BY BRENDAN M. FINN
CRUSADER NEWS STAFF

The United States’ war on terrorism has resulted in a great deal of violence. As we per- sisted our U.S. air strikes and military assistance, the government that has allowed and en- couraged bin Laden’s Al Qaeda terror- oryzation organization to operate in Afghanistan, retreated to the south of the country. Between Nov. 10 and 12, the Tali- ban retreated from Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat and Kabul, the nation’s capital city, to the southern province of Kunduz where they gathered their remaining forces. At the time of composition, the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance claim they control 80 percent of Afghanistan and are now fighting for con- trol of Kunduz, a city believed to be one of the final Taliban strongholds. However, rather than completely the military objective of reclaiming all Taliban territory, some argue that the United States should discon- tinue air strikes for the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, which begins on Friday or Saturday, depending on the appearance of the New Moon.

Though it is wrong to dismiss the reli- gious significance of Ramadan to Muslims, discontinuing air strikes at this point would be a serious tactical error on the part of the United States. The Taliban, who do not have air defenses, could use the month to reinforce their handhold. If this is allowed to happen, all it can to avoid the appearance of fighting against the Islamic faith and show that its efforts are simply to eradicate bin laden and his net- work of terrorists.

It is understandable that many American citi- zens do not sympathize with Muslim traditions and feelings following the Sept. 11 attacks, it is important to understand how our en- emies right now are a group of known terrorists who have manipulated the Islamic faith to justi- fy their actions. On the international relations scene, the United States is walking on a tightrope of emotions. The slightest push from one side or the other could cause our precarious situation to wobble and can once again cause Americans to fall into a spiral of fear for their safety. What is now most important is the safety of the Afghani people who fight for their freedom right now. An uprising in a nation like Pakistan, prompted by American actions during Ra- madan, may cause the U.S. to adopt a dangerous situa- tion, possibly putting them in the crossfire of an erasing conflict, or maybe even a world war, in the Afghanistan region.

It is a topic of huge discussion right now with Nov. 16 fast approaching. Scaling back the bombing may be the right choice at the time to preserve the fragile harmony in the surrounding region. However, if another terrorist attack is to take place in the next four days or throughout the next month, all bets are off. This is a chance for the United States to prove that this is not a war against Muslims in any way but against the Al Qaeda terrorst network. Let’s try it to keep that way.