

# Opinion

## The Battalion

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## A habit worth kicking

The recent remodeling of a State Department suite in a tobacco motif may have been done as a tribute to the industry that funded the renovations, but it also proves that one arm of the government doesn't know what the other is doing.

Besides two signs noting the tobacco companies' contribution, the redecorated suite is furnished with trim work featuring tobacco leaves and flowers, antique tobacco jars, bowls with tobacco leaf patterns and several peace pipes.

The State Department says the decorations are a way of saying thank you and are appropriate because of tobacco's long history as an American cash crop. No mention was made of tobacco's long history as an American cancer crop.

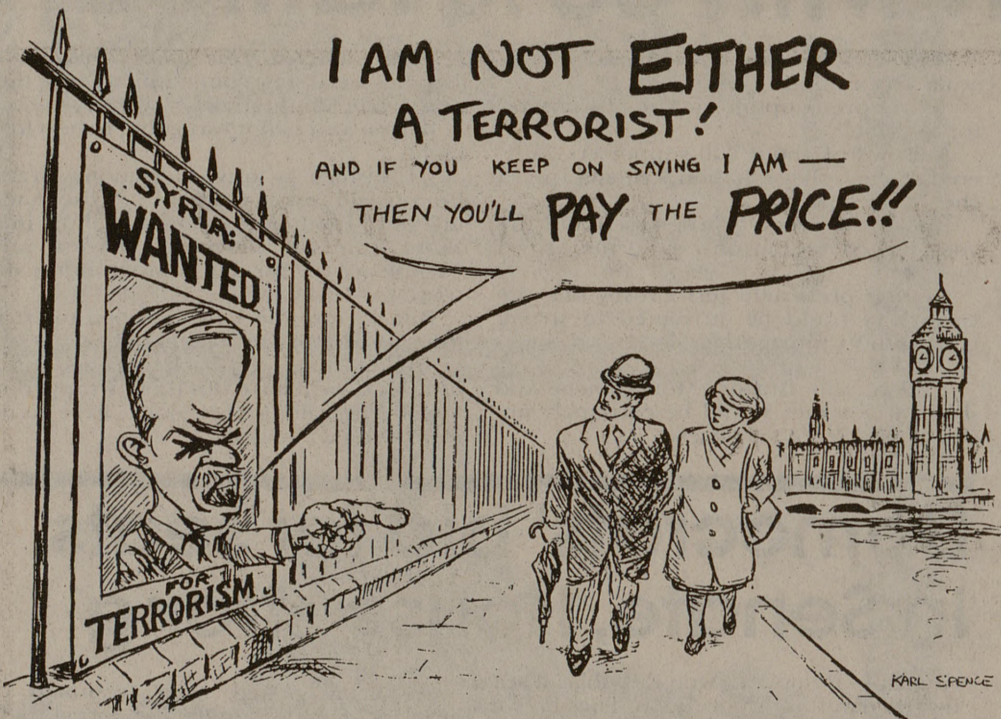
The Treaty Room renovation lights up a two-faced government policy towards tobacco. While happily taking the industry's money and gratefully paying tribute to it on one hand, other government hands are downplaying, if not openly attacking the use of tobacco products.

For years the surgeon general has warned of the dangers of cigarette smoking, and now chewing tobacco also carries similar warnings. The armed forces have implemented new smoking restrictions as have many other federal agencies.

The tobacco lobby is the most powerful agricultural interest group on Capitol Hill. When its money talks, the administration listens, but when the products it supports cause cancer, the administration condemns. When the federal government takes tobacco money, it indirectly promotes the product.

We can't ignore the tax revenues gleaned from tobacco, but we also can't ignore that the money is tainted with cancer and emphysema and death. The administration needs a consistent policy. It needs to stop wasting tax dollars attacking the products of an industry it indirectly "thanks" and supports.

If the administration and Congress truly were concerned with the health of the American people, it would get the arms of government working in unison and kick the tobacco-lobby habit. Then we could all breathe a little easier.



## Syrian bad manners versus freedom for U.S. hostages

Great Britain severed diplomatic relations with Syria this past weekend, and both Canada and the United States withdrew their ambassadors in response to Syrian leader Hafez Assad's continuing support of terrorism. Syria in turn responded that Great Britain would pay dearly and by "suitable means" for their actions.



Mark Ude

This is an expected reply from a nation that is considered much more dangerous than Libya, despite the United States' recent clash with the north African nation. Perhaps this is because Syria is much more subtle.

Syria, through its own groups and proxy militia in war-torn Lebanon, has been linked to numerous terrorist attacks upon the general populace, all in the aim of restoring the balance of power in the Middle East and helping displaced Palestinians, which means displacing the Israelis.

While Libyan leader Col. Moammar

Gadhafi is viciously anti-American, and freely welcomes known terrorist groups, he is at most a paper tiger. Libya does not have strong support from the Soviet Union because of Gadhafi's radical beliefs.

Assad, on the other hand, enjoys strong support from the Soviets and maintains a close relationship with Gorbachev. A direct confrontation with Syria would be close to a direct thrust against the Soviet Union.

Unfortunately, such ties to the Soviets are not the only reason there has been no retribution against Assad for terrorism. Opinions have surfaced that Syria had a part in the release of David Jacobson and the Rev. Lawrence Jenco, two American hostages in Beirut. France also needs Syria's help in negotiating the release of eight French hostages held somewhere in Lebanon.

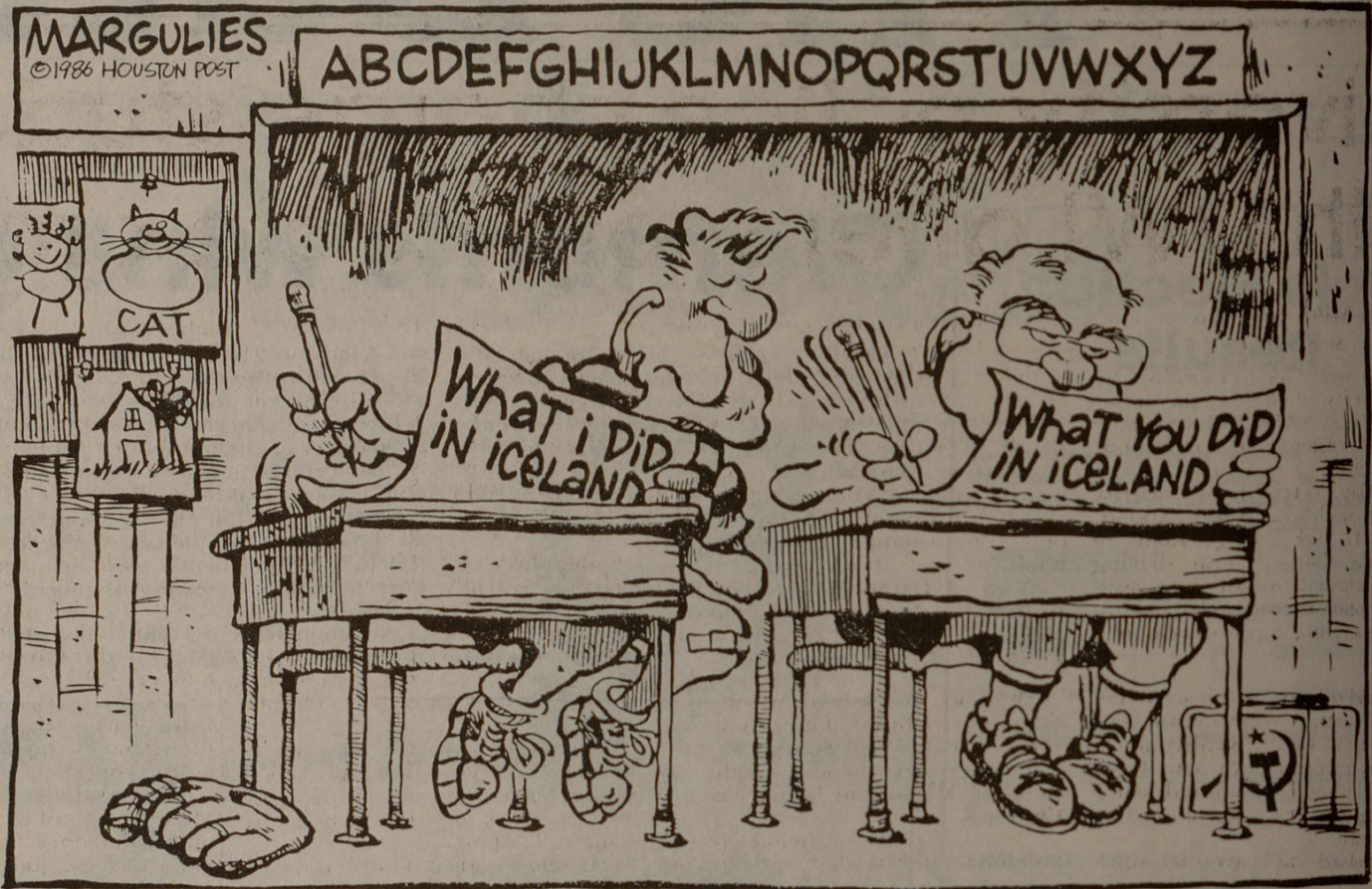
For countries to make an effort to stop Syrian-sponsored terrorism, retributions need to be enacted. But if a nation's hands are tied by citizens held hostage in Lebanon or other Arab countries, such retribution is difficult. To obtain hostages' quick release, Syria's cooperation is required. But the cooperation will not be there if Syria is attacked in the diplomatic and economic worlds.

European powers also hesitate to issue rash and impatient responses against Syria because they fear terrorist reprisals.

Aristotle once said that evil will prevail only when good men do nothing. If we cower in inaction, because we fear terrorist attacks against our people, then evil definitely will win. But America does not willingly back down from threats and abuse against its citizens abroad. And perhaps the United States is unique in this respect. While many countries will rise up in anger if their homeland is invaded or despoiled by an invader, only the United States has a history of seeking retribution when one of her citizens has been cold-bloodedly cut down.

While the United States should make all efforts to obtain the release of those Americans, it should not be pressured into passively accepting or condoning Syria's bad habits in return for goodwill and freed hostages. Nor should we be afraid to retaliate for terrorist acts throughout the world, for fear of Soviet response or being too closely identified with Israel's interest or foreign policy.

Mark Ude is a senior geography major and a columnist for The Battalion.



## Summit transcripts reveal in-depth talks in Iceland

The Russians, to White House indignation, have released a small portion of the transcript of the Iceland meeting between President Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. The White House, although asked, has refused to release its transcript. A confidential source, though, slipped it to me over the transom.



Richard Cohen

The two leaders sat down the first time at precisely 10:03 a.m., Saturday. According to the transcript, Gorbachev opened with an offer to eliminate all ballistic weapons in Europe. The president responded with a story about L.B. Mayer, once head of the MGM studio in Hollywood. At that point, according to the official notes, Gorbachev went to his briefing books to find out who Mayer was.

The president then followed with two more anecdotes about Mayer, one about Marilyn Monroe and another about John Wayne. He then launched into a story about going down the coast highway in California that, the transcript indicates, had no ending. Finally, the president agreed to abolish all nuclear weapons in Europe.

"How about all ballistic missiles?" Gorbachev asked. The president then told the story about having lunch in The Brown Derby in Hollywood with Gene Kelly. They were approached by another actor whose name he had forgotten but who was very short. The short man's head was level with their table. "Who's this?" Kelly asked, "John the Baptist?" The notes indicate that the

president laughed but that Gorbachev only smiled. The president told Gorbachev how the bravery of a black sailor at Pearl Harbor resulted in the desegregation of the armed forces. Gorbachev smiled again.

At this point, the president said he would agree to the elimination of all ballistic missiles, but not those on submarines because they could be recalled. "Nyet," the Soviet leader said. "They cannot." The president looked puzzled and asked to see one of his advisers, Richard Perle. After a brief conversation, the president assented to the proposal on all ballistic missiles. He then asked for time to take a nap or tell a story about Errol Flynn.

Upon resuming their conversations, Gorbachev congratulated the president on how well-rested he looked. He remarked on the progress they had made and suggested even more could be done. The president agreed and then told his Errol Flynn story. The notes indicate that Gorbachev smiled and asked about all nuclear weapons.

"I've already done that," the transcript shows the president as saying. Gorbachev said no, it was ballistic missiles they had eliminated. The notes indicate the president seemed confused and then launched into a story about a Social Security card for one of his children. He described the length of the line and the amount of time he had to spend in it and said that this was the problem with government. He said he understood that lines were a problem in the Soviet Union to which, the notes show, Gorbachev nodded his head. "What about all

nuclear weapons?" the Soviet leader then asked.

"I thought we had already taken care of that," the president responded. Gorbachev said they had not. The president, seemingly confused, said he had. It was his intention, he said, to eliminate them all, since he had seen what war could do when he helped liberate Auschwitz while with the Army motion-picture unit. "Let's do it," Reagan said.

At that point, Gorbachev asked for the elimination of the Strategic Defense Initiative. "No way," the president said. He described SDI as the technology breakthrough that would end nuclear war for all time. He likened it to the 1944 Normandy invasion which, he said, won the war for the Allies.

"The Soviet Union won the war for the Allies," Gorbachev said. "And anyway, if we eliminate nuclear weapons why would you need SDI?" At that point, the president latched into the story about Albert Einstein's letter to Franklin Roosevelt, proposing that the United States build an atomic bomb. The president suggested that SDI was his chance to be another Roosevelt and he was not going to blow it.

By now it was late and, inexplicably, the transcript shows the president saying, "Honey, I forgot to duck." Gorbachev then said, "No SDI," to which the president responded, "I cannot accept that. We built SDI, we paid for it and it's ours." The notes indicate that Gorbachev then stood to leave, but before doing so, turned to the president with a puzzled look on his face. "One more thing," he said. "Who's Errol Flynn?"

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## Mail Call

### Missing rings

EDITOR:

My purse was stolen from DeWare Field House Monday between 11:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. I was frantic until it was recovered by an honest custodian in G. Rollie White four hours later. My purse and credit cards were returned, but I'm still upset because along with my checkbook, two valuable pieces of jewelry also are missing.

I had taken off two special rings before handball. They are gone. They were both from another country and are virtually irreplaceable. I wish whoever took the rings would contact me instead of going to a pawn shop. I'll offer the money, and they can remain anonymous if they wish. The police will not be involved. If anyone has any information about the rings, their help would be greatly appreciated.

Stephanie Richard '89

### Bikes not 'death machines'

EDITOR:

Parts of the Oct. 28 article on sportbikes were inaccurate. Budd Abbott's statement on the number of people capable of handling sportbikes was misleading. While there may be only 500 people in the United States able to ride these machines to their full potential, just about anyone can ride a sportbike safely. Abbott's label "death machine" is a misnomer. Today's sportbike has better suspension, better brakes, better tires, more responsive handling and is much easier to ride than the bikes of the past. As far as high horsepower is concerned, we have in several instances been able to use the extra horsepower to get out of the way of careless drivers. For this reason, we believe that Abbott's approach to limiting sportbikes' performances is misguided. Although we agree inexperienced riders are a problem, Abbott places too much of the blame on the sportbike and not enough on the sportbike rider.

Fernando Maldonado '87  
Kolchi Tsukimashi '87

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