

Myths of a Military Solution

In light of the horrific September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the U.S., many feel the only option is to support the U.S.-led attacks against Afghanistan. We address some of these concerns (BELOW) and propose alternatives (OTHER SIDE).

MYTH: A MILITARY RESPONSE IS QUICK AND EFFECTIVE

Terrorism is not led by a simple collection of misguided or insane individuals. It will not vanish when they do. It took years for the desperation to build and spread among large supporting populations, and it will take years to eliminate the support that nurtures terror. Military strikes may (or may not) kill dozens of terrorists but will alienate and anger thousands of civilians, creating even more hatred and more terrorists. Terror will never eliminate terrorism. Far more lives are put at risk by a military response than with nonviolent alternatives.

MYTH: SACRIFICING SOME CIVIL LIBERTIES WILL HELP STOP TERRORISM

Our civil liberties are at great risk, especially the freedoms of speech and assembly, the right to dissent, and our physical and online privacy. When freedoms are taken away in time of "emergency," they are rarely returned later. What of this society will be left to defend if we are willing to surrender our freedoms? History is rife with freedoms being curtailed and laws being enacted to fight one problem, only to stay on the books to be used against minorities, dissenters, and the dispossessed.

MYTH: YOU'RE WITH THE TERRORISTS

President Bush, NYC Mayor Giuliani, and others say that if you don't agree with the military option, then you condone the terrorists' violence. But it is possible to be horrified by the attacks and still to believe there are effective ways to end terrorism without deploying the military.

MYTH: UNITY IS ESSENTIAL; WE MUST NOT CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT

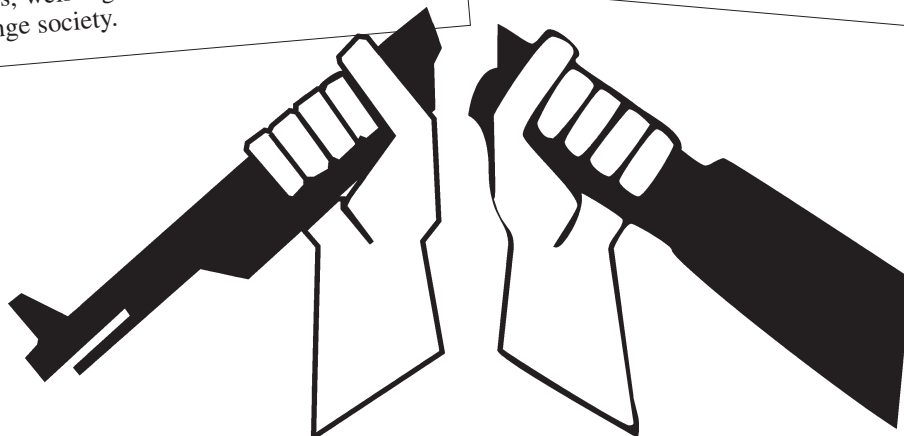
We are united against terror, united against hate, united against discrimination, but we are not united for war. The strength of our society is not determined by top-down decisions based on closely held information. On the contrary, well-informed, critical, and open discussions are essential to a free society.

MYTH: NONVIOLENCE ONLY WORKS AGAINST CIVILIZED OPPONENTS

Nonviolence has been used effectively to topple the most brutal regimes, including apartheid in South Africa, Marcos in the Philippines, Pinochet in Chile, and Milosevic in Yugoslavia. Nonviolent struggle has also triumphed against violent repression by "civilized" governments like British rule in India, which massacred hundreds at Amritsar, and "Jim Crow" segregation in the U.S. which led to violence and murder of African-Americans and civil rights activists. In all those cases, well-organized nonviolence overcame violence to change society.

MYTH: IT'S BETTER TO BOMB THEM THAN DO NOTHING AND APPEAR WEAK

Strength does not reside in the size of our missiles and the number of our bombs. Terrorizing foreign populations and killing innocent civilians will be perceived as a desperate act of a morally bankrupt country. There are many other options besides "bomb 'em" or "do nothing." The other side of this flyer proposes several.



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NONVIOLENT RESPONSE

The U.S. and its allies must stop the bombing. There is no simple or quick way to end terrorism, but over time these strategies (below) will be effective.

ISOLATE THE CRIMINALS

Terrorism depends on a supporting population and feeds on secrecy—whether theirs or ours. Rather than sending in the military, we need to expose the lies terrorists spread—undercutting their cultlike authority; share all information about their methods; and put them on open and fair trials. We must oppose calls for revenge, even against those who attacked the World Trade Center. Gaining the trust of the supporting populations in other countries will take time.

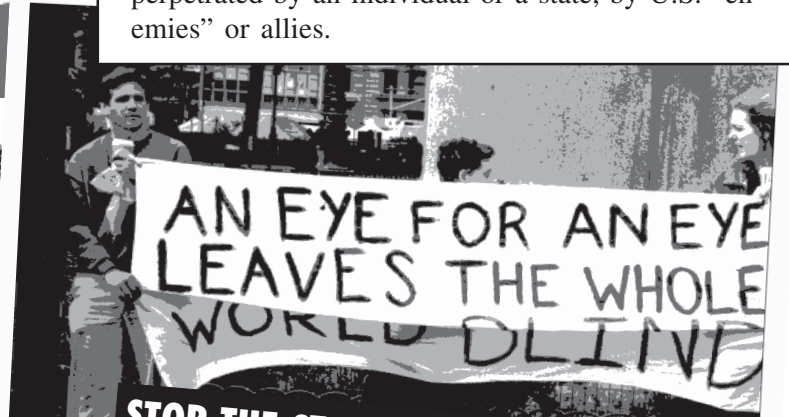


ELIMINATE THE ROOTS OF TERRORISM

The United States must change its foreign policy from that of supplying military equipment and supporting authoritarian regimes to one of investing (without strings) in the basic needs for food, shelter, health and education of the people of the world. We must begin to lead with compassion and understanding if we expect to minimize terrorist attacks on U.S. citizens.

CONSISTENTLY CONDEMN ALL TERRORISM

Terrorism must be universally condemned whether perpetrated by an individual or a state, by U.S. “enemies” or allies.



END THE ARMS TRADE

The United States is the world’s number one arms merchant. Countries that should be investing in development for their people spend precious resources on weapons and end up in a cycle of debt to the United States and other arms merchants. U.S. soldiers often find themselves fighting people armed with weapons stamped **MADE IN THE USA.**



STOP THE STAR WARS MISSILE PROGRAM

Since 1983 \$95 billion has been spent on missile defense programs that will not work. Since World War II military spending totals nearly \$15 trillion. Each year over 50% of your tax dollars went to the Pentagon compared to an average of about 0.15% for development aid. Despite its military might, the U.S. could not prevent the horrific attacks of September 11. War won’t keep us safe. If we want peace, we must invest in peace.

PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY & CONSERVATION

Reduce U.S. dependence upon foreign oil. Control of resources is at the center of the U.S.’s misguided policies in the Middle East.

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