

# **Sending more food than bombs to Afghanistan**

**By: Seth Baum**

**Posted: 10/25/01**

America's anti-terrorism strategy focuses on violent military action above peaceful, humanitarian measures. In response to this strategy and foreign reaction to it, I took it upon myself to write to William Coyne — my hometown representative — asking him to advocate shifting our campaign's focus from violence to humanitarian in nature.

As long as our goal is preventing future attacks on our country, our campaign should directly address the reasons terrorists seek to harm the United States — a blatant lack of modesty in acting as the world's greatest nation ever, highlighted by imperialistic military actions.

Accurate or not — and a strong case could be made for it's accuracy — America comes off as a greedy bully sucking all the world has to offer into its own excess and exploiting or bombing anyone who stands in our way. I wrote this letter about two weeks ago — shortly after America began bombing Afghanistan.

"Dear Representative Coyne,

The numerous and heavily attended anti-American rallies currently being held throughout the world are a clear sign that our energies must be focused less on violence and more on humanitarian efforts.

We are making no new friends by bombing Afghanistan — instead, we are making enemies, and making our enemies more bitter. We're giving their anti-Americanism a sense of urgency. If our ultimate goal is to protect our country, we are going about it the wrong way.

The prevalence of anti-American sentiment worldwide proves that uprooting a relatively small terrorist faction of a governing body cannot be a sound means of avoiding future terrorist attacks. When Al-Qaeda and the Taliban are gone, other groups will simply fill their shoes, and there are far too many qualified candidates to assume the anti-America crusade to eliminate all of them through military means.

I believe the average anti-American doesn't really care about our freedom of speech or democratic government.

The anti-American rally drawing 70,000 people in India — a democratic nation — testifies to this. Instead, the American policies that should be getting the blame for the attacks are the ones that we're using to deter future attacks — military imperialism and an arrogant sense that we know what's best for the world.

If we want peace between our nation and those who seek to attack it, we must counter their motivations to attack.

If they are angry that we support Israel's right to sovereignty, we must acknowledge and defend theirs. If they react in fury at our violent overseas military endeavors, we must overshadow them with humanitarian efforts to show them our true, peaceful intentions. If our goal is truly to live in a peaceful, prosperous world, we must lead by example throughout it.

It's hard to set a good example for peaceful existence when your focus is on violent military action. There are no casualties in humanitarian aid.

I proudly support the air-dropping of food and medicine over Afghanistan. Measures such as this are what is needed to help people come to consider America as a friend and not a foe.

We must focus more money and attention on this and similar actions. I recommend as a starting point House Resolution 2459, a resolution to create a Department of Peace. If peace is our true goal, then this department will help lead us there. If peace is not our goal, then I am not very proud to be an American."

Certainly, it is natural for us to care more about our fellow Americans than people half way around the world. And many of us do care about the well-being of Afghan citizens — who clearly were the first victim of the Taliban regime — as well as those in need of humanitarian aid worldwide.

But as long as America continues to drop more bombs than food, we don't deserve the admiration of those we drop them on.

Baum can be reached at [sbaum@campustimes.org](mailto:sbaum@campustimes.org).