

Arabs, not Israel, should pick up the slack

Once again, the "land of milk and honey" has been doused with blood. Violence broke out in Palestinian sectors of Israel after an archeological tunnel near an Islamic holy site in Jerusalem was re-opened last week.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat used the decision by the Israeli government as an excuse to renew hostilities. Rocks were thrown, and gunfire was exchanged. By week's end, at least 70 Israelis and Palestinians were dead in the streets.

Israel should take note of Arafat's outrageous act and redirect the course of any further peace negotiations. It is the Arab states, not Israel, that should provide a home-land for the landless Palestinians. Jews waited too long for the return to their own homeland to reach it dismantled through misguided diplomatic efforts. Modern Israel's short history is one of a continual struggle for existence. Since the rededication of the Jewish homeland in 1948, open hostility has continually emanated from the surrounding Arab states. After a prolonged and bloody *nefadah* (holy war) conducted by the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Israel was partitioned in concession in the name of peace. It was an unjust reward for acts of terrorism wrought by Arafat and the PLO.

Arafat, whose hands were still dripping with blood, became the face of the town. He was invited to the White House by President Clinton to sign the peace agreements and shared the Nobel Peace Prize with the late Israeli Prime



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Minister Rabin. The terrorist returned to Washington, D.C., late last week to negotiate an end to the recent violence. The meetings were unproductive, but before leaving, Arafat turned and saluted the President. Without hesitation, Clinton returned the gesture. Courteous diplomacy is one matter, Mr. President — saluting a terrorist is another. Parallel to this outrageous episode involving the President are the fatally flawed assumptions by which peace agreements are formulated in the violent region. Why must Israel relinquish its own territories to serve as the sacrificial lamb? The Jewish state's internal security should not be undermined and its future put in jeopardy to appease the desires of Islamic fundamentalists. It is no secret that neighboring Arab states, namely Jordan and

Syria, sponsored much of the terrorism conducted by the PLO. Should these countries not bear the burden of creating a new Palestinian state for their Arab brothers? The answer is simple: yes. Syria's King Assad and Jordan's King Hussein both have enough money to construct a Palestinian homeland within their own borders with vast revenues from oil exports. In addition, they reign over countless square miles of sparsely populated land just east of Israel's crowded settlements. This much more feasible scenario was never proposed by the Arab states, though. By leaving the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Assad and Hussein have much more to gain — a weakened and destabilized Israel. Like so many others, I was convinced a final peace between Jews and Arabs would be

achieved through Palestinian autonomy within Israel's borders. But it has become clear that the Palestinians and Arab states are using these partitions as a means to erode Israel's continued existence. When Arafat is not sitting at a negotiation table, he readily admits to this fact. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu must continue his hard line with Arafat, but should be more careful not to provide the terrorist with excuses for throwing stones. Millions of lives are at stake. And an atmosphere of civility must be maintained as a new (Arab) solution to the Palestinian problem is devised. But as the dove that descended upon the region is strangled by the current misguided efforts and as the olive branches wither, the mirage of peace in the Middle East fades away.

EDITORIAL

THE BATTALION

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DESERVING DECISION

Former regent Ross Margraves deserves Friday's guilty verdict.

Justice has been served, although former regent Ross Margraves would beg to differ. Margraves was convicted Friday for abusing the use of Texas A&M's airplane. Although he claimed he used the University's plane to discuss a possible merger with the Southeastern Conference, he actually visited Louisiana to see his son graduate from Louisiana State University. The cost of his trip to taxpayers was \$1,435. Placed on four months probation, Margraves faces the loss of his law license and plans to appeal his conviction. How Margraves could possibly hope to continue practicing law in the face of his blatant abuse of the law, though, is a question that is simply unanswerable. After hearing the verdict, Margraves was shocked by the decision. Many of his closest friends joined him in refusing to believe his guilt, even in the face of evidence giving irrefutable proof of his guilt. Margraves should own up to his actions, taking full responsibility for what is entirely his own doing. He should consider himself fortunate to have escaped with such a light sentence, considering that he could have served up to

four years in prison for his crime. Since first being scrutinized for his abuse of the University plane, Margraves has offered jumbled explanations that have never done much more than insult the intelligence of those he sought to convince. The senseless facts he offered in a futile attempt to exonerate himself are especially ironic as he once again attempts to convince the public of his innocence. Margraves was concerned only with clearing his own name, even if meant dragging others down with him. The most important result of Margrave's conviction is the message that corruption will no longer be tolerated. Hopefully, the day is gone when the guilty can flee from their mistakes without retribution. The University's current Board of Regents and administrators appear to have relegated corruption to the past. A shadow of doubt should not be cast over the University for the misguided actions of one man. In the face of constantly rising tuition and fees, it is a relief to know that students will no longer have to add the regents' pleasure trips to their already lengthy fee statements.

TV continues to miss the mark

No matter how advanced your remote control, only a certain level of happiness can be reached by changing channels. And when the reason for changing the channel faster than Clinton changes his uniform is because of offensive storylines, viewers should utilize another modern American invention — the telephone — to let local stations know that they demand a higher level of quality. The debate over how far we should allow television to go is not a new one. For years people have been complaining about the increasing trash factor of American television shows, and for years the producers have been responding with the same three excuses: we're just depicting what's going on in the real world, we show what gets the best ratings and society should be open-minded and learn about other lifestyles. The producers, of course, fail to recognize that television plays a large role in the perceptions we have about the world around us. Although many viewers are mature enough to handle the morally questionable situations portrayed, access to these programs is also available to younger viewers who may not have the same level of discernment. But beyond the moral implications, the financial and philosophical excuses that have been given for these programs just don't stand up anymore. To claim that most television shows give us insight into the "real world" implies that our own reality is virtual and their conception is actual. They would prefer to convince us that adulterous affairs occur on a weekly basis, homosexual couples are the norm and violent behavior is the only means of solving a conflict. But if producers are so intent on presenting reality, then maybe they could work into their storylines the fact that a Gallup poll found 90 percent of Americans pray and 40 percent attend church on a regular basis. Relying solely on what we see on TV, we wouldn't think this is the case. Financial motives should lead producers to run more values-oriented programs, not more shows with

Columnist

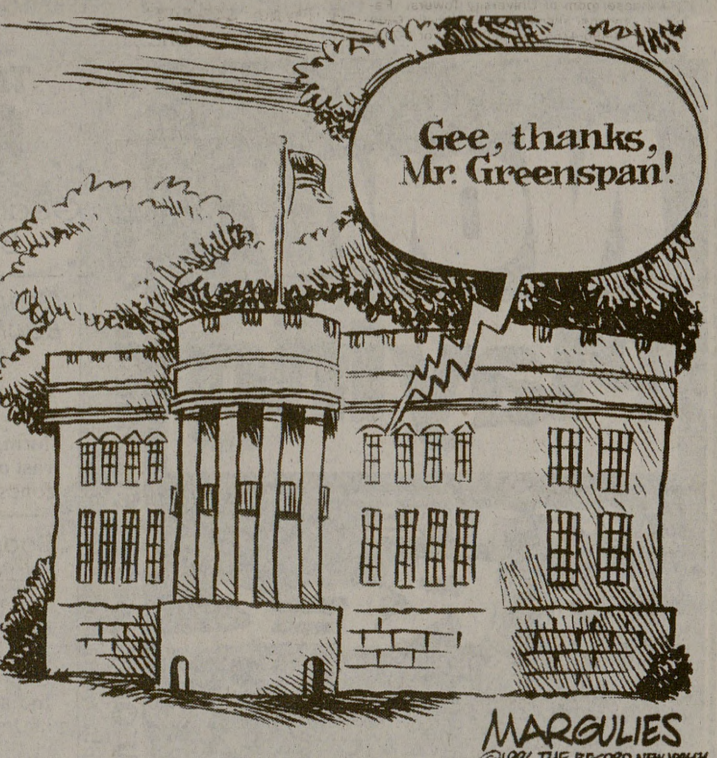


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scandalous storylines. The case used to be that the trashier shows got the higher ratings due to the "shock factor." But ironically, this same shock factor could encourage networks to run shows or movies that were based more on traditional values. Americans really don't care anymore about the small segment of society that happens to have slept with their daughter's boyfriend's third cousin while being an imperial wizard in the KKK. And they're getting bored with teenage cheerleaders who seduce their boyfriends and then ask them to kill their parents. People want producers to be nicer in their storylines, and some are already listening. Consider some of the recent shows that have become highly popular: *Touched by an Angel*, *Home Improvement* and *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*. Granted, some of these shows may not suit our particular tastes, but their overriding success has been based on the fact that they create suspense on how values like faith or integrity will pull someone through a situation, rather than how a flawlessly beautiful teenager is going to keep secret her affair with her best friend's boyfriend. As hard as it is to believe, clean shows are successful. Characters can be funny, interesting and even deep without having to be drug addicts, sexually promiscuous or criminally inclined. And finally, the idea that some of the questionable situations depicted on movies and sitcoms encourage people to be more open-minded about issues is coming dangerously close to toeing the line of immorality. As someone once said, "It pays to be open-minded, but let's not be so open-minded that our brains fall out." Television can be a useful tool for education and entertainment. But when it becomes difficult to find a movie or sitcom that you can enjoy without having to cringe five times before the first commercial break, it is time not to turn the television off, but to turn on the heat to those who are responsible for the offensiveness.



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Flying on a wing and a prayer

Fellow Americans: The recent flight tragedies of ValuJet and TWA have made it apparent that the entire airline business needs to be reexamined. All air transportation should be banned in the United States if man cannot ensure the safety of planes during flight. If elected president, I will create an executive order mandating ground transportation for all travel within the country. The reasoning for this ban is simple — man was not meant to fly. Look at the animals that do fly: birds, bats and insects. None of these has a brain larger than a human thumb, so each can only have a few thoughts. Consider the life of a bird: Flap wings. Flap wings. Flap wings. Stop. Eat. Eat. Eat. Flap wings. Flap wings. Humans, on the other hand, have large brains and overanalyze every situation. If the human body were able to fly, the following would occur. For the first two weeks, everything would be cool. A girl invites a guy over for lunch. He decides to fly there and on his way he spots some girls laying out by a pool. Feeling macho, he flies over them and does a loop-de-loop. The girls are impressed and the guy thinks he is great. But after awhile, the guy gets tired of just flying around town and showing off. He flies to the Dixie Chicken and hangs out with his friends. Since it is getting late, he chugs his beer and says goodbye to his classmates. A girl yells at him, telling him not to drink and fly.

Columnist



David Minor
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He does not listen and tells her he is OK to fly. As he soars over campus, he approaches the Oceanography & Meteorology building and attempts to make it over the top. Not having the strength to clear the tower, he clips a wing and crashes to the ground. The next morning as students go to class, the poor drunk flyer is found dead on the ground. This dramatization is only one of many examples of what would happen if man could fly. The undying spirit and overanalytical mind of man does not allow him to enjoy the simple pleasures of life, such as gliding through the air. Instead of enjoying the fruits of his labor, man consistently believes the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, so he continues to search for a greater rush of adrenaline by pushing the limits of what humans are capable. If flying is not banned, man will continue to abuse this privilege and destroy himself. Every time man and flight mix, the consequence is death. It does not matter if the situation is a commercial airplane flight or a man is flapping his own wings. Plain and simple, man was not meant to fly. That is why the United States needs a law that will prohibit air travel within its national borders. We cannot prevent other countries from acting with such reckless abandonment for human safety, but we can save human lives of United States citizens. Support the United States and the hope that we can get this country back to where it was meant to be — firmly on the ground. God bless you and God bless America.



MAIL CALL

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Battalion provides fresh voice for A&M
 Regarding Patrick Smiley's Oct. 2 column, "Traditions traditionally perpetuate stupidity": The Battalion should be commended for its consistent hiring of open-minded columnists who are

brave enough to question the establishment. Without these columnists, The Battalion would simply be another college newspaper. Smiley's column is a perfect example of this. Smiley courageously attacked some traditions that should maybe be viewed from a more critical angle. After all, you can see what traditions have done for lemmings.