

# Professor Urges Rational Responses

## LETTER

Your September 27 cover story, "Rising tensions: Arab students fear backlash as hate crimes increase nationwide" touched upon an issue close to the hearts of many Bay Area residents.

In the wake of the World Trade Center attacks, the loyalty of minority hyphenated Americans has been increasingly called into question. Question to the Arab-American: If America attacked your cultural roots, who would you side with? To the American muslim: If America waged war on Islam, who would you support? Questions of this sort presume that members pledge absolute loyalty to their group, much like players on a football team, or ants in a colony. But mindless loyalty is not the principle upon which our nation is built. "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity...." We are a nation built on justice and conscience. Loyalty without conscience is the vehicle of atrocities. In the two world wars, we have seen all too clearly what crimes to humanity have been committed in the name of patriotism.

When threatened, we all have the urge to lapse into the football team mentality, to act like ants protecting a colony. But war is not a ballgame, and we are not insects. Being human means letting our conscience rise above group loyalties and doing what we believe to be right. In a university environment, we have an even greater responsibility to be rational and not let tribal instincts get the better of us.

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