

penetrate any security system. Or they can choose other targets—say, oil tankers.

Yet the Security as Containment metaphor is powerful. It is what lies behind the missile shield proposal. Rationality might say that the September 11 attacks showed the missile shield is pointless. But it strengthened the use of the Security as Containment metaphor. As soon as you say “national security,” the Security as Containment metaphor will be activated, and with it a missile shield.

The Conservative Advantage

The reaction of the Bush administration was just what you would expect a conservative reaction would be: pure strict father morality. There is evil loose in the world. We must show our strength and wipe it out. Retribution and vengeance are called for. If there are casualties or collateral damage, so be it.

The reaction from liberals and progressives was far different: *Justice is called for, not vengeance*. Understanding and restraint are what is needed. The model for our actions should be the rescue workers and doctors—the healers—not the bombers.

We should not be like *them*. We should not take innocent lives in bringing the perpetrators to justice. Massive bombing of Afghanistan and Iraq—with the killing of innocents—will show that we are no better.

But the Bush administration’s conservative message dominated the media. The event was framed in their terms. As Newt Gingrich put it on the Fox network, “Retribution is justice.”

It is vital to understand the history of this framing now, because it is coming up again, with the conservative attack on Obama’s call for the use of “soft power”—diplomacy and economic leverage—and the conservatives’ call for a military buildup and intervention in the world’s trouble spots.

I have been reminded, over and over, of Gandhi’s words: “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” The words apply to governments as well as to individuals.

Causes