

The War on Terrorism literally became a license to kill

Americans never properly grieved for what was lost one year ago on Sept. 11th.

For many Americans, next Thursday, Sept. 12, 2002, will be New Year's Day. It will be the start of Year One following the attack on America. Yet, for the rest of the world, and indeed for many other Americans, it will be just another

Ryan Whitley

GUEST COLUMNIST

day in September. Citizens of the United States will certainly mourn, and moments of silence will most likely be observed. Meanwhile, others around the globe will nod their heads in our direction and then resume their business. Before we come to this day, let us take a moment to reflect on the past year, what has happened and how we as a nation and as a member of the world community have responded.

A note on my perspective: I write to you as one who recently learned much about the world's opinion of the United States and as one who was shocked by what he discovered. I do not hate America by any stretch of the imagination. I love America for what it is supposed to stand for and for all it has given me. Yet, due to my recent experiences abroad, I can no longer be

complacent about my nation's foreign policies. Criticism is necessary and good. Onward.

On Sept. 11, 2001, a foreign enemy breached American soil for the first time since Pearl Harbor, and it was breached thoroughly. A well-planned and well-executed attack was carried out, destroying Americans' sense of security and invincibility as well as buildings and lives. Over 3,000 American lives were lost; it was undeniably a tragedy. Children were left orphaned, wives and husbands lost their beloved and brothers and sisters were left alone in the world.

Yet, the knee-jerk reaction with which we responded did not endear us to the global community and was indicative of our nation's destructive foreign policies. Frankly, I was surprised that we waited as long as we did before we attacked someone. The amazing fact remains that almost one year and billions of dollars later, we still do not know who committed this act!

President George W. Bush's War on Terrorism has accomplished almost nothing but the slow loss of international support, especially from the Arab world.

The War on Terrorism is what I have termed the "Great National Excuse." It is our excuse to do anything that we want, to any other country (even to any other individual in our own country) and call it "fighting terrorism."

This summer I spoke with an Afghan woman while on a study program in Switzerland. Not only is she Afghan, but a citizen of the United States

Someone I met this summer asked me if we held a moment of silence after the Sept. 11 attacks, and I responded affirmatively. They then asked me if we held a moment of silence for the Afghan people who died as a result of U.S. bombing. Have we? How many more will have to die violently before we hold that moment of silence?

of America. Indeed, she is a college professor, supposedly a well-respected profession. Yet when she flew back to America from her annual visit to Afghan refugee camps, she was forced to remain in the airport for 14 hours while officials carried out the directives of the Patriot Act (reading every paper she had on her, every file on her laptop and even listening to every last second of her musical CD collection).

With this Patriot Act we are "fighting terrorism," but if you read it closely what you find is a part of the Great National Excuse that strips citizens of their Constitutional rights! Under this atrocity, the First, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth and 14th Amendments no longer apply. Look it up for yourself if you do not believe me.

This is only one example of the Great National Excuse, but there are many others. The U.S. bombardment of Afghanistan delivered myriad results. One: it has removed the oppressive Taliban government from power. Two: it has hindered the activities of

al-Qaeda and executed or imprisoned many of its members. Three: It has claimed the lives of over 3,900 Afghan civilians who had nothing to do with either al-Qaeda or the Taliban. This is because, according to Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, "some of our ordinance ended up where it should not have." How astute.

Someone I met this summer asked me if we held a moment of silence after the Sept. 11 attacks, and I responded affirmatively. They then asked me if we held a moment of silence for the Afghan people who died as a result of U.S. bombing. Have we? How many more will have to die violently before we hold that moment of silence?

How many of us university students actually know the first thing about Afghanistan? I willingly admit that before this summer, I knew nothing, even including its location. Some mediocre knowledge about the nation may help us to understand what has transpired and what is continuing to unfold. In 1979, with government and power structures crumbling, Afghanistan was invaded by the Soviet Union. The United States decided to involve itself on behalf of Afghanistan over the next nine years by supplying the Afghan people with funds, weapons and training.

One student in our Afghan school of war paid particular attention and soon distinguished himself from the rest. Saudi national Osama bin Laden was our champion in Afghanistan.

After the war ended, the United States disappeared with all its aid,

money and support. Afghanistan was left weak and unstable. Afghan citizens could not understand why the United States quit their presence there, nor what was to become of their future. It has often been said since Sept. 11, that the attacks were a wake-up call to the United States. Yet, how many of us knew to what we were supposed to wake up? If indeed bin Laden was behind the attacks, then perhaps he, in a twisted, evil and horrible way, was trying to say, "Hey! Remember us?" This is inflammatory, I know, but please, just try and think about it in that way for one moment. Don't get me wrong, the attacks on our nation can in no way ever be justified, but they can be understood. To me, understanding the attacks in this way seems to answer Bush's question of "why do they hate us" so much better (and more truthfully) than he did himself.

After any tragedy, an important step towards healing is grieving. Part of grieving is taking time for self-reflection, for really delving deep within ourselves (and our nation) and for figuring out who we are.

We did not allow ourselves time to grieve - American flags tacked onto bumpers do not count - and therefore, we eliminated self-reflection. Can we, after one year, go back to that grieving stage and think inwardly? I pray that we can at least try, for it is there that true healing can begin and pave the road to peace.

Ryan Whitley is a senior majoring in both history and religion.

Hysterical media criminalized frat

The public, university overreacted to the Sig Eps' supposed abuse.

Like you, I was horrified when I first heard the news. Of course I'm talking about the famous pig, whose tragic story has touched millions.

Colin West

GUEST COLUMNIST

After being thoroughly debriefed by the appropriate authorities here at the university, is resting comfortably at a Motel 6. While years of therapy might allow the pig to someday lead a normal life, the story does not end there. You might think it does, but I promise you it doesn't.

This is really the story of an evil fraternity (redundant, I know) whose members apparently think there is something funny about a drunken farm animal. Where, I ask you, is the humor in that? Whoopee cushions and hand buzzers are funny. The one about the priest and the rabbi who join up to form a two-man bobsled team is funny. But a pig that is too drunk to stand up (even though it does have four legs) is most definitely not funny.

Thankfully, there is a silver lining to this story. Out of the tragedy, a few individuals have emerged to restore our faith in society, if not fraternities.

First of all, kudos to the media for its outstanding, accurate coverage of the incident. Some have complained that the story was blown out of proportion.

Hogwash! The press's reaction, like a well-placed pun, was right-on as usual. Specifically, we owe our undying gratitude to the anonymous hero at the Associated Press who decided that the story should not be penned up in local news, but rather that the harsh lights of the national media were necessary to expose such wickedness.

Another fellow who deserves our thanks is the editor of USA Today, a fine periodical, without whose colorful bar graphs and pie charts we would never be able to grasp information like, "How much Americans are eating at the movies" or "Percentage of Canadian telephone operators who like

It was the online edition of (USA Today) that featured the pig story where it naturally belonged, on the front page, comfortably nestled between stories about the bloody standoff at the Church of the Nativity and the return of fascism in France.

hardboiled eggs." It was the online edition of that newspaper that featured the pig story where it naturally belonged, on the front page, comfortably nestled between stories about the bloody standoff at the Church of the Nativity and the return of fascism in France. Credit is also due outside of the media. We must all recognize the efforts of Barbara Cassidy, the director of Forsyth County Animal Control, who helped rescue the pig and who offered poignant words to reporters: "That pig could have easily died."

Excellent point, Barbara. With watchdogs like Cassidy around, I don't think Forsyth County has to worry about any innocent pigs being killed (except, of course, for those that are killed every month at the slaughterhouse where the pig was purchased).

Finally, there is the biggest hero of all, the pig itself.

The abducted animal bravely escaped from a band of depraved fraternity hooligans, who were no doubt forcing it to listen to songs by Nelly and OutKast. Despite that kind of unimaginable trauma, the pig showed no animosity toward its captors. When asked about its missing tail, the shaken pig responded, "It doesn't matter who cut it off ... I don't mind about the tail, because I never knew what it was for anyway." Merciful, heroic pig indeed.

But I'm not so forgiving. The AP article reported that if convicted of animal cruelty (although they were actually charged with animal abandonment, not animal cruelty), some of these fraternity swine could get 90 days. In my opinion, they'd be getting off way too easy. I say an eye for an eye. I know it could never happen, but if there were any justice in this world, the guilty fraternity brothers would have to go out to a field and get "drunk, unburned and dehydrated." Then we'd see how they like it.

Colin West wrote this column in May and graduated with the Class of 2002.



Attacking Iraq is a misguided idea

The White House's proposed invasion of Iraq is doomed to fail from the very beginning.

As an avid reader of Tom Clancy novels, I consider myself an expert armchair general on national defense and foreign policy. But even without the extensive training I have received from Jack Ryan, common sense alone dictates that President George W.

Jamie Kidd

GUEST COLUMNIST

Bush's administration's plan for preserving homeland security via first strike action on Iraq is doomed to fail.

In a speech to veterans Aug. 26, Vice President Dick Cheney asserted that we will "work closely with a global coalition" to defeat terrorism and terrorist states. However, the fact is that we do not have a global coalition against Iraq, and if we attack Iraq now, we will do so without the support of the world community. At best, we would face global ambivalence and displeasure. At worst, we could incur the sanctions that we have placed on others for similarly imperialistic actions.

As a practical matter, the simple truth is that we have not yet subdued al-Qaeda or

According to Cheney, attacking Iraq will "prevent another, much more devastating attack" on our soil, stop the Islamic Jihad, help the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and ensure "freedom and dignity" for the region in the future. In addition to these lofty goals, there is a certain undeniable thrill in blowing up one of America's greatest enemies.

Osama bin Laden. This statement should not be misconstrued as a criticism of our armed forces. Their job in the area is difficult and time consuming, and I would never presume to tell them how to do it. However, I do believe that we should wait until we complete one major military operation to start another one - particularly one that may prove to be far more dangerous and complicated than Korea or Vietnam.

Even if these conditions are met, there is another serious practical objection. Our presence in the region may do more harm than good. There are very few examples of U.S.-led intervention into others' domestic agendas that have turned out well, while a few of our operations have had undeniably negative consequences.

Even when we have accomplished our short-term goals, the long-term consequences of many of our actions have been to foster more hatred and resentment

against America. Saddam Hussein still has considerable support in the region. Attacking him will only feed the dangerous fire of anti-American extremists.

Despite these and other obstacles, the Bush administration seems set on attacking Iraq. The logic behind this policy is seductive. According to Cheney, attacking Iraq will "prevent another, much more devastating attack" on our soil, stop the Islamic Jihad, help the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and ensure "freedom and dignity" for the region in the future. In addition to these lofty goals, there is a certain undeniable thrill in blowing up one of America's greatest enemies.

Destroying Hussein and Iraq would expedite the war on terrorism. However, like the similarly efficient secret immigration hearings, declaring war against Iraq without a stricter standard of proof of necessity is wrong.

Democracy is difficult and often frightening. The rules and moral codes that must be followed by a nation like the United States often put us at somewhat of a disadvantage when compared with those like Hussein who have no scruples or honor.

If we violate our principles and successfully attack Iraq soon, we may or may not accomplish everything Cheney says we will. Either way, the action will rob America of some of our spirit and pride.

Jamie Kidd is a senior political science major who writes on current events.