

Letter

Excuses stem from a guilty conscience

The article concerning the shooting down of the Iranian civilian aircraft (Summer Daily Nebraskan, July 7), killing 290 people, quite frankly disheartens me as a human being. I refer to the article in which David Forsythe suggests the Iranians intentionally brought about the incident.

I found the article a rather disturbing attempt at rationalization. Though he doesn't state it outright, Forsythe, along with most Americans, seems to begin with the assumption that the United States is a civilization eminently superior to that of the barbarous savages of Iran, and in no way could cause the death of 290 innocent people. Iran, then, must be somehow responsible, he asserts (as most of us tend to).

According to the article, Forsythe said "the captain probably acted correctly..." A reasonable assumption, supported by the initial Pentagon claims that the aircraft was off course, broadcasting as an F-14 fighter, at high speed, and descending directly for the U.S.S. Vincennes, all typical signs of a fighter plane preparing to

shoot missiles.

Forsythe must have begun to see the outline of a conspiracy after hearing these claims: The Iranians, sick of U.S. military presence, herded 290 people (Indian and other foreign citizens included) aboard a plane, equipped it with a military transponder, used gunboats to fire on the Vincennes to create tension, diverted the hapless planeload of passengers from normal plane routes, sped up, descended (to appear as a fighter), . . . and so on, and so on.

But according to a July 7 article in the Boston Globe, Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci indicated that the aircraft "may not have been flying outside the commercial air traffic corridor, may not have been descending, and may not have been veering off course..." The assertion that the plane broadcast as an F-14 is an arbitrary one; there is no international set of channels specific planes must use to identify themselves. The captain of the Vincennes only inferred that the plane was a F-14. Add to this the fact that an A300 Airbus could never

achieve the speed of an F-14, not even a substantial fraction of it, and doubts ensue.

The flight, it seems, may merely have been a commercial one luckless enough to pass directly over a U.S. Navy ship equipped with imprecise electronics and a trigger-happy captain.

But all of this aside, Forsythe maintains that "you cannot rule out that they were willing to sacrifice 290 people to embarrass the United States." While I respect Forsythe's eminence as a professor of political science, and do not wish to belittle it, perhaps his assessment arises as a rationalization necessary to placate a guilty conscience.

Even if the incident was indeed some absurd Iranian plot, the people of the United States are responsible for the killing of 290 human beings. God knows my conscience is still reeling from it.

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Votes, Ed not found at Soviet caucus

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whole team of surveillance experts sweep the place for all manner of microphones and hidden wires. They unscrew phone receivers, check under the ham in the complimentary sandwiches and search the "party donkey" for electronic "ticks" and noise-activated smegma beans. After all, there are sensitive party strategies being discussed here.

The Soviets take bugs for granted. They speak right into them. Usually they planted the bugs themselves years earlier, when they were up and coming young Communists. They like listening to themselves later at KGB headquarters.

5. **People Named Ed.** At the Democratic Convention, every other person is named Ed. At the Soviet conference, no one is named Ed. The classical pianist dreams of being called Ed.

6. **Voting.** The Democratic delegates vote endlessly. They sometimes vote up to 20 times per day. They vote on what they'll have for lunch. They vote on who will get to ride the "party donkey." They vote on whether or not a vote should be taken.

Old Soviets hrumph if someone suggests a vote. Gorbachev suggested several votes, but nobody wanted to play along. The Soviets consider voting a time-consuming game. They know exactly what they want for lunch two days in advance and the "party bear" is in the Soviet National Zoo.

7. **Speeches. Democrats:** "The reason we have been called together here in this place to ponder a historic and wondrous party unity and unity that we hope will inspire a deeper, more lasting unity for all of our country and, if I can say so and retain a certain necessary humility, the world at large..."

Soviets: "Nyet. Hrumph."

8. **The Candidates.** Michael Dukakis is the son of Greek immigrants. He was in Greece once for four whole hours. His running mate is a Texas Republican masquerading as a Democrat, which often happens in the

South. One must keep in mind that George Wallace, whose major goal in life was to repeal the Emancipation Proclamation, was a Democrat. Jesse Jackson is a real Democrat who's been to Greece for whole days at a time. He is going to smile all the way through the convention because he's not on the Democratic ticket but he wants to show he's not a spoilsport. He's going to sit on the platform and smile while several guys named Ed call for a vote on lunch. What's he thinking? He's thinking he'd like to play classical piano.

Gorbachev is a New Wave Communist. Unlike the older set at the conference, he's not real concerned about the tractor as a symbol of revo-

lutionary renewal. He'd like the Soviet Union to have its own stock market. He likes girls and wine. He, also unlike his colleagues, has purchased a suit made after 1914. If he even looks at Greece the wrong way, he's in trouble. His vocabulary extends well beyond "hrumph." He's what's known in the Soviet Union as a man treading on a very thin wire.

As you can see, the lines may be blurring, but they're still there. Who knows? Maybe next time around you won't be able to tell the players without a scorecard.

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