

EDITORIAL

Reagan's stance inconsistent

The release of the Rev. Larry Jenco last week brings the plight of four other Americans who have been held for the past 13 to 16 months by the Islamic Jihad in Lebanon to the forefront once again.

One of the hostages still in Lebanon, David Jacobson, held captive since May, 1985, said in a videotape carried out by Jenco that he felt like he was stranded at the Alamo waiting for help to arrive. He said that the Reagan administration's refusal to negotiate with his captors meant that "our release will be by death."

Ronald Reagan, all too aware of the beating that his predecessor took over the Iranian hostage fiasco, has refused to negotiate with the terrorists for the release of the four Americans still in Lebanon. The principle is sound; negotiating with terrorists or "knuckling under to their demands" only leads to more terrorism. The policy's consistency, however, is questionable in light of events since the first American was taken in Lebanon.

Jacobson's words show the price that Americans will have to pay for Reagan's policy of not negotiating with terrorists. One of the hostages, William Buckley, a political officer at the U.S. Embassy kidnapped on March 16, 1984, was claimed killed by the Jihad in October after Israel's raid on the Tunisian headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The Reagan policy has not been consistent, especially in the absence of public scrutiny — as when a TWA plane was hijacked and an American serviceman was killed amid massive press coverage during their three-week captivity. The release of PLO members held in Kuwait did take place despite Reagan's policy. The president explained that the release of the Americans and the Palestinians were not related, and certainly not a reward for the terrorists' actions.

That situation attracted much heavier press coverage than the plight of the Jenco's group has throughout their entire 16-month ordeal, though the situations overlapped. Of course, pictures of unshaven pilots leaning out of cockpit windows, terrorists giving press conferences and bodies being thrown onto the tarmac make much better copy than five still pictures of hostages

held for months without any significant developments.

The American people would have been much more reluctant to pay the price of not negotiating with terrorists for the release of people that they knew intimately from daily, even hourly, reports on their situation. The power of television made celebrities out of the TWA passengers and their pilot because moving pictures of them existed. Reagan can continue to ignore the others and score political points with his "tough stance" because Americans don't know they exist.

The Reagan stance is appropriate, but in the aftermath of the TWA crisis, the accent now is not on not rewarding terrorists, but on retribution. Reagan has made it clear that the terrorists themselves will have to pay the price for their actions. This was shown after the Achille Lauro situation and the Berlin disco bombing. After the disco bombings, Libya was forced to pay a very high price after the State Department intercepted mysterious coded messages between the terrorists and that country. Later revelations that Syria (the rescuers of the TWA victims) had links to the bombers didn't warrant as much coverage as the more spectacular obliteration of Khadafy's house. But bombing secret locations in Lebanon seems a problem that needs a totally different approach — nothing should be done.

The release of Jacobson was a calculated attempt by the Jihad to place their hostages in the limelight to increase the stakes of the game. Their value to the American people has not been fully appreciated. As faceless prisoners of war they can be ignored, but they aren't soldiers, they're American citizens, and something should be done. The Jihad's strategy is clear — introduce Jacobson to the American people as more than a two-year-old still picture, before killing him so his talking obituary will bring home the fate of the others to the American people. The networks can get a lot of mileage out of this footage of Jacobson's strange prophecy, and it will make the public aware of exactly what the price of Reagan's inflexibility is. Some attempt must be made before Jacobson's grim predictions are made real.

The Tar Heel

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Cellular phones another useless toy for yuppies

John deVille
The Port Bow

residence phone, they work both ways — not only can you call but others can call you. It seems that a dawning technology may infringe upon an older one — the cellular phone vs. the car, your own private cabin.

Extending the use of a phone is in keeping with current American logic. We act as if somewhere in the Smithsonian there lies a faded document written by the founding fathers that reads, "You can never have too much of a good thing, especially technological props."

If necessity is the mother of invention then surely the advertising industry is the mother of the fetish.

We just have to have certain toys regardless of their true utility and enjoyment potential.

We get the impression that without a yellow diamond "Consumer on board" sign

in the rear window and a cellular phone that your car and life are not quite up-to-date.

The creators of the fetish tell us we need these new gizmos in order to be properly outfitted commuters.

The yuppie-oriented ads strongly suggest that one's livelihood may well depend upon having a cellular phone.

The commercials run something like

the following: How can you go about your business while you're stuck in a traffic jam? Your competition will probably get the account now. Why, you might as well hadn't gotten out of bed this morning, you're practically gagged.

What does one do with a cellular phone? Transact business, a.k.a. work. A society that is consumed with the concept of leisure and simultaneously lionizes the work ethic finds a lot of ways to at least give the appearance of work. Driving with the mental fog incurred from lack of sleep, etc., combined with the morning haze and merging traffic is mere idle time. Lest one work for the Devil, one best get a car phone and get crackin'.

Besides the merchandizers of the gadget, who do they exist for? If we take the above as the best case scenario (i.e. cellular phones are vital business tools) what else can they be used for, or better put, what will they be used for?

Cellular phones are portals to the outside world. And like any ordinary

I am not a technophobe, but I have a personal beef with phones. They are cold, plastic and impersonal.

They deny eye contact and the viewing of facial expressions which convey important information as well. They prevent full appreciation of a speaker's intonations as well the human warmth passed on by a handshake or a hug. The fewer of them and the less they are used, the better.

Besides, the spread of cellular phones could lead to the extinction of a most important form of direct communication found on the highway. Imagine having another driver suddenly swerve in front of you. Quickly you dial the mobile operator for the phone number of a blue Chevy with license number RTJ-947 and then dial the culprit and deliver a few choice epithets. I fear the lack of continued usage of our middle fingers may lead to an evolutionary disappearance.

John deVille is a senior philosophy major from Highlands who does not own a phone. Please leave all messages for him under his windshield wiper.

The WAR ON DRUGS

