

U.S. should support Lithuania's fight for freedom

Since the days of David and Goliath, it's been human nature to back the underdog in any sort of confrontation. Whether rooting for the Cubs to make the Series or pulling for an upstart fighter from Cleveland to knock Mike Tyson on his duff, we as Americans have always rooted for the little guy. Until now.

Why are we hanging little Lithuania out to dry? This small Baltic republic with roughly the same population as Los Angeles has asked us for nothing but an affirmation of the democratic ideals and principles which we as a nation have espoused for over two centuries.

A public declaration of support for Lithuanian independence and recognition of the democratically elected government of President Vytautas Landsbergis is a pitifully small price to pay in order to demonstrate our resolve to support democracy and avoid charges of hypocrisy.

Larry Cox
Columnist

Why do we hesitate? Simply put, our polite president doesn't want to step on his new buddy Gorbachev's toes. In this matter, however, Gorbachev doesn't have a leg on which to stand.

President Landsbergis has pointed out time and again that Lithuania is not seeking to secede from the Soviet Union and establish independence. Rather, it is working to restore an independent state which had been illegally suppressed by a foreign power and its army fifty years ago.

If Gorbachev is truly interested in allowing democracy to spread and

flourish, our recognition of a free Lithuania will hasten this process.

If, on the other hand, glasnost and perestroika are merely ploys to divert attention away from crises within the Soviet Union, isn't it time we found out?

It's prudent to ask whether we're willing to watch another Tiananmen Square type situation unfold in Lithuania and then, after a few weeks of saber rattling, go back to playing footsie under the bargaining table.

Or, are we as a nation willing to stand up for our principles and risk pushing Gorbachev toward an untimely retirement? In either case, his usefulness as a democratic reformer is nearing its end if he intends to stop the spread of democracy at the Soviet border.

With or without Gorbachev, democracy has inexorably progressed across Eastern Europe and will not be turned back by any means short of

World War III.

The Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia were forcibly annexed by the Soviet Union after the second World War, and should be given the same backing and support from our government that Poland, Hungary, and the other former Soviet slave states are being given.

Our hesitation in this matter brings to mind two historical perspectives.

The first occurred during our own American Revolution, when General Lafayette and the French gave us critical support against that time period's most powerful nation — Great Britain. Without this heroic display, a heroism apparently lacking in our current administration, we might have remained a British pawn for decades.

The second perspective is more unsettling but particularly apt — that of

the Bay of Pigs invasion. Just as we trained and then abandoned those heroic Cubans at the height of the War, we have nurtured the democratic ideals which are driving Lithuania towards democracy and appear ready to compromise those ideals to keep the Great Thaw.

Thomas Jefferson said that all that is necessary for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing.

George Bush, a big fan of nothing unless the opinion polls dictate otherwise, appears willing to oblige.

In the battle for Lithuanian independence, it looks like Goliath is finally pulling one out.

It's ironic that in this battle, unlike many others, David is not asking us for rocks — just recognition.

Larry Cox is a graduate student in range science.

Mail Call

International experiences worth effort

Editor:

As a graduating senior, I want to take a moment to share some thoughts with my fellow aggies.

I began at this University at age 25 as a freshman. Before coming here, I had various chances to go overseas, i.e. Columbia, Mexico, Japan, Hong Kong. Those were some of the most rewarding and enlightening experiences of my life. Then when I came here, I began to be friends with students from those countries as well as from other countries.

Sincerely, I want to say that what I have learned from these "international" students during the past five years is much more valuable than any lessons I learned in any of my classes. These students have so much to share with us if we'll take the time to hear and to understand.

The Bible tells us to "love those who are aliens" (Deut. 10:19), and Jesus said that to welcome the stranger is to welcome him (Matt. 25:35). We have received so much that we can share with them by just being a good American friend. Let's take the time to get together, because we really need each other.

Respect for other people is something the A&M tradition represents, but to actually respect others is not easy. Becoming friends with the international students around us teaches us to respect the people of the world.

It's an adventure that is well worth experiencing. When a chance comes to meet and spend time with one or more of these students, don't hesitate. Give it all you've got.

Paul Wyatt '90

Have an opinion? Express it!

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The GREENING of CORPORATE AMERICA:



Bush administration's policies too soft on China

Three score and eleven years ago, on this day, the people of China took to the streets, demanding democracy. One year ago, they demanded once again in Tiananmen Square. But exactly eleven months ago, Tiananmen Square flooded over with blood, and her Goddess of Democracy crumbled under the wheels of government tanks.

The violence spread throughout the country, to places that have no television cameras. No one will ever know how many were maimed or killed.

The Chinese government had slaughtered people once again, and this time our own government could not ignore it. The president spoke on television — spinelessly. He said that he could not condone and he wasn't sure because the line was busy on the telephone. He suspended both high-level contacts and military sales to the Chinese government — minimal actions in response to the massacre of thousands of people.

In the following days, weeks, then months, the crackdown continued. By February, over 100,000 people had

Irwin Tang
Columnist

been arrested for simply expressing their opinions. Hundreds had been executed (109 soldiers alone, said one report). The torture, the forced confessions, the re-education, the self-criticism were all parts of a new repression that swept over China. Children and college students had to learn how to think the way the Communist Party wanted them to think. People were not allowed to smile and walk at the same time through Tiananmen Square. And liberal members of the Communist Party were kicked out of political office.

The repression continues today, and no one sees any end to it. And U.S. foreign policy continues to make it politically and economically affordable for Chinese hard-liners to continue the crackdown.

George Bush's China policy went from soft to softer soon after the crackdown in China began. Less than one month after the Tiananmen massacre, Bush lifted the ban on military sales to send the hard-liners \$48 million of military aircraft. A few weeks after that, Bush ended the suspension of high-level contacts to allow the American ambassador participate in a celebration with the Chinese government over a business deal. And not long after that, Chinese government engineers were allowed to resume work in New York state to improve the Chinese Air Force's F-8 fighter planes with American technology — teaching killers to kill more efficiently. Still later, in December, our president sends General Scowcroft (National Security Adviser) and Lawrence Eagleburger (Deputy Secretary of State) to visit with the newly-installed hard-line conservative leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The two Americans toasted their drinks with those who ordered the massacre on Tiananmen Square.

A Bush official defended these actions with a statement that amounted to 'Forgive and forget'.

Tell that to the four Chinese students that jumped to their deaths in a mass suicide at Quinghua University. They killed themselves as a result of an intimidation program set up in the continuing repression in China.

In America, the Chinese students feared, as well. Government agents secretly intimidated the students right under the FBI's apathetic nose. The students knew that when they returned to their homeland they might be sent directly to prison. So they worked with the American Congress to create a bill that would guarantee an extension of their visas.

The bill was drafted and passed unanimously through both houses of Congress. But then the President vetoed it! Only under political pressure did the President finally issue an executive order equivalent to the bill. He issued it in April — months after the original bill was passed.

Meanwhile, American companies were allowed to give the Chinese government billions of dollars to buy American satellites into orbit. The technology that the Chinese government needs for its military, monitoring, and economic power is allowed to be traded.

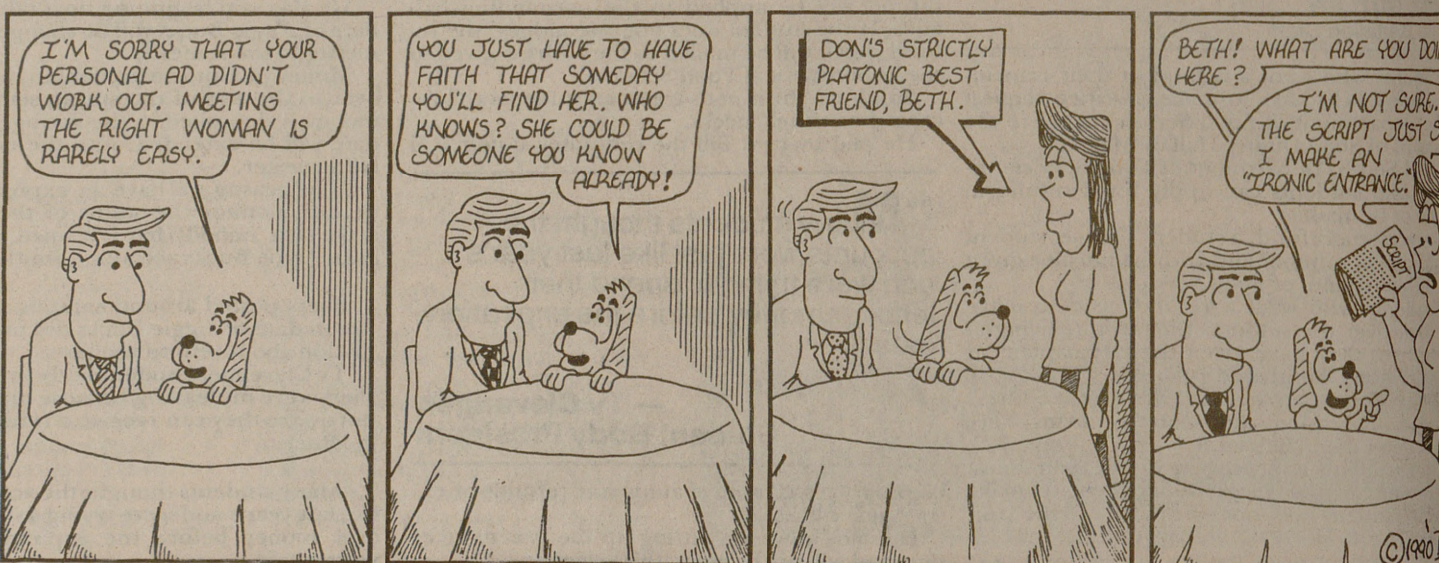
Ironically, former chairman Deng Xiaoping once said that truth must be gotten from facts. Unfortunately, the facts convict our president for creating a China policy that supplies the guns, money, technology, and political support that enables the Chinese government to continue the repression of their own people (and I have not even mentioned the killing of Tibetan Cambodians, and China's minorities the government).

No, the United States does not support human rights in China. It supports human death. So, tomorrow after we have honored the moment of silence, let us scream, cry out for human rights and democracy in China.

Irwin Tang is a junior political science major.

Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson Jr.



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