

EDITORIAL

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

If there is to be peace in the Middle East, Palestinian Authority leader Yassir Arafat must take drastic measures to curb all attacks on Israel by militant groups. Now. Otherwise, the United States and allies that rail against terrorism must re-assess the strategies being pursued toward a cease fire. Rarely do *Battalion* editorials offer opinions on international issues, but Wednesday's suicide bombing in Netanya, during a seder meal celebrating the Jewish Passover, is such an atrocity that it would be irresponsible not to comment on the current impasse in the peace process.

The inhibitor of the current cease fire plan is not new, and Arafat deservedly finds himself in a tight spot. The militant group Hamas took credit for the cowardly attack, which killed at least 19 people and injured more than 120 on the Jewish religious holiday. If Arafat has the control he claims over Hamas and other militant groups, the time has long passed for him to call for an end to the string of attacks that have fueled 16 months of violence. Both Palestinians and Israelis are weary from the violence, but as long as Arafat allows his followers to instigate violence, skepticism from Israel and other countries should be considered. Arafat has proved himself to be unwilling to compromise on Palestinian demands — a position that has spoiled numerous attempts at peace and stability in the region. His disregard of the Oslo Accord and turning his back on the Camp David talks in September 2000 are among the obstacles he has laid for peace. The international community needs to get past Arafat's repeated apologies for bombings (he "strongly condemned" the Passover massacre) and take all measures necessary to ensure that his actions match his words.

Ironically, this unacceptable attack occurred at the same time as the Arab Summit, where Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah is selling his Mideast peace proposal. This proposal — well-intentioned but misguided — will end up another dead letter if Arafat is not held accountable for the actions of his followers. Israel is right to re-evaluate its overall policy, as should the United States if peace is to be achieved.

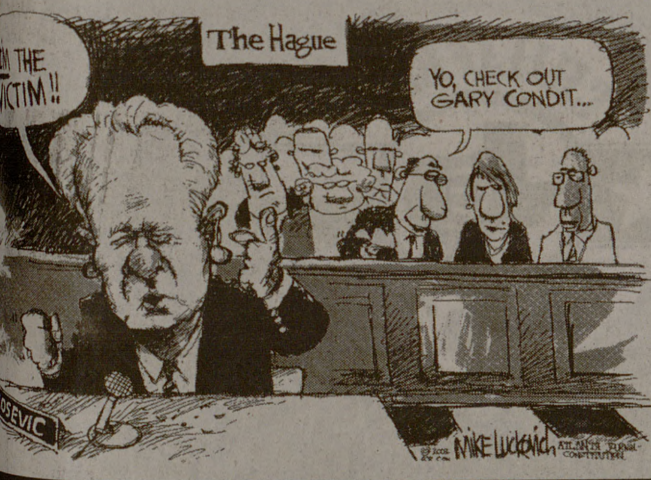
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MAIL CALL

Candidate issues

and foremost, I want to apologize to John Kitsopoulos and other students who may have been offended by the actions of our campaign staff. I take full responsibility for these actions. By means however, do they represent the way I feel about Native American people, or any other religion or ethnicity on this campus. I am truly sorry for the actions our actions have caused. As a Resident Adviser it is my job, and I have taken pride in promoting diversity and the respect of other cultures on this campus. The purpose of the head dress was to draw attention, and the drum was not a beating of war, but a piece of a one-man band that also included two tambourines (trashcan lids), a flute and tambourine. Although the intentions were good the results are something I am ashamed about. Please accept my apology.

Sampson Jordan
Class of 2003

Heritage protected

In light of recent comments regarding the Southern

Heritage Society and its use of the Confederate battle flag on their T-shirts, I felt it was my obligation to clear up some misinformation. First, the battle flag is just one of nine various flags representing Texas, the South and the United States on our shirts. We hold each of these flags close to our hearts because they symbolize our ancestors' struggle for self-determination.

They also symbolize their bravery against overwhelming odds (Texans vs. Mexicans, Colonies vs. British, and Confederates vs. United States). Pablo Rodriguez stated that he is offended by our use of the battle flag. I have never seen him at any of our meetings. Isn't diversity about learning of other cultures and opening your mind to these?

Like it or not, A&M has many ties to the historic South. Jefferson Davis was the first man ever offered the presidency of A&M. There are numerous streets and statues named for great Southern men. The Sul Ross statue, in the past, has even been the target of organizations desiring to remove it. We honor the great things of our heritage and ancestry, and will do everything in our power to protect the memory of the great men and women who have gone before us.

James Drew
Class of 2001

Race to the top?

Merit should decide next Texas A&M president



MATTHEW MADDOX

For the first time since 1993, Texas A&M has the opportunity to make a fundamental change. A&M will have a new president, one that will play a critical role in several issues facing the University including Vision 2020, the future of the top 20 percent plan and Bonfire. A&M always needs the best president possible, but especially now. However, A&M has a policy in place that may not guarantee the best person for the job — affirmative action. It is not clear whether A&M's stated affirmative action policy is a toothless means of appearing racially progressive or if it truly affects the outcome of which candidate fills an employment position. Either way, the outcome of such a policy is disastrous and will only negatively affect A&M.

Last week a link was on the A&M Website, "Presidential Search," a site that posted a basic employment description and solicited applications for the office of the University President. Most striking about the advertisement was the statement below the job description. The line said, "The Texas A&M University System is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer." There are only two possibilities as to what this means.

If the policy carries no weight and is simply a façade to appease those who feel that A&M is racially unwelcoming, then shame on the University. Stated policy should be abided by unless it is determined to be wrong. If it is wrong, then it should be removed from University policy. If Texas A&M is not abiding by its own rules, this not only leaves students and administrators confused, but will be perceived by the public as deceit. This would be a step backward for A&M's goal of changing the University's racially-conscious image.

If the affirmative action policy is more than a paper tiger and actually determines who will be employed by A&M, then shame on the University. It is undeniable that decades ago, Texas A&M was an unwelcoming place for minorities. However, a past era of discrimination does not justify a new one. All candidates involved with the University — whether they are students or administrators — must be chosen with disregard to race or other factors not affecting job performance. Individual merit used as the sole deciding factor is paramount to ending the racial mentality that has plagued Texas A&M.

An answer to what is the true scenario is difficult to find. The names of two mystery candidates not released by the University have become shrouded in even more secrecy than the federal shadow government. Dr. John Junkins is the chair on the Presidential Search Advisory Committee. Junkins said candidates with strong academic backgrounds and an ability to fund-raise were actively sought. However, he declined comment when asked if the University's affirmative action policy affected the candidate pool or if it would influence who becomes the next University president.

Brenda Simms, director of communications for the A&M System and spokesperson for the presidential search, said she did not know the criteria for searching out candidates.

Another interesting component is the apparent clash of ideals at work at the highest levels of the University. President Dr. Ray M. Bowen said, "It is a fundamental premise at Texas A&M University that all students, faculty, administrators and staff on our campus are due equal respect and consideration."

Also, the University policy on harassment and discrimination is clear. It reads, "All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin ..."

Contrary to the American way



JONATHAN JONES

Earlier this month, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to weaken the laws against illegal immigration. The measure allows more than 200,000 illegal immigrants to remain in the United States while their status is determined rather than requiring them to return home to apply for U.S. entry. The vast majority of these immigrants are from Mexico, and many reside in Texas. Normalizing the status of illegal immigrants through amnesty and the possibility of dual citizenship are issues that loom large over the upcoming meeting between President Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox. Both are bad ideas and a terrible precedent to set for the most successful immigrant country in the world. The future of America's immigration policies toward her southern neighbor should be based on the core principle of loyalty through assimilation.

President Bush is caught in a difficult position. The new Mexican government is the first in almost a century to attempt serious free-market and democratic reforms. Fox's effort toward a more open and economically-sound country is a

positive move for the United States and the people of Mexico. In the short run, however, he has some very specific and strongly-held opinions about American immigration policy. Mexico's Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda has outlined these repeatedly: amnesty for all illegals, the establishment of a guest worker program for those still in Mexico, decreased border enforcement and an exemption from legal immigration quotas for Mexico. The political motivations for Bush's endorsement of amnesty are obvious: He wants to win a larger share of the Hispanic vote for the Republican Party and help Fox, who, without strong support in Mexico's Congress for his programs, is losing popularity.

But such policies are not popular with the American public. Pollster John Zogby recently released a report that found 83 percent of Americans believe immigration laws are too lenient. The focus on security concerns since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks means political trouble for those who advocate policies such as amnesty for illegal immigrants, and rightfully so. America has been successful in forging a unique national character through assimilation, regardless of race or national origin. The course of action Fox wants the United States to embark on is contrary to what has made America strong.

Castaneda and other government officials are pushing for "regularization."



ADRIAN CALCANEO • THE BATTALION

The irony is that the very premise of affirmative action is the downplay of individual merit in light of a candidate's race, color or national origin.

Hopefully, the change of who occupies the maroon presidential office chair will be a catalyst for another change. The change needed is one that rids politically correct thinking from the administration in favor of common sense and academic accountability. Texas A&M's affirmative action is poor policy no matter how it is sliced, and it must be discarded before it determines who makes the presidential cut.

Matthew Maddox is a sophomore business administration major.

This involves legal work status for millions of illegal immigrants, leading to their eventual American citizenship. However, a 1998 Mexican law states these new American citizens could retain Mexican nationality. In addition, the law states that their children born in the United States could also claim Mexican dual citizenship. For the first time in America's history, millions of U.S. citizens could declare their allegiance to a neighboring country.

Mexican immigrants have made important contributions to the United States. Most have become proud citizens who transfer their loyalty from their birth country and become as American as any descendant of the Mayflower. This process has enjoyed a long history of success for both the country and the individual. To try something else, especially for political reasons, is to unnecessarily take a course with unpredictable consequences. Americanization and assimilation have been met with undeniable success since the birth of the nation. America has been a haven for the world's poor and oppressed for more than 200 years. Dual citizenship and large-scale amnesty are inconsistent with what has made America strong.

Jonathan Jones is a senior political science major.