

Opinion

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No Deals With Terrorists

Terrorists seek to create confusion and division among the objects of their hatred. In the latest chapter of Middle Eastern terrorism, Americans should keep several points clear in their minds:

● The American hostages in Lebanon have always been in grave danger.

This seems like an obvious point, but some officials talk as though the hostages would be safe as long as the U.S. and Israel play their cards right.

This sort of thinking led to Sen. Bob Dole's lamentable remarks on the Senate floor Monday. "Perhaps a little more responsibility on the part of the Israelis one of these days would be refreshing," he said, adding that President Bush should reach an understanding with the Israelis about "future conduct that would endanger the lives of Americans."

It is not beyond the realm of possibility that the terrorists might release one or more of the hostages some day. But look at when these men were captured: 1985, 1986, 1987. Their captors are sadists who thrive on a psychopathic view of the U.S. and Israel. If the primary strategy for getting them released depends on trying to keep on the terrorists' good side, an honest assessment is that most of the hostages will eventually die in Lebanon.

The prospects for Lt. Col. William R. Higgins were particularly bleak long before Israel's seizure of a terrorist leader last week. Higgins' captors sentenced him to death months ago.

● Israel is on our side, Iran is not.

This, too, should be clear to everyone. Yet some American officials — and Dole was hardly alone — have been quick to blame Israel for a terrorist killing some intelligence experts think took place months ago. But even if it was done Monday, blaming Israel is blaming the victim of terrorism instead of the perpetrators. If you can't get at an enemy,

take it out on a friend.

Meanwhile, hands are again being wrung within the administration over the lack of "hard evidence" connecting Iran to the pro-Iranian terrorist organizations in Lebanon. How much evidence is necessary? Iran established and financed these organizations, and they have devoted themselves to attacking the enemies of Iran. Tehran has even explicitly tied the fate of the hostages to demands it has issued.

Considering the circumstances and the long record of Iranian hostility toward this country, the burden of proof should not fall on Washington to show that there is a connection between Iran and its surrogates in Lebanon. It should be up to Iran to establish that there is no link.

● More is at stake than the lives of the hostages now being held.

While U.S. leaders must be concerned about today's hostages, their first priority is to make it clear that terrorism will not succeed. If they do not make this clear, these terrorists and others will simply take more hostages and carry out more atrocities in the years ahead.

Both the Carter and Reagan administrations carried out lengthy negotiations for American hostages. President Carter succeeded and President Reagan partly succeeded in obtaining the release of hostages. But it should be apparent that this process encouraged terrorists to search out new bargaining chips.

The U.S. should stick with the tough, non-sensational course laid out in the country's official anti-terrorist policies. The administration should take a hard look at the options available which, contrary to a widespread belief, are numerous. Terrorists and their sponsors should receive no concessions, no quarter, and no mercy.

Thumbs Down for Lucas

Apparently, William Lucas was less impressive in a meeting Monday with Sen. Howell Heflin than in earlier appearances before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

President Bush's nominee for assistant attorney general of civil rights and the Democratic senator from Alabama met at Heflin's request. Heflin was considered the senator who was the deciding vote on the Democratic-controlled committee.

Neither Lucas nor Heflin would provide details of their talk, but it was obvious by Tuesday's judiciary committee meeting, where Lucas was denied confirmation, that the nominee failed to convince.

The committee was to have voted last week, but postponed action until Tuesday because Heflin wanted to meet with Lucas. One would think that in an informal setting, absent cameras and microphones, Lucas could have shone. Perhaps in this relaxed setting, however, his flaws became more pronounced.

"He's lacking in experience and qualifications, his managerial accomplishments are debatable," Heflin announced Tuesday.

By a 7-7 vote, mostly along party lines, the committee refused the nominee and also rejected a proposal to send the nomination to the full Senate without recommendation. Sen. Dennis DeConcini of Arizona was the only

Democrat on the committee to favor the nominee. He was joined by all six committee Republicans.

Were Lucas confirmed, he would have to be propped up at Justice by more experienced lawyers who would be his subordinates. Amazingly and regrettably, Lucas makes even former Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds, who did considerable harm to affirmative action, look good. Reynolds is an experienced, if misguided, lawyer.

"For assistant attorney general for civil rights, I just think we need a strong voice who will speak out for civil rights and I don't hear that coming from Bill Lucas," said Sen. Paul Simon, the committee member from Illinois. He's right.

So is Project Equality, the national ecumenical and civil rights organization based in Kansas City. It opined, "In the context of his lack of legal experience, we believe that confirmation of this nomination would signal to the country that civil rights are not a major concern of this country."

Lacking a vote of confidence from the Senate committee, the administration can re-route the nominee to the full Senate. It ought not to prolong the inevitable or provide opportunities for greater embarrassment. What is needed is a better nominee.

Not the Way to Do It

The full-court press is on to win City Council approval of a special sales tax project worth \$1.05 million in the Union Hill area. The goal is laudable. But the proposal should not proceed further at this time.

Supporters with clout at City Hall point out that dozens of neighborhood leaders and residents have requested the new sidewalks, curbs and other physical improvements. That's not surprising, however. Name a neighborhood in Kansas City that *doesn't* want capital improvements provided by the city.

Good reasons exist to oppose financing of this project. Primary among them are fairness and the precedent the plan could set.

No other neighborhood project in any of the six councilmanic districts has been able to get this kind of long-term, we-pay-all commitment from the city. What about the 20 or so other neighborhood groups in the 2nd District? Do they get a chance to garner this financing, too? What about the Northeast? Westport? The West Side?

Neighborhood groups across the city have reason to wonder why the council wants to break new ground in spending sales tax dollars for this particular project, in a neighborhood with \$140,000 homes and up.

Approval of the Union Hill plan would reduce the city's flexibility to use the sales tax pot for high priority items in the future. About \$150,000 in each of the next seven years wouldn't be available even as other, supposedly more worthwhile projects come along.

This proposal is a dramatic change from the "pay-as-you-go" philosophy used for the last six years in Kansas City. Remember: It will cost \$1.05 million to get \$860,000 worth of improvements done under this plan. Is going into debt this way good for the city? Jackson County voters earlier this year overwhelmingly defeated a proposal to finance projects with sales tax money and go into long-term debt to do it.

There are too many questions for the Union Hill plan to be accepted by the council. If long-term financing for neighborhood sales tax projects is a good idea, the council needs to set some rules of the game before charging off in that direction.

Today's Bible verse

The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever — Psalm 22:26



Jeff MacIntyre/The Chicago Tribune

Help for failed youths

Chemical dependencies are only one part of mangled lives of Benilde Hall boys

Benilde Hall Boys Home is not another program to solve the youth addiction problem, although it's been a lifejacket for a few. Rather it is a quiet experiment with some old-fashioned activities. They include listening and caring. Also education and discipline.

The catch is that this is more or less voluntary on the part of the keepers of Benilde Hall at 1600 the

Jean Haley

Paseo, the Lay Volunteers of De La Salle of Kansas City, and on the fellows who move in to accept their guidance. The tiny community became a not-for-profit corporation in 1979 for the purpose of helping "the least of the poor."

For the men who are lay volunteers, their work with alcoholics and other substance abusers is a religious call, although their efforts are not at all for the purpose of preaching or converting anyone to Roman Catholicism.

In fact, the way they answer the boys' most frequent question tells the reason. Some aging baby boomers won't believe it. It's neither cost effective nor measurable.

"Why do you do this for us?" asks a swollen-eyed guy who would be the star of the football team in another life.

"God loves you," the volunteer will explain, probably for the 23rd time. "I love God and for the love of God, we're going to work together so that you can become what God wants."

The boys are there because they, their families, the courts, schools and any other institution with which they have come in contact have thrown in the towel. Or, you could say, the institutions have failed their children.

John Baptist de La Salle, the great 17th century educator who focused on the "maladjusted" child, wrote meditations for the teachers who populated his schools.

"It is necessary to show affection for the students," the French aristocrat admonished. "It is necessary to have more gentleness for some, more firmness toward others. Some require much patience, others need to be prodded and encouraged. Some need to be reproved, punished and corrected for their faults; others need to be supervised continually to prevent them from hurting themselves or wandering away."

Yet one of the most succinct summaries of what de La Salle was all about was tough. No permissive absent-minded professor was he. A biographer wrote, "His life was more concerned with solutions than with theories."

That model is most evident in the structured routines imposed on the young men accepted for residence at Benilde Hall. Some are from Kansas City. Others are from small towns outside. They

don't belong in jail and they can't make it at home; they're usually officially "cured" eons before they are emotionally strong enough to manage their own lives.

Their chemical dependencies are usually only one part of their mangled lives, a symptom, the lay volunteers would say. It's why entry to Benilde Hall is open-ended — the youth stays as long as he needs to put his life in order which includes school, job training, getting along with the rest of the residents and perhaps most importantly, self-discipline. Some stay as little as six months. Others remain two years. Currently, seven youths are in the transitional facility; it can accommodate up to 15.

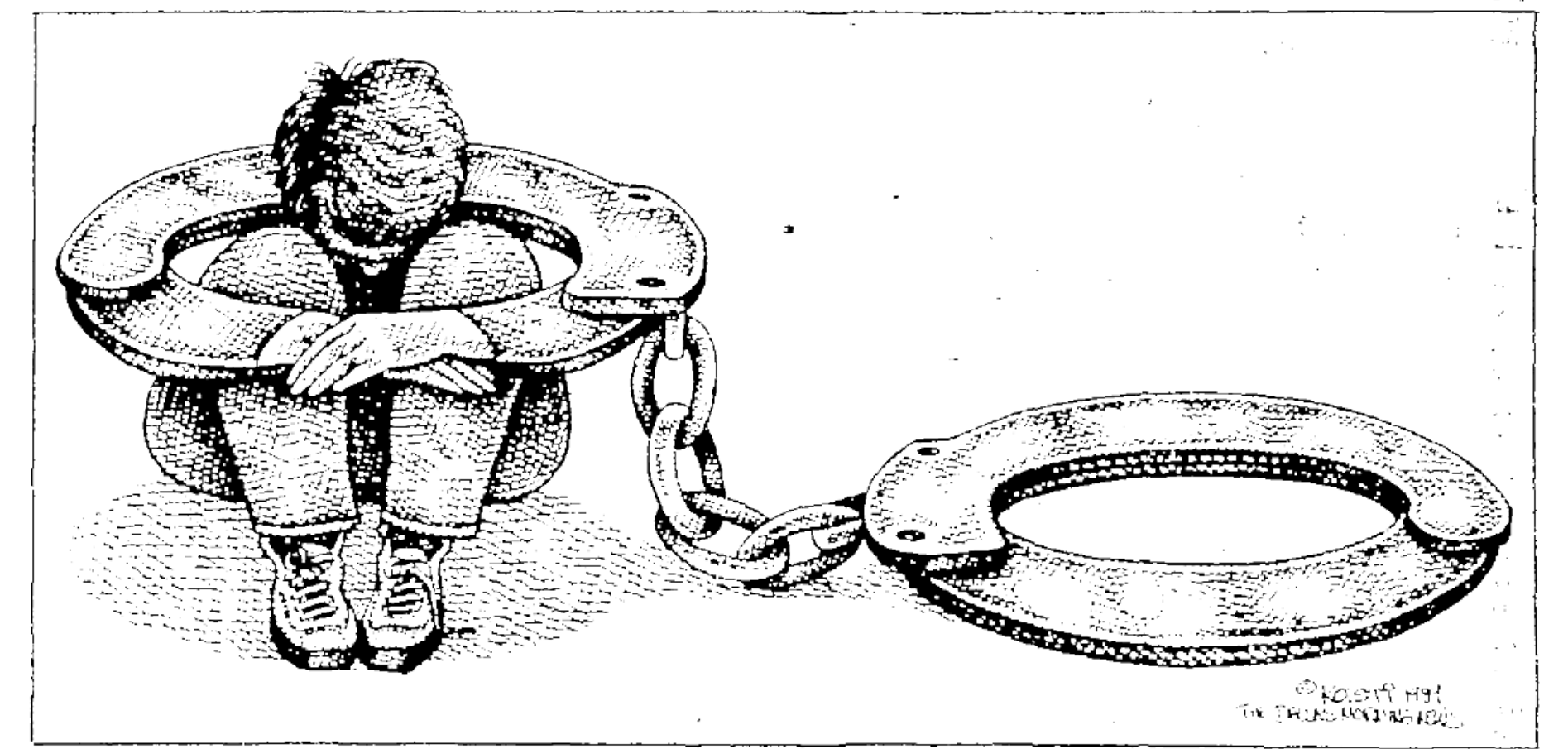
Since it opened in 1987, Benilde Hall has served 41 young men. Administrators say 80 percent have reached their short-term goals. That includes participation in Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous group meetings and programs. It costs \$80 a month for a resident. Some pay. Others don't. The volunteers say cost is "negotiable from \$580 to \$0. Space, of course, is limited. This is almost a one-on-one situation.

The "program" is intense and totally structured. It addresses physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of the young men. The daily schedule details precisely how work and play, education and prayer will be fitted into each day. The Monday through Friday routine, for example, begins at 6:30 a.m.: "Wake up, clean up, clean room." The community proceeds through prayers, breakfast, school or work to 2:30 p.m. "work detail (residents take care of everything from cleaning the halls to gardening, just as they would at home)," to "5:15 p.m., spiritual reading; 5:30 p.m. supper" to 11 p.m. "lights out."

What differentiates this from many traditional social service efforts or government programs, though, is the intent to make up deficiencies in what the lay volunteers describe as a human being's three crucial societies: the family, religious orientation and the educational setting. And although structure and schedule are the means, the unique ingredient is the emphasis on relationship. The volunteers become the parents, the role models, the friends, the champions the boys never had.

"All kids want to be loved, to be accepted, to be recognized," one volunteer asserted. "He'll find that in peers, but he has to be obedient to the 'leader' in the crowd. . . . learning incorrect moral values from the streets. . . . Some of the kids begin to take drugs when they're 10 years old."

As much as the country wants every new idea to be magic bullet to the drug crisis, the elemental damage won't be prevented or corrected by skills and techniques, no matter how sophisticated they are. The real disease was established before alcoholism or drug addiction. That's what the lay volunteers are trying to treat.



Remember when?

From The Star and Times of Aug. 2

10 years ago — 1979

A World War II soldier who hid in the Oklahoma hills 36 years for fear of being shot as a deserter was cleared by military authorities after he signed "other than honorable" discharge papers. The former soldier, whose home is in Shady Point, Okla., has been invited to New York to appear on the "Good Morning America" show.

President Carter's comparison of the Palestinian movement in the Middle East to the U.S. civil rights cause has brought strong critical reaction from Jewish leaders in this country.

Oil prices, already up 42 percent this year, may rise again soon because foreign producers are unhappy with the dollar's decline. OPEC is worried about the dollar because it does its business in dollars.

20 years ago — 1969

The Justice Department filed a lawsuit against Georgia to require its state school officials to end its racially dual school system.

Authorities charged John Norman Collins, an Eastern Michigan University student, with murder in the slaying of Karen Sue Beineman, latest of eight

young woman killed in the area.

30 years ago — 1959

The Jackson County Chapter of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis will pay \$15 a day to General Hospital for care of each paralytic polio patient.

The Little Rock school board will keep public high school integration at a minimum next fall by assigning only six blacks to schools once reserved for whites.

40 years ago — 1949

Two-hour parking restrictions would be provided for streets in and adjacent to the Country Club Plaza and the 63rd Street and Brookside districts by an ordinance introduced in the council.

Rep. Ed H. Rees, Republican of Kansas, in a House debate over a bill that would have permitted the sale of liquor to Indians in Minnesota and Wisconsin, argued that an Indian is "different" and that he "can't" handle liquor. The bill was defeated.

Jackie Robinson, the first baseball player to play in the major leagues, commented on the accelerated recruitment of black players. "Still," he said, "there are only about seven Negro boys in the big league out of some 400 white players."