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PERSPECTIVES

The difficulties of scheduling an Iraq attack

To plan a war, Clinton has to look at a calendar as well as at a map

We can't have a war yet; we don't have a free day until at least mid-May.

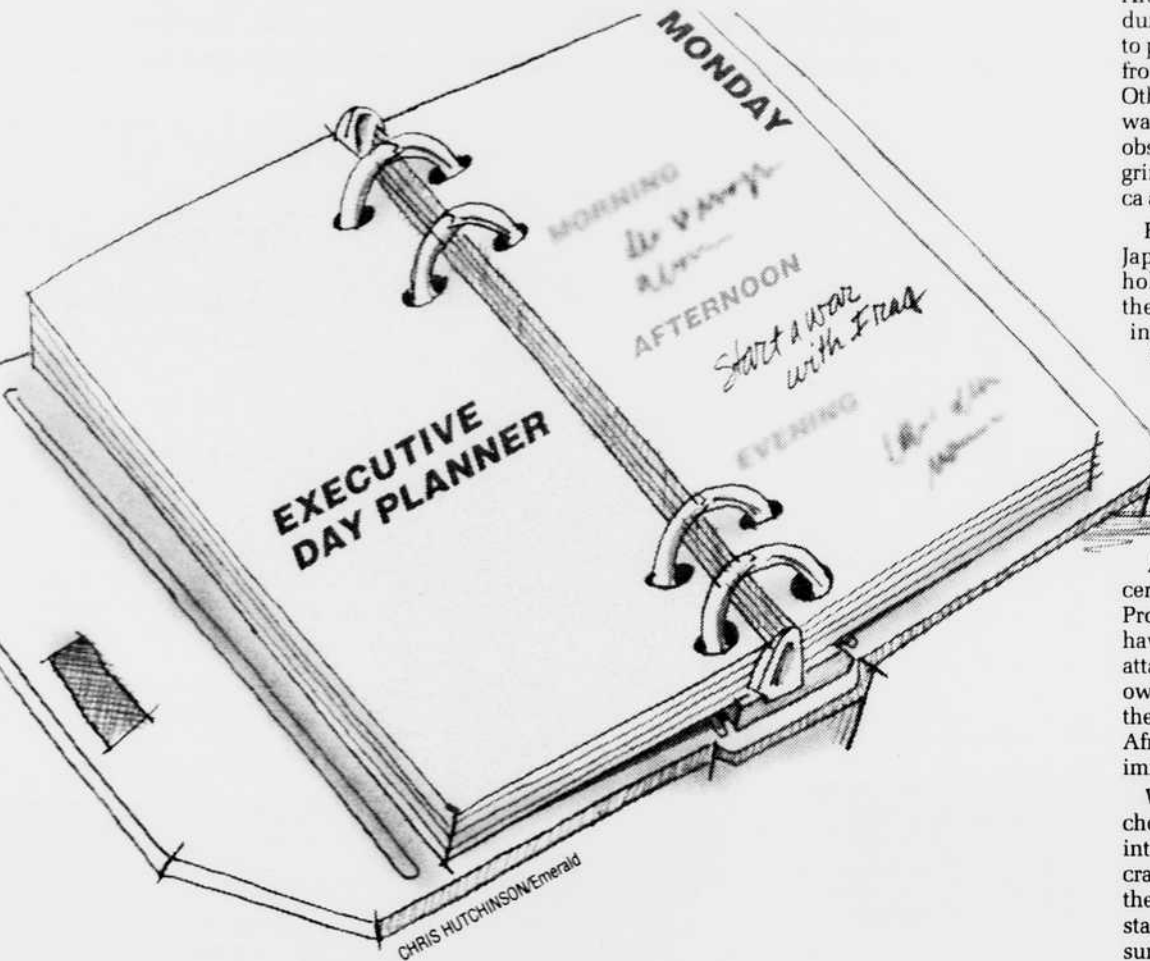
Believe it or not, the United States is dismantling the Executive Day Planner trying to find a good day to start round two of the war against Iraq. Dates and agendas for starting attacks have been tossed around like a hand grenade since before Christmas. Without looking at the calendar of world events, however, more than a cruise missile is likely to explode.

Despite unrest in many countries, our world has turned into a much more closely knit place, particularly in the last few years.

As the world has gotten smaller, each country has become more aware of the cultural differences between nations. One of the most prominent differences is religion.

Studying these differences in faith makes us better world citizens, but it also takes away from our freedom to do battle. This is arguably a good change, but nonetheless a very confusing one. Because of this global familiarity, the need to plan a date for "respectfully" starting a war has gone from improbable to imperative, particularly in American debates of attacking Iraq.

Years ago, wars were wars; they were simple but brutal battles between two basic sides. Governments did not concern themselves with the religious implications of starting a war,



nor were they concerned about hurting cultural relations with international allies.

Take, for example, a planned attack on San Francisco during World War II. The attack was to be on Christmas Eve but never happened because Japanese officials didn't want to injure Japanese-Americans in the area. There was no debate over whether to attack on a Christian holy day.

More recently, the first war

against Iraq started near a religious celebration. Forces in Operation Desert Storm began their bombing missions within days of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, one of the big "no-no's" of the current plan of attack and a major reason the Clinton administration has not yet declared war.

How far we've come in a few short years. At least that's one way to look at it, if respect for religious celebrations is a barometer

of international closeness.

Wars are no longer just country versus country — they are culture against culture. As the world gets smaller and cultural borders disappear, beliefs can mingle from nation to nation. By starting hostilities, the United States will no longer declare war on Iraq; it will risk personally attacking every area with cultural and religious ties to Kuwait's northern neighbor.

Several Middle Eastern countries have voiced opposition to American attacks on Iraq. Saudi Arabia, a strong American ally during Desert Storm, has vowed to prohibit American warplanes from landing at Saudi airfields. Other Islamic nations oppose a war in the near future as Muslims observe their hajj, an annual pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

Even countries as far away as Japan have asked that hostilities hold off, at least until the end of the Nagano Olympics. According to The Associated Press, the International Olympic Committee agrees, which means to avoid the wrath of yet another international body, Clinton must wait two weeks until the Winter Games come to an end.

Aside from international concerns, several Catholic and Protestant groups in America have voiced strong opposition to attacking Iraq. Even Clinton's own schedule, filled with trips to the First School (Stanford) and Africa, seems to conflict with an imminent war.

With the presidential planner chock full of engagements and the intercontinental calendar crammed with religious holidays, the potential date to respectfully start an offensive is mid- to late summer.

But this is not a case where it's better late than never. American forces must carefully choose their dates for air strikes. Russia claims an imprudent move or ill-timed attack on Iraq may cause a third world war.

If Clinton's schedule of world events is ignored, that may just well be the case.

Jonas Allen is a columnist for the Emerald. His work appears on alternate Fridays. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

OPINION



Jonas Allen

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Evaluations help registration

Course registration time is coming up. Being a new student on campus, I am not familiar with the courses or instructors here. My first term, I registered solely by my requirements, not considering any other issues. Luckily, my courses turned out all right, and I had good instructors for the winter term. Not that there are bad instructors necessarily, but it would be nice to have an idea how well the instructors have been rated in their courses in the past, as well as the quality of the courses themselves.

In the middle of this term I discovered the ASUO's "Professor/Course Evaluation" books. They have great information in them, and the revised edition for the spring will have extra things as well. The book is easier to read, gives more information and is better organized. I know I will make sure to use it before I select my classes this spring. There is no need to guess about the classes when I can make an educated selection.

The ASUO "Professor/Course Evaluation" books will be available beginning on Feb. 15 at the bookstore, and, best of all, they are free.

Rachelle Pavao
 Sociology

Pesticide awareness key

Amidst symptoms of decay in our society largely due to investor-owned corporate domination, there is one which troubles me the most. Between the insidious destruction of community solidarity, the increasing isolation of individuals, the social-economic stratification, the homogenizing (and near eradication) of diverse culture and perspective that defines our sterile, uniform American mainstream, the conglomeration of commerce into the one world corporation stunting small, family-owned businesses, not to mention the desecration of the natural ecosystem that supports us all, the disarming of public freedom appalls me.

All forms of oppression seek to disable our basic human need: the freedom to create and choose the way we live. Without our rights, you and I can do nothing to change the rules we must live by and we are but slaves to the system.

In this age of environmental healing, of crucial importance to our survival, awareness is fundamental to social change. Outside "national security," the need of which can be argued, we have the right to know about everything that affects us.

OSPIRG's statewide Pesticides Right to

Know campaign is aimed directly at reclaiming this public right. A few facts from OSPIRG and the Northwest Coalition Against Pesticides: Did you know that only 98 percent of pesticides reach their targets? The rest go on to kill other life. For humans, this can mean neural damage, reproductive disorders, cancer and other negative effects. In the Willamette River, the U.S. Geological Survey found Atrazine, one of thousands of pesticides, in 90 percent of the samples taken. Only 6 percent of the hazardous waste produced in the United States is regulated by law. Backwardly, the Environmental Protection Agency first determines the chemicals that cause serious health effects before they can ban them instead of proving their safety before allowing their use. The EPA is far behind reviewing chemicals currently used, not to mention the newly synthesized. Many good alternatives exist.

My point is, we don't have the crucial right to know who is responsible for the toxins that affect us. Empower yourself and become aware. Demand your right to know. OSPIRG's campaign on campus this week is a good opportunity to do both. Please use it.

Austin Moon
 Undeclared

Chess competition offered

I write this letter to the Emerald and all its readers to inform you about an exciting event that's taking place this Saturday, Feb. 21 in Gerlinger 220.

I speak of a Chess Championship that is a brand new event on campus, an occasion that has the opportunity to become a tradition at the University. However, it needs support here in its ground-breaking year.

The tournament itself is sponsored by Delta Sigma Phi, which is donating all proceeds from the \$15 registration fee to the March of Dimes. Five rounds of competition determine the UO Chess Champion, and since it is a philanthropy event, we're only able to offer trophies to the top three finishers. Students of all skill levels are welcome to participate, since there will be upper and lower divisions, and women are especially encouraged to enter.

If you're interested or have any friends that play, registration forms are available in the Greek Life Office, EMU Suite 7, or you can e-mail me at dhall@gladstone.uoregon.edu, and I'll arrange to get one to you personally.

David Hall
 Delta Sigma Phi