

Opinion

Friday, October 19, 2001

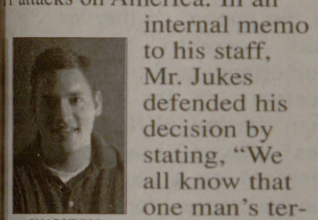
THE BATTALION

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Terrorism did happen

Reuters denies that Sept. 11 attacks were acts of terrorism

Steven Jukes, global editor in chief for Reuters news agency, has prohibited his reporters from using the word "terrorists" to describe those responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks on America. In an internal memo to his staff, Mr. Jukes defended his decision by stating, "We all know that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."



CHARLTON WIMBERLY

Mr. Jukes' inability to call terrorism by its proper name stems from a problem plaguing society today: a belief in moral relativism. Moral relativism is a philosophy that asserts there is no objective moral truth in the world. Whether an action is right or wrong depends on the ideas of the individual or group performing that action. Despite its tolerant facade, moral relativism is a bankrupt philosophy that leads to self-contradiction and intellectual dishonesty. The primary argument for moral relativism is that because individuals and cultures have differing moral practices there cannot be a set of universal moral truths. Mr. Jukes ostensibly prohibits the word "terrorists" because he believes that to be unbiased he must recognize the possibility that other cultures do not consider the tragedies in New York and Washington, D.C., terrorism. In actuality, there are many moral values that are universal. There is no society, for example, where men are praised for being cowards or where dishonesty is extolled as a virtue. Two people disagreeing on the answer to a question does not mean the question has no answer. For example, some people argue that the Holocaust

never happened, but that does not change the fact that it happened. Or, as UNLV Professor Francis Beckwith said, two people who "disagree about whether or not the earth is round is not proof that the earth has no shape."

John O'Sullivan, editor in chief for United Press International, responded to Jukes and said, "A terrorist is a man who murders indiscriminately ... We may want to defeat his political cause or see it triumph. For his methods, however, the terrorist is always to be condemned."

O'Sullivan exhibits the proper perspective on this issue — he realizes that there are differing opinions among various groups, but he is not afraid to state the obvious fact that indiscriminate murder is universally wrong and should be universally condemned. If one believes that there is a difference in the world between right and wrong, he must believe there is a universal standard by which these qualities are measured. Otherwise, for example, no one could legitimately criticize the Nazis for murdering millions of Jews.

Murder may be considered wrong by one group, but absent an absolute truth by which to measure, we cannot say that murder should always be considered wrong. We cannot, therefore, say that there is anything inherently wrong with murdering someone. Along this line of thinking, we must respect the rights of other groups and individuals to rape, steal, lie and murder as long as they feel these deeds are acceptable.

Of course, this is ludicrous — but this is exactly where moral relativism leads. Relativists will counter that the government would not allow these things to go on. But government derives its power from the people. If the government did allow these



things, would that make them acceptable?

Former Cambridge University professor C.S. Lewis said, "Whenever you find a man who says he doesn't believe in a real Right and Wrong, you will find the same man going back on this a moment later. He may break

his promise to you, but if you try breaking one to him, he'll be complaining 'It's not fair.'"

Whether they admit it or not, everybody recognizes some universal truths in the world. No one can look at the savage acts of Sept. 11 and believe that there is no basis for determin-

ing whether they were "right" or "wrong."

The fact that we live in a society that allows differing viewpoints does not mean each of those viewpoints should be considered equally correct. Those who want to deny that the Holocaust took place or that

ADRIAN CALCENAO • THE BATTALION the earth is round are free to do so. But the news media should not temper its language to accommodate people who express these, or other, ridiculous notions.

Charlton Wimberly is an accounting graduate student.

No more food wars

Advertising has become more sensitive

Advertising has become an important part of American life in the last few decades. No more commercials of exuberant or carefree living urge you to feel insecure in your sheltered or boring lives.

Instead, advertising in America has become culturally acceptable and at times even comforting after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Since then, advertising campaigns have been transformed into socially sensitive displays that would be almost impossible to be taken the wrong way by a country in mourning.

According to the *Houston Chronicle*, Houston advertising agency Fogarty Klein Monroe planned to launch a campaign for Subway restaurants that would promote their low-fat sandwiches and encourage people to try healthy eating options. This campaign would have been perfect for Houston, the fattest city in the United States, but the campaign became instantly offensive and inappropriate. In the advertising for the Subway campaign, Houston citizens were going to be persuaded to lose weight as if it were a military mission.

The advertising campaign was planned to be extensive and included issuing draft cards and dog tags to those who wished to join the weight-loss army. Fogarty Klein Monroe planned to have Subway's company spokesman, Jared Fogle, act as Uncle Sam and proclaim demanding, "Jared Wants You!"

Such an advertising campaign would have probably been successful, yet with the United States in a war with terrorism, dreadfully unsuitable at this time. Subway has since softened their campaign with the "Subway Challenge."

Subway is not the only company that has

changed advertising tactics. In many cases, advertising campaigns have been pulled altogether, such as the campaigns promoting Coca-Cola and Pepsi. Most of these companies'

Advertising in America has become culturally acceptable and at times even comforting after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

advertisements related the importance of drinking soda to the importance of joy and even life itself. Advertising agencies know this is not what the American people now want to hear.

It would be shameful if advertising agencies ignored the feelings that have arisen in America lately. Americans are in an emotional and wounded state, and agencies would be remiss not to address the sorrow.

Thankfully, for the most part, advertisers have done a job worthy of congratulation. Patriotism has spread rampant with help from advertising agencies that have eloquently commercialized the people's never-ending love of their country.

The country is in mourning, and advertising agencies are wise not to jeopardize their success by offending a nation set on justice. Advertising agencies quickly recognized that after a tragedy of this magnitude, Americans need to grieve without the bombardment of joyously shallow or offensive advertisements.

Advertisers did not thwart their responsibilities of influence, but decided to take the high road by assuring the people that they, too feel grief for what happened in New York City and Washington, D.C., by caring for the well-being of those here today.

Leigh Henderson is a sophomore psychology major.

MAIL CALL

Thank you stranger

On October 18 while reading outside, I left my keys and wallet sitting on a bench outside of Harrington. When I came out an hour later, I realized they were missing. After checking the lost and found I trudged back home thinking of all the cards I would have to replace and they keys I would have to get duplicated.

But I need not have feared. Not only did you find my keys, but you took the time to look up my phone number, call me, and come to my dorm and drop them off with my roommate, all before I even returned from my class. Thank You, People like you make me proud to be an Aggie.

Kathleen Jansen
Class of 2002

Clever cartoon by the Uncartoonist

In response to cartoon on Oct. 16:

Being a proud member of the Corps of Cadets, and ironically holding the job of Regiment Scholastics Officer, I wanted to tell the Uncartoonist that he or she made myself and many of my buddies laugh! The cartoon I talk about is the cadet sleeping in class with

the caption "Corps Scholastic Policy." I took the initiative to cut out a copy of this hilarious cartoon and post it on my Scholastics Policy Board in Dorm 5. I'm sure throughout the Corps many other cadets did the same and added that cartoon to their "Good Bull" boards. I know that the Corps usually only responds to *The Battalion* in rage for some remark made against it, sometimes with the occasional death threat, but I'll break tradition by saying "Job Well Done." I understand we all have Freedom of Speech, and I will actually serve in the military starting this May to protect that right! Keep up the good-natured work Uncartoonist, we sit in anticipation...

Allen Okvist
Regiment Scholastics Officer
Class of 2002

Strong stance made with little factual knowledge

In response to Mark Passwaters' Oct. 16 column:

In Tuesday's edition of *The Battalion*, Mark Passwaters viciously and unfairly attacked a group of people of which he knows absolutely nothing about. There is no way people protesting for peace is a

"pathetic form of selfish ignorance" when the concern they are showing is for the lives of the innocent civilians of Afghanistan. Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi both used peaceful protest to try and end the violence and prejudice that their people faced and I seriously doubt that history looks upon these two men as being pathetic, selfish, or ignorant.

Another mistaken accusation than Passwaters made was that Saddam Hussein is not a villain to Americans on the left.

Well, in the 1980's when Iran and Iraq were at war, it was Regan, the hero of only those on the right, who supported Hussein with money and military hardware. It was also this Administration that trained and armed Osama bin Laden.

I'm not against the current war, but I think it is important to understand that 6000 innocent people have already died and innocent civilians in Afghanistan will suffer or die as well. We will not be sure because the Taliban will always exaggerate the figure and our Government will lower it as much as possible. Make no mistake about it, blowing up energy plants and water facilities will hurt the innocent more than it will hurt the Taliban.

Oscar Ortiz
Class of 2005

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters also may be mailed to:

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