

goodwill and courage of moderate Islamic leaders. To gain it, we must show our goodwill by beginning in a serious way to address the social and political conditions that lead to despair.

Thinking of the enemy as evil means not taking the primary causes seriously.

Public Discourse

The Honorable Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), who I am proud to acknowledge as my representative in Congress, in casting the lone vote against giving President Bush full Congressional approval for carrying out his War on Terrorism as he saw fit, said the following:

I am convinced that military action will not prevent further acts of international terrorism against the United States. This is a very complex and complicated matter.

. . . However difficult this vote may be, some of us must urge the use of restraint. Our country is in a state of mourning. Some of us must say, let us step back for a moment. Let us just pause for a minute and think through the implications of our actions today so that this does not spiral out of control.

I have agonized over this vote, but I came to grips with it today and I came to grips with opposing this resolution during the very painful yet very beautiful memorial service. As a member of the clergy so eloquently said, “As we act, let us not become the evil that we deplore.”

I agree. But what is striking to me as a linguist is the use of negatives in the statement: “not prevent,” “restraint” (inherently negative), “not spiral out of control,” “not become the evil that we deplore.” A petition was circulated calling for “justice *without* vengeance.” *Without* has another implicit negative. It is not that these negative statements are wrong (three negatives!). What is needed is a *positive* form of discourse.

There is one.

The central concept is that of responsibility, which is at the heart of