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## EDITORIAL

### Bosnia action

*Students capture brings attention to crisis*

If you look at any newspaper lately or have watched any news program on TV, it will be difficult to find any coverage of the war in Bosnia.

As a matter of fact, if you can find anything about this 16-month standoff between Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia, it will probably be closer to the newspaper's classifieds or to the TV news' special on the elderly citizen-of-the-week than anywhere else.

Lately, this war, which has claimed between 140,000-200,000 lives and has caused 2 million people to become homeless, has not been given much attention by the media. This has been caused by a lack of regard given to the crisis by the U.S. government.

In Nebraska, what should open University of Nebraska-Lincoln students' eyes to this worldwide crisis was the recent detention of two UNL students who went to Bosnia to aid in the relief effort, but were held for 18 days in a Bosnian prison.

The students' captivity should be a not-so-friendly reminder that the bloodshed is continuing in the Balkans, no matter how much attention is currently being given to the war.

If the students' detention isn't a wake-up call on this campus to the tragedies of the war, then nothing will be.

And while the warring factions in the former Yugoslavia have not been able to come up with a peace treaty acceptable on all sides, the U. S. should realize the killing has gone on long enough, and something needs to be done.

While this might seem easier to discuss in theory than actually do in practice, the U.S. must live up to its role as the world's peacekeeper. It has become obvious that without intervention we might have on our hands the second 100 Years War, at the very least.

The first response to the war might be to send U.S. troops into the region to settle the conflict, but without any vital U.S. interests there, our nation does not need to see history repeat itself (i.e. Vietnam).

So what then?

The best solution would be to either strengthen the world's embargos on the region or to build the United Nation's peace-keeping force to a formidable level to handle the crisis.

Just as it is essential to end this war and unnecessary killing as quickly as possible, it is also important for the U.S. to remember that this is a world problem, and needs to act as the leader of a multi-nation effort, not on its own.

But the bottom line is that the U.S. needs to act now to show the Balkan Region that the world is not going to stand for the atrocities that the war is causing any more.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

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IF GAYS ARE ALLOWED IN THE MILITARY... WHO KNOWS? THEY COULD BE CHECKING ME OUT AND HITTING ON ME. IT WOULD HINDER OUR EFFECTIVENESS AS A FIGHTING UNIT



SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING TONIGHT?



LISA PYTLIK

## Memories reappear with time

Hey, remember that really cold winter when the water pipes to Broyhill fountain broke? Remember how water sprayed all over the plaza and how everyone skipped class to iceskate buck-naked around the student union?

Me neither. But according to an article I read recently, if we thought about it long enough and tried hard enough to envision it, we might actually be able to remember it quite vividly despite the fact that I just made the whole thing up.

The article I read, which was printed in the May 1993 issue of American Psychologist, was about repressed memories. That is, memories—often traumatic ones—that have slipped out of consciousness, only to be remembered much later, often after a great deal of time and effort spent in counseling. Often the memories are about childhood traumas such as physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

The basic theory behind repressed memories such as these is that as children, we are not strong enough to deal with the strong emotions created by intense abuse and, therefore, to protect ourselves, our minds "repress" the memories, pushing them deep into our unconscious, out of awareness.

However, out of mind does not mean out of sight. Such repression or "denial" mechanisms are thought by many therapists to be the cause of various "symptoms" including depression, low self-esteem, self-destructive tendencies and various sexual problems. Therefore, if a therapist suspects childhood abuse in a client, often he or she will encourage the client, who may initially have no recollection of abuse, to "work on it" and see if memories emerge. The idea behind this is that if the memories can be recalled and their associated emotions expressed and worked through, the client's denial defenses will break down and his or her symptoms will be lessened or relieved.

In light of the large number of abuse cases reported today (various



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surveys have estimated that sexual abuse alone afflicts between 10-50 percent of the population), it does seem likely that a lot of adults could have been abused as children and that abuse may indeed be a source of their adult problems.

However, not all counselors pressure their clients to remember abuse in their pasts. Instead, some therapists reassure their clients that they can work through their current pain whether they remember past abuse or not. What many therapists do not tell their clients, however, is that there are some good reasons why one should NOT try too hard to force oneself to remember.

According to the article I read, our memories are a great deal more complex and unpredictable than most people would expect. In fact, not only can our memories be altered by suggestions, there is a great deal of evidence that, at least under some conditions, whole memories may be implanted or created entirely in our minds. In one study, for example, a 14-year-old boy was falsely convinced by his older brother that at the age of five he had been lost in the shopping mall.

As commonly happens in the case of repressed memories, the boy claimed he did not remember the incident at first. However, a couple of weeks later he claimed to have revived the memory and described in detail his feelings of fear as well as many details about the stranger who helped him.

Even more amazing was the account of a man who, when initially accused of several counts of child abuse, claimed innocence. But then, after working with a therapist and some investigators, he began to "remember" abusing his children. Yet he also confessed "remembering" a fictitious instance of abuse that a social scientist had invented to test the authenticity of his memory. Furthermore, this obviously false memory was so vivid that the man was able to write three pages describing it in detail.

These cases are rather sobering considering the amount of faith that therapists, their clients and society as a whole often have in the reality of revived childhood memories. In some cases people have been convicted of crimes thought to have been committed 20 or more years ago, primarily on the basis of revived memories. In other cases, whole families have been torn apart when a son or daughter remembers long-forgotten abuse and then denounces his or her family when they deny it.

The recovery of repressed memories of childhood abuse may often be true and accurate. However, evidence also suggests that our minds may have an incredible capacity to take suggestions and create very vivid, yet false, "memories." In light of this, as individuals and as a society, we ought to be very careful what actions and consequences we choose to base on what may or may not be authentic repressed memories.

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