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U.S. reaction predictable but wrong

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The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were a hideous crime. First, the terrorists took advantage of the effects of internationalization. Internationalization makes it easier to move around the world. Even those people who have insidious intent may enter the United States.

Internationalization also makes it easier to transfer monetary resources across national borders so that the terrorists had easy access to a large amount of funds in the United States. The terrorists allegedly learned how to fly in the United States in order to carry out their attack.

Second, the attacks precipitated an upsurge in nationalist sentiment in the United States and helped the Bush administration to unite the country and to increase its popularity.

Bush is the first president since 1888 to enter the White House without winning the popular vote. When the bitter presidential election was over, Bush said: "Our nation must rise above a house divided." He also asserted that "Whether you voted for me or not, I will do my best to serve your interests, and I will work to earn your respect."

The attacks gave Bush a great opportunity to serve Americans' interests and to earn Americans' respect by resorting to punitive military action.

Third, the terrorist attacks also provided the Koizumi cabinet with an opportunity to strengthen its power base. As in the case of the Bush administration, the Koizumi cabinet is also a weak cabinet since Koizumi is not a member of the biggest faction of the Liberal Democratic Party and has a relatively unstable power base in his own party.

Koizumi has to bolster this weakness with his image as a true reformer and with the strong support from the United States. Koizumi has kept pace with the United States by dispatching Japan's Self Defense Forces abroad and moving steadily to pass an antiterrorism bill through the Diet.

The United States is dealing with the terrorist attack with military force. But I find the U.S. reaction quite deplorable. When someone commits a crime in a civilized nation governed by the rule of law, justice is administered to the criminal according to impartial and disinterested laws.

Bush or any individual human being has the right to use force to bring the criminal to justice. The "eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" strategy is ineffective. Bush seems to believe that eliminating the Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, and the terrorist leader Osama bin Laden will solve the problem.

This is not a solution at all. Unless the root cause of terrorism is detected and addressed, another leader



will rise to the surface even if the United States successfully eliminates bin Laden this time.

The U.S. recourse to force against the Taliban and bin Laden may be regarded as the clash of the Western and Islamic civilizations. Using force satisfies only American national sentiment and arouses the animosity of potential terrorists.

It is also deplorable that the majority of Americans support systematic destruction and killing in Afghanistan conducted by the Bush administration. It is to be hoped that they will come to their senses as soon as possible.

It is additionally unfortunate that Japan blindly followed the United States. As a true ally, Japan should advise the United States to sit back, stay calm and look at the root cause of the terrorism.

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