

Speak Out

War and peace

TO THE EDITOR:

I'm writing to express my unequivocal objection to treating the terrorist crimes as acts of war. We do not need to crash around the world swinging the sledgehammer of military action.

These terrorists are organized and terrifying, but their acts are criminal, not military. I support peaceful resolution through traditional channels of justice, including full prosecution of the criminals.

The bombings and the threat of war have drawn us together. Our nation still will rally and stand together, strengthened in unity, in support of our ideals, if leaders choose the moral route of fair pursuit of justice.

We do not need a war, whether protracted or brief, to do that; in fact, the evil tendrils of its effects only will weaken us in the long run. Further, launching "war" against a worldwide organization structured like Osama bin Laden's carries echoes of the mess of trying to "win" against elusive guerrilla tactics in Vietnam.

JULIET WYERS
Portland

We must carry on

TO THE EDITOR:

As a nation and a community, we all are working hard to comprehend and heal from the horrific events of Sept. 11. This

unimaginable loss has struck at the very core of our sense of safety and order.

Before the tragedy—even on a good day—many gay, lesbian, bi and trans U.S. citizens felt unsafe or at least vulnerable in ways large and small. Now, that feeling has grown even more acute and has blanketed the nation.

Like others, our community knows all too well the devastating effects of hate. We have witnessed it firsthand.

As a nation, our unity of experience and our shared pain also give us the strength that renews our hope for the future. For some, the struggle to bring the United States even closer to the complete dream of equality for all has been a renewing notion.

While we deeply mourn our loss, we must not allow this sacred quest to drift to any distant place in our lives. It never has been more important to remain strong because at its core, the very opportunity to seek full equality is what makes this nation great.

So many people from so many walks of life were caught up in this horrific web of tragedy, and all differences have fallen away. As we heal, we should remember that legacy.

In the name of those who perished—and those they leave behind—we must carry on as a community and a nation. Much work remains to be done: a global cure for AIDS and breast cancer, fairness and equity for our families, safety and the opportunity to flourish for our youth.

We will heal as a nation. When we do, we

will be stronger—and perhaps even more forgiving of our differences.

ELIZABETH BIRCH
Human Rights Campaign Executive Director

Next to godliness

TO THE EDITOR:

I just read Marty Davis' Sept. 21 commentary, "One Nation Under God?"

I am grateful for the clarity of your vision and the lucidity with which you expressed it. Thank whatever gods may be for those who hear a different drummer when the drum rolls for mindless patriotism are shattering the eardrums of the spirit.

I shiver every time I see a pickup with a monstrous flag. And here in Chattanooga, Tenn.—as redneck a country as one could find—I see many such trucks.

The idea of peacekeepers being soldiers without uniforms is a good one. I hope it comes to pass.

May whatever gods you cherish, cherish you, Marty. You wrote with the compassion and wisdom of a Bodhisattva, and I thank you for it.

JIM DICKEY
Chattanooga, Tenn.

Media overload

TO THE EDITOR:

With almost constant news coverage and hundreds of interviews discussing the

just asking Do you support immediate retribution against those responsible for the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, or would you like to see calmer heads prevail?

The surest form of retribution against an intolerant society is to expose it to the economic prosperity enjoyed by open societies around the world. We should proceed to remake the refugee camps in Pakistan and northern Afghanistan into self-sustaining communities with schools, colleges, religious freedom, information and access to the global community. As these new towns and cities improve the standard of living of the common Afghan, more citizens will flee the Taliban-controlled zones, further isolating and identifying the supporters of terror.

RODGER EGO
Sweet Home

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I completely support immediate retribution against the creatures responsible for this. Sometimes being calm and cool-headed just isn't the way to go, especially when dealing with those who call themselves religious terrorists.

There is no being calm with them. Thousands of people were killed, and many millions more around the world are in great pain. We need to put a stop to global terrorism once and for all and show the peace-loving people of the earth that they can feel safe at night!!!

SCOT JAIN
Salem

...

Democracy requires calmer heads. Do we really want additional innocent losses? Calmer heads allow unification, support and love to take the lead.

Can we really cause the terrorists the same loss they have inflicted? I think not.

Put the responsible people out of the world's



PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

harm? Damn right!

RICH KIBBONS
Portland

...

I support whatever it takes to rid the Mideast of fundamentalism, the Taliban, Osama bin Laden and anyone who would seek to destroy our civilization. This is war, and they declared it on us first. I am 65, and I remember World War II and Korea.

I also believe we should declare war on fundamentalism in our society. We all have a right to our position, but we do not have a right to impose our position on others.

The Constitution not only guarantees the

right to freedom of religion, it also guarantees freedom from religion!!! Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson are bastards!!! And I have told them so by e-mail!!!

DAN MCCORMICK
Portland

NEXT ISSUE: Does the fear of HIV transmission warrant the American Red Cross ban on blood donations from sexually active gay men, or are they all being painted with the same brush? Respond at www.justout.com. (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)



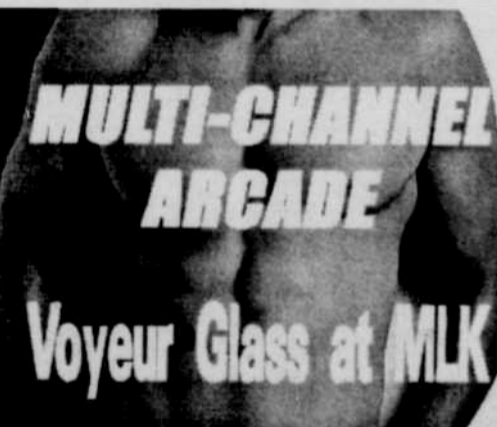
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