

COMMENTARY

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Editorial

Special tribunals, evidence must be made public

President George W. Bush announced Nov. 13 in an executive order that military tribunals can be used instead of full-fledged public trials for terrorists he believes are linked to the Sept. 11 attacks. But though tribunals are able to serve justice swiftly, public trials would lift the veil of secrecy that has shrouded the investigation thus far.

According to Bush's military order, he will personally select the suspected terrorists to be tried in private military tribunals. Details of each case, including evidence against the suspects, will be kept secret, and the suspect on trial would be blocked from appealing to other U.S. and international courts.

By redefining justice for the suspected terrorists, Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft are keeping the facts from Americans. We have the right to know who these suspects are, what charges are being brought against them and further details of their individual cases. As Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., said last week: "We stand for a great deal in this country. ... [But] when we're talking about setting aside our criminal justice system for something like this, we end up looking more and more like some of the things that we are fighting against."

All secrecy surrounding the terrorist attacks should be eliminated. This includes any evidence the administration has gathered against Osama bin Laden, the al-Qaeda network and its links to other terror organizations. Although we have been told by our government leaders that bin Laden and his terror organization are responsible for the attacks, we have not yet been allowed to view any concrete evidence to justify the so-called "war" in Afghanistan since the bombing began.

If the Bush administration won't provide the evidence, then how do we know evidence will be properly presented to prove guilt in military tribunals? Justice must be served swiftly to those responsible for the horrific attacks on our country, but the nation must not compromise its integrity and standards of justice. Military tribunals would only work if all of the details of the trials were made public record.

We have been kept in the dark too long. If hard evidence exists that links certain terrorists to the September attacks, it needs to be presented to the public. Continuing without doing so is unfair to every American citizen.

Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries Policy

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.

Poll Results:

Every week, the Emerald prints the results of our online poll, which can be accessed from the main page of our Web site, www.dailyemerald.com. We encourage you to send us feedback about the poll questions and results.

Last week's poll question: In the spirit of the upcoming Civil War, what would be a better mascot for Oregon State University?

Results: 152 total votes

Accountants — 8 votes, or 5.3 percent

Cow pies — 76 votes, or 50 percent

Banana slugs — 13 votes, or 8.5 percent

Jailbirds — 38 votes, or 25 percent

Don't know — 17 votes, or 11.2 percent

'Cow pies' wins, but perhaps we'll forgo the smart-ass comment this week. We don't want to make the Beavers feel any worse or cry any harder.

Protest brings back memories of atrocity

GUEST COMMENTARY

Dennis Dunleavy

Sometimes it is all too easy to lose hope in humanity. Sometimes it is all too easy to forget the suffering and sacrifices of others.

Although the events surrounding Sept. 11 have awakened a renewed sense of nationalism and pride, we also need to remind ourselves of other tragedies, some of them even fomented by our own government.

While walking across the plaza to the EMU on Nov. 15, I saw several students enacting a grisly scene that brought back a terrible moment of reality for me. The students, surrounded by small white crosses, bearing the names of campesinos killed in conflicts in Central America during the 1980s, reminded me of years spent covering the war, interviewing combatants and refugees, and witnessing our own government's involvement.

At first, I had to remember the date the students were reenacting. It was Nov. 16, 1989, just 12 years ago. Early that morning in San Salvador, El Salvador, six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter were taken from their sleeping quarters at

the University of Central America and murdered in cold blood by an elite military squad of U.S.-trained Salvadorans.

The still forms of the students lying out in the rain brought back the reality of this atrocity. Some of the soldiers involved in the massacre had received training in the United States at the Army School of the Americas in Ft. Benning, Georgia.

The School of the Assassins, as it is often called, has been the target of a growing movement to close it down. The civil war in El Salvador (1980-1992) claimed more than 75,000 lives, mostly civilian. It displaced well over a million people. El Salvador is a small country, about the size of Massachusetts, and has a population of only several million. During the war, the U.S. government poured in more than \$4.6 billion in military aid to

stop what it considered communist aggression. In reality, this conflict was a people's war against hunger, disease and abject poverty.

How could I forget the horror and destruction of this and many other conflicts around the globe? Will the cry of the poor and the oppressed ever be heard? But hope persists. Now, in the middle years of life, I have stopped to witness a new generation of individuals of conscience — people who act out of empathy for the oppressed of the world and out of anger against errant U.S. foreign policy. I am grateful for these students' idealism. I am grateful that they take the time to reflect and care. But I am also ashamed of myself for not having joined them.

I am saddened that I did not take time to quietly lie in protest and solidarity on that cold rainy day in November. I am saddened that I didn't take the time to think of the dead and to dream of peace.

Dennis Dunleavy is a graduate student in journalism and mass communication.

Letters to the editor

To each his own values

I've traveled extensively, and I've studied in the United States for three years. I've learned about Americans' culture and values. Americans share values, but individuals differ in how they practice them in society.

Coming from Kuwait, I love history, poetry and practicing traditional methods of eating, greeting others and playing music. I can't find friends with these interests in this society. Everyone wants to be "modern." What does "modern" mean? People always answer "to be cool." When I ask those in my age group what "cool" means, the answer differs, based on identity.

My identity hasn't changed. I've practiced things like praying and playing my favorite sport. While staying with an African-American host family, I practiced an old traditional Arabic method of eating off the floor, using only three fingers of one hand. The family was surprised. They asked me to eat at the table. I responded, "This is my culture; this is where I come from — a society where we feel warm using the floor for eating."

I feel free to pray, play my Arabic musical instrument and wear traditional clothes at home and other events.

In all the countries, my friends ask me to teach them my behaviors, but not the values. The host family tried to teach me both the behaviors and the values. I like that. However, I don't identify with American values. I have my own, which characterize my identity. But I do behave like a "normal" American to show respect for their values.

Khaled Al-janai
junior
political science

The definition of real fans

Is that all we get?
I'm glad that the football team appreciated the efforts of students who spent Monday waiting in line for Civil War tickets, and I appreciated the article that the Emerald ran Monday about the student fans. However, I was disappointed to open the paper Tuesday to find the only mention of the thousands of students who spent their Monday waiting for tickets was from the team's perspective.

My disappointment turned to offense when I saw the last page of the Emerald, a full-page Nike ad featuring Coach Bellotti and the slogan, "The definition of a true fan." After being at Autzen on Monday, I'd like to add a few more definitions.

How about "Camps out Sunday night to get a good spot Monday morning and still waits in line five hours"; or "Misses an entire Monday of classes to wait outside in the middle of November"; or "Bonds with fellow linemates as they chant 'Cutter!' to anyone attempting to join the line midstream"; or maybe "Spends the last two hours of

the line squeezed between barricades like a can of sardines"; or "Hobbles away from the ticket window eight hours later, feeling as victorious as the football team will Dec. 1?"

No offense, Coach, but I think we know who the real fans are.

Rachel Seay
junior
music

Real war involves suffering

I'm confused about the sports headline appearing on the Nov. 27 edition of the Emerald. The second line reads,

Turn to Letters, page 3

Peter Utsey Emerald

