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# COMMENTARY

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Friday, April 5, 2002

## Yesteryear's Editorial Slaying Ends Life, But Not Cause Of Reverend King

**Y**ou can kill a Black man, but you can't kill the cause and the spirit of Black men.

The Black man of this country has begun to move. He is discovering a heritage and developing a pride. No bullet will steal from him the freedom and equality due him as a human being and an American citizen.

The assassination of Martin Luther King is a tragedy in the deepest sense. A tragedy not just to Black men, but to men of all colors; not just to

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Americans, but to men of all nations; not just to Christians, but to men of all faiths.

These are words which editorial writers save for great men, for men who, like the Reverend King, live greatness from day to day. These are men who not only accept their destiny but rush forth to embrace it, who refuse to shrink from the burden of the definition of their name.

Reverend King was great among great men because he not only suffered the trials of leadership, but he shared the oppression of the people he led.

Some may say the difference between Mr. King and a Black man in an urban ghetto was like the very difference between black and white. But, the reverend shared the oppression and frustration of the ghetto dweller for he had to openly confront the White power structure which perpetuates that oppression and which sustains that frustration.

Reverend King was unique among men also because had he been given the opportunity to confront his slayer he would still be dead today. Given the chance to kill his assassin, Martin Luther King would not have saved his own life by following the path of weaker men.

Mrs. Coretta King once said, "My husband has no fear of death. He has said it does not matter how long you live, but how well. ... If you have to do this for a great cause ... you are doing right. I have tried to prepare myself for whatever comes, because somehow I have felt all along that what we were doing is right. If you believe in your convictions, you must stand up for them. If you really believe in a cause enough, you are willing to die for that cause."

Reverend King believed in his cause of equality. He was willing to die for that cause because he knew his cause and his spirit would survive him.

Martin Luther King believed he was right, and he was.

This editorial was taken from the April 5, 1968, edition of the Oregon Daily Emerald, the day after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

### Editorial Policy

This editorial represents 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.

### CLARIFICATION

In the article "Running on sunshine" (ODE, 4/03), Jocelyn Eisenberg should have been identified as a landscape architecture student.

## Where do we STAND?



### Keep Americans home to take care of U.S. business

**T**he Middle East has exploded again. On Passover, a suicide bomber detonated himself inside a busy hotel in the town of Netanya and 22 people died. A few days later, in response, the Israelis launched a major offensive intent on destroying Yasser Arafat's rule over the Palestinian Authority. This has exacerbated the violence of the 18-month long Intifada.

There has been some debate about whether we should be sitting on the sidelines with General Anthony Zinni performing a Quixotic task — trying to broker a peace deal — or instead send troops to the region to either keep the peace and separate the two sides, or aid the Israelis in rooting out certain terror groups whom we have a long-standing grudge against, including the PLO itself.

As tempting as it would be to go after these criminals, this fight is not our fight. If we were to re-insert ourselves into this war, we would once again have to be prepared for numerous casualties for an effort that even our presence may not be enough to change.

What we are seeing in the Middle East is a blood feud. The Palestinians complain that the Israelis are choking them economically, and the Israelis focus on the latest round of suicide bombings. However, the fight settles down to millennia of grudges and recriminations, mostly centering on one issue: land. The land that the Palestinians and Arabs say they want is the land they lost in the 1967 war, but in their heart of hearts they would be ecstatic if they could drive the Israelis into



**Pat  
 Payne**  
 Columnist

the ocean and be done with them. They feel that the land is theirs — after all, it had been part of several Muslim empires since 700 A.D. — and that the Israelis are merely squatters. The Israelis see the land as their kingdom that was taken from them by the Romans after the revolt of 70 A.D.

Second, we could find ourselves thrust into a general Mideast war, which would be detrimental for us and our own mission. We found ourselves in a nightmare situation when we intervened in the civil war in Lebanon in the early 1980s (fomented by the PLO), culminating in a 1983 bombing of a Marine barracks in Beirut that killed 241 soldiers. We need all the troops we can find if we are going to continue on our planned campaign against Saddam Hussein. With our troops so far-flung as they are already, we risk spreading ourselves too thin to focus on our own problems.

Finally, we don't exist to clean up other nations' messes. The fighting over the West Bank has been exacerbated by the fact that unless it's in their own national interests, the other Arab nations haven't lifted so much as a finger to help the Palestinians, less it be to help the Palestinians kill Israelis. The refugees living in what now are cities over the sites of the original UN camps, were refused entry to Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Jordan even controlled the West Bank until it lost it in the last great gamble — there was a golden opportunity for a Palestinian state, yet Jordan did nothing.

We once thought of ourselves as the world's policeman. We can't be the world's parent, not when we have our own job to do.

E-mail columnist Pat Payne at patpayne@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

### Use U.S. military, money to settle Middle East mess

**T**he blades have been spinning and the colon filling in the Middle East since before I was born, but now the crap has really hit the fan. Palestinians have been detonating themselves in Israel at a rate of about one a day, and now their ranks are being refilled not by crazy zealots, but by young men and women of relatively sound mind and body, men and women a lot like you and me.

Israel's dim-witted response to these suicide bombers is to blow up Palestine — literally. With American tanks and helicopters, they're demolishing the entire infrastructure of the PLO, as well as anything or anyone unfortunate enough to be within a stone's throw of one of its targets.

The suicide attacks are a direct result of years of oppression by Israel (whether or not this oppression is justified is another topic altogether), so it stands to reason that harsher oppression will only yield more college-aged kids with more C4 stuffed down their drawers sneaking through Israeli checkpoints. This, in turn, will yield more angry tanks and helicopters and explosions, which will yield more bombers, and so on and so forth. They are caught in a violent, vicious cycle, and neither side is willing to do what is necessary to break it. They've given up. So they fight.

Maybe the real problem here, in the eyes of the rest of the world, is the unevenness of the fight. With our help, Israel has become almost a world military power (they've got nukes, for Christ's sake).

Palestine is a giant refugee camp. When one side of a conflict has a standing army and heavy artillery and the other splits a half-dozen AK-47s and a pile of rocks, eyebrows will be raised.

Most of those eyebrows are big, bushy black ones in Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, Israel's Arab neighbors. The citizens of each of these countries are pressuring their leaders to take action against the bullies next door. This "war" will spill over if left alone. It's only a matter of time.

If stopping a bloody, senseless conflict isn't incentive enough to get us more involved, maybe salvaging our foreign policy goals is. Before this thing flared up, we had a nice "coalition" against terror. Saddam Hussein has promised to give financial assistance to the families of suicide bombers in Palestine, essentially encouraging parents to allow or even persuade their children to strap on explosives, run into a crowd of Israelis and turn them into ground beef. He has publicly promoted terrorism of the nastiest order, and we can't do a damn thing to stop him. He knows the rest of the Arab world told Dick Cheney to piss off when he sought support for action against Iraq. He knows they have his back — now he's rubbing our face in it.

Israel and Palestine are acting with all the civility, wisdom and restraint of four-year-olds fighting over the last grape lollipop. Someone has to separate them, stick their noses in opposite corners of the room while their mess is cleaned up. We have the money, the leverage, the troops and, unlike some other closer industrialized nations, the backbone to do the job. If we don't, someone a little less objective might.

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