

Speakers Call For Americans' Release

Students Rally to Support Hostages

By PAM BURN

Students and community gathered to cheer their support for the release of hostages held in Iran and witnessed the burning of an Iranian flag at a rally here last Thursday sponsored by the Americans for the Unconditional Release of Americans (AURA).

"Hear that, Iran? That's America talking!" shouted AURA member Joe Freeman above the shouts and cheers from the crowd as the flag burned.

Later, Ford Hart argued that burning the flag was wrong. He said that it is wrong when the Iranians burn U.S. flags. "That's damn wrong! But what are we like when we start burning flags?" he asked.

The rally was coordinated by AURA members, headed by David Beales, a day student here and assistant manager of a company in Fredericksburg. Beales said the group includes "about eight people from the community, some are students." AURA was started about two weeks ago.

Beales said the rally was to show support for the hostages held in the U.S. embassy in Tehran. It also showed support for the Carter Administration, which AURA "backs 100 percent about getting hostages out alive," Beales said.

Student Association President Steve Schlingen said he felt the rally was to educate the students. "They are using people who know something about the situation," he said. He also said the rally was a message from American students to the Iranian students in Tehran.

Schlingen mentioned before the rally that he had heard that people might burn an Iranian flag, or carry trash in one, but he said that he strongly discouraged that. "It should be peaceful, nothing radical," he said.

"Let Our People Go"

The rally, which featured 10 speakers, started as the American flag was displayed from Virginia dorm. After loud cheers and clapping died down, Beales asked for a moment of silent prayer, and "The Star-Spangled Banner" was played.

Members of AURA and several people in the crowd wore white arm bands which Beales explained represented a peaceful solution to the Iranian situation.

"Hear our cries today," Beales said to the crowd. "Students must be one voice which says, 'let our people go.'"

Beales said the AURA backs the U.S. government "with the cost of our lives if we need to." He asked that the students not let anyone "sway us from our goal of releasing the hostages."

AURA advocates an immediate naval blockade of Iran. They call for "immediate and verbal public support of military action in response to the overt aggressions by the country of Iran," according to a statement which has been distributed throughout the campus.

The other speakers differed in their views of how the situation should be handled. All seemed to agree that it should be handled as peacefully as possible. There were pleas asking American students to unite and speak

out, and asking all Americans to back the U.S. government.

MWC-history professor Roger Bourdon spoke after Beales saying that "freedom with peace should be won over and over and over again." He spoke about Khomeini and his council, "which some deem with dignity 'a government,'" he said. He also warned that if the situation was not handled correctly "terrorism will spread throughout the world," and added that Americans currently abroad are in jeopardy.

Peaceful Solution Urged

Psychology professor Alice Rabson told the crowd that she had been opposed to the Vietnam War, and that she is opposed to war in general. "There should be no naval blockade. I know weapons get used, and that will

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