



HOW WE REALLY WON THE "WAR OF THE WORLDS"

BRET FURTWANGLER | GRAPHIC ARTIST

Editorial

Unfiltered journalism necessary for society

With the death of Peter Jennings on Aug. 7, ABC seems to be continuing in its streak of unfortunate luck.

Last week, it was reported that ABC journalists will no longer be allowed to work in Russia. The reason for such an extreme ban? Russian officials were upset when ABC broadcast an interview with Chechen rebel leader Shamil Basayev: a man wanted by the government for his role in the 10-year Chechen war.

A release by the Russian Foreign Ministry states that "ABC is now unwelcome to contact any Russian state organizations or bodies." The statement went on to claim that by interviewing Basayev, ABC was "helping to propagandize terrorism."

The Russian government has put a \$10 million bounty on Basayev's head and failed to capture the man, yet it continues to act as though ABC is responsible for terrorism.

The United States should certainly consider itself lucky to have a little something called the first amendment, and with it the right to free press. Unlike Russia, our government could never (and hopefully would never) censor a television interview with a well-known terrorist suspect. In a world increasingly fearful of rogue terrorists rather than well known dictators, it is important that news agencies are free to find and interview those terrorists without the fear of government backlash.

Freedom of press is necessary to creating freedom of a nation, because the world cannot afford tainted journalism. As soon as anyone, especially anyone from the government interferes with reporters and columnists, the general public will not be receiving an unbiased report about what is happening in the world.

If ABC journalists were able to track down and interview Basayev (before the Russian government could even find the terrorism suspect), then more power to ABC. Journalists should not filter their information, sources, or interviewees through the government, because an intimate connection between government and journalist will ultimately lead to corruption. ABC made the right move in broadcasting the interview and showing viewers an unusual perspective into the Chechen war. It was not ABC's job to check with the Russian government first and make sure that the Basayev segment would reflect favorably on Russian President Vladimir Putin and others.

Try as they might, the Russian government will get nowhere close to a perfect society without the help of journalists all around the world. Russia affects the United States just as much as we do them; it is perfectly reasonable for people in both Russia and the United States to receive the best foreign journalistic efforts possible. Russia has been turning journalists away from its borders for years, but the time has come to end such a trend.

The question is this: If the Oregon Daily Emerald had a chance to interview Osama bin Laden, would we? You bet.

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In my opinion

A look at the BRIGHT SIDE

Sometimes, it really does seem like it's the end of the world. Iran just announced its plan to ignore nations' pleas and restart a nuclear program; 48 percent of the American public thinks that President Bush is an honest man; New York Governor George Pataki (who may seek a presidential nomination in 2008) vetoed a bill to dispense Emergency Contraception without a prescription; and if London can be hit by terrorists, anyone can be hit by terrorists.

Luckily bad news is what regularly hits the headlines of morning papers, and readers are lucky because the world is hardly ever as bad as it seems. Most importantly, forgetting about the pain and sorrow in the world is probably the key element in coming into a future that is happier for all.

To begin with, although countries are steadily mounting weapons of mass destruction against one another, not everyone is resorting to violence in order to be heard. For two days, Cindy Sheehan has stood near the entrance to President Bush's ranch, and says that she will not leave until she can speak one-on-one with George W. Bush about the war in Iraq, where Sheehan's son was killed. From a mother to the president of the United States, Sheehan just wants to sit down and have a conversation, explain her position to Bush and try to deduce his reasons for continuing combat in Iraq and persuade him to please reconsider.

Mothers are the talkers; politicians are the fighters, and the world slowly goes to war with itself. Still, the resilience of women such as Cindy Sheehan certainly shines. By all accounts



AILEE SLATER
FURTHER FROM PERFECTION

Sheehan would be justified in becoming deeply depressed and living an angry and bitter life. Instead, she is recovering from the death of her son by improving the future for everyone else in a manner that is peaceful and safe for all. Even if governments nationwide haven't yet taken such mature steps, it is promising to remember that if everyday people can change the world for the better, we don't have anything to worry about. I can think of at least 10 people in my immediate life who could certainly run Earth (I'm sure you can too), and I like the thought that they just might have the chance.

Also promising about the future is that many citizens are taking individual steps to make the world a better place. As reported by Newsweek, California has begun creating small communities that are so energy efficient, power bills are reduced the less than half. Houses within these ZEH communities use solar panels to regulate temperature, and host low-energy appliances. Best of all, any excess solar power flows into a grid, which is then tapped into by everyone else in the neighborhood.

Projects such as ZEH communities

should be receiving major news headlines, captions that proclaim everything is going to be OK as long as we all just take simple steps to make it so. New York may be readying itself for a chemical weapons attack, but isn't it just as important that Shell gas stations are working with General Motors to provide hydrogen fuel pumps?

I would venture to say that your personal world, like society in general, is a lot better off than you think. In fact, humans have this awesome, evolutionary ability to get over stuff. Your body and mind must be able to recover from fear, loss, disappointment and all sorts of physical harm. Resilience is key to adaptation and therefore successful evolution.

Expressing heartbreak is important, but forgetting about the past and looking toward a happier future seems the golden ticket to a better world. Just imagine an earth wherein all murder because of revenge suddenly ended, and countries eradicated all weapons for the sake of deterrence (so, really, all weapons). Without a strong focus on past violence, no one would want to take such dangerous steps as building nuclear bombs in order to "stop" the possibility of future violence. Like Cindy Sheehan, maybe we could all move on.

There is much that needs to be fixed about our planet and our society, but that change cannot come until we change ourselves. And what better place to start than optimism? After all, the world is not as bad as it seems.

aileeslater@dailyemerald.com

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