The US launched an airstrike on a hospital run by Doctors Without Borders - MSF - (無國界醫生) in Afghanistan. The US forces believed that the hospital was used by armed insurgents. But MSF, an organization that provides medical services in conflict zones, said only medical staff and patients were killed. There were no armed fighters inside.

The bombing was apparently a mistake. US President Barack Obama apologized and promised to examine military procedures to prevent a recurrence (再發生) of such tragedies. But his apology neither brought back lost lives, nor changed the mind of MSF to press for a thorough investigation.

Obama's apology can be said to be “無濟於事” (wu2 ji4 yu2 shi4), at least as far as saving his country from international condemnation is concerned.

“無” (wu2) is “without,” “nil,” “nothing,” “濟” (ji4) is “to aid,” “to benefit,” “於” (yu2) is “at,” “in” and “事” (shi4) is “affairs,” “a trouble.” “濟事” means “be of help,” “不濟事” is “does not help at all.” Literally, “無濟於事” (wu2 ji4 yu2 shi4) is “no aid to matter.”

It means “unhelpful,” “useless,” “of no avail,” “of no help” or “to no effect.” It also means “to serve no purpose,” “not to help matters.” An idiom of the same meaning is “於事無補” (yu2 shi4 wu2 bu3) - “does not help matters.”

The idiom conveys the same feeling as the English expression “a drop in the ocean,” which means “a very small amount in comparison to the amount that is needed.”

**Terms containing the character “無” (wu2) include:**

- 無法 (wu2 fa3) - unable, incapable
- 無論 (wu2 lun4) - regardless of
- 無關 (wu2 guan1) - to have nothing to do with
- 無奈 (wu2 nai4) - to have no choice