



EDITORIALS

Coddling China

U.S. trade policy far too forgiving

Once again, the Senate fell short of the vote needed to reverse President Bush's veto of a bill placing conditions on China's most-favored-nation trade status. This is a sad commentary on an administration rhetorically touting the formation of a kinder, gentler nation and promoting democracy around the world.

The killed bill held China accountable for the flagrant civil rights violations that occurred at Tiananmen Square in the summer of 1989 by revoking most-favored-nation trading status for those Chinese enterprises that are state-owned.

President Bush refuses to deal with a Cuban government that denies its citizens basic civil rights. Ironically, the same Bush administration has continued to carefully court China's hardline government — a government that ordered the massacre of hundreds of protesting

students, that arrested and executed countless more, and that continues to forbid thousands of Chinese from returning to their homeland and families.

Our country prides itself on its long-standing practice of espousing democracy to the less fortunate citizens of the world. Yet, the Bush administration continues to grant most-favored-nation trade status to a country that would go so far as to kill its own people.

While it is a political reality that the United States must maintain friendly relations with China, we do have a responsibility to exercise the appropriate reprimand when the issue is critical and the means of admonition readily available. By vetoing this bill, which placed moderate restrictions on most-favored-nation trade status for China, the Bush administration once again failed to back idealism with action.

New order, new policy

Time to cut arms sales to Mideast

According to the Congressional Budget Office in a report issued last week, the United States could save \$10 billion a year in defense costs by reducing arms sales to the Middle East. Though these defense cuts might cost the United States as much as \$3 billion, the long range savings combined with the added possibility of peace in the Middle East outweigh the short term profits that accompany America's position as the weapons clearinghouse for the world.

Faced with the skyrocketing costs of the federal debt, the United States can no longer afford to shovel millions of dollars into the war-making machinery of a volatile Middle East. While the Bush administration pushes for peace in the Middle East, the United States continues to rely

on arms sales to those same nations in order to prop up a sagging U.S. economy.

The Middle East represents a small and shrinking market for American arms; since 1984, arms sales to the Middle East dropped from \$33 billion to \$15 billion.

If the Bush administration proves successful in its endeavors to bring a lasting and meaningful peace to the war-torn region, Middle East demand for American arms will only continue to dwindle.

An added tool in the peace process, arms sales limitations to the Middle East discourage further altercation by limiting access to war machinery — and arms sales reductions allow America to make the transition from cold-warrior to peacemaker in the new world order.

Television: opiate of the masses

Boob tube a malignant cancer on American culture

Allen B. Dumont changed our culture more than any other individual in the last half of this century. In 1939, the independent inventor marketed the first version of the television.

In the intervening 53 years, television became the most important cultural force in America. For the most part, it has served to undermine our society with bad programming and excessive viewing.



DWAYNE PURVIS
Columnist

Television robs America of its culture and replaces it with a cheap imitation, the rewarmed product of a few bankrupt imaginations. Television is the dominant and uncontrolled means of social education and cultural change. It is our storyteller and our babysitter. It is our dinner time conversation and our pillow talk. Yet it offers very little of interest or value.

Nielsen Media Research reports that the average American spends more than 26 hours a week watching television. People spend half as much time watching television as they do sleeping and going to school or work.

And look at what they see. There are the "adult" programs like the lawyer shows and the yuppie shows. These programs often treat sex like candy. Characters casually indulge in sex without responsibility to each other and without bad effects like sexually transmitted diseases. And the programs make sure that viewers know exactly what's happening. Some scenes and some commercials border on pornographic.

Then there are the sitcoms. My personal image of hell is a labyrinth of sitcom sets in which you are condemned to participate. These shows are predictably stupid to the point of insult. They are simply not funny. Granted, a few sitcoms provide almost-believable characters and semi-plausible plots. But even then the messages are still negative. For example, "Cheers" is a popular show which teaches people that marriage relationships are hopelessly grating. The humor is often based on belittling another character.

The kids' shows aren't any better. "The Simpsons" makes me sick. There is absolutely no hope, no joy. There is nothing positive in the show. And we can't forget Music Television (MTV), that target of parental indignance, that

extended pubescent fantasy of noise, sex, violence, sex, and more sex.

Television hurts children the most when it assumes the role of babysitter and educator. Too often, parents abdicate nurturing to the remote control. Inexperienced children unable to differentiate between real and scripted activity learn social skills and values from Hollywood producers. Children's undeveloped values and limited knowledge make them indiscriminating targets.

Television continues showing more and more shocking material as it becomes necessary to keep viewers' attention. Four years ago, cop shows flooded the airwaves. When the daily murders got old, networks started showing "real cops." A couple of weeks ago, a "real-life" cop programs showed a woman being gunned down by her husband's homosexual lover. People sit in front of the boob tube and soak up this trash for 26 hours a week trying to convince themselves they are having fun!

I imagine that in times past, pleasures were simple but real. Wisdom passed from generation to generation through word of mouth or written language. Children grew up slowly, requiring time to investigate and explore the wonders of nature and of science and of relationships.

Today, children, entranced by our expert advertising techniques, stare at the tube for hours learning what's bad in life. They rarely go outside to play; they don't read; but they can explain every "Simpsons" episode of last season.

Television consumes adults as well. Adults willingly shut down their minds for hours on end pretending to recreate. Shows do not stimulate thought. People don't want anything else. It doesn't really matter what's on, just as long as it doesn't resemble life.

Television has become America's art. It records and shapes our culture. It influences our language and our fashions. Unlike the past, people can now enjoy this "art form" which is almost devoid of thought and skill.

Ironically, television also offers the most effective means of information transfer man has seen. It has positive uses. Sadly, the bad far outweighs the good.

If we are not careful, the mass media will continue consuming people's lives by unseating meaningful conversation and thoughtful art. America needs to turn off the tube and rediscover the beauty of real life.

Purvis is a junior petroleum engineering major



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NEW JERSEY

MAIL CALL

Christianity not the only guide to life

The Sept. 29 Battalion published a long list of faculty and staff members who are willing to provide us with a road map to "help us avoid getting misled or lost" as we struggle to decide the question, "How should we live?" The road map they use is the Bible. I'm not a Christian and I have no simple road map to living to give you. I would like, however, to discuss the meaning of life with anyone who is interested, preferably late at night over appropriate drinks. I would also like to hear from faculty and staff members who believe that Christianity is only one of many ways to find meaning and purpose in life and who are willing to have their names published in The Battalion.

Bob Presley
Professor
Oceanography

Don't pick a fox to guard the henhouse

Lately I've seen many T-shirts, bumper stickers and signs advertising for the re-election of Brazos County Sheriff Ron Miller. Throughout the twin cities, it seems there's at least a moderate amount of support for Miller. Have the people of this University and Brazos County forgotten that this man is a convicted criminal? Miller was caught gambling in a place where an illegal weapon (a sawed-off shotgun) was present while he was sheriff of this county. He was arrested, indicted, and found guilty. This is a fact.

Aggies, why are you supporting a man who was convicted of breaking the law he swore to uphold? Don't be taken in. A crook is a crook.

Dana R. Williams
Class of '92

We can beat racism if we communicate

Recently, there have been a few opinions in The Battalion regarding the racism that exists on campus.

I sincerely believe that we can cure ourselves of this evil, but it begins with each one of us.

The task is not simple, for nothing "short of genuine love, extreme patience, true humility, consummate tact, sound initiative, mature wisdom and deliberate, persistent and prayerful effort can succeed in blotting out the stain" of this disease.

Such an opportunity exists in a weekly meeting held at the Lincoln Center in College Station.

The Institute for the Healing of Racism is an informal meeting where participants share their personal sufferings and triumphs with this issue. The only requirements are that you come with an open mind, listen while others speak, and realize that you are responsible only for your own feelings.

The institute meets every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Recreation Center, located off Holleman Drive at 1000 Eleanor St.

We welcome your participation in dealing with such an important topic.

Peyam Barghassa
graduate student

Some Aggies refuse to respect tradition

If I had not been raised with it in my life, Texas A&M and the Corps of Cadets have taught me one thing — respect. This apparently has not been taught to all Aggies.

While passing by Rudder auditorium on Sept. 30, another man cut in front of me via the grass. I calmly pointed out to him that it is "bad bull" to walk on the grass around the Rudder Complex due to its symbolism as a memorial.

My information was met only with words of disgust and anger; then I was told abruptly, "Just drop it." This was easy for him to tell me, but how about the old Ags who gave their lives for their country in the World Wars?

They would not be so polite in informing such a person of the traditions of such a fine school.

Though the Corps of Cadets does its best to keep the spirit and traditions of Aggieland alive, we can't do it alone.

It was my belief that those who had such little respect went to school at t.u. It is a total Aggie responsibility.

Mike Shoemake
Class of '96

A brief criticism ...

This is in response to John Klement's column, "Bonfire protesters way off base," which appeared in The Battalion on Oct. 2, 1992.

Klement, you're embarrassing.

Richard D. Herron
graduate student

World doesn't need more unwanted kids

How sad that with millions of starving children in the world, there are people who want to bring more unwanted children into existence. How horrible for a child to be born only to be dumped in a trash can, or to be beaten to death by its mother's drunken boyfriend. Maybe it will live long enough to be chained in a closet and slowly starved to death, or to be shuffled around the child welfare system because it was too old or the wrong color to be adopted.

Every child that comes into the world should be a wanted one, brought into being by people who will love and nurture it; that is what being pro-choice means.

Sharon Sernik
veterinary student

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