

How many people will die for cheaper gasoline?

It has been more than three months since President Bush deployed troops to the Saudi Arabian desert in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and with no diplomatic solution in sight, people who once scoffed at the idea of war are beginning to get nervous.

Any military action in Kuwait would not be the usual "police action" the American public has occasionally seen during the past ten years — Iraq is no Grenada and Saddam Hussein is no Manuel Noriega. Military analysts have estimated that Iraqi military forces are the fifth largest in the world.

But in the event that things do take a turn for the worst, there is no question that the United States can emerge victorious; but what is uncertain is what the costs will be in American casualties. Even more so, what are these costs buying?

President Bush contends that the

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 Columnist

Iraqi invasion of Kuwait has nothing to do with the American dependence on foreign oil. He insists that what is at issue is the "naked aggression" of one country onto another. On recent campaign stops for his fellow Republicans, Bush has been tireless in his painting of a picture where the United States is the only nation on Earth equipped to stop Hussein. His speeches seem to convey the theme of "If not us, who? If not now, when?" Bush even went as far as to compare Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler, a comparison

not well taken by the Jewish community.

Now Bush, and his right hand man Secretary of State James Baker, are using the example of the German invasion of Poland in 1939. Saying that history shows that an aggressor's hunger for more territory is never satiated, Bush justifies his large buildup in the Persian Gulf.

A noble argument indeed, and one at first glance seems to make quite a bit of sense. But are the American people supposed to believe that 230,000 American troops are in the Saudi desert merely to defend Kuwait's monarchy? We deserve more credit than that.

Every American who drives a car, rides a bus, mows their lawn, shops at a grocery store or heats their home, knows that the sole purpose of the American deployment in the Persian Gulf is based entirely on the realization

that oil is a necessity in Twentieth century America. By taking the moral high ground with the argument that we are merely containing the aggressive nature of Saddam Hussein, Bush makes it easier to justify the potential sacrifice of American troops.

Yet at the same time the denial of the fact that it is the oil fields of Saudi Arabia and not the people of Kuwait that the United States is interested in, Bush clouds the debate of public opinion on whether U.S. troops should be in jeopardy for lack of a U.S. energy policy. If the citizens of the United States are willing to support the presence of U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf based solely on the fact that they are there to protect America's oil interest, then so be it. And if the United States goes to war with Iraq let it be clear that it is to defend the comfortable

American way of life, not the people of Kuwait and the sovereignty of their nation as George Bush suggests.

So the question for the president, and the American people for that matter, is not how many men and women we are willing to sacrifice for the people of Kuwait, but how many men and women we are willing to sacrifice for the comfort of reasonable gasoline prices.

In other words, when does a gallon of gas cost too much for the American people to bear? If Americans are willing to buy the argument that an armed conflict with Iraq is necessary to ensure that their lifestyles aren't cramped, fine. But the President needs to level with the American people so we can decide for ourselves.

Patrick Nolan is a senior political science major.

Mail Call

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following letters were written in response to a column by Steven K. Medvic, president of Aggie Democrats, printed on the Opinion Page Monday.

Column misrepresented Smith

EDITOR:

In yesterday's Batt you published a half-page reader's opinion column from Steven K. Medvic, president of Aggie Democrats, in which he attacked the Republican party, its candidates and the voting traditions at Texas A&M.

Mr. Medvic misrepresented my stand on issues of importance to students. Let's set the record straight. I have been A&M's champion in the Texas House, but don't take my word for it. Texas Monthly (which is not exactly conservative) named me one of the Ten Best Legislators, largely due to my work for higher education. In 1987, I fought in the Texas House to restore funding to A&M that had been cut drastically by Mark White and the Democrats.

And let's make it perfectly clear that I am and always have been in support of student representation on the Texas A&M Board of Regents.

As a result of my commitment to higher education funding, I have been recognized — an commendation by such prominent members of the education community as the chairmen of the A&M and University of Texas Boards of Regents, former A&M presidents Frank Vandiver and Jarvis Miller and numerous other members of the faculty and staff at A&M.

I was also honored in 1984 to have M.T. Harrington, Chancellor Emeritus, say, "Richard Smith is dedicated to making Texas A&M a world-class institution. He is the can-

didate who can go to Austin and fight for our share of funding. Our University isn't just a constituency for Richard, it's a commitment."

Rep. Richard Smith

Comments on Ogden inaccurate

EDITOR:

I was disgusted to see Mr. Steven Medvic's inaccurate and misinformed opinions given undeserved prominence in a column on the second page of yesterday's Battalion. Not only did Mr. Medvic's commentary insult the conservative and wonderfully Republican sentiments of the majority of Aggie students, but his column showed a clear disregard for the facts in a race I have been closely following: the state representative race between conservative businessman Steve Ogden and liberal trial lawyer Jim James.

In his column Mr. Medvic asserted that Steve Ogden does not support a student representative to the A&M Board of Regents, which shows me that Mr. Medvic either wasn't listening or chose not to listen when Mr. Ogden announced his support for a student representative to the Board of Regents. Mr. Medvic, like many Democrats, tends to only hear what he wants to hear. I can assure all Aggies that Mr. Ogden is deeply concerned with the views and opinions of A&M students, and his voice will echo theirs if they send him to Austin as their state representative.

Amy Webb
 Steve Ogden campaign worker

Texas A&M liberals aren't so bad after all

Heard any good jokes lately? Here is an idiom I enjoy: If you aren't liberal when you are young, you don't have a heart. If you aren't conservative when you are old, you don't have a brain.

Though it is only a joke, I'm amazed by the truth within it. I have always heard that once we leave the idyllic college life and establish careers we tend to drop our utopian views of how the world should function.

College students have always been renowned for embracing liberal beliefs. In this respect, Texas A&M is no different. The majority of Aggies are liberals. Compared to t.u or the Northeastern schools we stand farther to the right, but in absolute terms this student body is still liberal. The problem is they don't realize it.

Most Aggies are what I like to call "latent liberals." A latent liberal is somebody who, due to a lack of disciplined study of economic theory, tends to view the world with the idealistic and erroneous set of liberal beliefs. In other words, ignorance is liberal.

Ever since we were little children, we have always wanted the world to be a better place. As elementary school children, we draw crayon pictures of purple and yellow and black stick-people all holding hands and smiling. And we wonder why there has to be wars. We later learn about the evils of political power and oppression and rebels who fight against it.

Little children ask, why does there have to be poverty and famine? Why can't we just send them food? How do you explain to a child the adverse effects of income support programs that destroy families and discourage legal work income? Or how Asian and African despots subjugate their own people all under the intellectual disguise of socialism?

Until they receive formal training in economics, most people will not understand markets, prices, firm behavior and macroeconomic theory. But that doesn't stop them from expressing inane views on how economics works.

This realization hit me in one of my intro-political science classes when my professor administered a survey to gauge the classes political leaning. Most of the questions dealt with markets and the role of governments in a market economy, not religion, sexuality, abortion, or freedom of speech

Andrew Matthews
 Columnist

questions.

When the results came in, I turned out to be the most right-wing person in the class. Most of the other students were nowhere near me.

That's the problem with this campus. Everybody thinks it is conservative, when most students are running around with the same old hodge-podge collection of misleading, ignorant political views that can be found at any campus in the United States.

What this campus needs is more diverse and emotional political debate. We need more extreme left-wingers who are louder and more obnoxious. Though I think the Students Against Apartheid are a bunch of self-righteous morons who promote policies that only succeed in hurting blacks in South Africa, we still need them on campus to wake people up to the events in South Africa. It makes the campus more exciting. I mean, a campus without protests is like an auto race without wrecks — It's too dull.

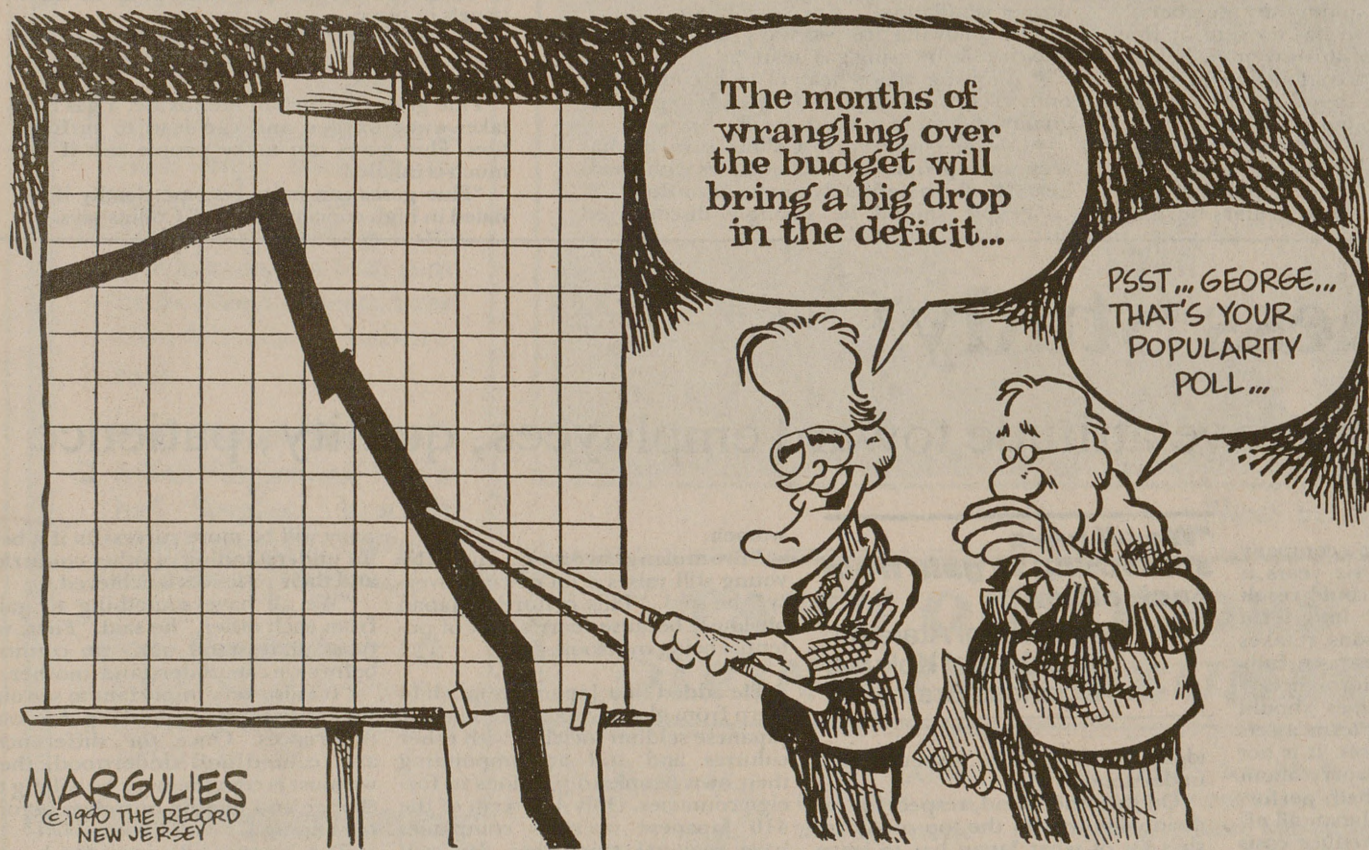
A more diverse student body like t.u. would create an electric atmosphere of heated social discourse that would wake up all those "moderates" and force them to actually think about the issues. And the more they learn, the more they will abandon their simplistic leftist opinions.

This competition from the left also would push us right wingers to strengthen our arguments. We would not want to get too complacent with our views. If anything, having more "alternative people" would save this campus from looking like a clone machine that went haywire.

As it is now, our subdued campus wallows in a perpetual state of mind-numbing political boredom. Let's have some marches and sit-ins and more poorly-built shanties with groovy peace signs. My liberal colleagues on the opinion page are pulling their weight, but columns can only go so far.

So I would like to praise all those wild and crazy left-wingers on campus. Even if they are absurd and usually wrong, at least they make us think.

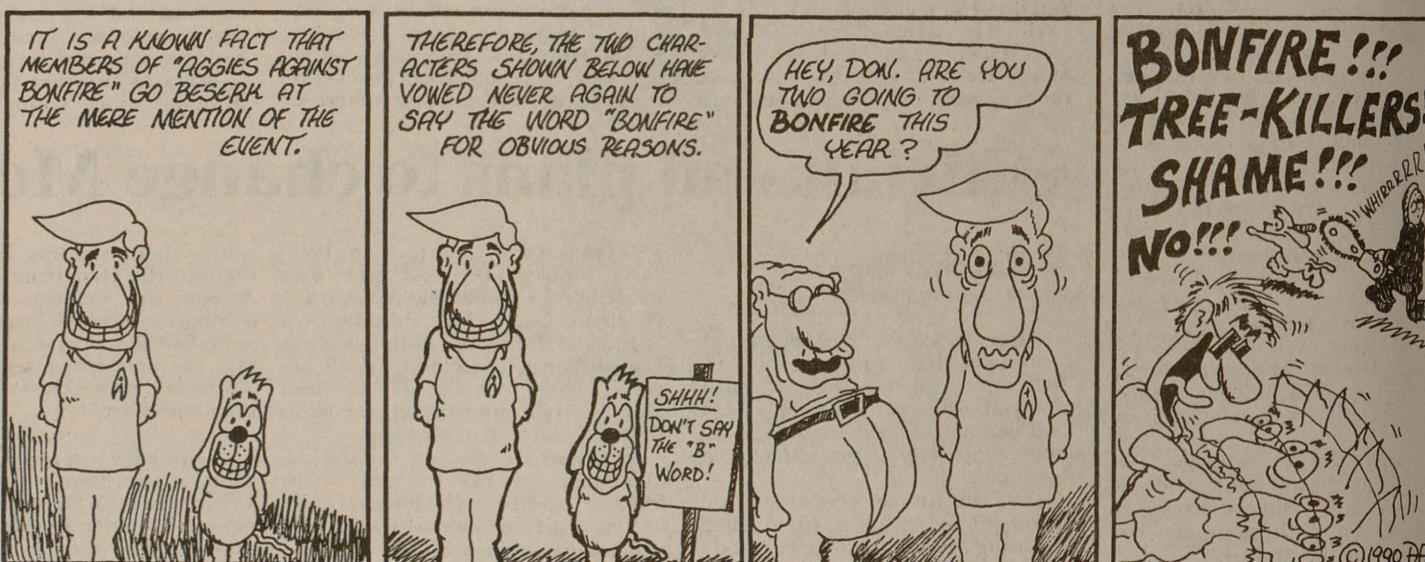
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