.

True, we must take some sort of action in response. But it is utterly terrifying to see how our country seems so desperate to go to war.

One of the more unsettling moments of last week occurred when the headline graphic on CNN changed from "America Under Attack" to "America's New War."

It seemed so abrupt and so final. We have been so quick to declare war on an enemy we cannot point out on a map. President Bush has pledged to "eradicate terrorism from the face of the earth." This is a laudable goal, but it is impossible to truly eradicate terrorism unless we eradicate the mentalities, the hatred and the iniquities that cultivate it.

At what time has war ever decreased resentment and hatred?

It's upsetting to realize that, as of right now, it doesn't matter who did this. We are prepared to wage a war against terrorism itself — not against one enemy but against all of them.

It has been argued that the attacks were just like Pearl Harbor, but these acts were not orchestrated by a country but by a nameless group.

This is much different than Pearl Harbor, and it is just that much worse. There is no national entity we can point to as the "evil" that must be eradicated.

It is terribly frustrating for a country that knows the concept of massive retaliation very well, of knowing our enemies by name. If the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks parallel Pearl Harbor, then does that mean that our future holds a parallel to Hiroshima? To Nagasaki?

Can our world stand another? Can humanity stand another?

There have always been complaints in the past about the American media's habit of filling the pages of newspapers with fluff — a movie star's affair or the sexual dalliance of a president.

I once heard a woman who had just arrived in America from a war-torn country respond to such complaints. She said something to the effect of how nice it was to live in a country, like the United States, where times are peaceful enough that "fluff" news makes the front page. I think we've begun to understand her point, having had so many years without tragedy in our nation.

Those who wonder whether rushing into war is the best and only option are not any less angry about the attacks than those who push for immediate retribution.

Questioning the wisdom in creating massive violence does not dishonor those who have fallen. The attacks have awakened in us a realization of just how fragile and precious a human life is. Cultivating a war would utterly disregard that lesson and would absolutely guarantee further American and foreign loss of life. Our generation has no concept of war — we have grown up in an era of prosperity and relative peace.

It is not a question with an easy answer. All we know is that our nation has been grievously injured and that we must do something. But this conflict has no solid enemy or foreseeable end.

Before making a decision to send our country into fighting, we need to know more. So much is still unclear.

Rationality is being sacrificed for righteousness, and a sense of confusion and moral conflict is prevalent. It is unsettling that when truly tested our country turns to two things.

Prayer and war.

Erin Fornoff can be reached at fornoff@email.unc.edu.



ERIN FORNOFF SWEETNESS AND LIGHT

Board Editorials

True Tolerance

The University and the community — known for their acceptance of others — need to maintain that reputation

Seldom has the adage "united we stand, divided we fall" carried more weight than it does now for America.

Last week as the media rushed to call the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon an "attack on America" and as President Bush declared a war on terrorism, some misguided Americans misinterpreted the calls and retaliated with violence and hate toward their own brothers.

A man in Huntington, N.Y., attempted to run over a Pakistani woman in a parking lot with his car.

An armed man set fire to a mosque in Seattle. A man in Mesa, Ariz., opened fire on the home of a family of Afghani descents and shot at a Lebanese-American store clerk.

The same man is also suspected of killing an Indian immigrant gas station owner. When he was arrested for his crimes he exclaimed, "I stand for America all the way."

Some members of the University com-

munity — a community that prides itself on tolerance — are quick to dismiss the idea that such things would ever happen here — but they already have.

An Arab woman wearing traditional dress was spit on at N.C. State University, while another woman had pebbles thrown at her.

A mosque in Raleigh had 14 bomb threats in the days following the terrorist attack.

A peace vigil outside the Franklin Street Post Office was interrupted by a passing motorist screaming epithets of hate directed at Muslims.

We as members of this university community must cope with our grief in a positive manner and work through this tragedy hand-in-hand with our fellow Americans.

We must not let hate and vengeance consume us and allow ourselves to rally behind those who do.

We must love our neighbors and educate

ourselves about the beliefs of others.

We must remember that just because someone practices Islam or is of Arabic descent, that doesn't mean they are a terrorist or condone the actions of those who endeavor to destroy the United States.

This terrorist action stems not from religion, but from evil deep within the perpetrators.

America is not a homogeneous nation that one people can claim. It is a tapestry sewn with the threads of different of races, ethnicities, ideas, religions and backgrounds.

It is this intricate design that makes America the great nation that it is.

University students have a responsibility to make sure that no person feels uncomfortable on this campus — all Americans have the responsibility to do the same with their brothers and sisters in this nation.

When we fulfill this responsibility, we can break the chains that bind this nation.

Just Pure Luck

Last Tuesday's tragedy left many feeling lucky to be alive — but for some "luck" was more like grace

America faces some daunting challenges in the wake of last week's national tragedy. The search for meaning and hope amid the confusion and fear will not be easy during the coming months and the inevitable conflict escalating throughout the world.

Perhaps the most encouraging and inspirational aspect of this real-life drama has been the incredible rescue effort and the outpouring of support from ordinary citizens who choose to fulfill a moral obligation much larger than everyday life.

In a true test of the theory of "six degrees of separation," it seems that every individual is connected to someone who has been personally affected by the terrorist attacks. There are also stories that seem to test the resolve of individuals who are forced to, burden more than their fair share of pain and doubt. These stories help to ground a person who needs a certain amount of reassurance that is achieved through a sigh of relief and a "thank God it wasn't me" moment of selfish indulgence in the importance of pure luck.

But luck is a sliding scale. Some people felt lucky Tuesday afternoon after a few phone calls revealed that everyone they knew was safe.

Other people didn't get those calls until much later, but for them good news did arrive, eventually. The story of Rudy Marisa proves that hope is a valuable thing and that luck knows no quota for personal relief.

Marisa is the head basketball coach at Waynesburg College (Pa.). He is also the athletic director and the namesake of the school's basketball arena. He is the father of two sons and lives with his wife just outside his college town. Before last week, he probably thought his life was more than a little charmed. But Tuesday's attacks left his life,

for a few hours at least, in total turmoil.

Kent Marisa, Rudy's younger son, was at work in the World Trade Complex when terror struck. Rudy's other son, Kurt, called home just after 9 a.m. to see if they had any information about Kent. They shared tears and prayers, promising to be in contact when word came in. At about 9:30 a.m., Kurt returned to his desk at his office in the Pentagon. Minutes later the building was rocked by an explosion.

Both Kent and Kurt survived, but their calls home were also made in fear. The fourth plane involved in the terrorists' attacks crashed in Somerset, Pa., less than 90 minutes from their father's home.

Today, the Marisa family is intact and physically unharmed. Their world was turned upside-down and shaken before being returned to them. As unlucky as that seems, the Marisas probably consider themselves among the luckiest people in the world.

JOSEPH FORMISANO

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

READERS' FORUM

Local American Red Cross Director Thanks Community for Support

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you all very much for your support of the victims of last week's horrible tragedy through Red Cross blood drive program.

So many of you have wanted to help, but we did not have the resources to accommodate all of you. But we recognize each and every one of your efforts.

To all of those who donated blood or time, were deferred from donating or lined up and were turned away, we do not know how to thank you enough.

If anything positive can come out of this horror, it is the publicity that the importance of donating blood has received.

For many Americans, the best way to fight back against the people who attacked our nation is to donate blood or help at a blood drive. But every day, thousands of people nationwide need blood transfusions for operations, trauma, terminal illness and other ailments.

The blood you donate now can only be used for a short time before it expires. UNC Hospitals needs blood year-round, and the UNC-Chapel Hill campus is a

main provider and lifesaver for it. Pain is felt daily by families who are losing relatives to cancer, car accidents and heart attacks.

Their pain is no weaker than the pain felt now by all of us, especially those of us who have friends or relatives who were lost or seriously injured in these attacks. We must strive to remember that.

Blood drives are held constantly on campus, and you are eligible to donate every eight weeks. Please take advantage of this opportunity to save lives and help others. In this way, we can show the terrorists that Americans sacrifice for each other all the time and cannot kill the spirit.

Once again, our heartfelt thanks go out to those who helped in this desperate time, and will continue to help in the future.

Casey Copp
Director of Blood Services
Orange County Chapter of the American Red Cross

Student Urges Nation to Recognize Long-Term Consequences of War

TO THE EDITOR:

In the aftermath of last Tuesday's grie-

some attacks, while the entire nation is mourning the loss of thousands of innocent civilian lives, Bush says the United States will wage a "long war."

We have to realize that the action that the United States decides to take will have significant and long-lasting implications.

The United States says it will bomb Afghanistan if it refuses to give up Osama bin Laden.

India and Pakistan have offered the United States their airspace and ground support should the United States decide to attack Afghanistan.

Afghanistan, on the other hand, has pledged to declare war against any country that decides to side with the United States, including Pakistan, which is one of the very few countries that recognizes the Taliban as the official government of Afghanistan.

Moreover, the Islamic militant groups in Pakistan are geared to initiate a civil war if the government decides to help the United States in any way.

The question is: Are we going to avenge the loss of thousands of innocent civilian lives by killing even more civilians who stand nowhere at fault?

Is that going to make us feel better? Is that what we as humans want?

Going to war is also bound to have severe economic implications.

With globalization, most economies of the world are interconnected so strongly that a strain on the already reeling U.S. economy will inevitably result in economic crises in numerous other countries.

In light of these issues, we can just hope that whatever action Bush and his men take is contemplated well and involves minimal loss of innocent human lives.

Aishwarya Kumar
Senior
Economics, Management and Society

UNC Graduate Highlights That Flier About Islam Contains Some Validity

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to write with regard to the fliers which have been posted up around campus entitled, "A Frank Word About Islam" and the responses in The Daily Tar Heel about this literature.

I've noticed that people are quick to say that posting this flier is some terrible, horrible act.

But one question I want answered is: What exactly on this flier is not true?

The flier contained direct quotations from the Koran — quotations that called for

the killing and driving out of non-Muslims, quotations which any true Muslim is bound to abide by as commandments from Allah.

The flier makes a good point also in noting that Christians, Jews and others are persecuted even to death in some Muslim countries.

Yet Muslims are not persecuted in America and other Western countries (except, I suppose, when Muslim terrorists commit mass murder on our soil).

Letter writers and others, such as Jason Idilbi and Mohamed Zayed, are quick to decry this flier (in very general terms, it might be added), but they seem unable to refute any of the truthful statements made by this flier.

We all are horrified by the terrible tragedy which occurred on Tuesday, and most Americans can certainly recognize that most Muslims do not support the type of fanaticism which fueled these attacks.

But on the other side of the coin, one cannot forget the images of Muslims in Palestine and Egypt celebrating the deaths of thousands of the "enemies of Islam." The face of Islam in lands "where it does rule" may very well have been shown.

Tim Dunkin
Class of '00



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