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COMMENTARY

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Thursday, October 18, 2001

Editorial

Customers must make informed consumer choices

Earlier this week, the Emerald reported that some students have received services they did not order after having phone service activated by Qwest. Most of the complaints stemmed from customers being billed for extended features. Others said Qwest was uncooperative when they called to ask that the mistake be corrected. While there are certainly people in the community who have not had problems with the phone company, a substantial number have complained — numerous enough that Oregon's attorney general has stepped up to address the problem.

While this issue certainly casts Qwest in a bad light, the responsibility is twofold. "Cramming" is not new. Shady sales tactics themselves are not new. Now that the problem has been highlighted in Oregon, customers need to be smarter when connecting their phones, or they should consider alternate phone service.

Guess what happens when a customer goes to a restaurant and orders a drink without stating what size? Generally, the server will bring a large drink, even if the customer wanted a small. Unless the customer explicitly states what service or product they want, they're likely to get more than they may have intended. Businesses that do this could be characterized as taking advantage of the customer, but the customer really needs to be paying more attention.

Customers wanting telephone service can better inform themselves about the packages and prices the company offers before actually ordering services, so they will know exactly what to request. Also, examining the monthly bill when it arrives is a smart idea. It sounds simple, but sometimes customers don't think of these things until a relatively minor problem has developed into something bigger.

Finally, customers should be informed about other options on the market. Cellular phone service is one alternative — often one that costs a similar price and offers similar services. And if all the customers who have complaints about Qwest were to stop doing business with the company, it would add a powerful incentive to improve services.

Qwest does need to fix its apparent customer-service problems and apologize to any customers who feel the company "burned" them. To the company's credit, it does seem to be putting forth some efforts to improve services, with a plan to answer customer service requests faster and to comply with a court agreement to stop practices that might be misleading.

The solution to this type of issue involves both businesses and consumers.

Editorial Policy

These editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words.

Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

CORRECTION

In a story on the front page of Wednesday's paper ("Graduate exchange student from Yemen shares perspective," ODE, 10/17), Khaled Ishaq's name was misspelled.

The Emerald regrets the error.

AMERICA: supercop to the world

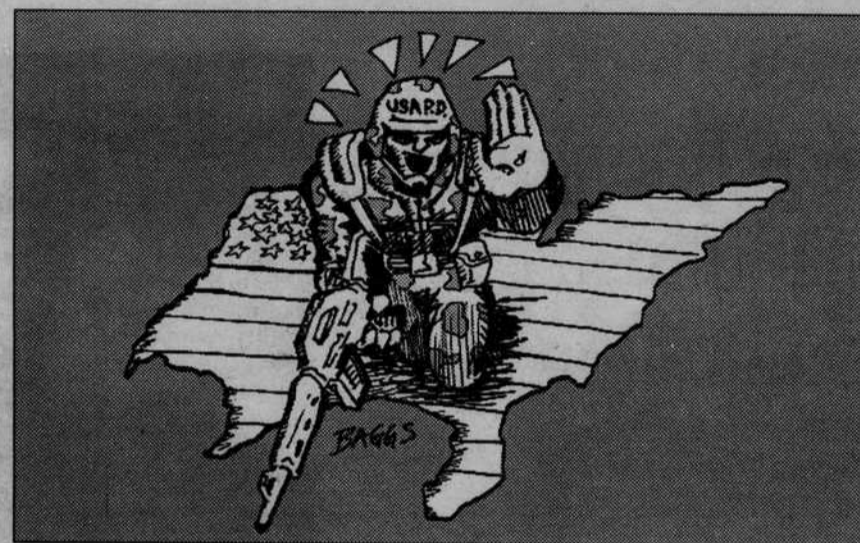
Now that the real war has actually begun with bombing strikes, and not just rhetoric, we should hope that our national leaders stay committed to the fight and when the threat of world terrorism has been significantly decreased that they don't give up.

Instead, now that we have the opportunity, the United States should use it to achieve a position of global power in the Middle East and Asia from which it can influence the balance of power to protect our interests abroad and ensure our domestic security. Not only must the United States defeat our enemies militarily,

we must use our global economic weight to reshape the region in such a way so that the specter of fanatical Islamic terrorism can never again darken this nation's skies.

With a thousand troops in Uzbekistan and special forces believed by many to be currently in operation throughout the region, the United States has shown it is serious about bringing justice to the terrorists. The next step is to continually expand the scope of our operations to instill fear in every person who hates freedom.

Many people have compared the Sept. 11 attacks to the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese on Dec. 7. Likewise the end of this current war must be similar to that of World War II. The United States can not come "to terms" with Osama bin Laden and all the other terrorists in the world. Our objective must be to eradicate the terrorists and topple the governments that harbor them, and



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then, as in World War II, the United States must reshape those nations with democratic freedoms and the benefits of Western civilization.

Toppling the corrupt Taliban theocracy and eliminating bin Laden should only be the starting point for our campaign. The United States should work to solidify the power of legitimate democratic governments and undermine the power of dictatorships and terrorist-friendly regimes throughout the Middle East and Asia. The former Soviet states that have embraced democracy deserve our support, as do other Islamic nations that have denounced the terrorists — and we must not forget our duty to Israel. But the governments of Iraq, Iran and others need to be undermined and removed from power, and once gone the United States needs to step in to ensure that the threat of Islamic fanaticism can never again arise.

If the United States can be successful in the first goal of defeating the mecha-

nisms of terror, then our nation can use its economic power to further eliminate the threat. Governments that have supported terrorist cells in the region have kept Western businesses out of their nations. If the United States can remove these corrupt regimes from power, American and European businesses can shift some of their foreign investments into the region and stimulate the local economies. Once that has occurred their standard of living would improve and the West would no longer be a foreign evil, but a source of economic revival.

It is no longer feasible for the United States to retreat to the relative safety of the North American continent because sadly, that safety no longer exists. Our nation must now step up and assume its role as a global superpower to rid the world of this evil by extending our power outward.

Andrew Adams is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald. He can be reached at andrewadams@dailyemerald.com.

Islamic religion not to blame for acts of terrorism, violence

Do not kill a child, a woman or an elderly person, and do not cut a tree branch.

These were the words of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) to his followers. These were his instructions, even in wartime, and they meant to reinforce the importance of life, be it human or non-human. Respect for human life and nature are some of the basic values upon which the Quran, the Muslim book of faith, and Islam are built. Muslims believe that the human body is the structure that God built and those who destruct it earn the wrath of God. Committing suicide is seen as defying God's will and rejecting his most precious gift of life.

The Quran says "If anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land, it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he or she saved the life of all mankind" (V.5: 32). Any good Muslim knows he or she has to respect life, even his or her own;

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and to be kind to those less fortunate. "Peace" is the word from which the meaning of the Arabic word "Islam" is derived. "Islam" simply means submission. Islam means a complete submission to the will of God — Allah. Islam means tolerance, and it states that clearly in the Quran. "Approach the aggressors gently and nicely then your most furious enemy will turn into a good friend" (V.41: 34) — a teaching of prophet Jesus (peace be upon him).

Islam teaches its followers to live in peace and spread wealth in their community and in the world. Islam teaches Muslims to respect and preserve others' property. Islam teaches Muslims not to kill innocent people, such as those killed during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The attack on Sept. 11 was a multiple crime against humanity. There were major violations that Islam prohibits, such as

killing innocent people, suicide, destruction of property and disturbing people's peaceful lives.

We, the Muslim Students Association (MSA) at the University of Oregon, would like to offer our deepest condolences to the families of those killed in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon tragedies and to the entire community. We strongly condemn the attacks that occurred on Sept. 11.

The terrorists not only attacked innocent people, but they also attacked our culture and religious beliefs. We will do everything in our power to help alleviate the sorrow that took over the country on Sept. 11. We thought we should start by shedding some light upon who we are, Islam and its teachings against terrorism.

To learn more about Islam, we encourage you to contact us by calling us at (541) 346-3790 or by e-mailing at asuomsa@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

Reda Mohammed, Mahmud Addul-Jawad and Claudi Ciobano are members of the Muslim Students Association. This column represents the opinion of the Muslim Students Association.

CLARIFICATIONS

In the SafeRide story in the Spotlight on Campus special section ("Shuttle aids women walkers," ODE, 10/17), Project SafeRide's volunteer coordinator was misidentified because the information on the group's Web site was incorrect. SafeRide's volunteer coordinator is Eve Rivinus.

In the OSPIRG story in the Spotlight on Campus special section ("OSPIRG celebrates 30 years," ODE, 10/17), Jonathan Collegio's position with the Oregon Commentator was not clear. He is a former publisher.