



Taking sides:

Should the European Community ratify the Maastricht Treaty?

By ANTOINE MONTEILS

By IGOR CARRON

The European Community began in 1957 with the Treaty of Rome. The European monetary system (1979) and the future single market of 1993 create the base for an economic and monetary union.

According to the Maastricht Treaty, a single currency and a common central bank should be operating in Europe by the end of the century. The treaty will also legislate European citizenship and will organize closer cooperation among member states on foreign policy.

While the ultimate goal is to create the "United States of Europe," the agreement represents only one stage and is still far from a federal structure. Decisions are made by the Council of Ministers of all 12 countries, and the most important policy decisions require unanimous approval. The Brussels Commission, often accused of power abuse, is in reality only the executive arm of the council. Finally, the Court of Justice controls the whole and protects the citizen.

Maastricht is a step — an important one — toward closer European integration. This integration lies behind the dream of a world without borders where peace would be eternally secured. It is also supported by some "realpolitik" justifications.

The treaty provides increased economic efficiency with the fall of trade barriers and the use of a common currency.

It creates a strong democratic entity as an element of stability and security. It offers a more efficient way to work out disputes through the Court of Justice instead of fighting.

A unified Europe will be a better influence in world affairs; a politically united Europe would have intervened more efficiently in Yugoslavia.

The rejection of the treaty by the Danes and its narrow victory in France shows that some issues are worrying people and need to be addressed in order for the EC to gain popular support.

One concern is the voting by foreigners in local elections; this should be carefully organized by each country to avoid possible resentment among local citizens.

Language and education issues will have to be addressed as soon as possible.

Another worry is the recent European financial turmoil. Since this is due to a lack of European unity that allows nations to act individually, the common central bank that the Maastricht Treaty calls for would help solve this problem.

Some are concerned about the pace of integration. Well, it has been going on for 35 years and is far from completion. Why should we wait?

Besides, cultural identities are being Americanized far more than Germanized or Italianized.

I am sure that even if I pay in a common currency, I will still be able to go to bullfights in Spain and drink ouzo in Greece.

As a citizen of France, I see Europe as an opportunity to promote French culture, language and technology.

As a citizen of the world, I hope to see the peaceful fall of national borders. Promoting international friendships remains, in my view, the best way to prevent war in the future.

Monteils is a French graduate student in business and is president of the TAMU European Club.

The European Community (EC) was born 35 years ago, the result of people of good will. The EC has evolved wonderfully since then. Wonderfully is actually not the word: let's say it was less painful for the Europeans to get together than to fight each other as was the case with the first part of this century.

The Maastricht Treaty proposes to unify twelve countries of the European continent in a predicted powerful economic alliance that would enable the Europeans as a bloc to conduct trade agreements with the Japanese and the Americans. While I am not against this concept, I cast a "no" vote in the French referendum for the ratification of this treaty, and here are some of the reasons why.

First of all, I do not agree with the sudden rush of European politicians to proceed with this kind of project when we have yet to see any of the results that the openings of the economic borders will have on the economies of each of the countries. The opening of the economic borders is planned for Jan. 1, 1993. Past attempts at easing the transition from independent economies to one unified economy have failed! The European pact on agricultural policies failed to even convince European farmers of the treaty's benefits. Adding to that, it seems obvious to me that the European leaders failed to sell the treaty to their people: why should the voters trust the politicians when they haven't even bothered explaining what the treaty was really all about? What I saw on the continent during the summer, were politicians arrogantly saying "If you don't vote 'yes' for this treaty, Europe will be Yugoslavia AND I will quit". While it seems that some politicians offer similar ultimatums in the United States too, I, as a voter, am not inclined to trust this political blackmailing of their own people.

Beyond these objections, the current mood of "good feeling" towards the ideal of a united Europe, places the politicians and the treaty itself above question and criticism. The danger in a democracy — as evidenced by the French revolution — exists when leaders believe they're doing great things when in actuality they have no feedback from the people who elected them.

Overall, the arguments against the treaty are multiple. The text itself ignores the future economic and social transitions it creates, which might be detrimental to the union itself in the long term. In addition the means by which the Maastricht Treaty was elaborated to the public and voted upon raises questions as to its acceptance to the voters as a whole. Remember that only the Danes, the Irish and the French had the opportunity to voice their collective opinions through a referendum on this capital issue. The fact that the Danish government will impose a second vote next year in hopes of increasing voter support reminds me of my mother nagging me to repeat things until I said them correctly. Do the righteous politicians think the voters are really that stupid, or are they paying the price of not having done their jobs correctly in presenting a workable European Community to the voters and the world?

Carron is a French graduate student in nuclear engineering

'Howdy' a good but dying habit

Friendly tradition truly distinguishes Texas A&M

Howdy. The word is so simple, yet the tradition seems to be dying.

When visitors and prospective students tour the campus, they're told how friendly A&M is because of all the Aggies who smile and say "howdy."

At first, the word "howdy" may sound foreign to some newcomers whose vocabulary never included words like "howdy" or "gig 'em." These immigrants hail from lands as far away as Houston or Dallas or any city large enough to have more than one Dairy Queen — places unfamiliar with our Aggie language.

At first, hearing the words pass from their own lips may sound a bit unusual, but saying the word "howdy" doesn't seem so strange, once the newcomer is asked to sing "hullabaloo, caneck, caneck."

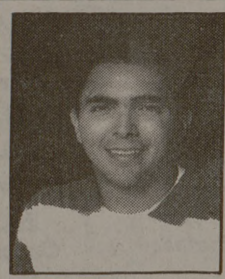
Freshmen seem to be the most valiant observers of the "howdy" tradition. Fresh from Fish Camp, these wide-eyed zealots still have enthusiasm dancing in their eyes and "howdy" springing from their tongues. Passing a group of upperclassmen who already know better, the freshmen smile and emit a genuine "howdy," sweet as molasses made with NutraSweet.

Now, if the group of upperclassmen is feeling friendly — not having consumed Campus cuisine — one or two may actually recognize the ritual and say "howdy" back.

In fact, the whole group usually will grow animated, remembering who they are — Aggies — and where they are — A&M. Like a hypnotic code word, "howdy" musters up the enthusiasm those upperclassmen once displayed when they first came to Texas A&M.

The Corps is an outfit well known for upholding University traditions. Yes, they may bludgeon the occasional adventurer who has nothing better to do than run across Kyle Field. And maybe they did harass some female cadets last year, but maybe they didn't.

But no one can dispute that the Corps does one thing better than almost any other organization at Texas A&M:



ROBERT VASQUEZ
Columnist

Make national news.

OK, the Corps does two things better than any other organization. Corps members almost always say "howdy" as they march to class. True, they usually don't smile, or look at you, or even blink, but they almost always say "howdy." And that's cool. It kinda' humanizes them. And it sets them apart from the rest of the zombies fumbling between classes.

Fraternity members usually get a bad rap for reasons which may or may not have to do with devil worship and sacrificing virgins. But one particular "frat daddy" showed himself an uncommonly good Aggie.

After checking out 13 books at one time, as bookworms, nerds and last minute paper-writers often do, I opted to return all of the books at one time. Although the combined poundage of the books weighed slightly more than an imported sports car, one trip to the library saved precious seconds as my Honda sat in one of 12 empty tow-away zone parking spaces.

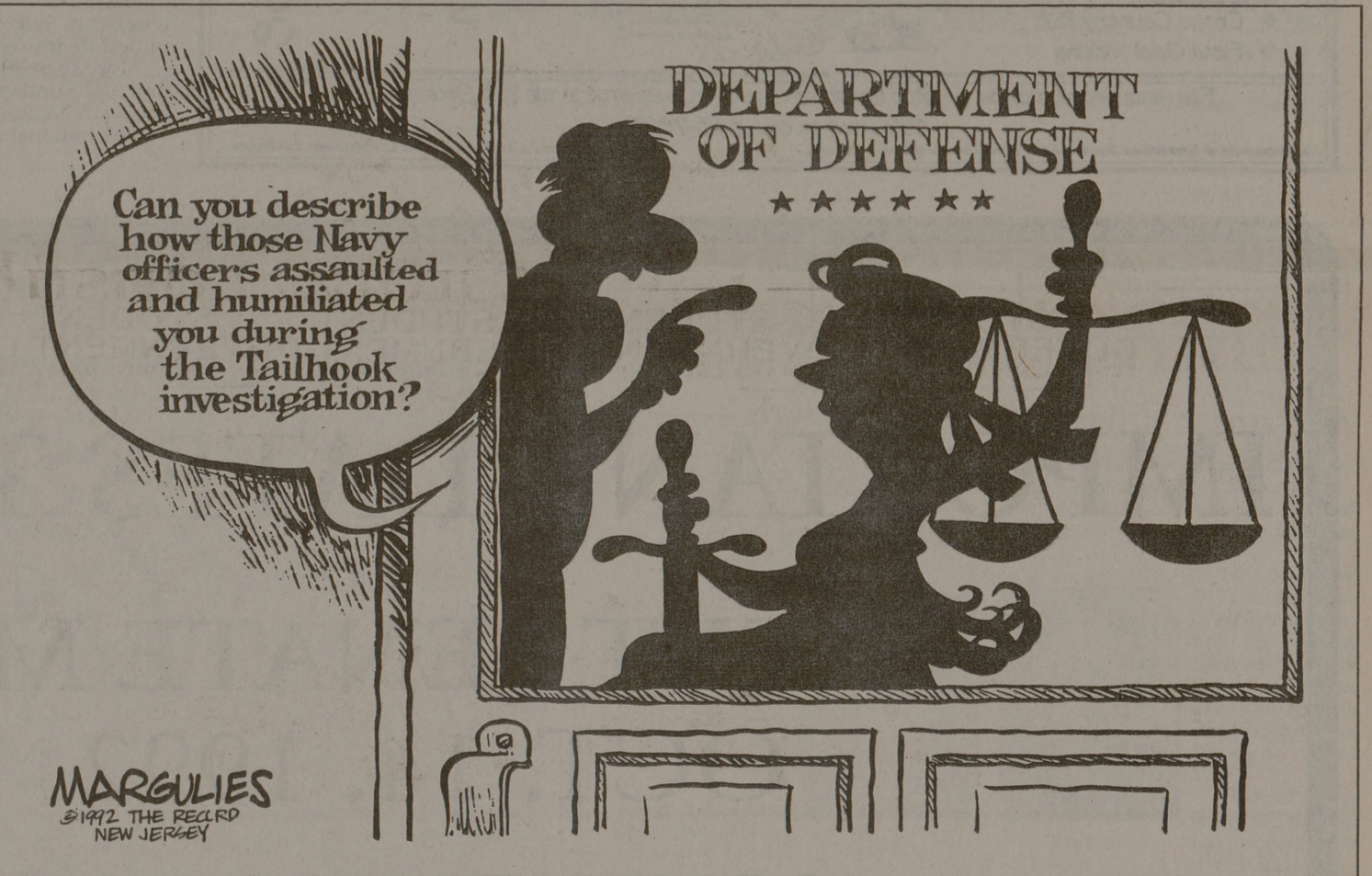
Juggling books and stumbling toward the library, I mumbled "howdy" to the students who scurried to safety. One of the students passing by wore clothes with little horses on it — suggesting he spent more on his wardrobe than the state of Texas does on education. He smiled and said "howdy" back, and then he turned and asked if he could help.

Caught off guard by this stranger's thoughtfulness, I stopped for a second, realizing that this was the friendly campus that I had always heard of. Unprompted by a tour guide, this Aggie had made an effort to make a stranger feel at home.

Aggies often boast of the friendliest campus in the world. We credit the "howdy" tradition for making a huge campus seem smaller and less impersonal. Traditions that make Texas A&M one of the best universities in the world are kept alive by students like you and me.

Like the right-of-way in traffic, "howdy" is something to be given and not taken. So the next time you pass someone on campus, take a second, lighten up and help keep a tradition alive. Say "howdy."

Vasquez is a senior journalism major



MARGULIES
1992 THE RECORD
NEW JERSEY

MAIL CALL

Campus food cooked, but still a raw deal

Gee, the Northgate restaurants petitioned the University not to allow privatization of food services. Why would they care?

Maybe because the food on campus is so unusually awful and overpriced that students are forced off campus? Nawww, it couldn't be.

Well, hmmm — what looks good? Food Services specials? No — one look reminds me of a rap album (nasty as it wants to be). Well, maybe a roast beef sandwich would be good.

One piece of bread with three wimpy looking pieces of roast beef. Hey! This isn't a sandwich! It comes with this broth stuff (supposedly gravy) poured on it, with a splat of watery potatoes beside it. Doesn't look like much, so I guess I'll get a bag of chips with it.

What? Out of medium sized cups? Guess I'll have to get a large cup ...

maybe they'll sell it to me for the price of the medium I wanted. Ha, ha, ha ... yeah, right.

I hand the lady my ID card to pay with magic money — Aggie bucks. She tells me my new balance. Since this is an experiment, I ask her how much I was charged for the meal. \$6.40. Huh? Excuse me?

I look at the food. I look at the lady. Back at the food. Back at the lady. I ask hopefully if I can keep the plate to add to my fine dinnerware set. Nope.

I sincerely hope the food tastes better than it looks. The roast beef is gone in three bites, leaving half a slice of bread. The mashed potatoes keep sliding through the fork so they get left.

Well, no reason to stay. Get chips, drink and backpack and depart \$6.40 poorer, and still hungry.

So allowing competition on campus is going to hurt the students? What a crock. Any business major can tell you that competition increases quality and lowers prices.

If the University is here for students it will decide unequivocally to allow restaurant companies on campus ... but don't bet on it.

So what's the problem? The University has its hand in the money jar once again. And, from experience, I can safely say that anyone that stands between the University and money will get run over.

All those funny stories you hear about Aggies? Those are jokes. The students here are at A&M aren't really

stupid. We know we're getting a raw deal.

William Oliphant
Class of '94

Pro-choice translates to anti-children

Here's a tear for the children who will never see a sunset and feel the wind upon their face. For lips that will never kiss their mother and ears that will never hear their name. For hands that will never clap with joy and arms that will never embrace.

Here's a tear for the children whose heart will never cease to love and a love that will never be felt. For laughter that will never be heard and a smile that will never be seen. For dreams that will never be shared and eyes that will never be dry.

Here's a tear for the children who will never have a chance Because of a choice.

Stephen Emmons
Class of '94

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