

# OPINION

## Bosnian conflict prolonged by U.S. involvement

Ronald Reagan once told us to be wary of those who, by choice or accident, lowered the stature of the United States in international relations because, "... they may just end up lowering our flag."

Ever since the 10th Century, the area we formerly recognized as Yugoslavia has been a hotbed of internal, as well as, external strife. The region has flip-flopped between Serbian and Croatian rule throughout its history and has fueled many a story about the atrocities of war.

In 1914 the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo lit the flame that would become World War I. After the war, Yugoslavia was created with Bosnia and Herzegovina as provinces. During World War II, Serbians and Croats attacked each other with unprecedented fury. The area was left with only a strong communist regime to quell the ethnic groups.

During Yugoslavia's embattled transition to democracy beginning in 1991, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared their independence. This plunged them headlong into the tenacious civil war which exists today between the Bosnians and Serb militias backed by the Yugoslav army.

Bosnia is no stranger to unrest. The only difference between this most recent conflict between Serbs and Croats is the involvement of the United Nations, which I might add, has muddied the waters.

ALEX MILLER  
COLUMNIST



In an effort to end fighting, the UN imposed an arms embargo, which has been enforced by, of course, America. Also, in an attempt to stop "ethnic cleansing" or the slaughter of Muslims, the UN has established "safe areas" where fleeing refugees seek the protection of UN forces.

These forces, made up of predominantly French troops, gave up one "safe area" last week when Serbian artillery approached within a mile of the city. This loss displaced thousands of the Muslims harbored there.

Don't start blaming the French, yet. For those of you not familiar with the situation, UN troops wear bright blue uniforms - ideal for target practice - and are rarely allowed to carry more than a pistol.

That's right, given several big rocks and the element of surprise, even I might be able to overpower a platoon of UN troops. In addition, since there is an arms embargo, rocks are essentially the only weapons these refugees have to fight with. Not too fair, huh?

Now start blaming the French. Last week, French President Jacques Chirac demanded increased allied involvement in Bosnia. He requested American equipment, aircraft and money be channeled to help retake and reinforce the safe zones.

Without specifically naming the United States he unleashed withering criticism of countries which he believed have behaved "irresponsibly" in Bosnia, preaching democracy and human rights but being

increasingly unwilling to put money or soldiers on the line to defend them. President Chirac "allowed" the allies 48 hours to remit a response before he would seriously consider removing the French forces from the UN protection group.

Yes, that's the same France who had very little involvement in the Persian Gulf and would not even allow us to fly over its air space during our engagement with Libya. Unbelievable.

To think that the world's only superpower would commit our resources to the mercy of a campaign the French have not even planned yet is nonsensical.

### We cannot conclude these events endanger American interests and require a military response.

Luckily, on an issue that has the White House looking like the Waffle House because of the lack of sound international policy, President Clinton seems committed to withholding American ground forces from involvement.

Involvement in Bosnia by the United States is a vote of confidence for a United Nations which has increasingly flexed its impotence in the past several years. President Clinton has shown a propensity to be used by the UN (i.e. Somalia) rather than using the UN for the benefit of our nation as President Bush did in the Persian Gulf.

Beyond supporting a dwindling, world governing

body, the United States has absolutely no imminent national interest at stake in the Bosnian conflict.

In former President Nixon's last book *Seize the Moment*, he defines three levels of national interest as "vital," "critical" and "peripheral."

Vital and critical interest involve the direct threatening of the sovereignty or the resource base of the United States, such as a conflict with Japan.

The Bosnian situation does not even fit the definition of peripheral interest, for it does not even distantly affect a critical or vital interest to our country, accepting their voluntary inclusion in the unrest.

While we do not support "ethnic cleansing" and certainly do not condone tyrannical governments, we cannot conclude that these events endanger important American interests and require a military response.

This crisis is far from over. Further U.S. involvement only ensures the loss of more human life by prolonging a situation which has no positive outcome. Congress is poised to lift the arms embargo and allow the Bosnians to defend themselves, the vote may come as early as today.

For the benefit of all, I hope President Clinton refuses any help except the evacuation of the UN forces. For the benefit of France, I hope President Chirac seriously considers his threat of pulling out of the UN forces.

If so, President Clinton, through his actions, will have saved more than just American lives.

Alex Miller is a senior bioenvironmental science major

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## Regulation of Internet is long overdue

### Controlling Net information is no different than censoring other mediums

The Internet will ultimately redefine the way information is exchanged. Currently on the World Wide Web, you can access high-resolution full-color pictures, short video clips and more text than you could ever hope to read.

As computing hardware becomes cheaper, smarter and more prolific, the Internet will engulf every existing medium. Anything newspapers, movies, TV or radio can do the Internet will soon be able to do better.

Earlier this year when Sen. Jim Exon of Nebraska introduced the Communications Decency Act, many people feared that the federal government was rushing to censor this new cyberdomain.

Perhaps a comparison between this infant medium and some of its older, more mature cousins could help to clarify the debate.

What are we ready for when we turn on our televisions?

Nielsen ratings attest to the fact that sex or a little violence can attract viewers to almost any show.

So what is the American audience afraid of? The Public Broadcasting Service perhaps, the Discovery Channel or just about anything with any nutritive value ... but that's another story.

Would the audience stop watching if nudity could be seen on broadcast television? If explicit sexual acts became a staple of the big three networks, would we close our eyes? How many Americans would tune in to watch gay or lesbian sex, bondage, rape or sex with small children?

How many of you are still looking for the remote?

What would public reaction be if Federal Communications Commission regulations evaporated overnight, and during rush hour you could listen to explicit songs or even poetry about rape, stalking or child abuse?

Maybe you are still not offended by our new hypothetical media. Would the knowledge that children can access these sounds and images just by clicking a button change your outlook?

JEREMY VALDEZ  
GUEST COLUMNIST

First, as Americans we've gotten used to the fact that we can't see some things on TV or hear on the radio.

If any expression could be broadcast over the airwaves, it would create an environment where many viewers would be offended on a regular basis, almost nobody would be satisfied consistently, and most parents would be too scared to leave their children unattended near an electronic box.

Also, consider that nobody defends an obscene phone caller's right to free speech, simply because we would find it inconvenient to live where anybody could reach out and harass someone.

The Internet has a

wealth of educational and entertaining material that anyone could enjoy.

However, there are several easily-accessible areas of the Internet where users post and view pornography and stories eroticizing rape, child molestation and other violent acts. People are stalked via modem and sent electronic death threats.

Some of the Internet's characteristics make it a haven for dangerous individuals. The Net is superlively economical - if you (or your university, employer or government) can ante up

enough cash for a little computing power, access to the Internet is cheap, if not free. Any information or image uploaded to the Net can change hands thousands of times almost instantaneously. Pornographers can trade and distribute images without fear of postal inspectors.

Also, the Net is impersonal. With a little effort, you can communicate with or molest others completely anonymously - no face, no voice, no address.

Despite its ease of use, the entrails of the Internet are highly complicated, so it takes a persistent, nerdy cop to track you down. Finally, current statutes were not designed to prosecute cybercrimes, and jurisdiction is hazy.

Essentially, Exon's bill seeks to extend the laws applicable to phone communications, computers and other electronic devices. Exon's Communications Decency Act is not the only proposal; there's an interesting alternative being introduced by Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont.

Congress must realize that regulation of Internet is a necessary idea. People will continue to traffic in pornography and other controversial material, but why not ensure that it's the kind of material that would be legal in the analog world?

Make people pay - or at least prove adulthood - for access to Internet "cable channels." That way, the underage and unwilling would be afforded some measure of protection.

The Internet goes unpoliced for lack of knowledge. If knowledge of the Internet was widespread outside of academia and the opinion page, support for regulation would be extensive.

Anyone who wants to prevent electronic stalking would support it. Anyone aghast at the glorification of rape would support it. Anyone who wouldn't want to stumble into a discussion about bestiality would support it. Anyone who would fear the proliferation of child pornography would support it.

I think ... I hope that's just about all of us.

Jeremy Valdez is a junior chemical engineering major



## MAIL CALL

### Race should be factor of adoption

This is in reference to the Opinion page of July 18.

It is difficult to understand where Elizabeth Preston is coming from in her column on bisexuality. From her past writings I have come to the conclusion that she is sympathetic to homosexual and bisexual organizations and their causes. Yet here she seems to be wavering a little.

Her logic meanders through a series of media references and personal epiphanies before she concludes that "bisexuality is not wrong" but can be confusing and detrimental to the individual. Well said.

The editorial, which referred to an Austin adoption court case, stated that "race should not be a factor in deciding the fate of adoptions."

I beg to differ. In our society, the media will not let the public forget about racial strife for one day. I think it is important to consider how this would affect adopted children.

Would you go against the will of a child who might be instinctively more comfortable starting a new life without the race issue to contend with as a central theme everyday? Politics should be kept away from the children's lives.

I was also a little unclear about the guest column by J. Frank Hernandez. There is one item I can feel sure about counter-arguing with total comprehension, however.

It is a damn good thing the Aggie Band still has a larger budget than the Department of Multicultural Services.

Otherwise, our foreign friends might not fully be able to appreciate our American culture.

Gabriel Salas  
Class of '96

### Thanks to those who gave support

I am writing this as a letter of "thanks" and to advise you of Trevor Shockley's progress. As you may know, Trevor was involved in a serious accident on campus Feb. 1, 1995.

After three months at Brazos Valley Medical Center in College Station, he was transferred to The Institute for Rehabilitation

and Research in the Houston Medical Center.

Though Trevor's physical therapy is extremely painful, he believes that a good sense of humor and positive outlook are important to one's recovery.

Trevor constantly talks about walking again and being able to return to A&M to complete his degree.

A heartfelt thanks to all who wrote, called, came to visit and offered their love, support and encouragement. We are grateful to all who gave of their time and donations to help in his fund raisers. A special thanks to all the media people who were sincerely touched by Trevor's story, and in turn touched thousands with their reporting.

An extra-special thanks to all the legislators, their staffs and the government agencies that helped.

Many thanks to all the doctors, and staff at Brazos Valley Medical Center, who with their life-saving acute care brought Trevor through the life-threatening phases. Also for their helpfulness and kindness for working with us on the staggering cost accrued during his three month stay.

I do not have words to express my gratefulness to the Texas Rehabilitation Commission and all the fine people who worked so hard on Trevor's behalf.

Last, but certainly not least, thanks to TIRR for giving Trevor his first 30 days, which was necessary to get him started in his rehabilitation.

Because of the kindness and goodness of all of those that have been a part of Trevor's miracle, this has also been some of the most rewarding times of my life.

The greatest lesson I have learned from this experience is that there is no guarantee for tomorrow.

Trevor and all of us who love him are so very grateful for all that's been done in his behalf. We are thankful first and foremost for God's healing power in answer to the prayers of all who have been praying for his recovery. We credit this for Trevor's being where he is today.

May God bless each and every one of you for your part in Trevor's continuing miracle.

Joe C. Shockley

You can write to Trevor at:  
TIRR (Room 305)  
1333 Moursand  
Houston, Texas 77030

## THE BATTALION

JAY ROBBINS, EDITOR IN CHIEF  
ROB CLARK, MANAGING EDITOR

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