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Letters to the Editor
Home News Tribune
35 Kennedy Blvd.
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To the Editor:

I applaud the efforts of our government to bring to justice those who planned the September 11 attacks. I also applaud the great effort our leaders are making not to hurt more innocent people in the process, and I applaud those who have warned that striking out against innocent people can create more hatred and more terrorism.

The thought I want to add is this: we should remember how the cold war was won. In the end, it was not won by military prowess, by better spies, or by better teams of assassins. It was won by the better performance of free-market economies and democratic systems. It was won because the leaders and the people of the Soviet Union became convinced that their system did not work.

In this new war also, the most important battlefield is the worldwide battlefield of ideas. I do not imagine that those who have already signed up for Mr. Bin Laden's project will change their minds. It is right to mobilize the world to pursue them as criminals. But there are thousands and perhaps millions more people who are sympathetic to what Bin Laden has done—who cannot help but admire his destruction of symbols of economic and military power that they see as oppressive of their countries and peoples, and who may be ready to sign up. We must change their minds.

Here are some ways that our leaders, in government and in the news media, might help.

1. Instead of continuing to show the world pictures of the terrorists' success in destroying buildings, we should show their victims. This was an attack on human beings.
2. People of all nationalities, all faiths, and all colors were targeted. We should show the world a contrast between the indiscriminate cruelty of the terrorists and our own compassion for all the victims.
3. Even while mobilizing Americans for reconstruction, we should emphasize that the attack was an attack on the economy of the whole world. The increased prosperity since the end of the cold war has been worldwide, and the damage done by the September 11 attack is worldwide. We should show that we know this, and that we care. We should visibly and sincerely redouble our efforts to secure justice and opportunity for all the world's peoples.
4. Instead of emphasizing calls for revenge, our media should feature voices that call for tolerance and wisdom as well as justice.

Respectfully,

Glenn Shafer