

Viewpoint

Security

World Trade Center explosion reminder of U.S. vulnerability to terrorist attacks

It can even happen in the United States. Last week's blast that rocked the World Trade Center in New York City was first thought to be some type of mechanical failure. But after authorities found evidence of dynamite in the wreckage, the incident smelled more and more like a terrorist attack. It will be months before we know all the details of what destroyed six levels of parking and caused what might be irreversible structural damage to the complex's hotel. But both federal and local authorities are pretty certain this was a bona fide terrorist attack; 17 different groups claimed responsibility, including Serbian nationalists, Iranian and Palestinian terrorist organizations, as well as New York crackpots. But the issue that seems to overshadow the high-powered politics behind the explosion is the realization of where it happened: New York.

This wasn't a plane explosion in France, a hijacking in Germany or a car bombing in England. It was an explosion in the nation's largest city, in a complex where 55,000 Americans work and 100,000 people visit every day.

And to Americans, this is the most frightening aspect. This one explosion showed the American government and public that we are just as vulnerable as our European and South American counterparts.

We have been spoiled in the past; out of 557 terrorist attacks recorded by the State Department in 1991, only five were in the United States.

The last time a major terrorist attack occurred here was 1975 when a bomb, left in a locker in New York's LaGuardia Airport, exploded, killing 11.

Hopefully, it will be at least another 18 years before a terrorist attack occurs on American soil again. But it's dangerous to assume that.

If we take the attitude that we are untouchable on our own soil, we are in for a nasty surprise. Fifty-five percent of worldwide terrorist attacks were directed against Americans and their property overseas.

In the modern world of global communication and transportation, it is relatively easy to terrorize us in our own backyard.

Much of the country is poorly prepared to avoid a potential terrorist attack. Access to metropolitan water supplies and government complexes is surprisingly easy. Metal detectors do not detect everything they should.

Unfortunately, there is not much we can do. Tighter security in important public buildings and increased awareness by the general public can help avoid these types of tragedies.

But we must remember that we're not invincible, and we should never pretend to be.



Congress should reject Freedom of Choice Act

In the wake of various bills and issues facing Congress, one issue continues to make ripples in the water. Actually, a tidal wave is more accurate.

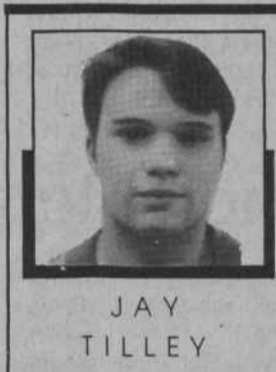
The issue: abortion. The cause: the Freedom of Choice Act. Once again, pro-life and pro-choice people have waged war on one another by one raising the question of morality, while the other argues the facts of the Constitution.

First, let us look at the facts, shall we? The Freedom of Choice Act would basically allow abortion (1) for any reason, (2) as many times as a woman wants one, (3) at virtually any stage of pregnancy, and (4) in every state in the nation.

Furthermore, this act does not require parental consent or notification for a minor, nor informed consent. But it allows sex-selective abortions and taxpayer-funded abortions.

What is our great country coming to? What are we as human beings coming to? If this act goes through, I believe this will be the saddest day in America's history since President Kennedy's assassination in 1963. Adolf Hitler would be proud.

That's right, folks. It's modern-day genocide. I believe the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ made a great point when it compared the abortion rate in this country to Hitler's murdering more than six million Jews during World War II. How is this any different?



JAY TILLEY

If you talk to any scientist, he or she will tell you that from the moment of conception, a life entity begins to form. After a few weeks, brain waves can be detected, and other aspects of what we consider to be living, such as the heart and lungs, appear as well.

Any way you look at it, it is murder, plain and simple, no bones about it. Sure, it's not a fully formed human being at this point, but what else can it be?

A big problem I have with the FOCA and its supporters is that they insist on ignoring the majority opinion of the American public.

Don't believe me? According to the most recent Gallup poll, 70 percent of Americans support parental consent; 91 percent support banning sex-selection abortions; 72 percent support banning abortions after 12 weeks; 86 percent support informed consent; 73 percent support spousal notification; and 75 percent support 24-hour waiting periods.

The FOCA defies and even denies every one of these statistics. So much for democracy.

Another problem I have with the FOCA is that states would be absolutely powerless in trying to restrict abortion under the FOCA.

Additionally, even Catholic and other Christian hospitals would have to compromise their most moral and sacred beliefs under the FOCA. This is a slap in the face not only to

Christians of every denomination, but also to anyone in any religion who has moral values. It's a mockery of God's word, no matter how one interprets the divine.

I must, however, give pro-choice people a little credit. I don't really think they or the doctors who perform abortions are evil. I believe they are just ignorant of the facts. They do bring up some valid arguments worth looking at such as women's rights, rape, incest and the use of fetal tissue for medical research.

First of all, no one, man or woman, has a right to kill unless it is in self-defense or in war. Secondly, rape and incest are terrible sex crimes, and I sympathize with their victims, but does the unborn deserve to be punished for this?

Moreover, it would be wonderful if we could find a way to cure and treat diseases such as Alzheimer's, but there are other ways of doing it besides sacrificing God's greatest creation, human life.

To conclude, history has shown us that the Constitution has and can be changed if it is the people's will.

If the FOCA is not stopped, we'll not only end up destroying millions of unborn babies, 1.6 million a year to be exact, but we'll destroy ourselves as well.

Remember, there are many women who want babies, but just can't have them, and we shouldn't deny them the opportunity just because pregnancy is a nuisance to some. In other words, stop the Freedom of Choice Act.

Jay Tilley is a columnist for The Gamecock

Wastefulness rampant in campus community

We are a wasteful campus. I've always known it. Anyone who has taken 30 seconds to think about it knows it too.

What am I talking about when I say we are wasteful? I'm mainly talking about recyclables and electricity.

It took a recent visitor to USC to make me finally decide to write about it. A few of you may know whom I'm talking about.

I had a nice little chat about USC a few weeks ago with the woman who made you fill out those cards before your yearbook picture was taken.

She's been to many campuses all over the eastern part of the country, and she told me we have the dubious honor of being one of the most wasteful campuses she has ever visited.

We use too much, and we don't recycle enough, plain and simple.

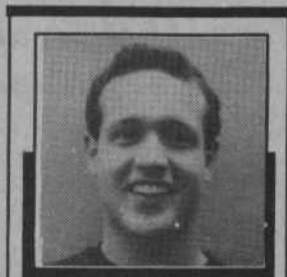
There should be recycling bins for office paper, newspaper, styrofoam and plastic products next to every trash can on this campus.

The problem with recycling is that we are lazy. It's that simple. We don't feel like carrying something around until we find a collection bin. But if recycling bins were as accessible as trash cans, it would be easy for anyone to do their part.

And what about all those fliers I see everywhere all the time? I am not just referring to the campaign fliers, mind you. The USC community uses entirely too many trees on things most of us don't even read.

We also waste too much electricity. Every day, I see perfectly healthy people use an elevator to go up one floor. They wait two or three minutes, if they are lucky, to ride an elevator the vertical equivalent of 10 to 12 feet.

Last time I tried the stairs, they weren't too painful. Plus,



THOM HARMAN

taking the stairs is quick, if not quicker than any elevator on this campus.

Every day, I see perfectly healthy people using the automatic doors at the Russell House. But the other doors don't even have knobs. So if you can't bear to see yourself exert such energy, turn around and back in.

I've heard too many people, including myself a time or two, say, "Well, it doesn't even cost a cent for those doors to open, so my using it once won't matter."

Well, the next time you go by there, use a real door and just leave a penny, and I'll be there to pick it up. With 26,000 students, I'll have next year's tuition collected in no time.

Every day, I walk past deserted rooms that still have the lights on. Why? Because no one thinks once, much less twice, about turning them off. Does everybody waste that much electricity at home?

My point is that things do add up. One day, although it may be a while off, America is going to wish it had things to waste.

It's not that hard. Recycle whenever you can. Stick an arm out, and push open a door. Turn off the lights when you leave a room empty. Think about what you're doing, and, as time goes by, we'll all be the better for it.

Thom Harman is a copy editor for The Gamecock

Letters to the Editor

Intramural coverage important to student

To the editor:

I would like to commend your job of printing intramural standings in Wednesday's edition. It seems very logical to me that the intramural program at USC needs to get some space in the triweekly publication of our paper. It has bothered me for a long time that the intramural program here was not deemed newsworthy, when, in fact, a high percentage of students are involved in one way or another.

Considering The Gamecock is published three times a week, which is more than most of our varsity teams play a week, other campus sports news should be reported to the students.

There was a time in USC history, and not that long ago, I might add, when championship intramural games were reviewed in The Gamecock. I am not necessarily asking for all that, but I do believe a small section of your sports page, once a week, should be devoted to intramural coverage.

Don't you agree that by printing intramural standings, tournament

pairings or review, that you may do something positive to increase morale in students that is probably low right now considering our varsity's performance? I believe events on this campus, such as intramural athletics, should receive print in our paper before commentary on some network basketball game. I mean, let's face it, if I wanted a review of the NBA All-Star Game, I would read USA Today.

Steve Hartell
Business sophomore

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The Gamecock will try to print all letters received. Letters should be 200-250 words maximum. Full name and professional title or year and major, if a student, must be included along with an address and phone number. The Gamecock reserves the right to edit for style, possible libel or space limitations. The Gamecock will not withhold names under any circumstances.

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The Gamecock is the student newspaper of the University of South Carolina and is published three times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays during the fall and spring semesters and weekly during both summer sessions, with the exception of university holidays and examination periods.

Opinions expressed in The Gamecock are those of the editors or author and not those of the University of South Carolina.

The Board of Student Publications and Communications is the publisher of The Gamecock. The Student Media Department is the parent organization of The Gamecock.

Change of address forms, subscriptions, requests and other correspondence should be sent to The Gamecock, P.O. Box 85131, The University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.

Subscription rates are \$46 a year. First class postage paid at Columbia, SC. The Gamecock is a registered student organization of the University of South Carolina and is partially funded by student activity fees.