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Nebraskan
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EDITORIAL

Say it loud

Tailhook solution must send a message

The Clinton administration decided Monday not to fire the Navy's No. 1 officer, Adm. Frank B. Kelso II, for his role in the Tailhook sex scandal.

Navy Secretary John Dalton had recommended to Defense Secretary Les Aspin that Kelso be dismissed for failing to provide leadership during the scandal that arose from the 1991 Tailhook convention of naval aviators. Scores of women were sexually harassed or assaulted at the convention.

Dalton based his recommendation on Navy tradition that the most senior officer is accountable for the misconduct of his subordinates.

But Aspin rejected Dalton's recommendation. "An evaluation of his record under the criteria you have offered does not suggest to me that he should retire," he wrote in a memo to the Navy Secretary.

The Associated Press reported that Aspin's decision reflected a deeply held view in the Pentagon and the White House that Kelso had responded well to the Tailhook scandal. More than 40 officers accused of participating in the assaults on women at the convention have been fined or disciplined. Eleven others await court martial, military grand juries or other inquiries.

Aspin's desire to avoid firing a 38-year Navy veteran in the service's No. 1 position can be understood. And Kelso has responded to the Tailhook scandal by moving aggressively to crack down on sexual harassment in the Navy.

But the Clinton administration needs to ensure that its move will not undermine the importance of the issue of sexual harassment. If officers perceive they will not be held responsible for sexual harassment, they will be less likely to prevent them.

OTHERS' VIEW

As promised, President Clinton pushed through Congress his National and Community Service Trust Act, which offers college students up to \$9,450 in exchange for two years of community service.

The White House always talked a good game for college-age voters, and the act is a solid first step in proving that this administration cares about the younger generation.

Now it's up to us.

The federal government has actually allocated money to the tune of \$1.5 billion by 1996 for the program. Some 100,000 students could be participating by that time.

The country needs people to teach at inner-city schools and lend support to public safety groups, environmental organizations and social work programs. Our generation must take charge and fix the crumbling society we live in, for it's obvious our government can't do that job.

In its current form, national and community service might not be for everyone. The wages paid during the two years of service are low, and the jobs might not be ideal.

Nonetheless, they are critical. Someone must answer the call for help. The country doesn't just need people to answer the call; it needs good people: students with a hard work ethic, an open mind and dedication.

Hopefully, now that Clinton and the federal government have put out the bait, qualified students will offer our communities some of their talents.

— The Daily
The University of Washington

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Soldiers dying for no reason

At the close of the Third Punic War in 146 B.C., the Roman Republic attacked and took the cities of Corinth and Carthage. Both were razed, the inhabitants sold into slavery and at Carthage, salt was scattered on the ground to make the site a permanent, barren testament to Roman power and resolve.

The spectacle of a crowd of grinning, chanting, hopping Somalis parading the dead bodies of U.S. servicemen around the streets of their wretched little village that passes for a capital makes the blood boil. Well, the time has come for some Roman-style revenge in Somalia.

Land a division of Marines, plus a couple squads of B-52s and a Missouri-class battlewagon. Level their cities, scatter the inhabitants to the winds, let them starve and kill each other, and then coat the whole area with Agent Orange or plutonium as a warning to the future Aidids or Saddams.

Twelve U.S. servicemen died Monday, 78 were wounded and as many as a dozen others may be held hostage, fodder for every free-lance cameraman to question and thereby vicariously humiliate the United States. The response from the United States was, to say the least, muted. President Clinton merely warned that the Somalis better treat our people right, or else. It rings about as hollow as his continued threats to carry out air strikes in Bosnia.

The military response is one guaranteed to drag us further into a no-win situation. A mechanized company of Army troops, plus an armored platoon, are now on their way to Mogadishu. Two hundred twenty men, four M1-A1 tanks, 14 Bradley M-113 fighting vehicles, two AC-130 gunships, plus replacement Blackhawk helicopters and personnel will bring the U.S. presence in Somalia to 4,700 people.

Not enough to win a victory, if and when such a thing is ever defined, but enough to serve as a tripwire to bring



It's quite obvious by now, though, that the Somalis are well-fed enough to start taking pot shots at our troops and dance in the streets when the rounds hit home.

in more troops.

It was an eerie sight, watching Defense Secretary Les Aspin announce the reinforcements, and hearing Rep. Lee Hamilton say the United States couldn't just "cut and run." Replace Aspin with Robert McNamara, and Clinton with his idol, John Kennedy, and you have an idea of what Somalia is becoming. We haven't had a Tonkin Gulf Resolution yet, a point of no return, but it is rapidly approaching.

Through all of this, there is absolutely no rationale given for why those 12 Americans died, other than continuation of Operation Restore Hope. It's quite obvious by now, though, that the Somalis are well-fed enough to start taking pot shots at our troops and dance in the streets when the rounds hit home. So screw 'em, and turn their country back into the wasteland it was before we got there. Use it as a toxic waste dump or nerve gas depot.

The United Nations is not making our efforts any easier, with Secretary General Bhoutros Bhoutros Ghali making a bid for U.S. Secretary of State. The bungling of U.N. forces, and the covert aid that some U.N. workers were giving Mohammed Farrah Aidid, the notorious "warlord," are in large measure responsible for the present mess.

The comic-opera efforts of the United Nations to arrest Aidid, plus our own unwillingness to do so, is quickly making U.S. power in the area meaningless. CNN, NBC and

Jimmy Carter can find this guy, but the U.S. Army can't. It makes one wonder if the incompetence is deliberate.

Somalia, if it drags on indefinitely, could well be the undoing of the Clinton administration. Of the four Democrats to hold the White House since World War II, three have been undone by foreign affairs — Harry Truman in Korea, Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam and Jimmy Carter by Iran. With little foreign policy experience and a cadre of advisers who know nothing of the military and have nothing but contempt for the men who are dying in Somalia, Clinton has the potential for a foreign policy debacle.

It's time to admit that Operation Restore Hope is dead. The "nation building" we hear the United Nations and some State Department-types talk about is a pipe dream in Somalia, where the people still haven't shaken the notion of tribal chieftains. The only thing they could possibly do with a modern, Westernized nation is wreck it with tribal warfare and forced starvation.

We've tried to save the Somalis, and through a confused and mismanaged excursion, we have received nothing but grief in return. Letting them starve may sound heartless, but how much less heartless is it than seeing the flag-draped caskets coming home, bearing men who died for no good reason?

Kepfield is a graduate student in history and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Russia

In your editorial (DN, Oct. 4), you say that "America should ready itself for intervention on Russia." That sounds to me as if Russia is just one small American state on which you can dictate what to do or not to do. For how long are you intending to keep up your blind determinism of interference on other countries just because they act in a way that doesn't please you? I am for Boris Yeltsin, too, but with no external influence or pressure. How would it sound to you if some other nation decided to interfere in the American process of selecting

the president or parliament?

Ivan A. Guerrini
post doctorate
agronomy

Military

After reading your Sept. 30 opinion page, I couldn't help but laugh at how you called the congressional policy on homosexuals a "giant step backward."

Gays have always been in the armed forces. There's no denying it. I'm not saying they can't do their job just as well as anyone else; it's just that military leaders have known for 28 centuries that a unit is vastly more effective than a much larger group of individuals. The homosexual service-

man breaks down unit cohesion by destroying that special trust and brotherhood found only in and essential to the armed forces.

Don't think the "don't ask, don't tell" policy changes anything, because most of them can be weeded out. People in the civilian world don't understand that 80 percent — my estimate — of all the goings-on of the military are conducted behind closed doors, off the record and so forth.

My advice to any gay considering military service: I applaud your patriotism, but investigate the term "blanket party" before signing anything.

Jason Grundmann
freshman
pre-medicine