

Knee-jerk reaction won't end dilemma

It's not surprising anymore. Every so often, there's some sort of event in the Middle East that shakes, shocks and confounds us here in the United States. How could this have happened? we ask.

The answer to that question is troubling. Usually we discover that with a little foresight, the terrible event didn't have to happen. And also in most cases, by the time we are galvanized into action the problem has gotten so far out of hand that we don't know what to do.

Such an event is being played out now in Beirut. Shiite extremists, angry over Israel's abduction of religious leader Sheik Abdul Karim Obeid, have apparently killed American hostage Lt. Col. William Higgins and are threatening to kill more.

We say apparently, because the word in Western intelligence circles is that Higgins has been dead for a long time — reportedly, he was executed within 24 hours of the U.S. downing of an Iranian civilian airliner last year. It's not an implausible scenario: the Shiites, with a cadaver on their hands, try to trick Israel into releasing an important captive. It would be ironic if this clever trick has backfired — there's world-wide condemnation of an action that may have occurred long ago, and the terrorist act has forced the hand of an American government that had been content to let hostages in Lebanon rot for eight years.

Regardless of whether Higgins is a fresh corpse or a long cold one, Americans are shocked and outraged. And the Shiites' threats of further executions should be taken seriously (although the militants have backed down so far).

But anger and outrage will not end the current crisis; it may only lead to further bad events. There is, for example, misdirected anger at Israel for precipitating the current crisis. Israel, a country with far more national security interests at stake in the region than the United States, is one of the few countries in the world with an effective, aggressive anti-terrorist policy.

Part of that policy, despite claims to the contrary, includes negotiation — but on Israel's own terms. In fact, Israeli forces seized Obeid in an attempt to swap him for Israeli army officers held hostage. The kidnapping of Obeid does smack of state-sponsored terrorism, and certainly Israel is not blameless in this situation.

Regardless, the Israelis seem to have a better handle on the situation than we do. The American outrage has also led to the dispatch of naval forces to Beirut, a stupid ploy that didn't work the last time there was trouble in that town. One would think the administration would know that large military reprisals might work against renegade nations such as Libya, but don't work against isolated bands of terrorists. Sending batches of troops to the region only puts them in danger.

What's needed, of course, is a return to diplomatic negotiation in the Middle East — constant, persistent negotiation. The negligent policies and knee-jerk reactions to the region's dilemmas haven't worked for previous administrations; they won't work for this one.

NOW THAT THE
AYATOLLAH IS DEAD,
WHAT WILL HAPPEN
TO THE HOSTAGES?

THE NEW LEADERS
WILL KNOW WHAT
TO DO WITH THE
WESTERN CRIMINALS!

I WAS TALKING
ABOUT US!



Letters

Moot facts

It is easy to debate William Moore's "pro-life" point of view (ODE, Aug. 1) when you realize he is really "anti-choice" and somehow doesn't realize that it is possible to be both pro-life and pro-choice.

His is a pure and righteous opinion which ignores life's impurities, an opinion common to those who believe so absolutely in the sanctity of life.

I also believe in the sanctity of life, however, my position is not so absolute so as to believe my opinions should amount to anything other than an influence on a mother, who, if well educated, is in the best position to choose which is best for all persons concerned.

Personally, I believe that Moore and the rest of the anti-choice movement would accomplish a lot more (i.e., save more lives) if they channelled their effort and money into

community education, rather than asking the rest of us to forever argue moot facts of biology.

Michael Shaffer
Resident assistant

My body

In response to William Moore's commentary on abortion (ODE, Aug. 1), I have a few comments of my own.

Moore says, "Depending on who is asking and which questions are asked, polls can be used to show that a majority of Americans is either 'pro-choice' or 'pro-life.'"

Well, depending on who is presenting and which facts are presented, the pro-choice position can be made to seem right or wrong.

The manner in which Moore presented his facts presumes it is wrong. I could do likewise and show why the pro-choice

position is right. But we know both sides of the argument, so I will not.

Aligning the pro-choice position with communism is ridiculous.

What it comes down to is that I am tired of the position Moore represents attempting to impose further restrictions on me. My body is just that — my body. The debate ends there.

Erika Jostad
Eugene

Show support

As full-time bargaining unit employees at the University, we support the views of our part-time co-workers expressed in news and editorial coverage of the Oregon Public Employees Union contract issues. We would like to add a few comments.

OPEU members were never asked to support a strike over health coverage for part-time employees. Except for dues increases and contract ratification, members were not asked to vote on plans or proposals. We didn't learn what those were until after the fact.

Minorities can be victimized by the majority — in every enterprise. What should concern all OPEU members is that a minority was created where none existed, by isolating and identifying one group of employees and separating them from other employees.

This is the antithesis of unionism. It is tragic when we remember the solidarity achieved by OPEU members during the strike two years ago.

In a work force as diverse as ours, no one is exempt from being grouped and defined as a minority. If you're feeling secure and lucky right now, wait a while. You'll get over it.

We urge all OPEU members to support each other in every way possible and to offer their talent and energy to find creative ways to reduce the burden inflicted on some of our members and to regain what has been lost.

Theresa Guerrero
and four co-signers
Eugene

Letters Policy

The *Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

Commentary Policy

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* welcomes commentaries from the public concerning topics of interest to the University community.

Commentaries should be between 750 and 1,000 words, legible and signed, and the identification of the writer must be verified upon submission. The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit for grammar, style and length if necessary.

Commentaries will be published as space and time permit. Because of these limitations, the *Emerald's* commentary space cannot be used as a forum for debate and response between individuals or for matters that are better dealt with in the letters section. Writers may only submit one commentary a month.

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