

U.S. forms our views on Iran

by Lucinda Chodan

Exposure to the American media and viewpoint have altered Canada's perceptions of the current hostage incident in Iran, says a U of A sociology professor.

Dr. Gordon Hirabayashi, who has just returned from Iran, says many journalists are living in a "cultural island" in a Tehran hotel. He told a group in Tory yesterday that their reports are moulding public opinion.

"This is an Iranian-American crisis, not simply an Iranian crisis," he said. Both sides say the other side has broken international law, a fact not emphasized in the Western media.

"Unfortunately, diplomats are affected by what they read, and especially by television," he said.

Hirabayashi and Jim Prior from Simon Fraser University

were sent to Iran by the Society of Friends (Quakers) to "see behind the headlines" in the hostage situation.

Although they did not see the hostages, they talked to the Iranian students in the U.S. embassy compound on several occasions and went on a field trip to the poorer areas of the Tehran, accompanied by one of the students.

The American embassy compound is a combination of "the Grey Cup, the Centennial and \$1.49 day all rolled in one" said Hirabayashi, and the student hostage-takers are "folk heroes."

"There is a carnival atmosphere...every day groups come in to express their support for the students," he said.

Hirabayashi also says the students are independent of government agencies. "The students did this without the knowledge or permission of the

government. Because they acted without government knowledge, the foreign ministry has had to retract several statements because the students refuse to transfer authority to any government department.

Hirabayashi also said he had suspicions about whether the hostage-takers were really students before he visited Tehran. "I felt before that 'students' might have been a cover...however, we felt this was essentially a student group."

Hirabayashi predicted little change in the situation in the month of January. "I don't foresee anything happening this month...but the middle of February is the first anniversary of the revolution. The students may want to use the occasion to make some kind of ostentatious gesture, like releasing some portion of the hostages."

"If the U.S. holds a hard-line, though, they may also harden up."



U of A sociology professor Gordon Hirabayashi

photo: Lucinda Chodan

Federalism petition begins

by Jim McElgunn

A major campaign to collect signatures on a petition urging Quebecers to remain in Confederation will begin this month in Alberta.

And the U of A's Chancellor Jean Forest, the campaign's honorary chairperson, says she is optimistic about its results.

The People to People Petition for Canadian Unity was started by "a group of concerned Canadians" in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island about two years ago. An organization was created throughout English-speaking Canada to promote the petition, which asks, "Quebecois members of our Canadian family to remain Canadian and to continue building with us this magnificent Canada."

Forest says although Quebecers have the right to determine their own future, "it is important that they understand that ordinary people in the rest of Canada want them to stay in Confederation."

"I'm not so naive as to think it will make the difference," said Forest, "but we hope it will be one more factor weighed in the decision of Quebecers."

The date for presentation of the petition has not been settled, but will be sometime during the referendum campaign. In addition to regular media coverage, the petition will be presented in public meetings throughout Quebec by people from all other provinces and territories.

To finance the project, organizers are soliciting donations from private individuals. To avoid the impression that this is an "official" campaign, no government funding will be accepted. Costs have been minimized through the exclusive use of volunteer labour, but Forest admits finances are very tight. "We're flying on a wing and a prayer."

To date, about 750,000 signatures have been collected nationally, but only about 12,000 of these are from Alberta. Forest says this small number is due to a later start here than elsewhere. She hopes to correct this with a "big push" during January and February, using the slogan "Put Yourself on the Line."

Alberta's three largest utility companies will be sending out mini-petitions with their monthly bills, thus reaching about half a million households. Other

copies will be distributed to places not reached in this manner, including post-secondary institutions.

Service clubs will be asked to assist the campaign by urging their members to sign the petition.

Premier Lougheed has endorsed the petition and declared February 3 to 9 Unity Week in Alberta. The week is intended to stimulate debate on national unity and encourage Albertans to show their support for a united Canada.

Forest says she hopes this activity will affect not only Quebecers but other Canadians. "I think it is important for ordinary citizens of Alberta to think about unity, even if they do not sign the petition."

No target has been set for signatures, but Forest is confident the petition will do well. "Provided we can get enough publicity, I'm convinced we will get a good response."

Information and copies of the petition are available at 288 Kingsway Garden Mall or by phoning 471-4903.

Med student Rhodes scholar

Andrew Wilkinson, a third year medical student at the University of Alberta, has won a Rhodes scholarship.

The scholarship provides for two years of study at the University of Oxford. Three Rhodes scholarships are available in Western Canada, awarded on the basis of academic ability, athletic ability, and extracurricular involvement.

Wilkinson is at present involved in research in biochemistry as part of the options required in the final years of a medical degree. He plans to study politics, philosophy, and economics at Oxford.

Although this may seem a strange choice of studies for a medical student, Wilkinson says he considered political science as a possible course of studies when he entered university and decided against it.

"Now, this gives me a chance to go back and study some of the other things which interest me without feeling I'm

wasting time," he says. Besides, the fields are not all that unrelated. Economics particularly has a lot of implications for medicine.

Wilkinson is president of the Medical Students' Association. He has also been a representative for medicine on Students' Council, and was on the Academic Affairs Board for two years.

He also skies, scuba dives, and plays rugby.

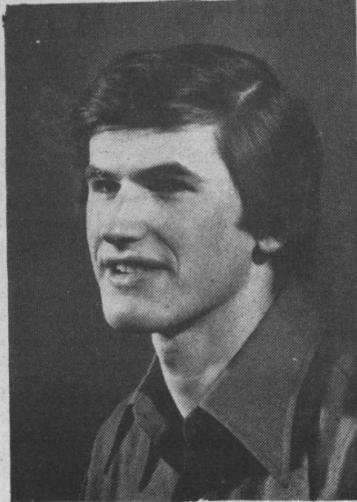
As far as academic work goes, Wilkinson says his marks are "not great. My marks are barely first class."

He says the selection committee are not emphasizing athletic ability, academic ability, or leadership qualities as much as they have in the past. "It's the ability to benefit from the experience they are looking for, not so much outstanding abilities," he says.

Wilkinson's future plans are uncertain. He says he may consider finishing medical school in the eastern United States, and then do a residency in

internal medicine. Eventually, a career in academic medicine is a possibility.

As for the possibility of a political career, as so many of the Rhodes scholars have chosen, Wilkinson says, "It's pretentious to say you have political aspirations. I've always been interested in watching."



Andrew Wilkinson

SU elections coming

Pssst. Wanna know who's running for president?

Rumors are spreading quickly on the second floor of SUB as the Students' Union elections draw closer.

Nominations are now open for the SU executive committee (president, vp internal, vp external, vp academic and vp finance and administration); the University Athletic Board (UAB) (president and vp men's athletics and president and vp of women's athletics) and the one student representative on the Board of Governors.

The nomination deadline is at 5:00 p.m. Thursday, January 24 and campaigning will begin on Wednesday, January 30 at 9:00 p.m.

Classes will be cancelled during the election rally, to be held on Wednesday, February 6 at noon in SUB Theatre.

Anyone wanting to work as election staff at \$4.00 an hour or interested in running for office should contact Sue Savage, Room 271 SUB.

Savage reports that two slates may be in the running.

Oh yeah, that reminds me, did I tell you that...

Kirk Kirkwood

It is the first day back after Christmas break and what is the major topic of discussion among the returning students?

Summer jobs?

At least it is around here.

I was listening to a couple of second year geology students today. It sounds like big oil companies are going to hire them at huge salaries. To do what? To walk in the woods and look for rocks. They don't even have to find any rocks, but should they stumble over one they'll have a supervisor to tell them what it is. Somehow this is how you find uranium. It is the most compelling argument against nuclear power I have heard. Stop the nukes and make those bozos in geology wash dishes like the rest of us.

After all, most of us aren't going to get cushy, well-paid jobs related to our field of study. Most of us end up clerking at the Bay or waiting tables at Fullers. Then again most students are in Arts or Education so there isn't a lot of field-related work for us. Who really needs an Art History major for four months or an English teacher during summer vacation? And whatever work that is available for these people has to be pretty simple, especially for the Arts students. What do you do with people stupid enough to pay fifty cents for a cup of coffee?

The stupidest bozos, however, get the best jobs. That's because they come from large (probably inbred) families who hire each other to do nothing at top wages. Just how they can afford to have so many people doing nothing is puzzling. Apparently most of these family companies survive on government contracts. That would help to explain the deficit for the Montreal Olympics.

There are also the dream jobs. Jobs like being lifeguard at the Banff Springs Hotel or personal assistant to Linda Ronstadt. Nobody knows the people who get these jobs, they are always friends of friends you meet at a party. You're talking about the busy night you had at Fullers and this mythical person tells you about the night he made \$2,000 in tips parking Mercedes in Beverly Hills.

Most of the work out here is stupid, but some of it is totally inexplicable. Take inventory work (anyone who added, please, should be made to paint the white lines down Jaster Avenue at 4:00 pm). Unless the company is willing to shut down for two weeks, by the time you've counted everything, the stock has changed. I was supposed to count the dishes and cutlery at a hotel-restaurant. It can't be done. The stuff keeps moving. Was the stuff coming out of the dishwasher the same stuff I counted on the shelves earlier or staff cleaned out of the rooms? If they bought 200 coffee cups but break 20 a day... eventually I guessed.

Still, maybe there is some justice after all. I heard the oil companies have found a practical way to produce energy from animal wastes. Who knows, eventually geology students may have to shovel shit like the rest of us.