

# Student hostages 'executed' in life-like terrorist attack

By Mike Sweeney

Despite the "deaths" of four hostages by six terrorists calling themselves the American Revolutionary Movement, a weekend political terrorism simulation at UNL has been termed a success by several participants.

About 75 students from four UNL classes and one class each from Wayne and Kearney state colleges gathered Friday night at the Nebraska Union for the first Midwest Global Simulation on International Terror.

The students, who had been studying terrorism, attended the conference expecting realism. A group of actors were scheduled to simulate a terrorist movement Saturday.

However, like real terrorists, the actors were able to catch the students off-guard by raiding the conference Friday night during speeches, said participant Brad Schnoor.

The terrorists seized six student hostages, barricaded themselves in a second-floor union room and issued demands, according to participant Mike Gibson. The terrorists threatened to kill hostages if their demands were not met promptly, he said.

In the confrontation between terrorists and students, "the terrorists won," Gibson said.

One hostage was released unharmed, another apparently escaped and four others were "killed" by the terrorists, participants said. After the killings the terrorists fled the union.

"We failed to get the hostages out, but I don't think the scenario was a failure," Gibson said. "I have a much better appreciation of the terrorist problem now."

The simulation taught him about the problems negotiators face during terrorist movements, he said. He said it duplicated the confusion, breakdown of communication and boredom of actual acts of terrorism.

New York playwright and former UNL student Don Winslow led the terrorists and created the scenario complete with guns, uniforms and blindfolded hostages.

According to Prof. Leslie Duly, instructor of one of the four participating UNL classes, Winslow gave the act a great deal of realism.

"There was nothing false or phony about the evening," Duly said. "We were not just playing a game."

The terrorists burst into the Centennial Room from all directions shortly after Paul

Laase, deputy director of the Office of European Political-Economic Affairs of the U.S. Senate Department, delivered the conference's keynote address, Schnoor said.

Dr. Stephen Sloan, a professor of political science at the University of Oklahoma, had risen to deliver a speech, but never got the chance.

"He said about two words when the terrorists broke in and held him up against a wall," Schnoor said. "They made us (students) lie on the ground and called the names of the hostages."

Dave Wilson, one of the six students taken hostage by the terrorists, described the attackers as dressed in military fatigues with blue and white badges. They wore nylon stockings over their faces and carried what appeared to be automatic weapons.

Giggles greeted the appearance of the terrorists, Gibson said, but the amusement disappeared when the terrorists started to take over.

"They said if you know what's good for you you'll stay down," Gibson said. "Everyone hit the deck, and people were really scared. My heart was pounding—I wasn't thinking it was a simulation."

Hostages were dragged and pushed across the hall to another room. Schnoor said the terrorists left with the warning that the students should stay on the floor if they valued their lives.

Shortly after the terrorists had gone, the participants began to stand up. However, when the students heard the terrorists coming back, they all fell to the floor again, Schnoor said.

Once the terrorists had gone for good, the students formed groups to deal with them. Students played the parts of journalists, mediators, security guards, state department officials and executives from a mythical company, the AMX Corporation.

According to student accounts of what followed, the terrorists began to phone their demands to mediators, state department officials and the corporation management.

The terrorists demanded —that the AMX Corp. pay \$1 million for the release of Wilson, a company executive.

—that the city pay \$100,000 to improve "T-Town," a lower-income district.

—that a state department official go on television to admit crimes fostered by the American public against Third World nations.

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