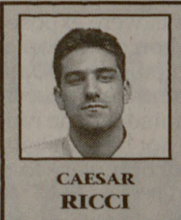


## Iran's new democratic push must be peaceful

Iran is undergoing a second revolution. Yet in stark contrast to the last one, this revolution is likely to be peaceful and ultimately will give Iranians what they want: freedom, democracy and open relations with the outside world. They have become fed up with the oppressive revolutionary regime that has mislabeled the name of religion to consolidate power, silence dissent and drastically curtail citizens' rights. Their resistance against the government is warranted, but must be effected without taking recourse to violence.



CAESAR RICCI

their activity appears "un-Islamic." The assault made on their privacy is greatly resented by Iranians.

"They don't want people telling them what to do," Rezakhani said of his people. Some individuals feel that the self-proclaimed Islamic government is not Islamic at all. Rather, many officials are simply power-hungry men who want to assert their authority and get rich.

"Islamic government is a myth; it's propaganda," one Iranian villager commented in the National Geographic report. "I doubt these people are working for Islam. They're just collecting money for themselves."

So what type of government do the Iranians want?

First, they kicked out the shah partly because of his attempts at westernizing Iran and minimizing the role of Islam. Now they feel oppressed by a staunchly anti-west government that has made Islam the cornerstone of society. It would appear Iranians cannot make up their minds.

But they have. And newly-elected President Khatami embodies their democratic vision.

"He is ideal in all respects," Islamic law student Ali Safaryan said in National Geographic. "He talks about Islamic democracy. He brings us this gift of dialogue between cultures. And he has improved the view Iranians have of Americans."

Khatami is seeking to moderate the role of religion in Iran's government.

"The future of religion is that it has to cope with freedom; otherwise it has no future," he said at a rally in Iran.

But to do so, he will have to overcome considerable opposition. Hard-liners are already making desperate attempts to prevent reform.

Recently, eight Iranian intellectuals were assassinated by members of the government's ministry of information. Right now, independent newspapers are being shut down to stifle criticism and debate.

In July, right-wing militias raided the dormitories of students who had protested the crackdown on the press.

At least one student was killed in the confrontation.

Now, the revolutionary court, much to the outrage of the people, has condemned four leaders of the student demonstrations to death.

While the court accuses them of inciting the people, a Human Rights Watch report explains the real motive behind the sentences is "apparently to intimidate Iranian students as they return to classes."

President Khatami must work diligently behind the scenes to ensure that the four leaders are not executed.

If his efforts are not sufficient, Iranian citizens should be prepared to use drastic forms of civil disobedience, such as strikes, sit-ins and mass protests.

In the meantime, they must wait for the February parliamentary elections, in which they will vote the hard-liners out of power and the pro-reform candidates in, thus sealing Iran's democratic future.

Caesar Ricci is a junior plant and soil science major.

## ACCESS DENIED

### Campus parking policy unfairly handicaps disabled students

Each semester nearly 400 students at Texas A&M register as disabled.



ELIZABETH KOHL

These students, in addition to many more who go unregistered, not only face overcoming their disabilities but are further hampered by the ongoing obstacles the University continues to place in their paths.

Recently, handicap notices have been posted in all pay parking areas on campus.

As of today, individuals with handicap license plates, hang tags or placards are no longer exempt from paying parking lot fees.

While the notice is in accordance with a new state law, House Bill 1032, it does not require A&M to enforce it.

University policy states, "Texas A&M does not discriminate on the basis of disabilities in admission or access to its programs."

The policy clearly implies that handicapped individuals who are enrolled or staffed by A&M should not be forced to pay to attend their classes or jobs.

The pay lot behind the Wehner Business Administration Building and the West Campus Library, Parking Area 72 is affected by this change of policy. The nearest handicap parking spaces, aside from those in the Wehner lot, are on the other side of the Heep Center in Parking Area 74.

In the event that a disabled person has to park in any of these spaces it is a considerable distance to the West Campus Library, Wehner, even to the Biochemistry/Biophysics Building.

Handicap tags are issued on a

merit basis; it only makes sense that anyone with a tag needs to park close for a reason. With the new policy, the University stands to gain minuscule amounts of revenue at the cost of the disabled.

In PA 72, there are 14 spaces designated for handicap parking. If one of these spots was occupied for an entire day, A&M only stands to earn \$8. Swallowing the cost of these handicap spaces would cost the University negligible amounts.

The new pay-lot notice is not the only handicap issue. Simply getting to and from classes can be difficult for students who are both permanently or temporarily disabled. Buildings with central locations, such as Sterling C. Evans Library, Harrington Education Classroom Center or the Biochemistry/Biophysics Building, leave little alternative for students, besides walking or riding in a wheelchair.

Even buildings located along streets or adjacent to parking lots are becoming more inconvenient to reach due to road closures and construction.

Handicapped individuals who drive themselves or are driven to campus face parking problems with a twist.

On main campus, there seems to be a sufficient number of spaces available around the Blocker Building and Zachry Engineering Center, but on the other side of the library, one faces a maze of gates and drives when looking for a parking space.

With a handicap placard and an A&M parking tag, a person can park in any space that is not University business or 24-hour reserved. The most central option for handicap parking is the new parking garage next to the library annex. But disabled people must pay to park there after today.



MARK MCPHERSON/THE BATTALION

A&M offers the illusion that they are dedicated to helping students who face disabilities. A simple manor in doing so would be to supply easy access to the available spaces for disabled individuals. The ethics and morals of A&M are in serious question if they choose

not to offer as much assistance as possible. Remedying the situation is not just an option. It is a social obligation.

Elizabeth Kohl is a junior accounting major.

## freedom-minded Iranians should oppose Islamic hard-liners without using violence.

The people's demands for reform, led by moderate President Muhammad Khatami and independent press, are being met with bitter opposition and violence by government hard-liners who stand to lose in a more open society.

Until now, most Iranians have pressed for democratic change in a peaceful manner. But there is the danger that the repression-wary populace will succumb to violent action if the train of reform comes slowly or is derailed by the hard-liners.

However, violence is not the best solution. Freedom-minded Iranians can channel their anger into intelligent non-violent action and win their demands, not through riots and fights, but through civil disobedience and non-cooperation.

Iranians must remember that while the right wing elite have the guns and the political power, they have the masses and the social power.

The people are the base of the economy, without which the government could not function. They must exploit this fact.

Iran's 1979 "Islamic" revolution, in which the dictatorial, westernized shah was overthrown and replaced with a strict theocratic state, has not given the people what they wanted.

"We didn't expect so much democracy," political scientist Parideh Farhi said in the July National Geographic special on Iran. "Severity is against our nature. We like fun. We like color."

Iran's repressive fundamentalist regime has made people unhappy and life gray, according to Khodadad Rezakhani, a Texas A&M student from Iran. "Nobody celebrates anymore," he said of his homeland. Iran's government may be religiously fundamentalist, but the people are far from it, Rezakhani said.

The government attempts to regulate citizens' lives with morality enforcers, men given the duty of incessantly nagging the people in public if

## Military's domestic power needs restraint

Last week, Washington issued a wake-up call for the entire nation.

The public should not roll over, hit the snooze button and go back to sleep.

Several years ago, the secretary of defense realized the world is operating on a new and different set of rules than previously this century and established a committee to investigate what kinds of vulnerabilities the United States faced in the coming years.

The committee and the RAND Institute, a hired policy think-tank, came up with a number of interesting conclusions, which were reported in a recent issue of the *Washington Post*.

The committee concluded that the United States is increasingly vulnerable to terrorist attacks within its borders.

Since few could ever forget the World Trade Center and Oklahoma City bombings, this revelation might come under the heading of "things we learned too late."

The situation is frightening, but even more frightening is the proposed solution: giving the military more responsibility for internal domestic security.

Anyone who does not understand the trouble with this idea is cordially invited to pay a visit to East Timor. The dividing lines between the military and the police disappeared there a long time ago.

The feeling that one should have seen the event coming does nothing to alleviate the misery of the catastrophe.

If the American public does not want military police patrolling its streets in Hum-vees and tanks, it should abort this mission before it gets off the ground.

The more time there is between inception of the plan and the call to rethink the solution, the less likely the opponents of the military policing are to succeed. Therefore, the time to protest these conclusions is now.

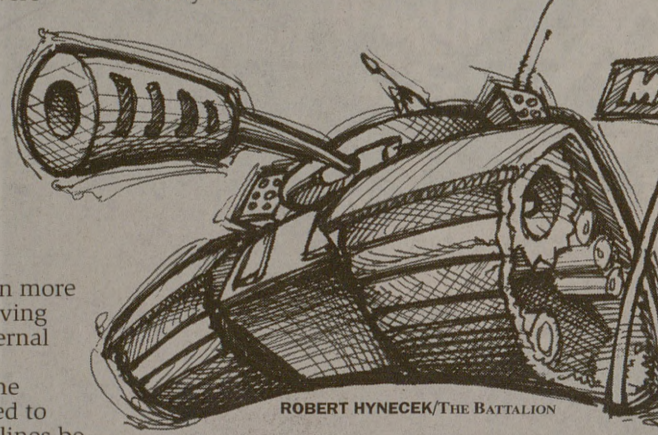
Human nature is essentially unchanged.

Give kids toys, and they will want to play with them. Give soldiers weapons and some ammunition, and they will want to shoot them — even if it means firing at civilians.

Yesterday's newspapers confirm such a scenario is not motivated by alarmism.

The Associated Press has uncovered evidence that American soldiers killed hundreds of civilian South Korean refugees in 1950 at a bridge named No Gun Ri.

Soldiers who participated in or witnessed the massacre have confirmed that their superiors told them to fire because North Korean soldiers disguised as peasants may have been in the mob, even though the crowd of harmless victims included women, children and elderly men.



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

Apparently, the military was not loath to shoot a few hundred Korean civilians for the sake of killing suspected enemies among them.

Who can be sure they will not fire upon American civilians to kill those they suspect of terrorism?

Events in the United States' past are not far cries from such indiscriminate policing.

Civil unrest was widespread during the Vietnam War, an immensely unpopular conflict. Since the regular forces were busy elsewhere, the National Guard was used to ensure order on several occasions.

One unfortunate consequence was at a previously-unknown school, Kent State University in Ohio. National Guard troops opened fire on unarmed student protesters voicing opposition

to the war. Their deaths were indelibly etched into the national conscience by poignant photography and evening news films. Those images must not be forgotten.

All over the world, there are police forces armed with automatic weapons who ride around in tanks.

These are often called security forces. But calling something by a different name will not change what it is, even if doing so changes people's perception of it.

The American public deserves to be protected from terrorist attacks.

A good starting place would be for the government to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of foreign countries.

If the foreign policy of this nation does not provoke hatred of the American people abroad, U.S. domestic security will be more assured.

The answer to the argument that the purpose of the plan is to protect the public is simple.

The government is made up of people, and as such, is subject to human error. Therefore, one of the strengths of the American government is the system of checks and balances.

The military is at the disposal of its commander-in-chief, the president. The founders of our country saw fit to hog-tie the president to prevent abuse of power. Because he has such a powerful tool at his fingertips, perhaps they had a reason.

This plan may begin benignly, but its development into something it was never intended to be is not without precedent. Vietnam is an unparalleled example of the chameleon-like character of government policies in practice.

There are ways to protect the public without turning the Army loose on the streets of this country. Lawmakers will have to be strongly convinced to look for alternative solutions to the problem of domestic terrorism.

A good way to convince them would probably be to vote them out of office. But it is much more likely that America will just turn over and hit that snooze button again.

Ann Hart is a senior English major.

### MAIL CALL

#### Intolerance problems at A&M overrated

In response to Eric Dickens' Sept. 29 column.

Dickens talks about how international students wearing traditional clothing inspire people to look at them.

That is human nature.

Wouldn't a student in Tehran wearing a Stetson and Wranglers get the same response?

It even happens here in America. I spent the last seven years in Seattle and got strange looks every time I left the house wearing my Stetson.

Were they being intolerant? No, it was just unusual.

Dickens also refers to the diversity at Texas A&M. What do the

students have to do with who is admitted to the school?

No one in the admissions office has ever asked my opinion on that subject.

How is it my fault that the level of minority students at A&M is below his expectations? How does that make me intolerant?

Dickens makes some harsh politically correct accusations, yet he provides no support for them.

He preaches tolerance, but where is his tolerance for the way others are? Where is his tolerance for beliefs beyond his own or those at A&M?

Why is it that the most intolerant people I have ever met are the ones preaching how intolerant other people are?

Marc Barringer Class of '92

#### Pedestrian: Keep bikers in bike lanes

This is for all those poor Aggies who do not know the important difference between a sidewalk and a bike lane.

A sidewalk is a piece of pavement beside a road which is used by pedestrians to walk on. A bike lane is a lane on a road used for

bike riders. Hence the names. I hope this will clear things up for those bike riders who do not know the difference.

If some of you still do not believe me, just ask a pedestrian where you should ride your bike before you get angry about them being in your way.

Stephanie Smith Class of '99