

# Opinion

## Considerate cuts

The Senate Labor and Human Resources last week rejected President Reagan's proposal to cut student aid for fiscal 1987 and instead voted to increase spending on higher education by \$1 billion. Students are painfully aware that they must tighten their belts, but the Senate bill not only makes more sense, it makes sucking in our financial guts a little easier.

President Reagan had proposed a \$2 billion cut in student grants and loans by academic 1987-88. The Senate bill, however, extends the Higher Education Act of 1965 through fiscal 1991, thus rejecting Reagan's student aid cutbacks.

The Senate bill would make several changes in the existing law including:

- Requiring a C average to be eligible for financial aid after the sophomore year.
- Restricting Pell Grants to students from families whose annual income is less than \$30,000 after taxes.

But the new bill also enables students to borrow more from the Guaranteed Student Loan and National Direct Student Loan programs. However, interest rates will be higher on these loans. The bill also creates a program that offers grants to students who do community service in exchange for financial aid — an interesting idea that's certainly better than no financial aid at all.

Reagan's plan advocated increasing interest rates on loans, abandoning the current policy of the government paying the interest on GSLs while the student is still in school. He also urged families to devote more of their income to funding higher education.

The Senate bill, however, places the burden of redistributing financial aid money on the government, not on the individual students and their families.

Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah), chairman of the committee, said of the Reagan proposal, "There is only so much blood you can take out of these stones," in reference to the Reagan proposal. The full Senate should consider this when it votes on the bill.

Students aren't so naive that they don't understand the need to cut back on expenditures during hard times. But when we're dealing with something as important as higher education, we need to find the most feasible way to make those cuts as painless and harmless as possible.

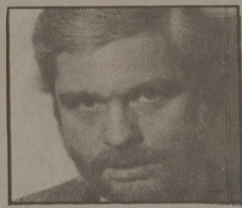
The Battalion Editorial Board



"NO, WEINBERGER... YOU TELL THEM DRUG TESTING IS MANDATORY FOR FEDERAL WORKERS..."

## Might makes right, not wisdom

Moammar Khadafy wears makeup. He dresses up like a woman. He wears high-heel shoes, goes into the desert to talk to himself, has drawn a line across part of the sea, daring anyone to cross it. He calls it the line of death. We'll show him who's crazy.



Richard Cohen

A miniature war followed. It is the sort of thing the United States is getting very good at. You bring an enormous amount of force to bear against a minuscule target. It worked in Grenada and, in a strictly military sense, it will probably work in Libya. Like the Britain of old, we now fight wars that are barely worth plaques on the damp walls of country churches.

A team of CIA shrinks says Khadafy is crazy. And so, apparently, he is. But worse than that, he is mad — maybe criminally insane. His, though, is not a cunning evil. Instead, it is a crude one, evidenced in the blood-spattered walls of international airports and the botched attempts to invade neighboring countries. Ruler of a sandbox, he holds a press conference from a tractor seat and then, like Zeke of Arabia, throws his John Deere into gear and furrows his way into the desert. Both the tractor and its driver could use an oil change.

International law stands solidly behind the United States. The U.S. fleet was in undisputed international waters

when it was attacked. In a court, there would be no question about who was right and who was wrong. But wisdom is a different matter than legality, especially when legality is beside the point anyway. The United States is pushing Libya around not because it has the right to do so, but because it has the power. As usual, might makes right.

But what is the purpose of the U.S. action? That it tainted Moammar the Mad and he responded is beyond question. We left the keys in the car and waited for some kid to come along. But now what? The Gulf of Sidra is on the way to nowhere. There was no urgency in opening it and, besides, we have been there time and time again in the last several years. No one questions that it is international waters anymore than anyone questions that, in a showdown, the United States has the guns to win.

Khadafy drew a line in the water and called it the line of death. But his real line of death is behind him — some army officer who, finally, resolves to end Libya's agony. Some have tried in the past and others will undoubtedly in the future, but there is little chance that they can act now. Any conspirator would seem to be an American accomplice. For the moment at least, the United States turned the difficult into the impossible.

And so we are stuck with Khadafy. What will he do? Surely, CIA analysts have made their predictions but their guess is as good as yours. No one knows. Maybe he has been chastised and will become a more prudent leader. Maybe. Or maybe he is enraged and will spill

blood for the sake of spilling blood. Maybe. It could be that his humiliation will hasten his end, or it could be that it will embolden him. If Khadafy is as mad as he is supposed to be, there is some predicting what he will do.

In a sense, though, Khadafy is at least of it. It is the Soviets we should be thinking about. Somewhere in Moscow there have to be men who look at the hail Gorbachev and see him the Reagan administration officials saw Jimmy Carter. They will talk about weakness, lack of resolve, a weakness in the PR gambit and, manifestly, an erosion of Soviet power and prestige over the world. The same roll call of names — Grenada, Afghanistan, Nicaragua — now a willingness to contest Angkor — can be cited in the Kremlin as evidence of Soviet weakness and lack of resolve. Somewhere along the line, the Russian backbone will stiffen and it will be morning again in Minsk. This is a dangerous game we play.

As this is written, the U.S. fleet strides the so-called line of death saying, "Come on, make my day." For time to time, Libya tries and more byans die as a result. We have legitimized our side, morality, too, and — more important — the power to back them up. But if in the end, an unchastened Khadafy still rules in Tripoli and Libya is brought closer to a resurgent Soviet Union, then the world will know something about the United States, its power in abundance. What it lacks, wisdom.

Richard Cohen is a columnist for Washington Post Writers Group.

## Fundamentalists give Aggieism bad name

Are you an Aggie fundamentalist?



Glenn Murtha

Many religions exist throughout the world — Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and Shinto to name only a few. Different degrees of adherence fall within each religion — fundamentalists who believe in a strict, literal interpretation of religious doctrine, and those who are more moderate or liberal and leave interpretation of scripture to the individual.

One can't discuss religion without mentioning Aggieism, the "true" religion. Many similarities exist between Aggieism and other religions. There are fundamentalist Aggies and more moderate and liberal Aggies, like other religions. Each religion offers a code, or scripture, that one should follow. Each has a place to worship.

Aggie fundamentalists believe in the literal interpretation of Aggie scripture. Aggie scripture can be found in this nice little facts-and-figures book that all cadet freshmen are required to learn. Other more moderate Aggies pick up on Aggieism through other means —

Fish Camp, freshman orientation, etc. I don't consider myself an Aggie fundamentalist — I consider myself irreligious.

I first encountered Aggie fundamentalism at a home football game my freshman year. The game was nearing completion and we were about to lose (the old days). When we lose (are outscored), we're supposed to stay for yell practice after the game. (Let's hope that's one tradition that's dead.)

Some more moderate Aggies opted to leave before yell practice. (I stayed — I was a good Ag back then). This really angered an Aggie fundamentalist. He ranted and raved and said all kinds of nasty things. (If you want unity among the student body, this isn't the way to achieve it). The other Ags just ignored him and went about their business — they left.

Oh by the way, one can't be a true Aggie fundamentalist without wearing a uniform. But don't get me wrong, this doesn't mean that all Ags who wear uniforms are Aggie fundamentalists.

One of my more recent encounters with an Aggie fundamentalist was at the A&M-Texas game. This nice Longhorn guy and some more moderate Ags were engaged in a friendly game of teasing when this high-and-mighty Aggie fundamentalist had to stick his nose in and start rattling on about how the Aggies were going to beat the pants off of UT, and how anyone who could believe in any religion but Aggieism, the "true" religion, just wasn't a good person and was doomed to whatever. It's guys like these Aggie fundamentalists who give Aggieism a bad name.

Followers of other religions worship in churches, temples, and the like. We Aggies worship in a place called Kyle Field. People of other faiths sing hymns. We chant yells. Others kneel in pews. We stand on benches.

Like any other religion, those who practice in moderation are fine. But extremists who try to impose their beliefs on others are not fine.

Aggie fundamentalists have this commandment that they swear by. It goes something like this: "Highway 6 runs both ways." This means that if you don't like something about A&M, that's too bad, you're a bad Ag and you don't belong here.

I don't hear as much of this anymore. I guess all of we non-fundamentalist Ags just got tired of listening to it.

Glenn Murtha is a senior political science major and a columnist for The Battalion.

## Mail Call

### Way off base

EDITOR:  
Loren Steffy's lead column Mar. 25 on the Contra/Sandinista debate was way off base. The crucial issue in the whole matter boils down to this: In 1984 who was elected to set the course of U.S. foreign policy — Ronald Regan or Tip O'Neill?

The bottom line is that neither O'Neill nor any other member of Congress has the constitutional or the popular mandate to obstruct the foreign policy initiatives of the president of the United States.

The checks-and-balances line of argument does not really pertain to matters of foreign policy. The bulky 535-man free-for-all which governs our policy on domestic matters is a sure recipe for disaster in the international arena. One can tolerate the inefficiency of government by committee on the domestic level as simply a cost of democracy.

For international affairs however, such indecision seriously weakens U.S. influence abroad. Making matters worse is the fact that this indecision is interpreted as weakness or a lack of will by our foes. And by retracting our influence we create a vacuum which the Soviet Union and its allies are more than happy to fill.

On the issue of Sandinista rule in Nicaragua, the ideal of objectivity is difficult to justify. We are dealing with an ideology, Communism, that has no moral qualms. It's an ideology where genocide is an acceptable means to carry out one's policy objectives. The track record of Communism is simply too cluttered with corpses and broken lives to give it the benefit of the doubt.

Mark Howell  
Graduate Student

### Uniform one of the privileges

EDITOR:  
Once again, an ill-informed radical-change advocate has shot off his pen in the pages of The Battalion. First the facts:

Melanie Zentgraf, now a captain in the Air Force, did not sue to be in the Aggie Band. In fact, she never sought membership.

One of the privileges of being in the Corps of Cadets is wearing the uniform. And by the way, the "standard military band" uniform Glenn Murtha mentioned is official that of the Corps. It's a uniform not anyone can wear, true. Not because we are exclusive, but because one has to earn the right to wear it. Just as one would earn the right to wear authentic Aggie Football jersey or Singing Cadet jacket. Our uniform is one we are proud of. The effort required to be a member of the Corps and the Aggie Band (and any extracurricular activity) is more than that of the average college student.

Handing out uniforms to anyone wanting to honk horn or march Kyle Field at halftime would demean the uniform's image. Being in the Corps takes determination, stamina and discipline. Discipline enough to make through three hours of drill each day for the Band — often in the scorching heat of their drill field.

Moreover, the exacting discipline of the Aggie Band is what separates us from the "M.O.B." (Rice's band) at most university show bands of other schools. It is the basis of all A&M's traditions — such as our standing 1200 Man and the attendance of Silver Taps. It is what distinguishes all Aggies as Aggies, no matter what uniform we wear.

In conclusion, Murtha, as a civilian student, is welcome to join the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band anytime he pleases. He'll be expected to do nothing more than what every other freshman before him has done — including the women — that is, JOIN THE CORPS.

Jeff Brady '86  
Commanding Officer — Company D-1  
Yori R. Escalante  
Corps Public Relations Officer

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