

Li's action appalling

Chinese Premier Li Peng's commendation Thursday of the People's Liberation Army's "defense" of Tiananmen Square is the latest display of the Chinese government's appalling lack of humanity, acumen and basic common sense.

The student protesters should be commended for their noble aspirations for basic democratic rights, as well as the nonviolent way most of them have sought to bring about the change. The government should be condemned by every civilized nation for its inhumane way of confronting the problem.

A government unused to seeing its wisdom questioned has simply overreacted. But the intensity of the overall reaction to the Beijing massacre may bring about the exact result that it was intended to suppress.

An elite oligarchy has ruled 1.1 billion people with a system that ignores the individual. The individuals may have had enough.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Mayoral office big step for women

Women mayors all over the Lone Star State and everyone wants to know what it means: Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, El Paso, not to mention Galveston, Corpus Christi and more.

Kathy Whitmire, Annette Strauss, Lila Cockrell, Suzanne Azar, Janice Coggeshall, Betty Turner — we've got Madam Mayors out the wazoo around here. Has Texas, that old sexist bastion, where woman's highest ambition was always to be cheerleader, come down with religion? A case of that old-time feminism? Does this prove that there is no such thing as discrimination against women anymore, that we can all quit worrying? No more special pleading necessary? Are they going to disband the Kilgore Rangerettes?

Women got the right to vote in Texas in 1920 (Gov. Bill Hobby Sr. signed that bill), but by 1950 our role as citizens was still so limited we weren't even allowed to serve on juries. (We pass lightly over even earlier eras of Texas sexism when we were legally classed with morons and the insane.)

The role of women in politics was clearly defined — we licked stamps and addressed envelopes. We started moving up slowly, from stamp-licking to office manager, from office manager to campaign manager, to precinct chair, to the school board (whole lot of us on school boards), civic boards and commissions and finally city councils. Just 20 years ago it was rare to find a woman on a city council.

The current crop of women mayors is not bolt out of the blue, it's just one more step for women who had already given long service to their communities on city councils, as treasurer or city secretary. The higher the proportion of women in such offices, the more likely that a woman would finally be elected mayor. That this process came to its logical fruition in several Texas cities simultaneously is swell, but it's not revolution, it's no breakthrough, it's just another step on a very long march indeed.

Some polls show that being female is actually a slight, very slight, advantage for a woman now at the municipal level, because women are perceived as more honest than men (ah, how true). But, there is still a wall that women hit when they run for higher office. Same wall we hit in every other area — lawyers, re-

Molly Ivins
Syndicated Columnist

porters, business executives, bankers. You don't see many women at the top because discrimination lives. It persists and continues not just in subjective areas like promotion and advancement, but in rank pay differences as well.

In politics, the problem is money, the mother's milk of the enterprise. "Is she serious?", is the question most asked about any woman candidate. What it means is, "Does she have money?" And it is just flat harder for a woman to raise money for a campaign than it is for a man. That's the reason EMILY's List and other fund-raising networks for women are being developed, (EMILY stands for Early Money Is Like Yeast — "it makes the bread rise.") The organization is headquartered in Washington and raises money for women candidates with strong records on women's issues, most of it in \$100 contributions from working women.)

The difference between the way men and women have to raise money is neatly illustrated in the case of a mailing made a month ago by Atty. Gen. Jim Mattox that went to all the Democratic precinct chairs in Texas. In addition to a pitch from Mattox, the mailing included an article written by Sam Attlesey and Wayne Slater of the *Dallas Morning News*, a fairly straightforward account of the fund raising being done by Ann Richards and by Mattox. The Mattox campaign highlighted portions of the article in yellow ink and sent it out as a fundraiser for their side, including such alarming news as: "Nearly 65 percent of Ms. Richards' contributors are women, while 90 percent of Mr. Mattox's givers are men." And: "While Atty. Gen. Mattox had tapped traditional Democratic sources of campaign money, Ms. Richards has traveled a different path - from Hollywood to the Harvard Yard, seeking support from celebrities, feminists and first-time political contributors."

There are a lot of people who don't believe a woman can be elected governor — and many of them are women. That is the biggest handicap women running for office still have — we are still considered oddities in positions of authority. It is changing, but slowly, very slowly.

Open mind; close mouth

This summer, for the first time in my life, I ate sushi.

That's not a big deal, right? I mean, sushi is a very trendy food. Lots of people eat it all the time.

But I don't. It's raw fish. I just don't eat raw fish.

Except, of course, when that really nice guy I'm really interested in, who I really want to make a good impression on, takes me out to his favorite Japanese place for his favorite Japanese dish, sushi. Then I eat raw fish.

I should have known that the whole thing was a bad idea when, on the way to the restaurant, he started saying things like, "You'll like it. Just keep an open mind."

I've always considered myself an open-minded person. Now I wasn't so sure.

I tried to think of any excuse to get me out of this meal: "I'd love to go out and get some sushi with you, but, unfortunately, I'm terribly allergic to seafood." That one might work, unless he remembered that the night before I ordered grilled tuna. "I'm not really very hungry. I think I'll just stick with salad." Very lame. I'm known for eating like a bird, literally — my food intake is about twice my body weight.

I finally resigned myself to eating the meal. There didn't seem to be any way for me to avoid it without damaging my pride and dignity.

The restaurant was a very pleasant little place. Our hostess seated us and our smiling waitress brought us our green tea. If I hadn't known better, I never would have suspected these people, who seemed so nice, were plotting in the kitchen to serve me raw fish.

"If you don't like it, you don't have to eat it," said the young man who was sitting across from me. "We can always stop somewhere and pick up some hot dogs or pizza or something."

There is no way I was going to admit that I'd rather eat a hot dog on the cor-



Ellen Hobbs
Editor

ner than sushi at this expensive restaurant. I'd slip all the food into my purse and dump it out in the restroom first.

"I'm almost sure you'll like it, though. It's one of my favorite foods," he said, beaming at me. "You've just got to keep an open mind."

It bothered me that he kept saying that. I am open-minded, I told myself. Just because I have an aversion to eating uncooked fish served with sticky rice does not mean I'm close-minded. In fact, I'm one of the most open-minded people I know. I think.

I've always prided myself on having an open mind, on being able to take the other guy's opinion and weigh it fairly for its virtues and faults. But this little incident was really eating away at my so-called open mind. Why was what I considered to be one of my really positive personality traits being eroded by a plate of seafood?

My train of thought was interrupted by the arrival of the food, and I knew that I was actually going to have to eat sushi. I tried desperately to remain calm. Little beads of sweat began to break out across my upper lip.

The young man started telling me what type of fish each of these little strips of meat had been before they wound up on my dinner plate. He said something that made me laugh, and I began to relax a little bit. Maybe this wouldn't be so bad after all.

For a few minutes, it wasn't so bad. After I doused the fish in hot mustard and soy sauce, it was even sort of tasty.

Then, from out of nowhere, came a small voice: "Hey, what are you thinking? That's raw fish you're biting into!"

I could feel the hinges on my open mind beginning to close. The little slice of pink fish suddenly became a lot harder to chew.

I tried to think about something else: school, work, the play we were going to see that night, my stance on the abortion issue. Nothing worked. I chewed furiously on the fish, no longer able to swallow. The young man began to look at me strangely.

"Is there something wrong? You okay?" he asked.

"Oh, yeah, I'm fine, I'm fine," I said, as I darted around in my mind looking for some mental crowbar to open up my now firmly closed mind.

I wandered back to the idea of open minds for a moment. I saw a bumper sticker once that said, "If you have an open mind, people will throw a lot of garbage in it." I wondered if they really believed that.

I thought for a while about letters we had received at *The Battalion*. I remembered getting some that said that columnists with rather non-traditional ideas had open minds. I wondered how true that was. Just because someone has an alternative outlook, or seems more 'liberal' than the majority of the students on campus, doesn't mean he has an 'open mind.' His mind may be as closed as everyone else's, if not more.

I seemed to be suffering from that sort of syndrome. I could say I have an open mind, but in reality I stick stubbornly to my own ideas. I'm not always as willing to give somebody else's idea a shot as I'd like to think I am.

"Well, how was the halibut?" the young man asked sweetly.

Then I realized — it's gone! I swallowed it! I'm not a close-minded person after all!

"Great!" I said. "I love it!"

"I knew you'd like it," he said. "Go ahead. Have some more."

Ellen Hobbs is a junior journalism major and editor of The Battalion.

Mail Call

Don't let it happen

Editor:

Our legislators in Austin just passed an amendment giving themselves a 300 percent pay raise.

This outrageous salary increase, at a time we can least afford it, will cost us, the taxpayers, \$3.5 million a year.

It gets worse. The amendment will take away the voters right to vote on future pay raises. In my opinion, the legislators are not being financially responsible with our wallets.

The legislators have craftily worded the amendment on the Nov. 7 ballot to limit their salary to one-third of the governor's salary. The legislators vote on the governor's salary.

Basically, they will vote their own pay raise when they give the governor a pay increase.

Their salary doesn't include the present daily allowance of \$30, which will be increased to \$81. That's \$4200 increased to \$11,340 for 140 days of work in Austin. Can you imagine getting that kind of allowance for food and gas?

We need state government to be financially responsible. We need to stop this pay raise.

Lynn Oates
Fort Worth, TX

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The Battalion

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