

opinion/editorial

Iran rescue attempt to have grave repercussions

As more details of the aborted hostage rescue operation last week are made public, it becomes clear that the mission's failure has put the United States in a difficult position with questions to answer and a crisis still unresolved and suddenly more complex.

The reactions of many actors are relevant, but the difficulty of knowing those reactions further compounds a situation that will take historians to unravel and analyze. The reaction of the Iranian government and of the militant students holding the embassy has been amazingly restrained, which is perhaps an important message not to be lost in the maze of facts.

The reaction of the American people, very important in an election year, seems to be "too bad it didn't work." Eight American lives, apparently, were worth wasting on one of the most dangerous American military operations ever planned.

A New York Times story Sunday revealed some details of the plan, and would make doves very nervous. Most significant, considering Iran's collective paranoia of the CIA, is the revelation that CIA agents and Pentagon officers were in Tehran as part of the operation.

Perhaps the American people will be more likely to vote for President Carter in primaries if they think CIA presence in Tehran enhanced the mission's chances for success, but the hostages' lives cannot be made safer by telling the Iranians that American spies were in their streets.

Nor can the revelation that students guarding the embassy were to be "neutralized." Or the knowledge that C-130 transport planes in the operation were armed with high technology equipment to "neutralize" Iranian radar and ground-to-air missiles located near a rendezvous site where the rescued American personnel would have boarded the planes to leave the country.

Although some American allies have supported the rescue attempt, the fact that Americans were pressing for economic sanctions while commandos and CIA agents moved toward Tehran can do little to improve our in-

ternational image.

The operation, however, could have made instant heroes of everyone involved, and would have boosted American morale and gained for us much respect through fear.

But it failed, and now American military effectiveness seems very in tune with the post-Vietnam image of this country.

Although the Iranian operation was more complex, comparisons will be drawn with the last American military exercise—the Gerald Ford-ordered rescue of the crew of the *Mayaguez* in 1975, which resulted in 41 deaths and probably was not necessary.

Our track record is slipping. Ironically, the hawkish mood in the country is at a peak, with 70 percent of those responding to a Louis Harris news poll approving of the rescue

attempt.

The operation is not wholly condemned. But the mess it has left in its aftermath—including CIA agents in Iran and, most importantly, eight dead bodies—will have serious repercussions for some time.

Although Carter and Defense Secretary Harold Brown have emphasized that the mission was humanitarian; not an act of war, the word "neutralization" leaves a strangely war-like taste in the mouth.

America's high-technology war machine was unloosed briefly, and fell on its face. If it didn't seem so likely that the attack was motivated by a desire to ensure re-election, that fact might not be so bad.

Randy Essex



Broader perspective needed in Krugerrand issue

Throughout the history of the Krugerrand controversy, the parties involved have failed to view this issue in light of the total world perspective. We have heard much concerning the "North" and "South" divisions in South Africa, the disparity between black and white wages, and

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the apartheid system which legalizes racism. Instead of discussing only the South African situation let's broaden our horizons and examine racism as a part of aggregate world oppression.

Doreen Charles pointed out that "black oppression condoned anywhere is a threat to all black people." Fine. I would think that oppression anywhere is a threat to everyone, but let's ignore oppression elsewhere for the moment and examine the existing picture in Africa. Current conflicts include civil war in Chad and Ethiopia, border clashes between Mali and Upper Volta, Morocco and Western Sahara, and squabbles between Angola and Zaire.

It is intriguing to note how little Black African nations criticized Uganda's Idi Amin during his regime of repression and terror. For those who prefer first-hand information, I refer you to Mr. Joshi, a friend of mine residing in Sweden, who is one of the couple of hundred thousand Ugandans expelled because they were of Indian descent. Tanzania protested such inconsistency during a 1978 OAU meeting and stated, "when massacres, oppression and torture are used by Africans in the independent states of Africa, there is no protest from anywhere in Africa." Perhaps this is because the oppressors are "non-whites." Thus we learn of a queer quirk of human behavior: those who first haughtily raise a finger of scorn and condemnation fail to find three pointing back.

Do not assume that only a few countries are guilty of ethnic persecution and racism. The Minority Rights Commission in Britain has found more than 60 nations with one form of official racial discrimination. For example, the constitution of Liberia denies whites the right to own property, and Saudi Arabia will not allow a Jew to enter the country. Human rights are consistently abridged in several South American nations such as Cuba, Chile, Argentina and Colombia. The U.S.S.R. and both Korea are further examples. Pakistan's martial law rules stipulate punishment by flogging or by dismemberment of hands and such. The list goes on and on.

So what about the Krugerrands? I hope most individuals understand that combating racism and oppression is a little more complex than many simple-minded people would make it seem. The crux is that returning the coins is pointless protest. A vicarious victory might give APU momentary satisfaction, but such symbolic protest does nothing to end racism in South Africa. Similar destruction of symbols and protest occurred during WWI, when the German language was prohibited in some schools and German publications were banned and burned. This helped flare up ethnic tensions, but did little to end WWI.

It has been very enlightening to observe the actions of Mr. Chambers, who is adamantly against the misuse of all drugs, when he recently opposed the "bong bill," on the grounds that such a bill is symbolic of anti-drug legislation that does little to end drug abuse. The logic: since sacrificing the profit gained by a few tainted headshops is only treating the symptoms, and does nothing to cure the real causes of drug abuse (the pusher and poor parents), the "bong bill" is bad. Paradoxically, Mr. Chambers later changes tack, and claims to espouse moral principle, nobly calling for the return of the Krugerrands; notwithstanding that such action is symbolic of protest which does little to end racism. The logic: since sacrificing the profit gained by a few tainted Krugerrands is only treating the symptoms, and does nothing to cure the real source of oppression in South Africa (the bigotry in the hearts of Afrikaners), keeping the Krugerrands is bad. The reasoning? Very confusing. The logical conclusion: Mr.

Chambers somehow seems more concerned with oppressed blacks in South Africa than white junkies in Nebraska.

Seriously, we must realize that just as destroying every bong and baggie (the symbols) will never end drug abuse in Nebraska, so will casting to the sea every one of the millions of Krugerrands (the symbols) never end oppression in South Africa. The source of the drug problem lies within the home, and the source of racism and oppression lies within the hearts of men. Accepting the donation is no more an act of racism than opposing the "bong bill" is an act of pushing drugs.

There are many who would claim that moral principle must be upheld, regardless of the price. Yes, it is noble to support moral principle, but it is the height of hypocrisy if we are arbitrary when we choose to do so. Perhaps some people can label the oppression in South Africa as unacceptable, and oppression elsewhere as insignificant. I believe Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn would call such rhetoric asinine. If this allusion has struck deadwood, you might consider edifying yourself and study *The First Circle*. If it is morally right to return the Krugerrands, for any reason, whether to protest apartheid or to exert economic pressure through reducing circulation and demand, then we must refuse currency from all nations guilty of oppression, regardless.

Following precedent set by the UN, we also should end trade with these guilty nations. Imagine what a wonderful world of cooperation we could have when our metal industry collapses as we cut off our only cobalt supply in Zaire! We can cease to import coffee from Colombia, and send all our shirts and underwear back to South Korea. No more Russian rubles; we must return them. Oppression will certainly cease just as soon as we end all economic trade and diplomatic ties with the scores of countries who are guilty of such crimes. No price can be too high! If we are morally consistent we ought to refuse our own dollar to protest crimes, past and present, perpetrated by our own nation against the forgotten minority, the American Indian.

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