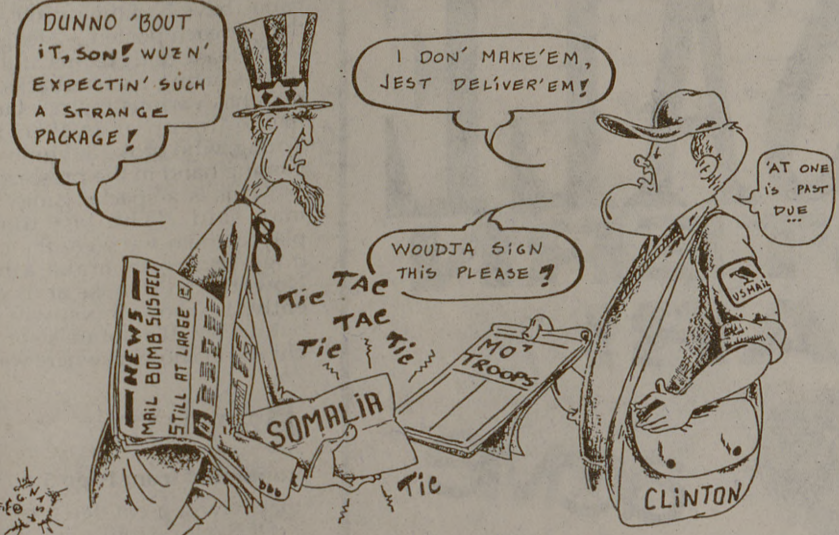


PRO CON

Is Clinton properly handling the situation in Somalia?



A lot of people agree that at this point the Oilers would be doing everybody a favor by just forgetting this whole football thing. There are also a lot of people who think that President Clinton should simply pull American troops out of Somalia instead of sending the 5,300 additional forces to the east African country.



JENNY MAGEE
Columnist



JASON SWEENEY
Columnist

However, given the fact that American troops have already committed themselves to the Somali cause, President Clinton is handling the situation in a respectable manner.

It is important to remember that it was only December 1992, less than a year ago when on the wings of the Desert Storm success, President Bush sent U.S. troops into Somalia with a mission called "Operation Restore Hope."

Once again, Mama America was out to comfort the afflicted anarchy-troubled nation and feed the starving. But the troops entered Somalia with a defensive objective. We were going to protect, provide for and feed this troubled nation.

So, when the tides turned and suddenly American soldiers were being dragged through the streets, forces were not prepared for the possibility of offensive action. For this reason it was necessary for Clinton to send the additional troops to substantiate the U.S. forces.

Obviously, the Somali situation has surpassed the fundamental question of why America finds it necessary to be the world's baby sitter in the first place. But the good Samaritan front of America's relief efforts in Somalia blind all suspicions of an ulterior motive, we all need to take a crash course in reality.

America has long since steered her foreign escapades from the motivation of a basic priority — cheap gas.

Take a look at a map. How strangely convenient it seems to note that Somalia sits straight in the direction of the Middle East.

When the tides turned and suddenly American soldiers were being dragged through the streets, forces were not prepared for offensive action. For this reason it was necessary for Clinton to send the additional troops.

Surrounded by the Indian Ocean on three sides, Somalia would make an interesting site to build a base. What a perfect way to keep a hawk's eye watch on the oil kings in the Sahara, not to mention of Saddam Hussein.

I am not trying to bash American foreign policy, but it is naive to think that even the best little boys and girls don't share their cookies with the secret hope of getting a second.

Now, Clinton sits in the White House with critics from both parties waiting for the "domestic president" to screw up foreign affairs. So, what does he do? He sends additional troops to finish out a job to which that U.S. troops are already committed.

But most importantly, he set a March 31 deadline to have the troops out of Somalia for good.

And as long as he does not compromise that March 31 deadline, Clinton is doing the right thing by not walking out on a previous commitment.

President Clinton has failed miserably with his policy on Somalia. United States troops were first committed in December 1992 as part of a United Nations peacekeeping force. This force was dedicated to getting food and medical attention to Somalis at a time when rival warring clans were preventing the aid.

By this summer, the United Nations successfully met its goals with the restoration to health of the Somali people.

Clinton then should have swiftly withdrawn from the region. However, Clinton and the United Nations opted instead to remain in Somalia to rebuild its political and governmental structure. Reacting to this new objective, the clan led by Gen. Mohammed Farah Aidid became violently defiant toward such foreign meddling.

On Oct. 4 CNN broadcast vial images of the naked body of an American casualty being dragged about through the streets of Mogadishu. Somehow, inexplicably, President Clinton did nothing in response.

On June 5, Aidid's forces ambushed a UN patrol leaving 24 Pakistani troops dead. Later on Aug. 8, an enemy mine would rip apart a U.S. troop transport, killing four Americans.

Twelve days ago, in fierce fighting lasting 17 hours, 12 GIs perished and 78 were wounded. The next day, on Oct. 4, CNN broadcast vial images of the naked body of an American casualty being dragged about through the streets of Mogadishu, the Somali capitol. Somali citizens could be seen reveling at their prize.

Somehow, inexplicably, President Clinton did nothing in response. Instead, he would wait two full days before ordering the first of 6,000 reinforcements to be sent, as he put it, only to provide safety for those already deployed.

There cannot be a more grossly inadequate response than this. The enraging sight of an American serviceman's body being desecrated by an irreverent mob should have ended in nothing short of a massive retaliatory response.

Instead, President Clinton meekly chose only to deploy more troops solely for defensive purposes. Additionally, he came out this week saying that the United States has actually reversed its stance, now wanting to end this matter diplomatically and abandon the search for Aidid.

Sensing likely vindication following Clinton's statements, Aidid on Sunday publicly called for a "total cease-fire." Knowing he will go unpunished, the shrewd general is now willing to come out of hiding dressed as a peacemaker.

Never would I have envisioned an American president conceding to an enemy as Clinton now has to Aidid. The President has said that we cannot immediately pull out of Somalia because "... all around the world, aggressors, thugs, and terrorists will conclude that the best way to get us to change our policies is to kill our people..."

This assertion is not untrue. President Clinton has failed to recognize that in actuality, he has abdicated to one of these very thugs. Aidid should have been severely punished for his deeds, yet he is poised to walk. American and UN peacekeepers have been murdered, and our President is prepared to ignore these crimes.

Jenny Magee is a sophomore journalism major

Jason Sweeney is a senior political science major

COLLEGE STATION, TX OCT 15 1993 MAIL CALL

Charity begins here

In the past few weeks, we have argued over the question of the United States' role in maintaining peace in foreign lands. While I cannot suggest how our government can solve the political injustices suffered in countries in Somalia and Haiti, I do know one place that deserves our services. That place is right here in the Brazos Valley.

While it is easy to feel isolated from world problems in a college town, a quick trip into Bryan reveals that poverty exists in our own community.

This week at Texas A&M has been designated as World Food Week. It is a time to take a close look at the problems of hunger and malnutrition. Several programs, which is sponsored by MSC Great Issues, focus on this topic such as a nation-wide teleconference on Friday, World Food Day.

Throughout the week, there is a campus-wide food drive with drop-offs in the Common Market and Sbsa. Alpha Phi Omega will also be collecting food from the Corps of Cadets on Friday and collecting food from the community on Sunday.

I challenge each Aggie to do something to get involved, whether it be dropping off a can of tuna or coming to a program. I also urge all Ags to find a area of community service in which you can make a difference.

What a better way to gain job experience than to volunteer at a free clinic or counsel new mothers! You may find that community service can mean a whole lot more than a way to work off a ticket. And who knows, you might just like that great feeling that comes from helping others.

Amy C. Bluntzer
Class of '94

Tolerance good bull, give it a shot for once

I am so sick and tired of the intolerance of differing opinions on this campus. The morning of Oct. 12, I was walking back to the main campus from Fish Lot when I passed two guys dressed in Wranglers and boots. One greeted me with a "Howdy." The other called me a freak.

I was dressed in combat boots, jeans, a tank top and a holey shirt. Just because I wasn't dressed in western style, he assumed that I didn't belong at A&M.

The funny thing is, I'm probably more country than he! I was raised on a cattle ranch, showed heifers and bulls in livestock shows for nine years and still work the herd when I visit home.

If he had seen me the day before — when I was dressed in Rockies, Justins, a Stetson straw and a Brushpopper shirt — he probably would have greeted me with a "Howdy."

I am not a freak, and neither is any other liberally dressed person on this campus or in this world. A real cowboy (synonymous with "gentleman") would know that.

Maybe he should listen to Chris Le Doux (a real cowboy) who says, "There's always been groups of people who never could see eye to eye. And I always thought if they ever had a chance to sit down and talk face to face, they might realize they have a lot in common."

Tolerance of others' ideals and choices is good bull. Try it sometime.

Mindy Bryant
Class of '96

Stay off MSC grass ...

On Tuesday, Oct. 12, I was walking to the MSC to check my mail, when I saw a young woman walking on the grass around the Memorial. The sidewalk was flooded out with water because it had rained that morning, so she just walked onto the grass.

At this time, I politely asked her to "Please stay off the grass." She looked at me and snarled in a cocky tone of voice, "I know, I've gone to school here for four years!" I then asked her, "Then why would you walk on the grass?" She replied with, "Because I didn't feel like walking around!"

I was outraged! Just because she didn't "feel like walking around." Well, I bet the families of the men who gave their lives in defense of this country didn't "feel like" losing their fathers and husbands either.

To begin with, life is sacred. Second of all, the MSC is a memorial all of the time, not when it is convenient. And finally, how long would it have taken her to go fifteen feet out of her precious way to go around? I think as Aggies, we should all respect the MSC more, because remember Ags, these people gave their lives for our freedom.

Chris Helms
Class of '96

... and remove hats

Ladies, ladies, ladies! For shame! Every day we hear women screaming for equality, and yet at both the Missouri and Houston games, I was standing next to women that would not uncover for yells.

Let me tell you something Ags ... this makes me mad! I'm not going to beat around the bush here. If you are going to call yourself an Aggie, you had best have respect for Aggie traditions. Just because you are female, that does not make you exempt. Next thing you know, women will be using their gender as an excuse for walking on the grass outside the MSC. I don't think that "my hair will get messed up" is an acceptable excuse for ignoring tradition.

Ladies, if you are not willing to uncover, either don't go to games or the MSC, or don't wear a hat at all. I am shocked and embarrassed by your behavior. So, the next time you are wearing a hat and you hear someone yell "uncover," either do it or stop calling yourself an Aggie.

Jennifer Powell
Class of '95

Updated hat policy

The MSC hat policy was set up during the 1951 dedication of the student center. In the rededication ceremony after the expansion of the MSC in 1976, the MSC was rededicated to "all Aggies who have died in any war, past or future."

Last semester, students expressed some concerns regarding the hat policy. These concerns were brought to the attention of the MSC council and then referred to the MSC Building Operations

Committee. The committee found the signs were never updated to reflect the changes made in the 1976 rededication.

MSC Building Operations then made the MSC Council aware of the 1976 rededication and the failure to update the signs to: "The MSC is dedicated to all Aggies who have died in any war, past or future. In token of respect for their sacrifice, all individuals are requested to remove their hats while in the building."

MSC Council then sought the University Center staff's assistance in updating the signs. A lack of funds delayed the updating, but the signs will soon be up.

We would like it to be known that this policy requests all individuals to remove their hats. This is not a demand. However, we encourage people to show their respect and comply with the request.

Ken Jarrell
Class of '95
Vice president for operations and procedures, MSC Council

Spirit of Aggieland is more than 'howdy'

I admit it. I, too, am a freshman who came back from Fish Camp saying "Howdy" to everyone and always expecting one in return. I didn't always receive one, and this made me mad because friendliness and tradition are two reasons I came to this great university.

Later, it angered me that during Silver Taps, another great tradition of A&M, many lights were left on near the site (even in the Academic Building). I began to fear the Spirit of Aggieland was dead.

Let me tell you right now that I was very, very wrong. A good example happened a few days ago. I was "lucky" enough to have to visit the A. P. Beutel Health Center because of a sore throat.

After an "enjoyable" three-and-a-half-hour wait, I was told there was only one person ahead of me in line. The problem was, I had only 10 minutes until a history exam. I would have to give up my place and come back the next day, I was told.

The person ahead of me, Wendy Jones, offered to give up her place so I could go before her. For all she knew, I could have been there another hour, but she gave up her place anyway so I could make it to my test (barely).

I would like to thank her, and all other Ags helping to keep the spirit alive. I realized the other day that "Howdy" and the lights don't have everything to do with the Spirit of Aggieland.

Ryan Deer
Class of '97

Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorial board. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff.

Columns, guest columns, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors.

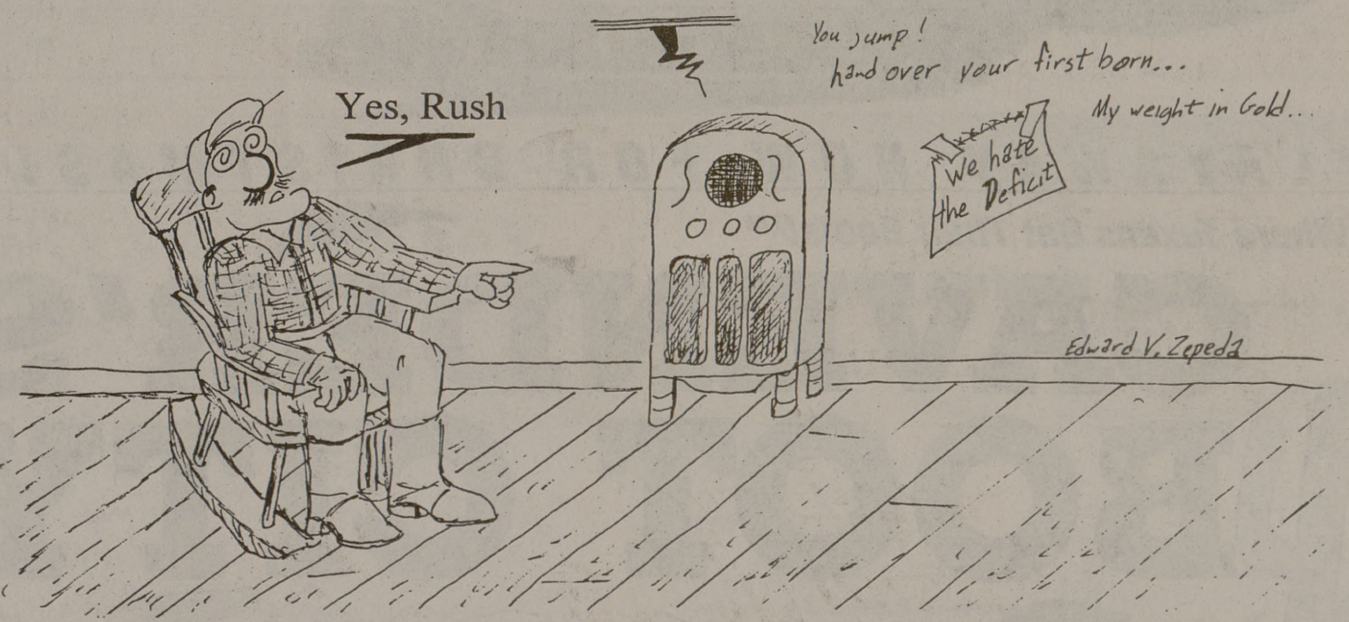
The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

We reserve the right to edit letters and guest columns for length, style, and accuracy.

Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

Address letters to:
The Battalion - Mail Call
013 Reed McDonald
Mail stop 1111
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843
Fax: (409) 845-2647

Because I said so, and when I say jump...



Edward V. Zapeda