

Korean dissident defenders blamed for melee

Richard L. Walker, the American ambassador to South Korea, has yet another explanation for how it was that a flying squad of security police roughed up a group of Americans accompanying opposition leader Kim Dae Jung home to Seoul. The Americans with Kim said the Koreans started the melee. The Korean government said it didn't start anything, but the ambassador has finally offered an explanation that makes sense: He's blamed Patricia Derian.



Richard Cohen

Actually, Walker blamed the entire group of Americans who had accompanied Kim to Korea. But Derian is not only the best-known member of that delegation but also precisely the sort of person who would step between the police and an opposition leader who Korean authorities have tried to kill in the past. She has been doing that sort of thing since the old civil-rights days in Mississippi.

Today Derian's passion is civil rights writ global, which explains her presence at the airport. She and the other Americans were determined that what happened to Benigno Aquino, the Philippine opposition leader who was gunned down in Manila, would not happen to Kim. If anything, it was the assassination of Aquino that made a repeat, Korean style, unlikely. But the death of one dissident in Manila is no guarantee that another would be allowed to remain alive in Seoul. Regimes run by thugs are notorious copycats.

What is Ambassador Walker talking about? Who cares if Derian and the other Americans



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accompanying Kim broke their agreement and refused to allow the Korean police to take Kim off the plane by himself? They insist they made no such agreement and that they did absolutely nothing to provoke the police (yet another Walker charge), but none of that really matters anyway. This is a silly argument fueled by an American ambassador who's forgotten what his country stands for.

The fact remains that Kim is under house arrest. The fact is that he can not even go to

church and that ministers who have come to see him have been turned away by the police. The fact is that he was once kidnapped in Japan, probably by the the Korean CIA, threatened with death, and dumped back in Korea. He's been imprisoned, exiled and attempts have been made on his life. He would be back in prison today or, like Aquino, dead on arrival, if it were not for the entreaties of the Reagan administration.

There is but one other fact you should know

about Kim: his crime. There is none, unless it is near success as an opposition politician. In 1971, running as the opposition candidate for president, he received more than 45 percent of the vote, which, to provide some perspective, is better than Walter Mondale did against Ronald Reagan. Mondale, though, went back to his law firm. Kim was jailed for the crime of dissent.

It could be, as the ambassador claims, that the grand plans of some very small minds went awry when Kim landed in Korea. Maybe in the crush, the police lost their cool. Maybe the government really had intended for the cops to be well-behaved. And maybe, even, Derian and the other Americans panicked at the last moment and refused to let Kim out of their sight. If they did, they had their reasons. They, if not the ambassador, knew that it was the police who threatened Kim — not the other way around.

The other way around is apparently the way the ambassador and the Reagan administration prefers it. It has directed its outrage at Derian and the others. For the government that over the years has imprisoned him, kidnapped him, tried to kill him, exiled him and now has him under house arrest for the crime of political opposition, it has uttered only the mildest rebuke. This, like the "constructive engagement" of U.S. South African policy, is foreign policy without a soul — moral vacuity posing as realpolitik.

It hardly matters who, if anyone, broke an airport agreement. What matters is that an ally, a country whose independence was secured by American blood, roughed up two congressmen and two former American diplomats who only wanted to protect the life of a political dissident. The ambassador is right: Derian is the perfect example of an American who can not be trusted. At any moment, she's likely to do the right thing.

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Candidates mean business

ASUN elections keep saliva glands going

One of the things I love most about beautiful Nebraskaland is its change of seasons — that lingering moment between summer and fall, or fall and winter, like the moment between supper and dessert: the last bite of a steak slides down your esophagus, your taste buds still



Chris Burbach

reveling in the beef flavor even while your eyes watch a spoonful of chocolate mousse floating toward your mouth. You're gonna miss the steak, but that mousse looks good. It is the anticipation of the mousse that keeps your saliva glands working.

At this time of year, when winter's icy grip is

slipping and daffodil bulbs are plotting their spring sprout, what keeps my saliva glands going is the annual ASUN election. The election is to me what a Gainesburger is to a famished pup — dogfood in a dish.

Like the seasons, each ASUN election is different from the last year's. Some things stay the same — such as the overwhelming overrepresentation of Greeks in the parties and at the polls, most of the parties' promises — the way the candidates look, the inevitably unsuccessful attempt of a humor party to be as funny as the legendary STUPID party and the total lack of concern among most students. But some subtleties do change. Like names. And, uh, well... names.

The parties that have announced so far this year have names as lovely as a tree — Look, Target, Change and SCUM. The names, like the parties' platforms, indicate a radical departure

from past years. With the exception of SCUM, none of the names are acronyms, at least they're not intended to be. And they get right to the heart of the parties' platforms.

Look wants students to "take a closer look," according to the story about their announcement in today's Daily Nebraskan. Target wants to improve on last year's Aim party slogan. Change wants to keep the Nebraska Union open 24 hours during finals week. And SCUM wants to disrupt ASUN and the election process.

Maybe you're one of those who never cared before. With the kind of people we have discussing the kinds of issues they're concerned about this year, you had better begin to care. These candidates mean business.

They want greater input from students, greater credibility for ASUN, unity between students and increased communication between students and faculty. And they mean to get it.

Listen to some of these quotes from the parties' respective announcement stories in the Daily Nebraskan.

Gerard Keating, Target presidential candidate, on equal representation: "We'll push hard for residence hall turnout and develop issues that they can relate to."

Kevin Goldstein, Change presidential candidate, on his party's beliefs: "...advancing the rights of students."

Tim Burke, LOOK presidential candidate: "All we ask is that in the coming weeks students take a closer look."

Jeff Baler, SCUM second vice-presidential candidate: "Let's face it. UNL students don't care about ASUN and its functions."

I think you get the picture. These are not your average run-of-the-mill-yuppie-do-something-that'll-look-good-on-a-resume-candidates. They're different. Really.

Letters

Peer pressure ...

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But to return to junior high — which is in fact happening more and more these days — some people cannot escape junior high, or actually like it, and choose, in a sense, to stay there as a lifelong thing, either because the different is nervous-making and thus is to be attacked, or because picking on the different is, by definition, picking on a minority, and is both safe and fun.

Whatever the explanation, the behavior should be recognized as feathered. We must hope that people can transcend birds.

Why?

There is much that is beautiful that doesn't look like a crow, but it takes, at least, a meta-crow to see it.

Tom Winter
associate professor of classics

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