

Opinion

The Battalion

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Credit where it's due

Terry Waite, emissary for the archbishop of Canterbury and hostage negotiator extraordinaire, deserves more credit as hero than world opinion and particularly more than his native England seems willing to give him.

Waite, acting on his own, already has secured the release of two French hostages and one American hostage in Lebanon — a feat the hostages' governments have been trying in vain to accomplish.

The Anglican envoy has given the Reagan administration a much-needed release valve to the high-pressure hostage situation.

The administration has been doggedly determined not to negotiate with terrorists. Although according to accusations hurled Sunday by Congressional leaders at the Reagan administration, this policy recently may have been scrapped in favor of a hostages-for-weapons exchange with Iran. It is essential in deterring future kidnappings. If one terrorist group finds such tactics work against the United States, countless similar attacks would follow.

But the policy also has restricted the ability to win the release of those already captured. Waite has provided a unique solution to this foreign policy dilemma. His theological background has given him an understanding of Moslem perspectives and principles that other Western diplomats have ignored. Waite is able to negotiate while respecting these beliefs, instead of trampling them. He has become an effective liaison between Free World governments and Third World terrorists.

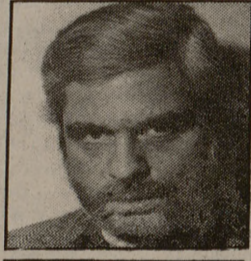
The recent charges by *The Times of London* that Waite has been used as a decoy by the United States to focus public attention on the hostages is absurd. The last thing the United States wants is to shine an undue spotlight on the terrorists' exploits.

The administration's primary concern is the release of captured citizens. Waite has made more progress in the last few weeks than the federal government has made in the last few years.

It's time Waite received credit for his altruism. He has shown us that even the most dire situations can be resolved not with violence but with skillful diplomacy. He is truly a hero of our times.

Nothing describes sudden rush of freedom when oppression lifts

One day, Yuri Orlov, the Soviet dissident, was in bitter Siberian exile, not knowing when he would be freed. A day later, he was moved to a Moscow jail and within a day he was winging his way to the United States. He met with the president, made statements to the press, hugged other exiled dissidents and, probably, fought for his sanity. The next day, in the only way he could, he tried to turn back the clock just a bit. In the ways of Russia, he went to pick mushrooms in the woods.



Richard Cohen

Anatoly Shecharansky also experienced psychic G-forces for which there is no parallel. One day he was in a KGB jail and a day later he was borne on the shoulders of his new countrymen to the Western Wall in Jerusalem. He even had a new name — the Hebrew Natan for the Russian Anatoly. And how about David Goldfarb? Old and sick, a leg lost at Stalingrad and a toe to gangrene, he was whisked out of Russia on the private plane of industrialist Armand Hammer. His son was at Newark Airport to greet him.

Is there anything in the world to compare to these experiences? Men have been freed from prison before, exiled from their country before, returned from exile and, even, managed to keep themselves alive as the liberating armies approached the gates of places like Auschwitz, the "corpse factory" of Hannah Arendt's unforgettable phrase. But these events, as discombobulating as they were, approached slowly and with warning. At Auschwitz, the guns could be heard at a distance; the behavior of the guards changed. Even Noah in his ark was tipped by a non-returning dove that the waters of the flood were receding.

But the contemporary world is unforgiving in its abruptness. The dissidents are rocketed out of the Soviet Union. They can breakfast in jail, lunch on an airplane and have dinner in the United

States. To the cameras, they fake sanity, pretend they know what's going on, but they cannot. They have been moved across time and place, from imprisonment to freedom and from one culture to another. The meaning of their life has been altered, maybe obliterated. Is it permissible to eat well when, just hours ago, your fellow prisoners were maybe not eating at all? Can you laugh in freedom when, before, you could not laugh at all? Can you yearn for creature comforts, television sets, cars? Can you chase a skirt? Nap? Do nothing?

Paradoxically, journalists who have tasted similar disconnected experiences write nothing about it. We simply do not know how. Some of us know what it is like to cover a war one moment and then, a day later, be back in Washington. A colleague remembers going almost directly from Vietnam to a Washington Redskins game. He was stunned. There were 50,000 people who seemed to care only about the Redskins. The place he left behind smelled of fear, pain, anguish, death. The war raged in my colleague's head while, on the playing field, a bunch of men fought over a football.

A journalist can cover African famine and eat in Paris that night. In Vietnam, it was possible to cover the fighting by day and, only hours later, enjoy a shower and a bed with clean sheets. The journalist insulates his emotions by professional calling: Someone's job is to make war; someone's job is to cover it. Some of the world sits down to eat while some of the world starves. That, of course, always has been true. But not until recently was it true for a single person in a single day. We hesitate to write about it because we didn't know quite what to make of it: Are the thoughts profound or are they banal?

After he won the Nobel Peace Prize, Elie Wiesel said he still felt guilty for having survived the concentration camps while so many — his own family included — did not. Why should he live when all the others died? For more than 40 years, the guilt has clung to him like a chill for which there is no blanket. He is forever the disengaged observer at the football game, the one who wonders

how so many can cheer when, just hours away, so many others are dying.

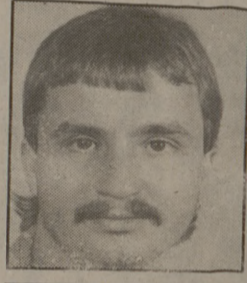
Liberation for Wiesel was no sudden thing. But the sudden cascade of freedom, the turning of a jail-house key that opens a new land with a rush — that is something that as yet has not been described. Time has been altered, space diminished and the prisoner, suddenly freed, is imprisoned in a wholly new experience. He smiles, says thank you and, after the strobe lights of photographers have turned cold, locks himself in to keep out what he cannot understand. It is time to pick mushrooms.

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Searching for televised oasis in multi-channelled wasteland

Just the other night, I was sitting around the house with nothing to do. That might seem strange since it's nearing crunch time for tests and other academically related items, but I'm apathetic toward my studies.



Craig Renfro

I already had listened to my Pink Floyd albums and wasn't really in the mood for the Violent Femmes. So, I decided to watch television for lack of anything better. Since my roommate and I have never splurged for cable television we only receive one channel. To resolve this lack of choice I decided to visit a friend and see what was on his television.

It's amazing how many channels there are to chose from. What's even more amazing is that out of the 30 or so channels there really isn't anything worth watching. One of them is purely for advertising, one is just weather and one even lists what is on all of the other channels. There's a sports channel, religious channel, Spanish channel and, worst of all, a pop music channel with stupid looking hosts.

But I was determined to find something entertaining, which automatically ruled out the "Big Three" networks.

When your options are such wonderful shows as "The Fall Guy," "Dynasty," "Hotel," "Magnum P.I.," "The Equalizer" and "The New Mike Hammer," you have only one choice — shoot the television.

However, we decided to check out "The New Mike Hammer." We really wanted to see if Stacey Keach was going to snort any cocaine. Since he didn't, at least not on the show, we soon became bored with this choice.

So we flipped through the guide to see what other adventures television had in store for us. We landed on "The Green Berets." This movie is guaranteed to bring out the American in everyone. John Wayne, portraying his usual heroic character, killed hundreds of Viet Cong and defied death at every turn. I think this was Richard Nixon's favorite movie, at least until he lost the war. Then he burned the home video along with several hundred other tapes. The movie was too "hawkish" for me, and we decided to push onward through the televised fog.

Next we came upon a religious program. A lunatic preacher with a ton of hair spray holding his brains together was ranting and raving about how we will all go to hell if we don't change our ways. However, we can avoid this eternal damnation if we make a tax-deductible donation of \$100 or more. At least that's what the preacher said, so it must be right.

For a change of pace we decided to watch the Spanish network. We could make out much of the dialogue, but it appeared that the leading male character fell in love, or maybe it was just a voluptuous female. But there was a small catch. Just as the action was getting hot and heavy some other guy came into the room and began shouting viciously he was not pleased because he shot them both. At that point we realized the show was too much like "The show began anew.

Next we came upon the "Dr. I Show," that wonderful call-in show where you, the viewer, can hear Westheimer's views on anything from oral sex to teenage masturbation.

One caller asked the doctor how he could persuade his wife to have sex at the dinner table. The good doctor said that the man should tell his wife what he really wants to do, and she really loves him she will oblige. He didn't work, Westheimer suggested the couple pretend it was a game, call it "meat and potatoes."

The next caller, also male, asked how he could get women into bed without on the first date. I wanted to wait to see what she would say because nothing I've said ever worked. However, he ran out and the show was over. Too bad.

By this time I realized the situation looked dim. We flipped through the channels a few more times just in case we missed something, but of course didn't. My friend said it was like this every night. You search for something worth watching, but you never find it.

I'm fortunate not to have this problem with my one channel. It's the stuff over and over so I don't bother turning it on.

The Violent Femmes sound pretty good right now.

Craig Renfro is a senior journalist major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

All for the T-E-A-M

EDITOR:

During the 1985-86 school year, I wrote a letter to *The Battalion* directed toward the Aggie Football T-E-A-M. I quoted a verse of scripture from 1 Corinthians 9:24. This verse says: "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win."

It seems this letter did some good. Maybe this letter will remind everyone that this is a new year, and we all must start a new race. This race includes the Cotton Bowl, our school work and dedication and our walk with God through thick and thin. Let's keep up the good work this year and in the years to come.

So student body and Coach Jackie Sherrill, let's all carry the Fightin' Texas Aggie Football T-E-A-M to the Cotton Bowl in 1986-87.

Gavin Jones '87

Rally non-partisan?

EDITOR:

The purpose of MSC Political Forum is to increase political awareness through non-partisan programs. After attending the "Panorama of Republican Perspectives on

the State of Texas," which was merely a glorified Republican rally, we are questioning both the motives and integrity of this program's sponsors.

We feel thoroughly enlightened by Barton's perspectives, which ranged from Mama Barton's first-time straight-ticket Republican vote to Joe's old room in Leggett Hall. Then came Sen. Phil Gramm who publicly endorsed Barton — in a non-partisan manner of course.

However, we were most impressed with Vice President George Bush, who simply gave up being non-partisan as proved to be too difficult. Of course, he was encouraged by pal Bill Clements who was quite adamant about retiring "ol' what's his name."

In effect, we wonder how this program could have been anything but partisan. To the best of our knowledge, we thought that political rallies were not allowed in Rudder Auditorium. Are we sadly mistaken, or does an invitation by Political Forum, to the vice president allow the Republicans to do whatever they want?

Kristen Phillips '89
Gina Russo '89
Sara Wall '89

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.