

Closing chapters

Time to end worldwide hostage crisis

After nearly seven years, Terry Anderson, the last American hostage in Lebanon, is free.

When Anderson entered a conference room at the Syrian Foreign Ministry to address reporters Wednesday, he waved his hands to the press and the rest of the world, and he hugged one reporter.

Later, for the first time, Anderson wrapped an arm around his daughter Sulome, born three months after he was kidnapped by Shiite Muslims.

These were the simple gestures of a freed human.

And, possibly, the end of an era that has seen 13 American hostages held by pro-Iranian terrorists and three more killed in captivity.

While he was imprisoned, Anderson missed out on many changes. The turns of the world will be important to the journalist in Anderson. He probably has never even heard of David Duke. Or of stealth bombers. Or of "Dances With Wolves."

While Anderson remained in captivity, the Cold War ended. The Berlin wall crumbled. The United States reasserted its military might. China positioned itself as the world's Communist power.

All of these events, including the birth of his daughter, were stripped away from Anderson. He will never get them back.

As Middle East leaders meet in Washington this week, the resolution of the American hostage crisis should be in the back, not front, of negotiators' minds.

The releases are indeed a gesture of goodwill, but just as the hostages' captivity could not be used as a bargaining chip, their freedom should be given no special emphasis.

After all, Shiite Muslims still hold two German hostages and several Israeli prisoners. Israel itself holds many Palestinians under controversial circumstances.

Perhaps Anderson's release will signal a victory for human rights in the Middle East.

After more than 6 1/2 years in chains, that is the least his release should bring.



Lisa Pytik/DN

—J.P.

Dehyphenation promises no staggering changes

I was the one University of Nebraska at Omaha student government senator who voted against the dehyphenation of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I thought it was just plain silly. Sort of like holding our breath until we turn blue.

The Daily Nebraskan is frequently quoted in The Omaha World-Herald. The UNO Gateway is never even mentioned in The World-Herald. Even if UNO student government could by its own volition remove the hyphen from UNL, our own school paper

would still be a Mickey Mouse tabloid. We would still be parking a mile from campus and taking a bus to class. We would still be the hometown, also-ran, wall-flower school without dorms. One preposition more or less isn't going to change any of that.

Our student court has declared parking tickets at UNO invalid. Isn't that amazing? I guess the hyphen was only the beginning.

Stephen Srb
Omaha

EDITORIAL POLICY

Signed staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1991 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are: Jana Pedersen, editor; Eric Pfanner, editorial page editor; Diane Brayton, managing editor; Walter Gholson, columnist; Paul Domeier, copy desk chief; Brian Shellito, cartoonist; Jeremy Fitzpatrick, senior reporter.

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The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

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.

Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not to run, is left to the editor's discretion.

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

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DAVID REITER

Apologies from nations puzzling

There are lots of apologies these days.

After the Clarence Thomas hearings, Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., apologized for faults in his private life. Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., apologized for being insensitive to the other side.

More recently, presidential candidate Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., apologized for telling an offensive joke. After that, in an apparent attempt to capitalize on Kerrey's mistake, David Beckwith, press secretary for Vice President Dan Quayle, told a joke about Kerrey's joke. He was informed that his joke was offensive, and he too has apologized.

Now officials in the Japanese government are saying that Japan's parliament will pass a formal resolution apologizing to its former enemies. In an interview in The Washington Post, Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe expressed remorse over the "unbearable suffering and sorrow" inflicted on America by Japan.

There has also been discussion of whether the United States should apologize for dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is estimated that nearly 300,000 Japanese were killed in those attacks.

In the interview, Watanabe said the Japanese government is not seeking an apology from the United States. But other Japanese officials have suggested such an apology. According to the Chicago Tribune, last year Nabuo Ishihara, deputy chief cabinet secretary, suggested the United States should apologize for its attack on Japan.

In a taped interview that aired Sunday on ABC television, President Bush rejected outright the idea of making an apology to Japan: "Not from this president. I was fighting over there. I had orders to go back there when the war was ended."

The very notion of apologizing for the attack on Japan is perplexing in a variety of ways. For starters, can nations even make apologies?

Although nations cannot sneeze or tear down a set of goalposts, there are some actions nations can perform. If a nation has a legislative system, it can impose a speed limit. If it has a good selection of guns, tanks and missiles, it can make war on its neighbor.

But doesn't apologizing require



Although nations cannot sneeze or tear down a set of goalposts, there are some actions nations can perform. If a nation has a legislative system, it can impose a speed limit. If it has a good selection of guns, tanks and missiles, it can make war on its neighbor. But doesn't apologizing require special equipment?

special equipment? Doesn't it require something like a heart? Something that can feel remorse or sorrow over past actions? Do nations have this sort of thing?

Even ignoring this question, there are other perplexities.

An apology ought to be sincere.

In part, this means that it should flow from a genuine conviction that the action performed was wrong. Our nation may be utterly convinced that dropping the bomb had horrible effects, but we do not have a genuine conviction that dropping the bomb was morally wrong.

While there are some who claim that the action was wrong, many Americans hold that it was morally justified. For a national apology to be sincere, this disagreement would have to be resolved.

But sincerity requires more than a bare acknowledgement of wrongdoing. It also requires that the giving of an apology is genuine. We are all too

familiar with the fact that empty or purely formal apologies are sometimes given as mere tools for reaching desired ends.

It would be wrong to use an apology as a tool to gain better trade relations with Japan. It also would be wrong to apologize just for the sake of projecting the "right image" to the world community.

Finally, it is unclear whether apologies are even appropriate in this context. If someone accidentally steps on your foot, an apology is appropriate. If someone insults you, an apology is appropriate. But as the offense becomes more and more serious, the role of apologies seems to become less clear.

The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The action was horrible, and this can be recognized even if one thinks it was morally justified. It is precisely because this action was so massively horrible that there is something strange about the very suggestion that someone should, or even could, apologize for it.

So the notion of apologizing is perplexing.

On the other hand, there is nothing perplexing about the desirability of peace. We should want very much to turn old enemies into new friends.

But there are different ways of attempting to do this. One way is to try to bring about healing through official proclamations and apologies. Another way is to let it happen through individual relationships.

Last week, the Chicago Tribune told the story of Iwao Fujiwara and Richard Fiske.

Fiske is a survivor of the Japanese attack on the USS West Virginia, while Fujiwara is president of a wholesale clothing company in Japan.

Fujiwara was one of 350 Japanese pilots who carried out the attack on Pearl Harbor. His plane scored a direct hit on the USS West Virginia.

Recently, Fujiwara visited Pearl Harbor. In tears, he embraced Richard Fiske.

The only way to conduct a war is from the top down. But healing is different. It is best approached from the bottom up.

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