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EDITORIAL

Follow through

UN must carry out economic sanctions

Up to 10,000 Croatian troops may have crossed into neighboring Bosnia. This is the latest move in the three-way conflict involving the Croats, Bosnian Serbs and Muslims for control of the former Yugoslav republic.

It was a move made despite U.S. warnings that further Croatian involvement in the war could lead to economic sanctions. U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, delivered this message to Croatian President Franjo Tudjman during a January visit.

If it is true that the Croats have ignored her words of caution, the United States should encourage the United Nations to deliver the economic sanctions with haste.

The United States and its allies have been seeking ways to end the 21-month ethnic conflict. In addition to warning the Croats, Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced Monday U.S. backing for a U.N. report that threatens air strikes against Bosnian Serbs if they strike against peacekeepers in two key towns.

In the past 21 months, more than 200,000 lives have been lost. Certainly, the United States should put forth an effort to help end the blood bath. But this effort should not include sending American troops.

More armed soldiers would only add to the horror.

By seeking economic sanctions, the Clinton administration could discourage further fighting without adding American lives to the list of casualties.

Time to quit

More evidence that smoking is dangerous

If you like colon cancer, smoke a pack of cigarettes. Two studies to be released today provide the strongest evidence yet that smoking cigarettes can lead to cancer. The studies of more than 150,000 people show that people who smoke in their early years acquire a risk of colon-rectal cancer that remains even if they stop smoking.

The studies were conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

A direct link was also found between the amount of smoking and the development of cancer. The studies measured smoking in "pack years," a unit equivalent to smoking one pack of cigarettes a day for one year.

Males who had smoked 35 to 39 pack years were almost 1 1/2 times as likely to develop cancer of the colon or rectum as those who never smoked. Risks doubled for women who had smoked 45 pack years or more.

These studies are more evidence to support the move to completely ban smoking from public facilities. Although there is not much argument about it anymore, smoking kills people. It leads to cancer and other health-related problems.

The argument that smoking is a personal choice must also be examined. In a public place, people can't avoid cigarette smoke. And in a time we are debating health care and its costs, it is valid to ask who should pay for the health care for people who willingly put themselves at significant risk of cancer by smoking. Smoking may still be a popular habit for some, but it is also suicidal. It should be eliminated from public places so its dangers don't affect innocent bystanders.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1994 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

LETTER POLICY

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 or reject all material submitted. Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted. Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

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SAM KEFFIELD

Judgments make revenge legal



Responsibility — it is a forgotten concept in today's society, with everyone so immersed in being a "survivor" of this and a "victim" of that.

Imagine a rape trial. There is no question of guilt — the evidence supports it, she's got a dozen witnesses, and the man himself admits it.

However, the rapist uses a novel defense. He claims that because of a psychological problem from his childhood, being rejected by girls time and time again, he lost control when he saw the provocatively clad woman and raped her. The judge allows this defense and the jury acquits the defendant. "She asked for it," the foreman explains.

Is there any doubt as to the reaction? The National Organization for Women gang-descends on the courtroom like a horde of shrieking locusts. They demand that the judge be recalled and that the jury undergo sensitivity training.

Preposterous, you say? The same situation has occurred three times in the past six months. Henry Watson and Damion Williams were not responsible for their actions, because they were caught up in a riot. Lorena Bobbitt used temporary insanity, and the Menendez brothers cried sexual abuse as children.

What is happening here holds portents for the future of the American criminal justice system. The victims are now put on trial, dead or alive, and the defendants make themselves out as victims. In an America clamoring for officials to "get tough on crime," the willingness to let murderers off the hook on such patently ridiculous defenses turns our criminal justice system on its head.

The defense, though, is not universal. It is limited to those historically oppressed groups who are favored in today's sensitive culture. These groups include women, historically the victims of rape; minorities, historically under the boot heel of white exploitation; and children, long abused physically and sexually — by men. If you fit into one of these categories, then you can literally get away with murder.

Responsibility is a forgotten concept in today's society, with everyone so immersed in being a "survivor" of this and a "victim" of that. Encouraged by the trash peddled on daytime TV talk shows, we are starting to view the abnormal (transvestite, Nazi hookers) as normal or somehow not aberrant, because it's not really their fault. It's their toxic parents, their codependent relationships that stem from their parents, etc., etc. Thus, people end up deriving their identity from their victim status. Daniel Patrick Moynihan called this "defining deviancy down."

The normal, two-parent nuclear family is viewed as the breeding ground for every dysfunctional form of behavior imaginable. Child abuse, spouse abuse, homophobia — lay it all at Ozzie and Harriet's door. Charles Krauthammer calls this "defining deviancy up."

Inevitably, this gets carried into the courtroom. All it takes is a sob story and a few tears for one to be acquitted because he or she is not responsible. Forgiveness of sins and absolution, powers once reserved solely to God in his heavenly Kingdom, are now given to mental health professionals and juries.

The best way to cure this mess is to once again institute in the law the concept of taking responsibility for one's actions. To begin with, abolish the battered-woman syndrome and battered-child syndrome as defenses to crimes.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

However, evidence of abuse might be used at the sentencing hearing, after the determination of guilt is made. Such evidence should be corroborated by medical reports or eyewitness testimony and not merely alleged without any proof, as in the Menendez case.

Insensitive, you say? Unrealistic and unfair to women, minorities and abused children? Possibly, but the value of a human life, no matter how bad we might believe the person to be, is beyond human calculation. It is precious. To give one person the power of judge, jury and executioner cheapens life.

Making revenge legal — and you can't call 16 shotgun blasts, slicing off a penis or throwing a brick at someone's head anything other than revenge, motivated by a depraved indifference to human life — goes against the underpinnings of our entire system of criminal justice.

A final word to all those moronic women slipping the Menendez brothers love notes and those applauding Lorena Bobbitt's feminist vigilantism: If you are willing to excuse these crimes based on some feel-good psychobabble, then you deserve to walk in fear on streets at night. You deserve to cower behind locked doors. You deserve to despair if you are ever the victim of a crime and bring charges, only to see the criminal let off on the advice of therapists. You, at least, can be responsible for the consequences of your actions.

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

DN challenge

I recently read two issues of the University of Nebraska at Omaha's student newspaper, the Gateway. In both papers, there were factual articles about AIDS, possible cures and the latest figures. I was happy to see the Gateway doing its job, informing the UNO student community about issues concerning the epidemic.

The Daily Nebraskan is one of the most available resources of information for a sexually active age group. Not everyone reads the pamphlets in the University Health Center. Possibly students think AIDS is only a gay disease.

According to the Gateway, AIDS cases in Nebraska have tripled over the past year. The percentage of people in their 20s diagnosed with AIDS

in Nebraska rose from 22 percent in 1992 to 32 percent in 1993. How many of these people in their 20s are students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. How many were uneducated?

This is my challenge to you — to become aware of the foremost education/information guides on the AIDS issue. Help the UNL community be aware.

Scott Roewer junior music education

Bike questions

I have some questions and comments for the Parking Advisory Committee regarding the bicycle dismount zone and registration proposals:

• What will the bike patrol be? Enforcement personnel riding bikes?

I'm sure they're not going to walk around checking for bicycle registration.

• Will the proposed exterior bike parking areas be secure and well-maintained?

• How will registration reduce the number of bicycle thefts? Will a registration sticker say, "Don't steal this bike" to a thief? A stolen bike is a stolen bike, registered or not.

I have ridden to class every day for the past two years. My bicycle is my main source of local transportation, as it is for many other students. A ban on bikes will hurt more than help.

Christian Davenport sophomore civil engineering