

Ill-defined strategy means more lost lives

Last week's Iraqi missile attack on the USS Stark in the Persian Gulf, which killed 37 crew members, highlights the murky, ill-defined and often dangerous foreign policy objectives of the Reagan administration. Shades of the 1982 Marine barracks bombing in Lebanon, which killed 241 soldiers, return with a haunting sense of *deja vu*. Those marines were the curators of the administration's poorly focused "peacekeeping" mission — the Stark's crew fell victim to similar myopic forethought.

Though the Navy has maintained a presence in the gulf for the past four decades, the Iran-Iraq war provided an impetus to increase U.S. forces in the area. Last year the war spilled into the gulf when Iraq and Iran began preying on oil tankers, and the administration responded by beefing up the flotilla. At present, a total of seven U.S. warships, including the disabled Stark, remain in the gulf on a three-pronged mission that Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger terms as "showing the flag," "projecting American power," and keeping international shipping lanes open.

While the first goal sounds innocuous enough, the latter two entail a greater risk to American lives. Moreover, the administration has not defined what exactly "projecting power" means or how it specifically intends to keep shipping lanes open.

If the United States insists on cruising the gulf, then a clear definition of our role in the gulf is a must. Until the missile attack on the Stark, U.S. warships in the area were under orders to defend themselves only if there was evidence of a "hostile threat." But Iraqi and Iranian warplanes routinely buzzed naval vessels, in fact flying directly overhead. This practice blurred the meaning of hostile threat to a point where the Stark was pitted in essentially a no-win situation. She had no air cover and, under the rules of engagement, could not have her defenses on automatic.

The gulf contingent now is operating on a "heightened state of alert," meaning our ships can now shoot at aircraft venturing too close to American ships. Couple this with the imminent re-flagging of Kuwaiti oil tankers under the U.S. banner, as well as provisions for their escort to and from the gulf, and the chances of engaging Iranian and Iraqi fighters increases.

Indeed, the chances of other attacks on a U.S. ships seem likely considering Iran's vow to continue striking oil tankers, be they American-registered or not. The Persian Gulf clearly exists as a hostile environment, yet Reagan recently stated, "I don't see the danger of a war [between the United States and Iran]." Thus Reagan is sidestepping the War Powers act, whereby Congress must be notified if American servicemen are placed in hostile situations.

As a tangential aside, most of the crude oil flowing out of the Persian Gulf makes its way to Japan and Europe — the United States receives only a marginal percentage of petroleum products from the Persian Gulf. Any action on our part must be contingent on our allies' financial and, if need be, military support in the gulf.

Without congressional resolve and evocation of the War Powers act, without air cover, without allied support and without a clearly defined Persian Gulf strategy, the United States continues to leave itself open for more attacks. And with more attacks will come further loss of American lives.



Letters

Recycle it

This letter is in response to Meg Springer's article on "Garbage a Renewable Resource," (ODE, May 8). While the article covered well the general theme of recycling as a means to reduce waste, it overlooked the means of how and where to recycle here in Lane County.

For those who don't already recycle, but would like to do so, here are some leads:

BRING Recycling Depots — most accept newspapers, glass, aluminum, tin cans, and cardboard. There are eight depots located around Eugene and outlying areas.

Dormitory residents can recycle at the BRING depot between E. 15th and 17th avenues just east of Agate Street. Recycling depots are also located at the Amazon and Westmoreland student housing complexes.

For the location of the recycling depot nearest you, call BRING and 746-3023.

Curbside Pick-up — all single-family home residents in Eugene, whether they subscribe to garbage collection service or not, can have their recyclables picked up by a collector that services their area.

If you don't have collection service, and would like to know

which collector services your area, call Lane County Waste Management and 687-4119.

Some collectors will also pick up recyclables from apartment buildings. Call the collector for your building to see if this service is offered.

If it is not, you can work with your apartment manager to set up a recycling station within your building that could be picked up by the collector.

Try recycling — the opportunities are many and it's easier than you think.

Brian Foran
Graduate student
Urban and Regional Planning

Band together

I was very angry at seeing the anti-labor, anti-worker letter by Dan Goulet concerning the Eugene teachers strike.

I doubt if Goulet works for a living, but as someone who does I sympathize with the Eugene teachers who risked their jobs to defend their union and their living standards against the vicious assault by the 4-J administration.

Ever since Reagan busted the PATCO union in 1981 it has been all-out war upon organized labor and the working people of this country.

Millions of workers have been laid off and millions more have had wage cuts shoved down their throats by the bosses and their buddies in Washington.

During the teachers strike we witnessed the brutality unleashed upon working people by the guardians of the rich, the police. Goulet condemns the strikers for their "violence" but unfortunately the strikers were far too gentle.

Back in the '30s when the unions were built and my grandfather went on strike, if you crossed a picket line you took your life into your hands.

That's how the unions were made powerful in this country, that's how working people got what is rightfully theirs, and that's what it is going to take to

beat back the anti-labor assault of the present government.

The teachers strike was a small but important victory. It's time that the working people of this country got off of their knees and fought back!

Strikes need community support and if working people band together they can be won.

Glenn Sacks
Journalist

Behind

Although I find Collin and Caitlin to be outspoken, I must take exception to their most recent letter (ODE, May 28).

Two reasons incline me to encourage Carolyn Lamberson in the study of politics: one, the narrowness of her present circumstances; the other, the great use of politics to mankind and society, and in every employment of life.

I cannot but recommend her wise resolution to withdraw so early from other unprofitable and severe studies, and betake herself to that, which, if she has good luck, will advance her fortune, and make her an ornament to her friends and country.

It is with wits as with razors, which are never so apt to cut those they are employed on, as when they have lost their edge. For even sounds inarticulate, she observed, produce forcible effects.

Consider the meaning of this: A person can blow his nose so powerfully, as to pierce the hearts of his audience, who are disposed to receive the remains of his brain with the same reverence.

For as she stated, it is of no importance through what vehicle it is conveyed.

I will not exploit for political purposes Carolyn's youth and inexperience. She is far too astute to be thought a fool than to speak, and remove all doubt.

I am not implying she is an ass, simply behind everything.

Charley Carter
Journalism

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