

# Carl Levin: No ransom for hostages

By Wayne Peal  
staff writer

A military strike against the terrorists who killed Marine Lt. Col. William Higgins is appropriate, Sen. Carl Levin said. If those responsible can be clearly identified.

"If in the prompt time frame there was a clearly identified target of people responsible (for Higgins' death), I think the American people would have supported a strike of some kind against that target — and I would have (too)," said Levin, D-Detroit.

A military strike would be inappropriate, Levin said, if the U.S. failed to clearly identify those responsible, or if identification only came after a lengthy investigation. The standard set by the 1986 bombing raid on Libya should serve as a rough guide for future anti-terrorist action, Levin said.

"WE DID a terrific job on Khadafi," Levin said. "Number one, we knew his role. I read his words in the bombing of the cafe in Berlin. We knew exactly what the role of the Libyan government was, we knew where to hit and we hit it hard."

In negotiating for remaining hostages, Levin said, the U.S. should avoid paying ransom.

Levin said he doubted whether U.S. officials were aware of where the hostages were being held at this time, but declined to answer questions on whether government officials ever knew their whereabouts.

His comments came during a Wednesday afternoon session with Observer & Eccentric reporters and editors.

The free-wheeling discussion covered a wide-ranging number of subjects, including the nation's drug war, the federal budget deficit, the nomination of William Lucas as the nation's civil rights chief and Levin's positions on military issues.

## Board to look at landfill sites

The site of the proposed county-owned landfill will be announced at 7 p.m. Thursday at a meeting of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

The Landfill Siting Advisory Committee, composed of 25 residents from different geographic areas of the county, made the selection based on a blind draw system.

**'To me Star Wars makes no sense. It would cost you far more to deploy that system than it would cost the Soviets to defeat it. All they would have to do is double the number of their warheads.'**

—U.S. Sen. Carl Levin



LEVIN, WHO faces re-election next year, said the visit wasn't an early campaign stop.

"This is just something I do from time-to-time," he said.

Regarding the drug war — Levin blamed both the president and Congress for not doing enough to combat drugs.

"He (President George Bush) has not even told us where we would fund the existing law," Levin said. There is a billion and a half dollar gap, he said, between the \$2.7 billion authorized for the federal war on drugs and the \$1.2 billion actually being spent. "Congress is to blame, too," Levin said. "We can vote the money at any time."

On the deficit — Levin said an across-the-board income tax increase isn't necessary. What is necessary, he said, are "cuts in spending and some targeted revenue". Raising the federal cigarette tax and increasing taxes for the wealthiest Americans are steps recommended by Levin.

Committee members developed criteria to evaluate sites around the county suitable for the landfill. An outside consulting firm designed a process by which the sites were designated by numbers — not location.

The public is invited to attend the meeting in the commissioners' auditorium, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

Regarding Lucas — Levin said he agreed with the Senate Judiciary Committee's rejection of the former Wayne County Executive.

"I feel they reached a reasonable conclusion," Levin said. "I thought his answers to some of the questions reinforced his lack of experience in the (civil rights) area."

On conventional military matters — Levin called for removal of select U.S. troops from Europe and South Korea, but said troop reductions must be performed, "very selectively".

"You can't do a lot of unilateral reductions when you're right on the verge of conventional arms talks," Levin said. "You don't want to undermine your own negotiating position."

An estimated 15-20,000 troops assigned to protect now-dismantled European missiles, as well as those for a planned U.S. air base in Italy, aren't necessary and should be recalled, Levin said. Some Army troops assigned to South Korea should also be recalled, unilaterally.

If need be, he added. "(But) I wouldn't recall airborne or intelligence personnel."

Regarding nuclear matters — Levin said he favored the Democratic-backed Midgetman missile to the Republican-based MX, but that increasing the nation's nuclear capacity should be a lower priority than other matters.

"WHO NEEDS 500 more missiles?" he said. "You can make the argument military but I don't think, you make the fiscal argument. We've got deficits, we've got education needs, we've got environmental needs."

Levin also said he opposes the Strategic Defense Initiative.

"To me Star Wars makes no sense," he said. "It would cost you far more to deploy that system than it would cost the Soviets to defeat it. All they would have to do is double the number of their warheads."

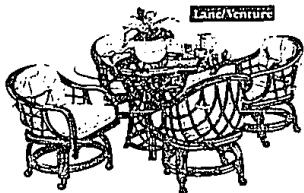
Levin is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and chairman of its subcommittee on conventional forces.

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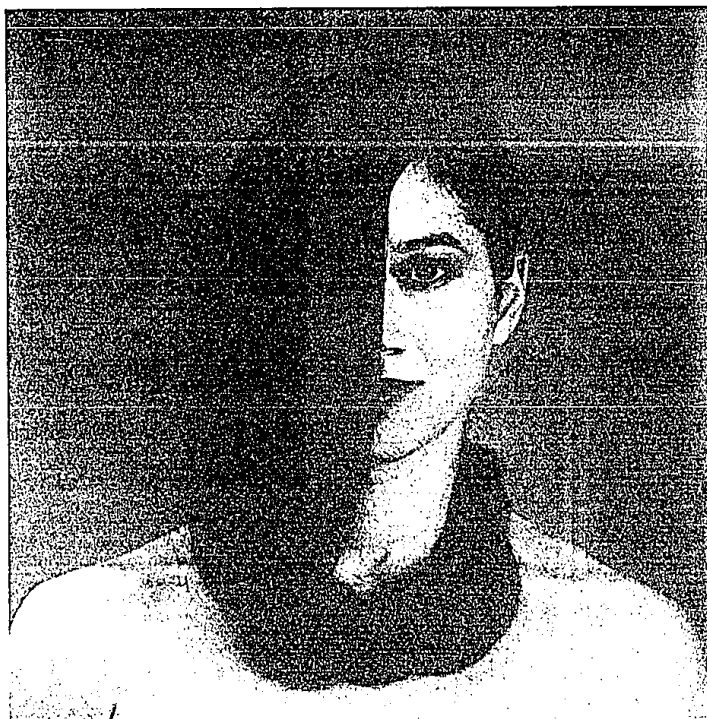
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