

STATE OF THE UNION

Carry a big stick

United States involvement in Iraq stands as example of American ego at work

Strengthening diplomacy with the threat of force is not new to America's foreign-policy establishment. Almost a century ago, Teddy Roosevelt relieved the tension between threat and negotiation with a peculiar blend of both. When dealing with foreign countries, he suggested the United States "speak softly and carry a big stick."



**CALEB
MCDANIEL**
columnist

The Clinton administration seems to believe the New World Order demands a new "Big Stick Diplomacy." It goes something like this: "Since we carry the biggest stick, we can speak as loudly as we want." So far, this pompous policy has guided our posturing in the Persian Gulf. Rather than presenting solid arguments for a military strike on Iraq, the Clinton administration is clumsily wielding a big stick and delivering a sound whack to all those who dare to disagree with them.

To be sure, the United States has made it clear a diplomatic solution to Iraqi mischief is preferable to a military strike. According to Clinton, the choice between reconciliation and conflict is up to Saddam Hussein.

But without even blinking an eye, notice we self-righteously have given ourselves the prerogative to decide the fate of the Persian Gulf. We assume our opinion about international relations is the most important and our solution to the Iraqi crisis the only option.

Thus, we have cast the crisis in Iraq as a situation with only two possible resolutions: either Saddam chooses to back down, or we give him a sound beating.

But supposedly the decision is up to us only. You see, if you carry the biggest stick, then you can ig-

nore other points of view. Note the United States does not believe the choice is up to France or Russia, who are opposed to military engagement in the Gulf.

It is not for Israel to decide, even though an American blunder could trigger an Iraqi assault on Jerusalem. The choice does not belong to the Iraqi population, who will suffer the most if Clinton decides to rain missiles on Baghdad. In other words, the United States has presumptuously decided that if we do act in Iraq, it will be in spite of the vociferous objections of a good deal of the international community.

In many ways, these conscientious objectors to "Operation Desert Storm: The Second Coming" ask some rather important questions. While no one doubts Saddam Hussein is a poor excuse for a human being, counter-population warfare is a questionable means of re-



sponding to his evil villainy.

Before the missiles start to fly, we must think long and hard about whether there are satisfactory answers to the following questions.

First of all, why does the United States get to keep its nukes if it is so opposed to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? Will the only country that has ever actually used a weapon of mass destruction please stand up?

Military strikes might not even accomplish our goals. What would happen, Mr. President, if Saddam Hussein retaliated to American aggression by making Jerusalem glow with radiation? Indirectly abetting a nuclear exchange between Israel and Iraq is definitely not becoming of a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Or suppose an American missile hits a chemical weapons factory, releasing poisonous agents into the Middle Eastern atmosphere. What about the innocent people who will inevitably be killed if the bombings are imprecise?

Europe wonders why it should support an American assault on Iraq when the United States was so hesitant to commit troops in Bosnia. Does our country's super-

power status give us the license to make decisions like this without the approval of our global neighbors?

In short, what right does the United States have to bomb Baghdad?

In the face of these clearly significant queries, the silence from along the banks of the Potomac is deafening. Instead of answering these questions, Congress continues to hastily beat the drums of war while Clinton's press conferences continue to make asinine assurances about hopes for a diplomatic solution.

Before we make a mistake in the Middle East, it would be wise for the United States to spend some time in profound reflection on the current status of international relations.

In many ways, the United States still labors under a Cold War mentality when formulating our foreign policy. When the Soviet Union was the common global enemy, countries were more resigned to American leadership and more readily granted diplomatic assistance.

But the Russian bear no longer stalks the international landscape, and there is no longer a clearly defined enemy for Uncle Sam to beat up on. Rogue nations and lone dictators are the villains of the day, but these targets are not as universally hated or clearly identifiable as former Soviet adversaries.

So when the United States sets out on a self-proclaimed mission of righteousness, it is more likely for there to be dissenting views, and America is more likely to be viewed as a bully.

And no one likes bullies. If the United States can create a solid moral high ground from which to pounce on Saddam Hussein, then its citizens and its allies should applaud its efforts. Until then, President Clinton, give up the big stick and speak a little bit more softly.

Caleb McDaniel is a freshman history major.

ONE STAR LOWDOWN

Textbooks adopted by Texas spread liberal propaganda

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the imminent demise of Castro's regime in Cuba and the "McDonald-ization" of China's economy, the war on communism is being won on the global front. The domestic situation is a different story. Those who wondered why Karl Marx made repeated demands for public education in *The Communist Manifesto* need only look at today's textbooks. Today's "Evil Empire" operates, not out of Moscow, but out of Texas' schoolhouses by means of biased, dogmatic schoolbooks.



**DONNY
FERGUSON**
columnist

Schoolchildren are under intellectual assault. Instead of teaching kids about the American way of life, modern textbooks attack it. Radical feminism, socialism, Marxism, environmentalism and moral relativism infest the pages of today's school texts.

The economic system responsible for America's stature as a global superpower, its high standard of living and, ironically, the ability to publish these textbooks is portrayed as an elitist system of feudal oppression.

Allyn & Bacon's *A Global History of Man* reads, "Marxism turns people toward a future of unlimited promise, an escalator to the stars." In reality, Marxism massacred 90 million people and forged one of history's most cruel totalitarian states, the Soviet Union. The public-education bureaucracy would prefer to gloss over the widespread brutality and fulfill Marx and Engel's vision of a proletariat, revolutionary state, with innocent schoolchildren as pawns.

The teacher's edition of *Follett Publishing's World Geography* claims, "Many people feel China's economic progress is worth their sacrifice of individual freedom." They refer to the Communist nation's practice of using slave labor to manufacture goods as part of their command economy. The message to kids is it okay to imprison Christians and pro-democracy activists in pursuit of a socialist state. Merrill Publishing's *American Government: Principles and Practices* tells students to, "Point out that a free market economy works well in the United States, but that other countries may find socialism or communism more suited to their needs..."

Freedom is a universal right, and no race or nation can justifiably deny the basic human liberties of life and liberty on account of political philosophy. Educators have simply broken down the teachings of Marx and Stalin and infused them into public education in a disgusting attempt to impose their anti-freedom, anti-American agendas on innocent children.

One history book told children to have sympathy for colonial traitor Benedict Arnold. According to the text, Arnold's treason was permissible because the blood money offered by the British could have been used to buy food for his children. Instead of learning American history, they are learning to put a price on their freedom.

The State Board of Education (SBOE) recently adopted an especially noxious work, Addison-Wesley's *Secondary Math: An Integrated Approach*, better known as "Rain Forest Algebra." What is supposed to be a math text dedicates much of its space to recycling tips, Indian religions and glowing praises of Bill Clinton. Far-

left social dogma has left the confines of Greenpeace rallies and infested children's math books.

According to Dr. Richard Neill, Texas State Board of Education member, what is supposed to be a math book is instead filled with Maya Angelou's poetry, numerous photographs of Bill Clinton, Malwoodcarvings, lectures on endangered species, a three-language feature on the radical leftist United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and countless pieces of environmentalist propaganda.

It also spends valuable math class time describing the African Dogons and Prossana Rao, an Indian man who spends hours making shadow puppets, a large article on the life of science fiction writer Isaac Asimov and a full-page criticism of the Vietnam War (with politically correct feminist rants about the fact women were not drafted).

"Rain Forest Algebra" finally does get around to defining an algebraic expression, on page 107. The Pythagorean Theorem is reserved for page 502, after the liberal indoctrination on environmentalism and feminism. What should be a valuable arithmetic lesson for children is instead a propaganda field day for radical leftists.

While the State Board of Education does have some say in textbook adoption, it usually just rubber-stamps the Texas Education Agency's decisions. Local school boards have final say, but "Rain Forest Algebra" and other leftist propaganda manage to slip through.

The only way to ensure academic purity in textbooks is for parents to either take an active part on their local school board, or top opt for private or home schooling.

Some of today's textbooks do more to harm children than to teach them and the results are apparent. Children no longer look forward to the Fourth of July or Veteran's Day.

"Rain Forest Algebra" and other socialist, feminist and environmentalist propaganda should be thrown out of our schools and children taught the truth. Capitalism is the best economic system on Earth, Marxism is synonymous with failure and the United States is home to the most liberated, free, prosperous and economically mobile people in the world. It is about time Texas' textbooks read the same.

Donny Ferguson is a junior political science major.

PERSPECTIVES

American indulgences permeate society

While the nation discussed the president's best scandal, parents over their children's ears and the public debated who Clinton lied to and how much they cared, few people asked the most biting question. The biting query first came from a morning talk show where the hostess asked, "How can a man so intelligent be a slave to his hormones?"



**DAVID
JOHNSTON**
columnist

It's a good question. It could be asked to most Americans — not just select politicians.

It seems Americans have given themselves over to their lusts and desires. Indulgences from prearranging to affairs are either ignored or receive a forgiving wink. At an earlier time, citizens held themselves to a higher standard.

Philosophers held self-denial as the highest cause. Those days are gone, and the nation appears worse for the absence.

The selfish indulgences occur at all levels. Some students, instead of selecting classes according to their value or ability to improve career prospects, will only choose courses they expect to enjoy, and even then must make sure they don't start before 10 a.m. Aggies almost always leap at the chance to sleep until late afternoon or skip classes. Instead of seeing the value of learning course material and the physical advantages of a regular sleep schedule, students yield to a few moments of pleasure.

Of course, there's hardly anything wrong with goofing off once in a while or indulging in a little extra sleep, but a habit of similar indulgences can be a problem. There is value in taking control of one's desires instead of being controlled by them.

The indulgent lifestyle is beginning to permeate society. John Grisham has recently taken up this cause, pointing out that executives

making hundreds of thousands of dollars often give small pittances to charity, instead adding to their extravagant lifestyle. Even practicing Christians who once tithed their gross earnings are holding their purse strings a little tighter. Many non-profit groups are worried about their financial prospects as baby-boomers' parents retire.

America has begun to excuse a wide variety of behaviors. Instead of mastering themselves they shrug and say, "I couldn't help it." Shortcoming from severe obesity to laziness and perhaps someday philandering are attributed to genetics or environment.

Sure, everyone faces different struggles and some people have harder battles in some areas, but this should present a challenge, not an excuse.

For some reason, discipline has become an undesirable term. Instead of learning to do without potentially harmful desires, Americans tend to give in to pleasures. The results can be devastating. Unchecked desires can lead to

physical problems (high cholesterol, fatigue, etc.) or can hurt others emotionally (inability to keep commitments or be punctual).

Students should realize there is worth in self-denial. Scholars and philosophers once considered it the highest goal. More recently, however, Americans seem to believe their experiences are unique, their struggles more difficult than anyone else's. For years, people have functioned under circumstances that now require medication or counseling. Although counseling or medication can help make burdens lighter, the underlying syndrome should not excuse unacceptable behavior.

Americans from Aggies to Bill Clinton should stop giving in to their human nature and begin striving to better themselves and those around them. If millions of Americans can conquer their hormones, their environment or their flawed genes, then everyone else has little excuse.

David Johnston is a senior mathematics major.



MAIL CALL

Air conditioning cannot kill strong traditions

Even though he doesn't say so, it is obvious Donny Ferguson must live in Walton Hall. He makes Walton Hall sound like heaven on earth, Hart Hall sound like a rubble-heap waiting to happen and Residence Life sound like the anti-Christ.

What I can't figure out is why residents of Walton think installation of window air conditioners is going to be the end of tradition and their close-knit community. The last time I looked, Walton Hall rooms have two windows. If you want to continue living in a sweat box, turn off the air conditioner and open the other window. If you want to maintain a close-knit community and tradition, you can still open your door. No one's stopping you. Plus you'll be air-conditioning the stairwell. Commu-

nity and tradition are determined by the residents of Walton Hall. Having an air conditioner and slightly higher rent have absolutely nothing to do with it.

Hart Hall is upset because they want to introduce women into the equation. What's the matter, guys, afraid a few women are going to see you in your skivvies?

Women deserve just as much right to a lower-rent facility as you do. As far as maintaining Hart Hall tradition, no woman is going to want to be in Hart Hall that doesn't want to maintain that environment. Hart Hall can only benefit by having women in it.

Residence Life isn't trying to "screw" anybody. A&M is a business as well as a University. Businesses have to look out for themselves from time to time or they are not going to be a business for very long. Not everyone is going to like it. Businesses have to be looking to the wanting cheaper housing, then things have to change. Raising rent to \$935 per semester is not that high. If you don't believe me, take a look at what other universities charge for room rent. I think you'll find you are getting a pretty fair deal.

My advice to both Hart and Walton residents is to get used to change. When it happens, make the most of it. Don't run away and don't whine and moan, but instead make it into the community that you know it can be.

*John Green
Class of '00*