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Guest Editorial**Do your part in avoiding a war**

The current situation has done a great deal to help the American people feel the depths of ineptitude. Beyond such symbolic actions as demonstrating and wearing white arm bands, there is little that can actually be done.

However, both President Carter and North Carolina Governor James Hunt have stressed the need for the lessening of U.S. oil consumption, especially at this time. Only by lessening our dependence on foreign oil, especially from countries like Iran, can we avoid the weakness of dependence. By remembering to turn off both lights and stereos before going to class; by remembering that Zacks is within walking distance; and by eating what is being served in the cafeteria for dinner, though it may be personally distasteful, instead of driving somewhere else for dinner, the Meredith community too can help in the conservation effort.

It is also important at this time to remember the pain and misery we, as a nation, experienced during the Vietnam war. No one needs to be told that war is an ugly thing which can only bring loss of human lives and dignity, but we may need to be reminded, especially now, of that fact. Before we leap into support of a war with Iran, we must support the president, no matter what our personal political feelings toward Carter are, in his efforts to solve this crisis through diplomatic means. We can do this by showing to ourselves, Iran, and to the world, U.S. solidarity, whether by demonstration, white arm bands, or the more effective conservation of energy.

Kathy O'Brien

Campus Paperback Bestsellers

1. **Chesapeake**, by James Michener. (Fawcett, \$3.95.) Multi-family saga along Maryland's Eastern Shore: fiction.
2. **A Distant Mirror**, by Barbara W. Tuchman. (Ballantine, \$6.95.) Europe in the 14th century.
3. **The Far Pavilions**, by M. M. Kaye. (Bantam, \$2.95.) High adventure and love in the Himalayas: fiction.
4. **In Search of History**, by Theodore H. White. (Warner, \$5.95.) Memoirs of a journalist.
5. **Mommie Dearest**, by Christina Crawford. (Berkley, \$2.75.) Life with mother: Joan Crawford.
6. **The World According to Garp**, by John Irving. (Pocket, \$2.75.) Hilarious adventures of a son of a famous mother.
7. **Evergreen**, by Belva Plain. (Dell, \$2.75.) Jewish immigrant woman's climb from poverty on lower Manhattan.
8. **The Thorn Birds**, by Colleen McCullough. (Avon, \$2.50.) Australian family saga: fiction.
9. **Scruples**, by Judith Krantz. (Warner, \$2.75.) Rags to riches in the fashion world: fiction.
10. **Wifey**, by Judy Blume. (Pocket, \$2.50.) Housewife's experiences on road to emotional maturity: fiction.

Compiled by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* from information supplied by college stores throughout the country. December 3, 1979.

Gravity of the Iranian situation underlined

by Regine Nickel

It is a shame to have to end this year's articles on a gloomy note, but the global implications of the crisis in Iran don't permit another way. We got so used to press coverage of the crisis that we may have forgotten its imminent gravity. To underline the seriousness of the situation, allow me to say here that there has not been a greater threat to world peace since the Cuban crisis, Vietnam, and the minute Korean incidents. Only 10 years ago the seizure of a country's embassy, which is sovereign ground under international law, would have been an undisputed 'casus belli'!

The present crisis has been handled in an unprecedented way, because we are dealing with an unprecedented situation. 200 years of sophisticated diplomacy proved worth nothing; we were faced with a complete break-down of diplomatic channels, understandings, and conventions. Our 20th century governments are suddenly faced with a government run by a medieval mind, by a despotic religious fanatic, who does not give a hoot about

international relations and the like, but who feels invested by God--by his God--to make his own laws.

Should the Ayatollah's demands be granted? Should the Shah, who, as we now know, was not a saint either, be returned? I think the situation would be far worse if the Shah were to be returned.

A giving in to international terrorists' demands would turn international relations topsy-turvy. Never again would American citizens be safe in any unruly or unfriendly country. The same would hold true for the citizens of any other country in the world. Once established as a smooth way to gain profit for a country, this method of terrorism would spread like wildfire.

This makes the outcome of the crisis everybody's concern, one should think. Why, then, is the Soviet Union not completely on the side of the United States? It depends as much on diplomatic immunity as does any other country. I feel strongly that the reason lies within the struggles among the Soviet sphere of influence. The Soviet Union has been so ambivalent in its actions regarding the crisis - saying

stop and go at the same time - because its staunchest allies in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, Libya's Gaddafi and East Germany's Honnecker respectively, have declared their support of Khomeini almost from the very start.

Also, the Soviets have been looking to Iran for oil, mainly because their own oil reserves are predicted to run out no later than the 90ties.

Any military intervention on behalf of the United States would then almost have to get the Soviets involved on the side of Iran; and the Soviets would have advantages, too. They border Iran directly and would not have any extended supply lines. Unless the United States involved NATO military, successful invention would be hard to achieve. Yet, if NATO were to be involved global conflict would almost be unavoidable.

What can be done? So far the American government has handled the situation very well. Steady diplomatic pressure and patience are about the only means Khomeini seems to respect. Rashness and open threats would only prove him right and draw his open disgust.

As seen by Harold R. Isaacs

Views on Iranian problemby Frank R. Grubbs,
History Department

The views expressed in this article are not mine but those of Harold R. Isaacs, a former political scientist at MIT and authority in world politics.

I hope that Mr. Isaacs's views will aid Meredith students, faculty, and administration in understanding the Iranian problem. His views, in my opinion, are extremely astute and reasonable.

The problem in Iran is part of the larger problem of International Tribalism. International Tribalism emerged upon the world scene after World War Two and was based upon the common elements of a similar religion, language, and culture, among a particular people. Tribalism is a force in Black Africa, Asia, and now the Near East. The ultimate objective of Tribalism is to unite a people of similar ethnic values into a new nationalistic state, often against the wishes of a nation already in existence, as in the case of the old Congo, or Federation of South Africa. Often, Tribalism goes against the foreign policy of both the Soviet Union and the United States, for Tribal Nationalism does not respect the wishes of either great power. It seeks its own ethnic justification.

Now, considering Iran, Harold Isaacs believes that Tribal Nationalism has led to the overthrow of the Shah and to the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini, whom Isaacs considers a fairly typical Tribal leader.

Tribalism always seeks the following objectives, Isaacs believes:

First, all foreign elements must be driven from the new Tribal culture. In order to accomplish this feat, early, nationalistic values must be returned (folklore). The new Tribal culture must be purely native. Secondly, nationalism is the vehicle to purify the Tribal culture. In Iran's case, Islamic Nationalism. All Western influence must go. In Iran's situation, primarily American influence.

Third, Tribalism can succeed only if the new ethnic consciousness is kept united behind the new leader and government, themselves a symbol of ancient purity. Consequently, a scapegoat is useful, especially if the goat represents the greatest foreign influence on the culture.

Isaacs points out that Tribalism has its own weaknesses. The people seeking a new ethnic identity based upon ancient values do not always agree on their precise values of objectives. Thus, Khomeini in Iran has the problem of uniting numerous Islamic factions within the country from the western Kurds to southern Arabs.

In facing the problem of Tribal unity, the Tribal state must resort to force and the suppression of freedoms once the unifying symbol of the scapegoat has vanished. In this case, American influence in Iran had diminished. Khomeini apparently hopes to use the twin forces of religion

and nationalism to hold the new Islamic nation together. His chances are not good, because there are too many diverse subgroups within Iran. Consequently, after Khomeini, there will be a reshuffling of power to establish another pecking order and another government which must find ways to maintain unity.

What can the United States do when confronted with Tribalism today and in the future? Isaacs believes that we can do very little but to accept Tribalism and incorporate the realities of it into our foreign policy objectives.

We can no longer use military force to stamp out Tribalism. We failed to prevent Tribalism in both North and South Vietnam from uniting that nation. Military force is no match for a people firmly convinced of their ethnic destiny.

The United States must accept Tribalism and demonstrate to the new Tribal nation that we are willing to allow them to exist on this earth. It is a new day, says Isaac, and Americans are going to have to learn to live in it. But so are the Russians. Tribalism is ethnic, not political, and seeks its own justification.

The greatest weakness in American thinking vis-a-vis Tribalism, Isaacs believes, is our lack of knowledge about international ethnic groups. Americans must learn more about the world in which they live, he advises.