

Voices (continued)

If that's the case, consider the message received. And take this message in exchange: You don't know my people. You don't know what we're about. You don't know what you just started.

But you're about to learn.



By *Tamim Ansary, San Francisco*

I've been hearing a lot of talk about "bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age." Ronn Owens, on KGO Talk Radio today, allowed that this would mean killing innocent people, people who had nothing to do with this atrocity, but "we're at war, we have to accept collateral damage. What else can we do?" Minutes later I heard some TV pundit discussing whether we "have the belly to do what must be done."

And I thought about the issues being raised especially hard because I am from Afghanistan, and even though I've lived here for 35 years I've never lost track of what's going on there. So I want to tell anyone who will listen how it all looks from where I'm standing.

I speak as one who hates the Taliban and Osama Bin Laden. There is no doubt in my mind that these people were responsible for the atrocity in New York. I agree that something must be done about those monsters.

But the Taliban and Ben Laden are not Afghanistan. They're not even the government of Afghanistan. The Taliban are a cult of ignorant psychotics who took over Afghanistan in 1997. Bin Laden is a political criminal with a plan. When you think Taliban, think Nazis. When you think Bin Laden, think Hitler. And when you think "the people of Afghanistan" think "the Jews in the concentration camps."

It's not only that the Afghan people had nothing to do with this atrocity. They were the first victims of the perpetrators. They would exult if someone would come in there, take out the Taliban and clear out the rats nest of international thugs holed up in their country.

Some say, why don't the Afghans rise up and overthrow the Taliban? The answer is, they're starved, exhausted, hurt, incapacitated, suffering. A few years ago, the United Nations estimated that there are 500,000 disabled orphans in Afghanistan — a country with no economy, no food. There are millions of widows. And the Taliban has been burying these widows alive in mass graves. The soil is littered with land mines, the farms were all destroyed by the Soviets. These are a few of the reasons why the Afghan people have not overthrown the Taliban.

We come now to the question of bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age. Trouble is, that's been done. The Soviets took care of it already. Make the Afghans suffer? They're already suffering. Level their houses? Done.

Turn their schools into piles of rubble? Done. Eradicate their hospitals? Done. Destroy their infrastructure? Cut them off from medicine and health care? Too late. Someone already did all that.

New bombs would only stir the rubble of earlier bombs. Would they at least get the Taliban? Not likely. In today's Afghanistan, only the Taliban eat, only they have the means to move around. They'd slip away and hide. Maybe the bombs would get some of those disabled orphans, they don't move too fast, they don't even have wheelchairs. But flying over Kabul and dropping bombs wouldn't really be a strike against the criminals who did this horrific thing. Actually it would only

be making common cause with the Taliban—by raping once again the people they've been raping all this time.

So what else is there? What can be done, then? Let me now speak with true fear and trembling. The only way to get Bin Laden is to go in there with ground troops. When people speak of "having the belly to do what needs to be done" they're thinking in terms of having the belly to kill as many as needed. Having the belly to overcome any moral qualms about killing innocent people. Let's pull our heads out of the sand. What's actually on the table is Americans dying. And not just because some Americans would die fighting their way through Afghanistan to Bin Laden's hideout. It's much bigger than that folks. Because to get any troops to Afghanistan, we'd have to go through Pakistan. Would they let us? Not likely. The conquest of Pakistan would have to be first. Will other Muslim nations just stand by? You see where I'm going. We're flirting with a world war between Islam and the West.

And guess what: that's Bin Laden's program. That's exactly what he wants. That's why he did this. Read his speeches and statements. It's all right there. He really believes Islam would beat the west. It might seem ridiculous, but he figures if he can polarize the world into Islam and the West, he's got a billion soldiers. If the west wreaks a holocaust in those lands, that's a billion people with nothing left to lose, that's even better from Bin Laden's point of view. He's probably wrong, in the end the West would win, whatever that would mean, but the war would last for years and millions would die, not just theirs but ours. Who has the belly for that? Bin Laden does. Anyone else?

The author writes for Encarta and is an occasional MSNBC commentator.



JROTC News

Submitted by LTC(Ret) Robert F. Parker Jr., NHS SAI

1. Naples JROTC supported the following events last month: Terracina Grand Opening, NHS Open House, 4 Home Football Games, Legislative Redistricting Meeting, LPE Walkathon.

2. The surge in patriotism following the terrorist attacks has landed JROTC in the media spotlight. GCHS cadets were featured in a large photo from College Night in the NDN; Naples cadets were interviewed by WINK TV-5 for the 5 O'Clock News; and Channel 78, The School Zone, filmed a segment at NHS last week on JROTC.

3. Both the GCHS Shark Battalion and the NHS Golden Eagle Battalion have donated \$500 each to the American Disaster Relief Fund to help those affected by the tragic events in NY, PA, and Washington D.C.

4. GCHS provided a color guard for the POW-MIA ceremony in Cambier Park on 21 September. The ceremony was expanded/changed based on the terrorist attacks.

Upcoming JROTC Events

1. All five Collier County Battalions will assist the County Public Health Dept during mass hearing and vision screenings in all elementary and middle schools. Started by Lely HS, this has become a major community support activity.

2. At least three battalions will march in the annual Swamp Buggy Parade on 27 October.

3. The Golden Eagles are scheduled to support the Alzheimers Foundation Elephant Fest (3 November), The Heartwalk (17 November), and the Festival of Lights (19 November).

TROA Scholarships

Continued from page 1

Chapters are encouraged to spread the word about these new scholarships. Additional information may be obtained from Mrs. Cindy Amos, 1-800-245-8762 (TROA), ext 169. Donations can be mailed directly to American Patriot Scholarships, Department 889, Alexandria, VA 22334-0889.

Additionally, all donations to the TROA Scholarship Fund sent via this year's Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) go toward these new scholarships. The application will be available December 31, 2001.

Credits

The graphic on page 3 is a combination of several graphics merged together by Pat Carpenter, whose work is well known on the Internet, especially in stationery newsgroups. Pat lives in Tennessee. The name of the artists for the various components is not known.

Credit for the mystery member on page 6 goes to Bill Gardiner's parents.

HAPPENINGS

Dinner Meeting

Saturday
13 October 2001

Social Hour 6:30 p.m.
Buffet immediately following

The Tides Restaurant
Marco Island

\$16.00 pp

Speaker:
Linda Abbott
Collier County School Board

RSVP
Paul Weber
262-6803

October Board Meeting

Monday, 15 October
3:00 p.m.

Bob Glodich's Home
2489 Kings Lake Blvd., Naples

Luncheon Meeting

Saturday, 3 November
Old Hickory, Ft. Myers
Social Hour 11:30 a.m.

Prime Rib w/ Baked Potato or
Blackened Mahi Mahi w/ Rice Pilaf


\$16.00 pp

November Board Meeting
TBA

Dinner Meeting

Friday, December 21
Country Club of Naples
6:30 p.m.

Reminder:
Bring an unwrapped Christmas
gift for a boy or girl up to the
age of 10. Shop early!



THOMAS M. FITZPATRICK,
M.D., P.A.
Orthopaedic Surgery

The Commons Medical & Surgical Center
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Mystery Member ... Do You Recognize Him?



Hints: The uniform is Air Force and this youngster was fresh out of abbreviated basic training at Camp Blanding in December 1944. Training was cut short because of the battle of the Bulge and he was headed for Europe right after New Years.

Mail your photos to me at 2489 Kings Lake Blvd., Naples 34112, or bring them to a meeting. If I'm not in attendance, give them to any board member to be passed on to Bob at the board meeting that usually follows a few days later.

I promise to take good care of these treasures and return them unharmed but I do need you to carefully and lightly write your name on the back

and maybe write a little note about the circumstances of the picture. You'll find the identification of this mystery member on another page.

New Member

Please seek out and welcome U.S. Army Captain Paul Lentini. Paul is a financial advisor with Prudential's Pelican Bay office and was sponsored by Eliot and Marguerite Nicholson.

A 1991 graduate of West Point, Capt. Lentini served three years with the 5th Corps Artillery in Germany and concluded his tenure with the 1st Cavalry Division at Ft. Hood, Texas.

Paul and his wife, Tracy, a graphic designer for the Marco Eagle, moved to Marco Island approximately four years ago from Philadelphia.

Got Something to Say?

We *could* have a Letters to the Editor section ... It *might* stimulate some good discussion at a subsequent meeting. Both email and regular addresses are provided on page 2 at the left-hand column. Enough said.

FIRST CLASS MAIL



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