

I was recently charged with the duty of writing a news article featuring the war on Afghanistan. As I began pushing around ideas inside my head over Christmas break I realized my quandary in that an issue which may have seemed very important one week may become irrelevant the next. Who would want to read something about Usama bin Laden when perhaps in the time between the article being written and being published, he has been captured and killed? Who would be interested in talk of a war in Afghanistan when the battle has since moved to Syria, Somalia, or Iraq?

Because of this I decided to forego a “news report,” and instead focus on my personal opinions on things of lasting importance, no matter what stage of the war we’re in or what the issue of the day might be.

BLAME AMERICA FIRST

It was inevitable that soon after the fires were put out at Ground Zero, that the flame of Patriotism that spread across the country would also die down a little and our politically correct mind set would set in again. While the vast majority of the country wrapped itself in the flag after 9/11, there is a small, but vocal minority who always want to blame America first for any of the world’s wrongs.

President Clinton, for example, had this to share with respect for who’s to blame for the attacks: “We were founded as a nation that practiced slavery, and slaves quite frequently were killed even though they were innocent . . . This country once looked the other way when a significant number of native Americans were dispossessed and . . . And we are still paying a price today.”

No one is disputing the facts Clinton has mentioned, but *what does this have to do with September 11?* What transpired on that day is not the fault of President Bush, or President Clinton, but especially not those who have been dead for generations who practiced such evils. *Those three thousand lives lost are on the head of Usama bin Laden and his insane friends.* This isn’t a difficult concept.

In the same vein, I’m tired of those saying, “Well maybe if we could have done this differently . . .” or “We were really asking for this.” I reject the notion that *any* country is deserving of this.

We all remember those dancing in the streets in celebration of 9/11 believing it was an act of God. This is no act of God. Genesis 11 tells a story of God knocking over a tower and dividing the people. America as a society is literally incapable of such hatred as to display joy over the murder of innocent civilians, and God has rewarded us with national unity.

WAR IS GOOD FOR SOMETHING

Our decade-long practice of having our military act like police is over. No one is an advocate for war, but those who are against war in *any* situation are just plain wrong. Civilized nations can, and must, negotiate to iron out differences. This is not possible with uncivilized nations who are out to destroy *our* country.

Holding hands, singing kumbaya, and lighting candles for peace doesn’t do anything but make those doing it feel good, and those same people would be telling us to negotiate a peaceful settlement with Hitler.

This is a war about justice, but even after bin Laden is captured, it is one for our protection. We mustn't forget why we're doing this and must maintain our resolution to wipe out this evil from our planet. The problem isn't isolated to bin Laden or al Qaeda, and ultimately lives will be saved because of war.

THE RICH GET RICHER, THE POOR GET RICHER

It shouldn't have to be repeated, but Tom Daschle doesn't seem to have a grasp on basic economic principles (or for that matter basic math). He blames President Bush's tax cut for the disappearance of the surplus, an accusation some people are all too eager to believe. The fact of the matter is that the government had a projected surplus of \$330 billion this year and a total of \$40 billion has been given out with Bush's tax cut.

Historically of course, federal revenue increases with tax cuts. Federal revenues doubled during the '80's going from \$517.1 billion in 1980 to \$990.7 billion in 1989 due to the Reagan tax cuts (Source: *Budget of the United States Government*, not adjusted for inflation) and we still had a deficit. Why? Because federal spending went from \$590 billion in 1980 to \$1.25 trillion in 1990. It is spending that creates deficits, not tax cuts.

Although it may be tempting to just give tax cuts directly to "those who need it," (I'll save the argument that the government shouldn't be deciding who needs a tax cut for another day), it is the rich that hire "those who need it." Ask the thousands who were laid off this year if they'd like a tax break or a job and I think we know which one they'd choose.

THE APOTHEOSIS OF STUPIDITY . . .

. . . might just be Karen Davis of an organization called Poultry Concern. Here is an excerpt of an open letter she wrote to Vegan Voice:

In conclusion, I think it is speciesist to think that the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center was a greater tragedy than what millions of chickens endured that day and what they endure every day because they cannot defend themselves against the concerted human appetites arrayed against them.

I don't really have anything else to say on this, I just thought it was funny, and yet sad that there are actually people out there like this. (The entire letter can be read at http://www.upc-online.org/011226vegan_voice_singer.html).

I'm hoping that everyone that reads this will agree with me, but I realize that's not going to happen. So if you have any feedback (positive or negative), feel free to email me at mpw147@psu.edu and visit my homepage at www.personal.psu.edu/mpw147.