

Opinion

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Too little, too late?

Following the lead of Great Britain, the Reagan administration recalled the U.S. ambassador to Syria in protest of that country's support of terrorism. The recall is the kind of international cooperation needed to combat terrorism effectively, but it's a move we should have initiated months ago, not executed on the coattails of an ally.

Syria's involvement in terrorism has been painfully evident for years. A 1981 assassination attempt on the pope, the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut in 1983, the bombing of the La Belle discotheque in West Berlin April 5, and an April 17 attempt to blow up an El Al jetliner by planting a bomb on a pregnant woman all have been linked to Syria in some way.

The Reagan administration bombed Libya in response to the La Belle incident — even before all the intelligence reports were in — but allowed Syria to go unscathed.

The administration's reluctance to get tough with Syria is understandable — the Mideast country presents a diplomatic dilemma for the United States. While Syria is one of the driving forces behind anti-American terrorism, it is also one of the few stable channels for negotiating the release of the American hostages in Beirut.

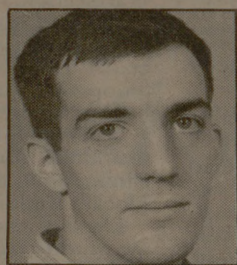
Withdrawing our ambassador is the next best thing to cutting off diplomatic relations, which can't be done without damaging the hostages' release. The coordinated withdrawal of diplomatic emissaries by Great Britain, Canada and the United States will send Syria a long-overdue message.

But the administration's actions may be perceived as too little, too late. Syria, instead of getting a message that the United States will support a country that fans the flames of terrorism, will see the U.S. action as mimicking Great Britain's.

The action is an encouraging show of international coordination in dealing with terrorism. But the United States shouldn't have taken so long in retaliating against Syria for the La Belle bombing. True, Syria is a sometime-friend in the Mideast, but with friends like these...

Learning to survive without an I.D. card

Darrell called me on the phone. Our group had somehow been chosen as the token seniors for 50-yard line, second deck seats at the Rice game. These would be the best seats this year, if not for my entire four years here.



Mark Ude

But it was not meant to be that easy. Thursday night my I.D. vanished, which really put me in a bind. I hadn't picked up my 1985-86 AggieLand or looked at my meaningless midterm grades, and I still needed to cash some checks at the Memorial Student Center main desk before the weekend.

Of course, it could have been worse. I could have been on meal plan, which means I would have starved over the weekend since I had spent a good portion of my checking account and owed a good bit more to my credit cards.

Luckily, being Mr. Resourceful, I had hoarded my I.D.s from years past. I cashed my checks and picked up my AggieLand and midterms. Everything was hunky-dory until a sudden realization hit — how was I to get into Kyle Field Saturday?

I had heard the horror stories. The place was guarded more closely than the Berlin Wall. Lord forbid that you should be caught passing an I.D. through the fence or trying to get by with a buddy's. The powers-that-be would lock you away in a room and throw away the room.

But I had to get in — I had choice seats. After 12-yard-line seats for the Baylor game, and the bit of bloody luck having Baylor fans in the seats immediately in front of and behind me, the minor inconvenience of an expired I.D. was not going to prevent my enjoying a good game. And most importantly, there was THE MOB. That alone was reason enough for my determination.

But on the chance that some good Ag would return my student I.D., I was hesitant about paying \$8 for another one, especially since I didn't have any money. So armed with last year's student I.D., fee slip and ticket book in hand, I went forth to the gate. I assumed that the fee slip would prove that I am enrolled this semester — and that I had paid all my tuition and fees. And I assumed my I.D., which had a picture that matched

my face and a Social Security number that matched my ticket book, would prove the tickets were mine. No problem.

But also being Mr. Naive, I assumed that would do it. When they asked for my "current" I.D., I innocently attempted to explain that I had lost my I.D. and it had not been found yet.

I would have gotten more response from a brick wall. A supervisor, obviously numbered to students' pleas and/or problems handed me a printed sheet of pink paper, informing me of the applicable rules and regulations while suggesting that for only \$7.50 more I could purchase a guest pass.

I couldn't afford a new student I.D., so how was I to find enough spare change to buy a guest pass?

I looked enviously at the numerous ticket scalpers trying to attract customers. Perhaps they would trade a student 50-yard liner for one with a guest pass. But I decided against it. I mean, how often does one get such seats, especially for an important game?

Attempts to discover why the system was so uncooperative had limited success. The Athletic Department passed the buck and told me that the Southwest Conference requires it for "reduced" (hah!) ticket rates and that the Student Senate ordained it and that one could get another I.D. in minutes, so there. To commit one line at the gate to those students with similar problems would be too inconvenient and take too long for both parties.

Come on, people! Inconvenient or not, one still would get inside to enjoy the game instead of harboring thoughts of scaling the fence. If time is a problem, the people who actually lost their I.D.s could show up early, while the one's who forgot would at least have an option to wait in line rather than trudge all the way back home to find it.

In spite of these obstacles, I got inside to see the game. And although I missed our first field goal, THE MOB performance made up for it.

Now, if I told everybody how this amazing miracle was achieved, then it would be like mentioning that the men's senior ring is in two parts and that copies of *The Advocate* are available in the Sterling C. Evans Library. I would spoil it for everyone. Besides, I still need to get in for the TCU game.

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Myths about yesteryear twist facts about teen-age births

Ask the average American if there is an epidemic of births to teen-agers in this country and the answer probably will be yes. Ask if things are getting worse, and the answer again will be yes. Ask if things were once better and the answer still will be yes, and if you ask when that was, you will be told "in the past." Kids then had values.



Richard Cohen

So, to paraphrase the introduction to the old "Lone Ranger" show, return with me to those not-so-thrilling days of yesteryear, say 1957. That was smack in the middle of the Eisenhower era, when every good boy delivered papers and no good girl delivered babies. There was prayer in the schools, patriotism in the community and fins on cars. Those were the days.

Sorry. The Census Bureau says that 1957 was the peak year for teen-age motherhood. Girls aged 15 to 19 had a birth rate of 96 per 1,000. Broken down by race, that amounted to 85 for white women and 173 for women categorized as "non-whites." Every year since, the rate has dropped. By 1985, the most recent year for which data are available, the average for all women aged 15 to 19 was 51 per 1,000 — 42.5 for whites and 95.7 for blacks.

So then what accounts for the widespread perception that teen-agers have gone from the Girl Scouts to Plato's Retreat? Well, for one thing, the rate of

births to single women is up. The figure for 1957 was 15.8 per 1,000; in 1984 it was 30.2. A fair assumption is that teen-agers who once got married because they were pregnant now do not. Gone is the desperate dash to a marriage mill and nuptials witnessed by a shotgun. Instead, more teen-agers are having babies and remaining single, producing a host of social problems that, through welfare, become our expense. That helps account for our concern.

But what about the widely held perception that the teen-agers of today are sexually active and need a dose of 1950-era values? That's a harder question. Clearly, the figures prove that a lot of today's concerned parents have become retroactive teen-age virgins. Those 15- to 19-year-olds who set a record back in '57 are, it says here, having sex. That hardly means, though, that today's kids are not and there is every indication they are. The birth rate can be held down by a variety of factors, including abortion, birth control, sex education or postponing marriage.

If that's the case, then more power to birth control, sex education and — depending on your views — abortion. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these programs often is denigrated by those who say they encourage promiscuity. It was precisely on those grounds that the New York City school board recently killed programs at nine high schools where contraceptive devices or prescriptions for them were made available. "We cannot... support clinics in any school that provide abortion counseling and the distribution of contraceptives that may encourage sexual activity and promiscuity among teen-agers," said Dr.

Irene Impellizzeri, a school-board member.

In effect, New York had passed amounts to the Teen-age Mother Observation Act. Unlike many government programs, this one will work. Sexual active teen-agers will not become child they will become pregnant. New York like a lot of jurisdictions, makes choice. It hopes, maybe, that teen-age sexuality itself will go away — a mythical recollection of the 1950s, an obscure government statistician otherwise.

The point, of course, is that teen-age sexuality is not something that can be wished away. In the 1950s, it was held in one way — premature marriages, shotgun or otherwise — and ten, premature divorces as well. Married or not, teen-age girls were only having sex, they were giving it as well. Now, different economic and social circumstances have produced a different problem — single mothers and its awful consequences. The constant, though, is the cause of the problem — teen-age sexuality.

As did our parents before us, would prefer if teen-agers learned about sex. It's hard enough for adults to handle, tougher for kids. The sex produces confusion, anxiety and, not to mention, pregnancy. But the way with the problem is not just to put values, but also to teach sex education and make birth control easily available. The Census Bureau's statistics show that when we had the former and the latter we also had something other than a lot of teen-age mothers.

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They don't taste bad but...

For lunch today, I drank some manito, ate some propylene oxides and then freshened my breath with some guar and sorbitol before going to class. And tonight, after my meal of sorbates, sodium chlorides and nitrates, I plan to go to the Dixie Chicken to imbibe some sulfites.

Anthony S. Casper
Guest Columnist

Sound interesting? Well, what I actually had for lunch was a soda, an apple and a stick of chewing gum and will have some bread, cured meat and veggies for dinner. The Chicken, by the way, will be serving me gallons of beer (I hope). These are just some of the ingredients colliding in my intestinal tract.

Haven't you ever wondered why the green beans your mom served you during those wonderful holiday dinners could last forever in a metal can on the shelf — without being refrigerated or frozen? How about those succulent steaks we all know and love? Why are they so tender and juicy? Do you really want to know?

Every single bit of food we eat has some sort of chemical or additive in it that can, if you eat enough of it, have a detrimental effect on your day, week, month or possibly your whole life.

For example, processed cheese, without added emulsifiers and thickeners,

would just be a goey mess. Pork sausage, without the processing, grinding and texturing, would be just a mess of pig guts and bones.

Look at the front of a can of beans or a box of cereal. Notice all the nutritious goodies in there? Now look at the back — where the ingredients are listed. Notice anything in the list that sounds appetizing enough to eat?

Those lovely little additives are allowed to be there in various concentra-



tions and are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. Most of the checks made on our food are conducted by the manufacturers themselves, only occasionally does the over-burdened FDA ever get to perform comprehensive checks of their own.

Our food laws, as important as they are, didn't come into existence until the Food and Drug Act of 1906 and the Meat Inspection Act of 1906. The meat

act wasn't even considered until Upton Sinclair's book "The Jungle" caused such an uproar that people were actually eating that the representatives in Washington finally heeded.

But even with these laws and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) by responsible manufacturers, control the amount of rodent feces, insect fragments, worms and other contaminants allowed in food, were still necessary. It didn't come into effect until the 1972 Filth Guidelines were passed.

These regulations, while not completely comprehensive, are specifically:

- Peanut butter can have no more than two rodent hairs and 50 insect fragments in 3 1/2 ounces.
- Chocolate can have no more than 150 insect fragments in eight ounces.
- Fruit juices can have no more than 10 fly eggs per 8 1/2 ounces.

But take heart — virtually all of these things are safe for just about anyone, except for elderly, infants under four years old and those on restricted diets.

By the way, the insect passants have any effect on you — chemically.

Anthony S. Casper is a senior journalism major and photo editor for *The Battalion*.