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## Editorial 12: Reasons for War

1. Who could say no to good ol' smilin' George W?

2. Somewhere in my mother's house are pieces of the Berlin wall; a few small pieces of graffitied concrete, chipped from something much larger.

They have no great personal meaning to me, or my family, but they are somehow impressive nonetheless. They might seem like trivial mementos, but they remain a tangible connection to history; a few fragments of concrete that sit lightly in the palm of a hand. They don't provide any substantial insight, but running fingers across their rough edges gives just a hint of what it might have been like to be there — to have been separated from loved ones by years of barbed wire and concrete, or to stand on top of the wall shouting and drinking, watching the bulldozers push and pull it down.

Since September 11th, many people have struggled to make the terrorist attacks of that day meaningful, not simply historically or politically, but personally. Many Americans and Canadians have travelled to New York to witness the destruction for themselves, many as part of organized rallies of support. A suspect number of Canadians have a friend who's brother's niece worked in the World Trade Center, but had a meeting uptown, and was mercifully absent when the towers came down. Tommy t-shirts have been replaced with clothing sporting the FDNY logo. People have given blood. They have given money to New York's newly destitute and homeless, they have given to those in Afghanistan to whom these conditions are so familiar. People involve themselves in the event.

They involve themselves for any number of reasons, to show kindness or sympathy, to show solidarity or empathy or support. There are a multitude of motives, but part of nearly every one, I suspect, is the simple desire to do *something*, to involve oneself for the sake of being involved, for the sake of being part of history, as ghastly and unfair as history often is.

Donating money is doubtlessly more helpful than putting an American flag in your window, or saving pieces of the Berlin wall in a drawer, but all act to connect us with events which might otherwise be peripheral in our lives. It helps to relieve some of our insecurities about our significance in the face of such large forces and events. There is no harm in this - if you are not in charge of the Canadian military.

Defense Minister Art Eggleton said "Canadians know how to fight when they have to fight." Apparently, we also know that trick where you wait until the fight is over to show up. By the time Canadian troops arrive in Afghanistan there will be little left to do but to take pot shots at the remaining Taliban "army", and to dig through rubble in search of Osama Bin Laden. Even the briefest and most cursory of glances at the American army suggests that the Americans certainly don't *need* our help.

Why are we going? Canada, not invited to participate in the peace-keeping mission in Afghanistan, wants to do *something*. More importantly, it wants to be *seen* doing something. The deployment of troops to Afghanistan is a public relations move, meant to show our solidarity with the US, and meant to silence critics who claim the Canadian Armed Forces are not up to the task. The government would like to relieve some of its insecurities about its significance in the face of such large forces and events. There are much better ways. The desire to involve oneself in history may be natural, but Canada's opportunistic entry into an armed conflict on that basis is foolish and embarrassing.

3. Because we're a good boy! Yes we are, yes we are, yes we are! We are such a good boy! Yes we are! Such a good boy. Tell us we're a good boy! Tell us we're good.

Matthew Dorrell,  
Editor-In-Chief