

commentary

from our viewpoint...

President said what needed to be said

It was, one faithful Democrat said, the best speech of George W. Bush's life.

She summed it up: He said what needed to be said.

As the President finished, the House, the Senate, the Supreme Court, the joint chiefs, all rose to punctuate his points:

Without formal declaration, America now is at war with terrorists. The president warned that we will pursue those responsible for the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks.

He said much more. He made it clear that any country which harbors terrorists will feel our wrath.

He pointed his finger directly at Osama bin Laden, the millionaire Saudi exile who is accused of masterminding and bankrolling the attacks this month, plus the bombing of the U.S.S. Cole and of two U.S. embassies in Africa.

Bin Laden and his organization have been the prime suspects all along.

The president spelled out how our response would happen: formal military attacks, coupled with covert operations which, he noted, may never be made public.

And he promised that, beyond the September attacks, the U.S. and its allies would pursue terrorism to the ends of the earth. He invited other nations to join in. He noted that in the end, they will either be with us ... or with the terrorists.

In what the president said, there were few surprises, even the announcement that the war on terror abroad would be accompanied by a new Office of Homeland Security which would coordinate counter-terrorist efforts in this country. He noted that 40-some agencies currently have a hand in the effort.

And while the cheers were loud and sustained during and after the speech, whether America has the resolve to follow through is not yet clear.

As Mr. Bush pointed out, the battle will take years. It will involve loss of American lives, both in military action and at the hands of terrorists.

And terrorists, who can travel light, have vast networks of supporters, and are hidden nearly anywhere, will be hard to track down. While we are hunting them, they will strike again. The United States will have to pursue this war until it is over, until the last active terrorist cell has been eliminated.

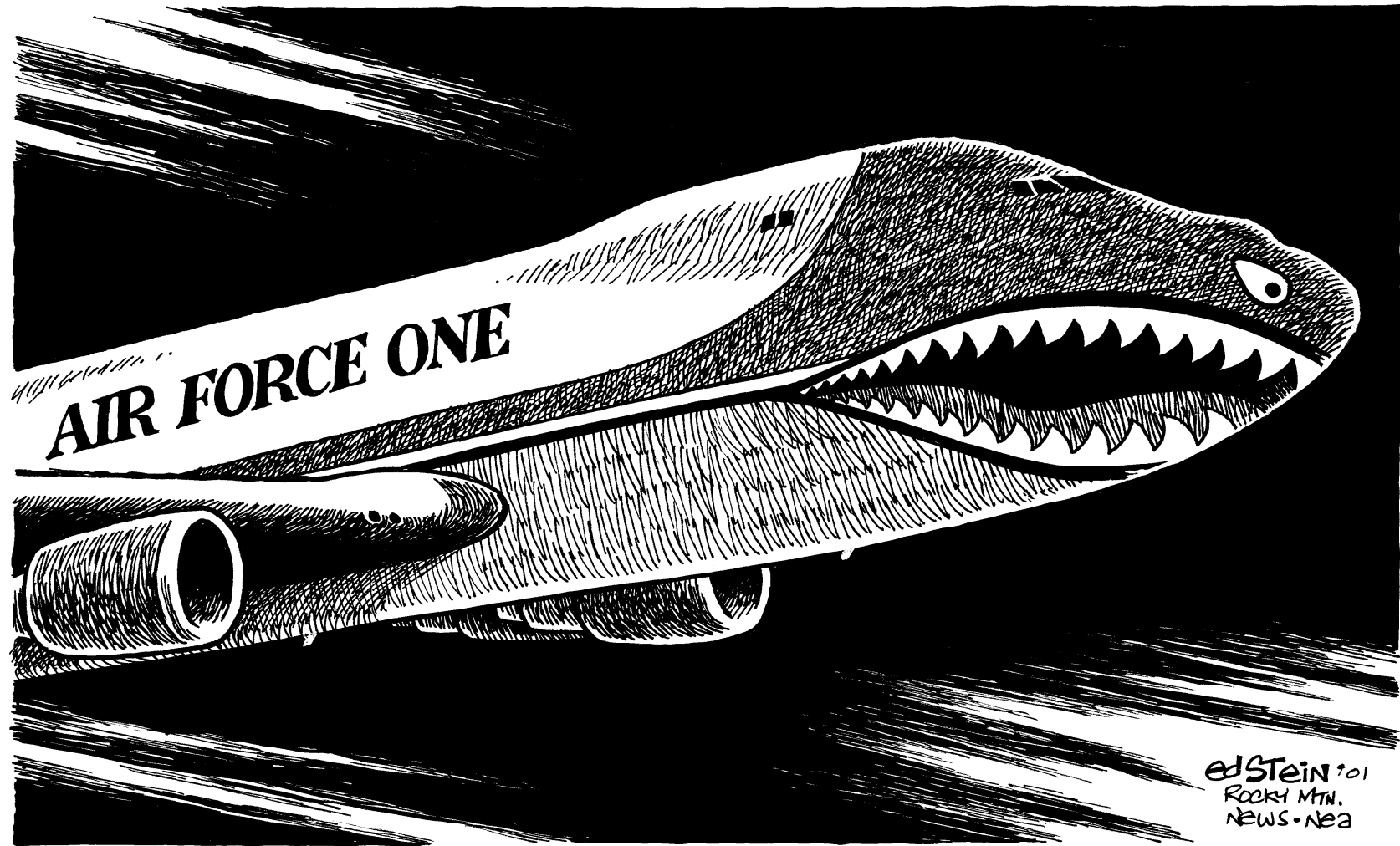
And while we are very good at fighting just causes, we have never had to conduct a campaign which could stretch out over so many years.

No surprises in the President's speech, but plenty to think about. Nothing that wasn't clear, but lots to figure out.

America has her hands full, and the betting is, we have not yet realized how full.

This war will be different: Small in scale, global in reach, confusing and hard to follow, unclear in outcome, difficult to measure, and yet quite costly. Be prepared.

— Steve Haynes



Bin Laden wouldn't give his life for his cause

*Take a little leap of faith,
Kiss the heart that hides the snake.
You'll never fade.*

"Take the Power," The Cult

First this week, an apology is in order. This column is more disjointed than usual. My emotions took control. I hope it still is coherent enough to make you think.

How could anyone be convinced to be a kamikaze? To see your death right in front of your eyes for all your senses to see and feel? Your beliefs must be so strong that you subjugate your mind, and the fears and needs of this world, to the promise of getting to the promised land, to the luscious gardens of paradise.

What did Osama bin Laden tell his suicide bombers? What did he promise them? What were their conversations like? Did he babble some unholy scripture saying, "Take a leap of faith and trust bin Laden and you will never fade from Muslim memory." Did he say, "You will live forever in paradise — and oh by the way you will be killing 6,000 innocent people. But don't worry about that. Allah loves you and so do I."

Puke and gag. Would the suicide bombers have been zombies? Would they have spoken back to bin Laden or was it a one-sided conversation with the all-knowing bin Laden telling these confused, depressed souls that they would have an infamous end? Would the bombers have been numbed senseless by the Qur'anic babbling of a spoiled rich kid? Would the bombers have spoken to their own families with a detachment? What if one of the bombers had asked bin Laden, "if this is so important to Allah and Islam, why don't you go fly one of these planes?" I wonder if they asked this simple



**mitch
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question.

Just typing bin Laden's name makes me ill. He has gotten what he wants. Attention. What has he ever done besides used his family's money and religion to kill? The answer is nothing.

He provides the hate seekers in this world with money and Islamic holy verses from the Qur'an to support violence and terror. But if he is so committed to this violence, why hasn't he driven a car bomb into a military barracks? Why didn't he himself fly a jet liner into an American icon? Why doesn't he show his commitment to his god by putting his money where his mouth is? We know you can show us the money, bin Laden, but how about guts? Do you have them? I think not.

Would bin Laden have risked his own life by diving into a crumbling building to save some of his own supporters? Would he give up his life for his so called "calling"? No way. He is a fake and a fraud. He preys on the confused who are poor of heart and of home. Bin Laden won't even show his face today. What are you afraid of bin Laden? If your cause is so just and you are so innocent, why aren't you proclaiming it from the tallest Afghan mountain? It's because you are a coward, who is afraid you will lose your power and influence. How about a court trial, bin Laden? This tact would actually hurt the United States because it would give you a worldwide platform to continue to spew your

hatred and your diseased religious sayings.

Bin Laden is convinced that life is predestined and that humans have no free will. How did he know that 6,000 innocents were all destined to die on the same day? How did he know that the 18 hijackers were destined to die in such an unholy way? How did he know that one of the deaths that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001, shouldn't have been his?

The answer is that he has no more of an idea than my dog about who should or shouldn't live. But just like anything else in life, it's not surprising that the more money you have, the more friends you have and the more people listen to you. Bin Laden is a leader to his supporters because they figure he must be doing something right if he is rich with money. He uses this belief to lead his supporters into doing whatever he wants.

I don't have the answers to these questions I've asked. But it seems to me that bin Laden decided he couldn't hack the real world, so instead he has made up an imaginary world in his mind with him being the undisputed and all knowing leader. His money gives him the ability to live this life, using innocent humans as the pawns on a monopoly board of life. Except in this game, when you make it around the board and pass "go" you don't collect \$200.

Instead you are dead. Except of course the all knowing leader, who sits over in the corner collecting all the money and attention, while his followers are pulled by strings just like puppets run by religious extremists gone amuck.

Bin Laden's selfish acts of Sept. 11 are the acts of a coward and zealot who is only a famous figure because he has money to drown out or buy out others who decide they don't want to play his little game of monopoly.

Attacks are a mixture of memories

This certainly has been one of the most memorable vacations I have had in my life, and what a combination — the terrorist attacks on the day our trip started, our daughter's wedding in Richmond, Texas, and then an extended stay in the hospital.

We watch in horror along with the rest of our nation and the world as smoke continues to rise from the rubble of the World Trade Center, and our hearts are heavy at the tremendous loss of life in these evil acts.

This was no spur-of-the-moment plan, and we should be as diligent in planning and executing our response.

However, unlike the terrorists, we do not want to miss two of our main targets or have interference in reaching our objectives.

While the terrorists who attacked New York did so with something like spectacular precision, the other two did not have the same follow-through. For the sake of our Capital and White House, their failure is a moral victory for Americans.

When we heard the fourth plane had gone down in Pennsylvania without any loss of life on the



tom betz

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ground, it seemed there had to be some heroic actions by those on board to sacrifice themselves to prevent the completion of that group's mission. As we have found later, that is exactly what happened on this plane, and those people certainly are shining heroes to be remembered.

What those passengers did was to devise a plan and with determination carry it out to ensure the destruction of the terrorist's plans. Unfortunately, they also lost their lives in the process. They deserve the medals that are being proposed, and probably something more tangible in the future for all to be reminded that you do not have to be serving in the military to make the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. When a situation exists that threatens

freedom, you simply take action without thinking about whether you will survive or not, knowing that you acted in the best interest of the greater good.

Exactly why the other plane hit the Pentagon rather than the other target also could have heroic implications, but so far the voice recorders have not provided enough for us to have any answers.

What we do know is there is no way an American pilot would intentionally fly a plane into a building like the World Trade Center, and if they ever find any of the black boxes from those planes we may find out more about what happened on those flight decks.

This type of evil action deserves for our people to return the favor. But when we do, we want to be very sure we complete our mission and decapitate the terrorist organization in such a manner that we make our point about not allowing evil to win. At the same time, we should try our best not to let these people become martyrs who spawn greater evil deeds.

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Member: Kansas Press Association
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e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com

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Betty Morris

Helen Dilts

nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services (nbetz@nwkansas.com)
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

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Junk Parade made city proud

To the Editor:

As I watched the Junk Parade of Saturday, it made me feel good to see the many loads of all kinds of junk go down the street and get out of town

We all should be proud of those who were involved in this effort. Although there was a junk parade held in 1992 by the beautification committee, this one involved many more people, clubs, etc.

I'm sure this has convinced everyone there is a great need to clean up our town.

I hope everyone will now take a serious look at their yards, alleys, vacant lots, and keep them clean of weeds and discarded items, so we can all be proud of Goodland.

I've often heard it said Goodland is a junky town.

And YES, this will also save taxpayers dollars because it costs the city money if they are forced to clean up a bad-looking place.

By the way, if you have items that you can't haul or need help to get it to the landfill, the city will pick it up.

There is no charge to the homeowner. So don't



**from our
readers**

• to the editor

pile it! Get rid of it if you don't need it.

Erna Blume
Goodland

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