

OPINION

Presidential hopefuls learn conservative dance step

Quick, everybody take a step forward. Now take a step back. Now jump as far to the right as you can.

Go on, keep scrambling. No, this is not a rehearsal for the Rockettes. It is an introduction of the candidates for the Republican Party presidential nomination.

Here we have Pete Wilson, the semi-anonymous governor from California. He was having a problem with name recognition. In other words, nobody had any idea who he was. Not satisfied with his 6 percent support rate among Republican voters, Wilson decided he needed to pick an issue and use it to set himself apart from the rest of the pack.

So he pressured the University of California Board of Regents to vote to end most affirmative action programs at all of the school's nine state campuses. No more "special treatment" for blacks, Latinos or American Indians.

The "historic moment," as Wilson later called it, is supposed to boost his numbers at the polls and prove to the die-hard conservative element of the Republican Party that Wilson really is one of them.

Since he has supported state tax increases and continues to be a proponent of abortion rights, Wil-

CHRIS STIDVENT

COLUMNIST



son has had to jump on the race issue in hopes of tapping into the "angry, white male" voter that every Republican candidate is courting.

Wilson is no stranger to using race-based politics toward his own political advantage.

His support last year for Proposition 187, the California bill that would deny basic social services to illegal aliens, boosted his popularity immensely during his re-election campaign.

And on the face of it, his latest move might have similar success. Playing to the misunderstandings and bigotry of much of the white population could conceivably garner for Wilson some of the notoriety and improved name-recognition amongst Republican voters he so desperately needs.

Yet it probably won't for a couple of reasons.

First and foremost, a majority of Americans still feel affirmative action needs only to be reformed, not eliminated.

Only 33 percent of those polled in a recent USA Today survey approved of the Republicans' attempts to completely do away with affirmative action.

Most agree with President Clinton that affirmative action needs to be "mended, not ended."

And they are correct.

Affirmative action never has been about racial quotas, hiring unqualified minorities or discriminating against whites. It was initiated under Lyndon B. Johnson as an attempt to combat the historical and societal injustices that have existed in our country for hundreds of years.

As Johnson said in 1965, "You do not wipe out scores of centuries by saying, 'Now you're free to go where you want and do as you desire.'"

Those who call for an end to affirmative action in our country have to also agree that America has achieved complete racial and gender equality. Only then would affirmative action no longer be needed.

And those who commit themselves to this statement are either willfully blind or sorrowfully ignorant.

Yet Wilson has managed to turn the elimination of affirmative action into a hot issue and a cornerstone of his campaign.

In doing so, he has further cheapened the rational political dialogue, while radicalizing and degrading even further the polarized postures of the Republican party. And hey, it still won't work.

Guess what? Phil Gramm, Bob Dole and just about every other serious Republican contender feel exactly the way Wilson does.

And they've got more money. Everybody is rushing to the far right. Even Bob

Dole, who leads his closest competitor by about 32 points, has had to endear himself lately to the radical core of the Republican Party in order to prove he is still their man.

He has criticized Hollywood in the past few months for its "degenerative" effect on the American family. He has flip-flopped once again on gun control and is now in favor of repealing the assault weapons ban.

This is the same man whose first speech as a freshman senator in 1969 was to call for more spending for housing for the disabled. That's government spending, by the way. Sort of a big conservative "no-no."

Dole, who has benefited in the past from such "liberal" programs as the GI Bill and New Deal agricultural programs, surely knows the value of government spending. Yet he and all of the Republican candidates are going to find themselves having to jump madly toward the right merely to stay in the ideological center of the Republican Party.

It is a difficult dance step, but they'll probably get it down.

Unencumbered by any personal convictions or real beliefs, it can't be that hard to run fast.

Chris Stidvent is a senior philosophy major

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EDITORIAL

SEEKING SAFETY

National Night Out allows students to develop better safety habits.

Tomorrow, Texas A&M students and Bryan and College Station citizens will have the chance to participate in the 12th annual National Night Out.

The event, hosted by the Brazos County Sheriff's Office and the Bryan, College Station and University Police Departments, marks a community-wide effort to curtail the crime and drug problems in the Brazos Valley.

Although our community is considered relatively safe, citizens can take many preventative steps to prevent dangerous situations.

Every year, crimes occur on the A&M campus. Cars have been vandalized. Bicycles have been stolen. Dorm rooms have been vandalized.

And two students were raped last semester.

The University has made some efforts to prevent these occurrences. New lighting has been placed at many problem areas of campus, and officers frequently patrol the streets and buildings.

Despite the actions of the University, students still should accept responsibility

for their own actions. Students should take steps to increase campus and community safety.

Sponsors of National Night Out urge citizens to lock their doors, turn on their outside lights and spend the evening with neighbors and police.

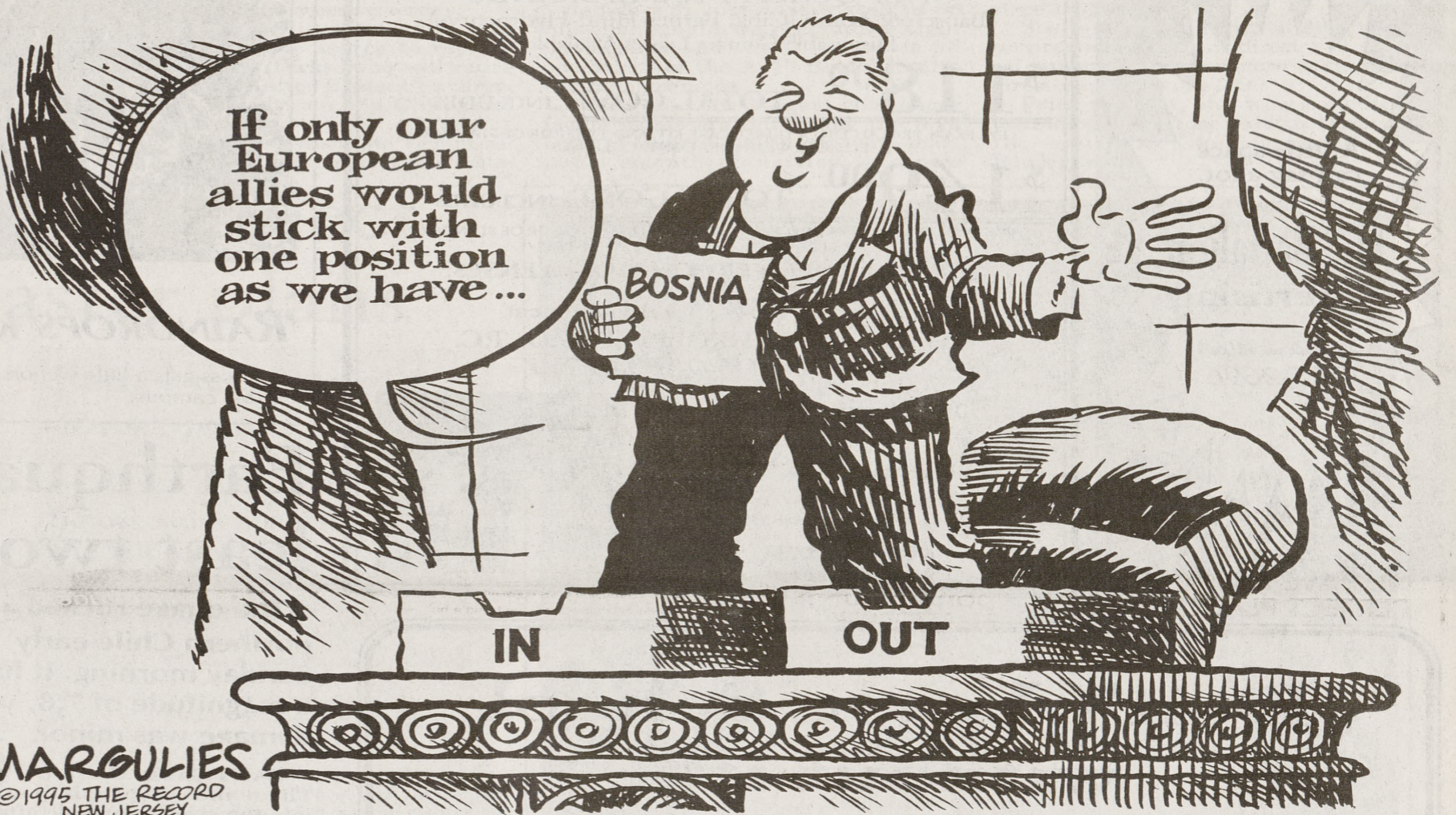
Students, however, should not make this a one-time effort.

When walking around during the evenings, students should travel in pairs or groups.

When parking, students also should avoid dimly lit, deserted areas. And when leaving town, students should make sure their houses and belongings are monitored by neighbors or friends.

Texas A&M University has long prided itself on the safe and friendly atmosphere of the campus and surrounding community. In order to maintain this environment, students, citizens and law enforcement officers all should cooperate in their efforts.

National Night Out is a good opportunity to focus on safety, but students and citizens should practice these habits year round.



MARGULIES
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NEW JERSEY

Bosnia deserves chance to defend itself

In 1979, Soviet tanks rolled across the border into neighboring Afghanistan.

Presidents Carter and Reagan followed a definite policy against this blatant aggression.

Until the Soviets left in the late '80s, the United States armed and trained the Afghan freedom fighters. It only made sense for us to provide the Afghans with the means to resist such an affront to their own independence.

It simply was the right thing to do.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe, many old nations were reformed. Yugoslavia divided itself into several different countries, including Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldavia and, most infamously, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

This reformation of old geography also renewed ancient animosities.

For almost 1,000 years, the Serbs have been at odds with their Moslem neighbors in this region. Only the totalitarian oppression of communism kept the tensions at bay for the past 40 years.

After the division, Serbia armed and trained the large Serb minority still remaining in Bosnia.

At that point, a new phrase entered the English language: "ethnic cleansing."

It seems that, for an area to be cleansed, no Moslems may be present.

So how do you get rid of any Moslems who happen to be still present?

Things get bad for the Moslems at this point. The Serb atrocities reported by journalists and the United Nations have sparked world-wide condemnation. But no real help.

In fact, the U.N. Secretary for Human Rights resigned in protest this past week be-

cause all of his reports have been virtually ignored.

In a brilliant effort to try to keep the fighting from spreading, the "civilized nations" declared an arms embargo against Bosnia.

The Serbs already were getting plenty of neat weapons from Serbia, so the very people who need them most.

Sure, the United Nations has sent in "peacekeepers." Unfortunately, there is no peace to keep.

So the United Nations declared six Moslem safe havens - two of which promptly fell to Serb forces.

Gee, I sure would feel safe as a Moslem in Bosnia right about now.

During the whole conflict, the United Nations constantly has been threatening the Serb rebels.

For example, this past year the U.N. commander told the Serbs to stop attacking the Moslem safe haven Srebrenica ... or else.

So the Serbs took French and British peacekeepers hostage, shot down a U.S. F-16 fighter and took Srebrenica anyway.

Effective policy.

What, you may ask, is the United States' policy toward Bosnia?

Well, that depends on what week it is. As with the past 40 years, the world, and NATO in particular, has looked to the United States for leadership ... and the world has found it lacking.

One day we threaten air strikes, the next we send in troops if things don't improve. Next, we need to use the United Nations.

A week later, we are threatening to go in

alone.

No wonder the Serbs won't stop. They are laughing all the way to the next safe-haven.

Last Wednesday, Congress took matters into its own hands. The Senate passed a bill ordering a unilateral lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia if the United Nations won't end it.

Arguments over who should conduct foreign policy in this country aside, this is the best of the solutions already proposed.

Great Britain and France object strenuously to this approach because they believe the weapons may be used against their troops already in place.

They, however, are missing the point. Neither the U.N. troops nor the NATO troops should be used to fight the Serbs in Bosnia. They will not win, and it is not their fight.

U.S. troops definitely should not be placed in Bosnia. If you think Vietnam was a mess, you will love Bosnia.

This part of the world tied-up over 100,000 of Hitler's best troops only 50 years ago. The geography is perfect for guerrilla warfare, and the people are committed to fight for their cause.

We should not and cannot fight it for them.

The Bosnians, like the Afghans before them, only want the chance to defend themselves. They deserve the right to do so.

Bullies like the Serbs only stop when their targets fight back.

The Afghans were able to successfully repel the Soviets with less going for them than the Bosnians.

Giving the Bosnians the chance is simply the right thing to do.

David Taylor is a senior management major

DAVID TAYLOR

COLUMNIST



MAIL CALL

Fee increase could price-out students

Today I received my tuition notice and couldn't believe my eyes.

I had heard of the increases which were coming, but after all were added up, my tuition increased a staggering \$989.

This is a 37 percent increase from last fall semester.

But wait, that's not all!

Another \$10 per-semester hour will be added on to my tuition if the Board of Regents votes to increase the general use fee.

The grand total then will be \$1,129.

An unbelievable 43 percent increase from just a year ago!

Now you might be saying

there must be more than meets the eye because my tuition didn't rise that much. Well, I did add one more hour of classes.

However, the real reason is the fact that I am a nonresident.

This is not the reason I wrote this letter, however.

I wanted to show the students and University administrators of Texas A&M why it is so important to carefully consider each increase that is proposed and how it will affect each individual.

If not, you - like myself - may have seen your last day as an Aggie.

The new fee increase may not raise your tuition like mine, but if not this time, maybe the next.

Timothy N. Connoles
Class of '95

THE BATTALION

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