

Editorial

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Libya attack One madman fights another

It appears that we are dealing with more than one madman. The U.S. attack on Libya Monday night showed the world the shallow mental depths of one of the world's most powerful men.

Immediately after the attack, President Reagan addressed the people of the United States to rationalize his attack on terrorism. Only terrorist-related targets were destroyed, he said. We don't want to harm any Libyans. The message was clear: We have to stop terrorism, and if it takes a bomb or two, so be it.

"He (Khadafy) counted on America to be passive," Reagan said. "He counted wrong." It was the tone of an irrational man, not a world leader.

True, terrorism has gripped the world in the last few years. The United States was embarrassed when captors in Iran held about 40 Americans prisoner for more than one year. Last summer, terrorists hijacked a TWA commercial jetliner in Athens. Recently, there have been so many terrorist attacks that Americans have grown ho-hum when reading about them in the newspapers. Yet the attacks are real and action should be taken. That action, however, should be well-thought out. Right now, it's not.

The fact that no European countries have emphatically supported the terrorist attack on Libya should carry some weight — and a lesson or two for the United States. Europeans have lived with terrorist attacks for decades. Let's assume they know something about dealing with them. Maybe there's something to be said for keeping a cool head.

Reagan has indicated that the attack was partly sparked by a bombing in a Berlin disco and a commercial jetliner — two acts that, Reagan says, are the responsibility of Libyan-based terrorist plans. Both attacks followed the U.S. provocation of conducting sea maneuvers in the Gulf of Sidra — a move that Khadafy

considered an act of aggression. We seem to think that bombing the terrorists will eliminate the problem. The events in Berlin and on the jetliner show us otherwise.

It all can be traced to Khadafy's beliefs. The man apparently thinks on a child's level. He and his followers are guided by strong religious and political beliefs.

Lisa Anderson, one of the nation's experts in North African politics, put it this way in a Lincoln Star column: "Khadafy is firmly opposed to the international status quo, which he regards as exploitative and illegitimate. It is the Libyan revolution, not the international system, that stands for justice, equality and freedom . . . Because these are firmly held beliefs, as long as Khadafy remains in power he will be a source of instability . . ."

Again, these beliefs are so strong that it's unlikely attacks on terrorist targets will curb any terrorist activity — maybe in the short-term, but certainly not in the long-term. Consider the young man who drove the truck of explosives into the U.S. Marines' barracks in 1984. It was an act of suicide on his part. Chances are, he considered it an act of God.

There's no doubt that one of the madmen will strike again. As Tripoli recovers from its blasts and Reagan savors victory, other events will transpire. If Reagan provokes the next attack, he needs to be a bit more careful.

The U.S. Constitution contains a war powers act, which requires the president to gain approval from Congress for long-term military action. Some senators have said the president hedged a bit on his authorities. Some have said he *told* senators about the act, rather than asking for their input.

Congress must demand a more active role in shaping U.S. policy toward terrorism. And U.S. citizens, consequently, should contact their congressmen to voice their concern and opinion.

Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials represent official policy of the spring 1986 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are Vicki Ruhga, editor; Ad Hudler, editorial page editor; Thom Gabrukiewicz, managing editor; James Rogers, editorial associate and Chris Welsch, copy desk chief.

Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its

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Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

Anonymous submissions will not

employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents.

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be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names from publication will not be granted.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

BULLETIN:

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS ARE CONVINCED THAT THE ATTACK UPON PRESIDENT REAGAN FOLLOWING HIS PRESS CONFERENCE WAS ORDERED BY MOAMMAR KHADAFY...



Politics is not the sum of life Students' focus on jobs and family not wrong priorities

Lamenting the apathy of students always evokes a sympathetic response from "Right Thinkers." All Right Thinkers shake their heads in oh-so-saintly disapproval whenever the lamentation is wailed.

Scratch the surface of the Right Thinkers' claim, and you discover that their tortured cries result not because students are disinterested in all things, but that students are only interested in the "wrong" things. In other words, students aren't interested in the Right Thinkers' agenda.

They're just so "establishment," so "serious and studious," so concerned about "getting jobs," so "politically unaware," . . . "so politically unaware . . ." There's the rub. Right Thinkers loathe the thought that life can be defined — let alone meaningfully pursued — without exclusive reference to politics.

I have some sympathy for the Right Thinkers' argument. I became an avid reader in the later years of elementary school. One book in particular radically altered my previously childish view of the world. Although I forget the title now, I distinctly remember the subject and content of the book, as well as the cover style, paper quality and graphics. The book was on the events and individuals of the Russian revolution. I was quite excited by the story and wanted to learn more. I am still excited, and still want to learn more. Political theory, in assorted divers fashion, still is an avocational and vocational interest.

Thus by intellectual constitution I regard politics in the broad to be important. But Right Thinkers require universal assent to such a view, and

that is unjustified. Politics is not the sum of life: Truth and beauty — the normative core of earthly human life — are not summed up through our relationship to the state.

At bottom, this is the distinctive difference between the conservative and the liberal. Insisting upon this distinction is anathema to the liberal.



James
Rogers

William F. Buckley lucidly summarized this point by quipping on a "Firing Line" program that he is a conservative because he considered social change to be of much greater importance than political change. The conservative view thus embodies work-a-day "pedestrian" activities with significance.

This only makes sense. In our immediate circle of activities, we all come in contact with numbers of people whom we can serve. Thus, family, church, neighborhood, union, vocation are the appropriate focus of life.

After all, it's much tougher to reconcile yourself with your neighbor after he broke your radio than to speak a thousand words in support of an amorphous "world peace." The practice of peace is most difficult when it involves children and the neighbor with bad breath. But these expressions have the greatest, lasting effects.

Such an emphasis of everyday activities draws only contempt from Right Thinkers — contempt for the bour-

geoisie.

Right Thinkers loathe the thought that other people actually draw significance from non-political activity. The thought that the state is not the well-spring of life is simply unconscionable.

Nonetheless, the nursery of society is within those non-political structures which mediate between the individual and the state. Each structure, family, union, business, church, school, etc., has a sphere of authority that can be captured by the term "governments."

The "activism" of the 1960s is always held as the appropriate standard of student involvement. The myth of the model is significant. "Involved" students are those who totally immerse themselves into political activity. Any involvement less than total immersion is deemed to be evidence of "apathy."

Of course, Right Thinkers forget that as the students of the 60s began dealing with the broad realm of life that cannot be addressed merely by symbolic speech, their radicalization largely disappeared. Many are now popping up as Reagan Republicans.

The fact that students today primarily are concerned with marriage, jobs and other "pedestrian" activities hardly gives evidence of mislaid priorities. After all, this is where most of our lives will have the greatest impact. Certainly cultural materialism ought to be a concern. But the evidence for the asserted increase in materialism of today's student is the "fact" that students are not immersed in politics. And thus the argumentative circle closes. The argument is hardly compelling.

Rogers is an economics graduate and law student, and DN editorial page editor.

Plan for Egyptian military help shows shortsightedness of foreign policy

On his recent visit to Washington, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres was a man with a mission. In his head he held a plan, and in his briefcase he held some statistics. They showed that a combination of sinking oil prices and military profligacy had (as they don't say at the World Bank) busted some Arab countries. Contrary to what you might think, this did not make Peres' day.

Instead, it put the Israeli prime minister in a somber mood. In a meeting with Secretary of State George Shultz, Peres outlined his worries. A bankrupt Arab world is an unstable Arab world, he said. In particular, Peres was worried about Egypt. It was in trouble. Revenues from oil and tourism were way down and the moderate regime of Hosni Mubarak might be in trouble.

At about the same time that Shultz was hearing from Peres, others in the State Department were hearing from

reporters. They were asking if it were true that the United States had on three occasions asked Egypt to consider joint military operations against Libya. The plans apparently varied, but they seemed to call for some combination of Egyptian troops and U.S. planes. The State Department confirmed the reports after the news leaked from Cairo.



Richard
Cohen

The two events — U.S. attempts to enlist Egypt in its anti-Khadafy crusade and Peres' attempts to enlist the United States in a program to help Egypt — are juxtaposed here for a purpose: They illustrate differing, almost

contradictory, world views. And they raise questions of whether the Reagan administration is so enamored of force that it fails to consider long-term implications.

For instance, the Egypt that figured in U.S. invasion plans bears little resemblance to the same country that so worries Peres. Peres' Egypt is a fragile society — one whose last leader, Anwar Sadat, was assassinated by religious zealots. It is a country in economic trouble. Its security police recently rampaged in Cairo because of low wages and miserable living conditions. Mubarak was able to handle the riots, but not the cause of them. None of that has changed.

The Egypt that worries Peres could be pitched into chaos by becoming an American ally in a joint operation against another Arab country. Moslem

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