

Uncle Sam, professional laughingstock

United States not respected by other countries due to history of involvement in civil conflicts

In the year 168 B.C. the Seleucid Empire invaded Egypt. As Egypt was an ally of the Roman Republic, Rome was understandably upset by this action and sent an envoy to the Seleucids to register their disapproval.

The Roman delegate Popilius met with the Seleucid king Antiochus and drew a circle in the sand around the king, telling Antiochus to decide whether he would have peace or war before he stepped out of the circle.

Antiochus backed down and withdrew his army from Egypt. Rome was the most powerful nation in the ancient world and Antiochus knew that to resist Rome would bring destruction on him and his people.

Today, the United States is supposedly the most powerful nation in the world. But despite our superpower status, we have proven consistently incapable of maintaining any kind of international order. Rogue terrorist states like Iraq and Yugoslavia openly and consistently defy the United States, while American efforts to control them prove ludicrously ineffective.

When Rome ruled the world it was able to keep the peace by sending a single man to talk to its enemies, why is it the United States can not even maintain order with cruise missiles and stealth fighters? The answer is simple, the ancient world feared Rome, the modern world does not fear the United States.

The principle reason why the United States is not feared is because of something called the Vietnam Syndrome. Essentially the Vietnam Syndrome is the paralyzing fear the United States has had of getting into a major war ever since Vietnam.

In some ways this has been a good thing as it has probably helped save American lives by keeping us out of needless foreign conflicts. Unfortunately, it has also deeply eroded America's international credibility.

The international community no longer believes America will go the distance if it comes to it. Instead they believe that when the going gets tough, America will get going. And quite frankly most of the evidence supports their position.

When the hostage rescue mission in Iran failed, the United States backed down and did not try again. When American forces in Lebanon were attacked by suicide bombers, the United States promptly pulled out of the country. And when the Somalia operation turned violent, we quickly abandoned it and gave up.

Even our recent victories have done little to restore international confidence. Grenada and Panama were both quick and relatively bloodless operations. As for the Persian Gulf War, which President Bush attempted to cite as proof that America had

moved beyond Vietnam, it was largely inconclusive.

The Gulf War amply demonstrated American technical mastery and tactical skill, but it was won so quickly that it offered no evidence that the United States had the will to suffer through a long, drawn out conflict.

To make matters worse, since the Gulf War America's enemies have gotten a lot smarter. Saddam Hussein has learned the futility of attempting to challenge the United States to a conventional battle, so now he has adopted a far more insidious strategy of just trying to outlast the United States.

He knows America will never invade Iraq, so he just has to be patient and wait. The worst we can do to him is to launch the occasional air strike or cruise missile attack and what does he have to fear from that?

Such attacks actually strengthen his position at home as he comes off looking like a hero for standing up to the hated Americans, and they make the United States look like a bully to the international community. Hussein knows he just has to stay in power until he finally gets some nuclear weapons and then the United States will have to back off or risk losing Riyadh or Tel Aviv.

Slobadan Milosevic has adopted the exact same strategy. He knows air power cannot win a war by itself, and that President Clinton has ruled out sending American ground forces to Kosovo.

Therefore, he has nothing to fear from the United States. Milosevic called our bluff and he won. The on going air strikes are doing nothing to stop his forces (Serbian atrocities have reportedly increased since the air raids began), the only thing that will stop Milosevic is if the United States commits ground forces to the region. Something that is probably not going to happen.

If the United States is going to insist on trying to contain the Husseins and Milosevics of the world, we are going to have to realize that this is going to require sacrifice.

The half measures that have been used against Iraq and are currently being used against Yugoslavia are simply not working. Neither Hussein nor Milosevic fear the United States, because while they know we have the power to crush them, they do not believe we have the will to use that power. And right now it looks like they are right.

Rome understood that ruling the world had a price tag attached to it, it is time for the United States to learn the same lesson. To stop Milosevic (or Hussein) is going to require Americans on the ground, and that is going to mean Americans' guts on the ground.

It is time for the United States to decide if we are willing to pay that price or not, because what we are doing right now is worse than useless.

Brendan Guy is a senior political science and history major.



BRENDAN GUY



GABRIEL RUENES/THE BATTALION

Homosexual hotel should be allowed, residents' fear irrational

Homosexuals are all child molesters who definitely do not deserve a place to relax and enjoy themselves. At least that is what Christian protesters are saying in response to the first homosexual hotel in the Galveston area.

However, these protesters are confused, close-minded and bigoted. But more importantly, they are wrong.

A homosexual hotel is no more an inappropriate and offensive place than is a dog-lovers convention to people who prefer cats. It is time to leave the homosexuals alone and concentrate on

more important issues.

The Hollywood Guesthouse is opening on the beach in Galveston and offers a completely secluded area within the walls of the hotel where guests can stroll around nude or semi-nude if they choose to do so.

To protest, Grace Baptist Church pastor Ken Barber wrote an opinion column to the *The Daily News* (Galveston's newspaper) saying that "in regard to the sodomite hotel ... everybody better grab your little boys off the beach. These guys love fresh meat. They will molest your children."

Needless to say, it is better to have a homosexual hotel that is not harming anyone — whatever Barber misguidedly thinks — than have a protest led by somebody who has no compunction about labeling an entire group of peo-

ple as child molesters.

This is a stigma that while untrue, will be believed by a huge percentage of the willing masses.

Look at the Holocaust. That is exactly what the Nazis did to the Jews. Because, if someone is labeled a child-molester, the general perception is very slow to fade.

Further, the hotel harms no one. Even if somebody believes that homosexuality is a sin, everybody sins to one extent or another. Instead of protesting somebody else's sins and labeling those sinners as sexual deviants, people should focus inward and try to improve their own lives.

Now, this is not to say that all the protesting Christians believe what Barber so virulently preached, but it is just as bad to protest the hotel's open-

ing for more "morally correct" reasons.

The homosexuals have a right, a legal right, to open whatever kind of establishment they want to. If society starts curtailing this right, because "these people are sodomites," it is just as bad as if society does not allow African-Americans the right to open a hotel where African-Americans can relax. It is just as bad as saying that no nudist colonists should be allowed. Where can one draw the line?

Start with homosexuals, end with an Aryan nation.

Galveston city council member David Bowers said, "When hate rears its head, it should be identified as such. My comment was, 'When hate wears a religious collar, it is still hate.'"

This statement explains how society should approach a homosexual hotel.

Do not preach hate against the "sinners," do not use all sorts of slurs against them, do not make them feel unwanted in this society. Let them own their hotel in peace.

As editor of *The Daily News* Heber Taylor said, "We could stop insisting we are motivated by love of fellow man when we try to belittle or disenfranchise them."

Read the Bible, everyone. While it might preach homosexuality is a sin, so is lying, cheating, stealing and gossiping.

Did Jesus not say that "he who is without sin can cast the first stone?" Please, all the perfect sinless people out there, stop badgering the homosexuals. You have better things to worry about.

Lisa Foox is a senior journalism major.



LISA FOOX

MAIL CALL

Tolerance not as important as liberty

How misguided are we as a nation when we replace the cry for liberty with a demand for tolerance. It seems that anyone who stands and exercises his or her freedom of speech is accused of being intolerant.

It is a sad day when the weak minded cries, "Can't we all just get along?" outnumber those who desire to boldly test their ideas and beliefs in the free market of ideas. Sure we may not agree. In fact we may disagree 100 percent, but let us always be free to argue, to discuss, and to challenge each other.

Tolerance is for the weak spirited, for those who fear opposing ideas. Liberty is far more challenging. It requires that though I

may disagree with you completely, I will do everything in my power defending your right to disagree with me.

I am a Christian. I do believe the Bible is true. I know many of you do not. Let us disagree and the other is wrong. Let us try to persuade the other to our way of thinking. Let us be civil and respectful, but let us be free. Liberty is a hard road to follow, but it is only here, when we are free to disagree, that truth can be found.

Curtis Sandlin
Class of '00

Ignorance at A&M blocks progress

The Constitution of this country graciously grants us certain rights

that we hold dear, granting a freedom not found in many parts of this world.

But, it seems many take these rights for granted, exercising them without the responsibility that goes hand-in-hand with these rights.

It seems that certain Aggies have exerted their freedom of speech and added a new shirt I hope will not become a regular mainstay of this campus' wardrobe.

Dawning a reprehensible phrase, "No fags, A tradition since the beginning" followed by soon to be forgotten quote, this shirt represents the ignorance that still persists within this one of the top schools in this country by implementing the "Vision 2020" plan.

It is disheartening to see that while we strive to present ourselves as one of the best in the

country, certain people tarnish this school and themselves by adorning themselves with this shirt.

I would, like no other, love to see A&M reach the pinnacle of higher education, distancing ourselves from the second-rate school down the road. Unfortunately, certain members of this campus still live in a world where hate and intolerance prevail.

I hope that these people can take the blinders society has put on them and examine why they feel so much hate for certain groups, and perhaps figure out for themselves whether disdain and malice, as opposed to love and understanding, can truly bring an absolute to the fears and ignorance festering within.

Ricardo Romanillos
Class of '01

Picture tasteless, insensitive, sad

Our condolences are sent to the family and friends of William Berry, Jr. It is horrible to lose a loved one in this manner. Although many of us did not know William, as Aggies we will mourn his passing. However, the choice of *The Battalion* staff to print such a tasteless picture to cover Berry's death sickens us.

A picture of him should accompany the article—a photograph to help us put a face with his name, not the clean-up of the aftermath of his death. The judgment of the editors is certainly flawed when no consideration was shown for Berry's memory or the feelings of his loved ones.

By printing such a tasteless picture, *The Battalion* is searching for

sensationalism in order to attract readers. As the campus newspaper, its circulation is already guaranteed without having to use such tacky and cheap tactics.

Jane E. Bearden
Class of '99
Accompanied by 57 signatures

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

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call
013 Reed McDonald
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX
77843-1111

Campus Mail: 1111
Fax: (409) 845-2647
E-mail: batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu