

EDITORIAL FAREWELL, BOWEN Outgoing president led A&M into 21st century

Today is Dr. Ray M. Bowen's final day as the 21st president of Texas A&M University. A&M's campus has undergone a variety of changes in the eight years since Bowen began his tenure, and he should be applauded for his efforts to make A&M a better university.

Since Bowen became president in 1994, The Zone was added to Kyle Field, work began on the tunnel beneath Wellborn Road, the physical plant was expanded and Vision 2020 was developed. Bowen has also been crucial in A&M's reaction to the 1999 Bonfire collapse.

Although Bowen's legacy will probably be Bonfire, the full impact of his tenure is yet to be decided. Bowen initiated Vision 2020, the plan to make A&M a top-10 university by the year 2020 and announced the decision to cancel Bonfire in 2002, making him one of A&M's most controversial leaders. His decision to cancel Bonfire in 2002, after delaying the tradition for two years following Bonfire's collapse, also stirred debate in the A&M community.

By initiating change at a university which prides itself on tradition above all else, Bowen has displayed a great deal of courage in leading A&M into the 21st century. His legacy should not be remembered solely for his actions following Bonfire's collapse; he has also been instrumental in improving A&M's academic standing and gaining A&M greater respect on the national scene. For these accomplishments, Bowen deserves Aggie's respect for his leadership during the past eight years.

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Lights out in California

California governor, not Texas companies, to blame for energy crisis

Not since Huey P. Long has a state's chief executive been as associated with corruption and bungling as the present governor of California. In a territory with only one Republican elected to statewide office, it would seemingly take Armageddon to turn voters against a democratic incumbent. That is precisely what California has endured under Governor Gray "Gray-out" Davis. Most recent poll figures place his disapproval rating evenly matched with his approval numbers. This November, Californians have the opportunity to remove Gray Davis, and they must seize the day.

Under Davis' leadership, California has endured a reversion to third-world conditions. The roving blackouts that became the norm two years ago may only be a memory, but the California energy crisis is still wreaking havoc along the West Coast. In what is arguably the most liberal region in the United States, the policies under Davis might leave the state permanently biased against government deregulation. In 1998, crippling government restrictions imposed on the deregulation process came to a head. Companies were stopped from making long-term agreements with energy generators. This prevented those corporations from floating spikes in the cost of energy over long periods in time, instead exposing them to the volatility present in the open market. Contrary to advice available in

Economics 101, California then enforced a rate freeze on power providers, essentially driving them to bankruptcy when their costs exceeded what they were allowed to charge to customers. In one of the largest bankruptcy cases prior to Enron and WorldCom, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) became a casualty of the government's deregulation policy, filing Chapter 11 in April 2001.

Once intermediary companies such as PG&E were no longer in place to sell to customers, California proceeded to buy its energy directly from the open market, or "spot market." This left taxpayers and energy users directly exposed to fluctuations present in the market. Eventually, the only option open to California was to restrict energy use to the point that it inhibited business and normal life. Adding to the mess was the fanaticism with environmental regulation present in the state's laws. Due to the rigorous process, no new power plants had been built in the decade preceding the energy crisis despite a rapidly growing population. The government had no one to blame but itself for the crisis.

Long thought to be a chapter already etched in history, Davis unbundled the energy crisis issue recently in an attempt to raise his faltering approval numbers in the election year. While all of Washington was riding the Enron tragedy bandwagon, Davis decided to project his shortcomings as far away from himself as he could. His targets: the White

This month, the governor also signed off on legislation aimed at raising his approval numbers and courting the environmentalist voting base. The target of the legislation is the sport utility vehicle and other above-average fuel guzzlers. The law will empower an unelected commission to decide how high to raise automobile efficiency standards above the national requirement. Davis cited the Bush administration's inaction on the Kyoto Protocol as a reason to pass the higher standards. The Kyoto Protocol is a United Nations treaty under fire by both democrats and republicans as a potentially detrimental accord for the United States to abide by. Davis' legislation calls for the reduction in "greenhouse gases," specifically carbon dioxide.

Carbon dioxide is the gas expelled by human respiration and the substance most plant life requires for photosynthesis. The Air Resources Board has until 2005 to draft a plan of action. At that time, automakers would be required to incorporate the regulations into the design of their 2009 models. In a Reuters report, a spokesperson for the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers said automakers plan to fight the legislation, possibly through a referendum on California's November ballot.

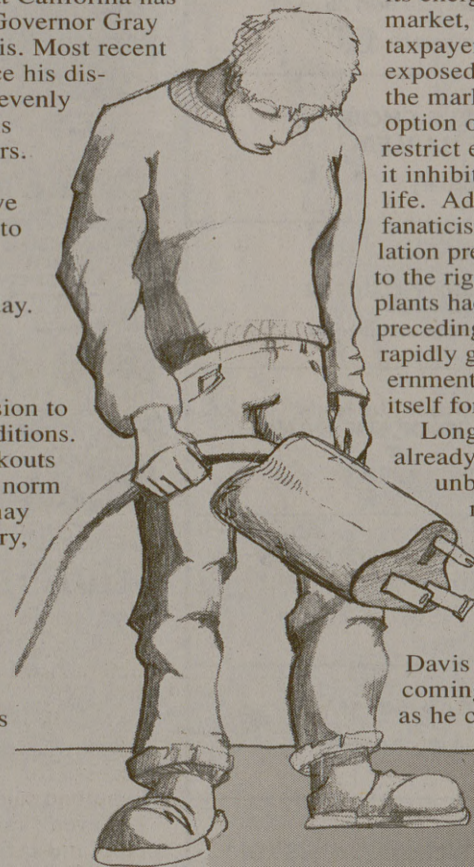
The implications of the bill are no laughing matter. The real threat is that while California's political ideologies might only make up a tiny wing of mainstream America, California auto sales represent an estimated 13 percent of the U.S. automobile market. If Davis is successful, auto manufacturers would most likely be forced to make the changes not only to their Pacific Coast auto line, but to all cars sold in the United States. Thus, while Californians might not be allowed by law to purchase the safer, larger steel-manufactured vehicles, all Americans might be reduced to purchasing domestic aluminum compact cars or looking outside the country's borders for their next purchase.

By voting out Davis, Californians will not only be doing their civic duty and their part for their state's future. They will be doing the entire country a favor.

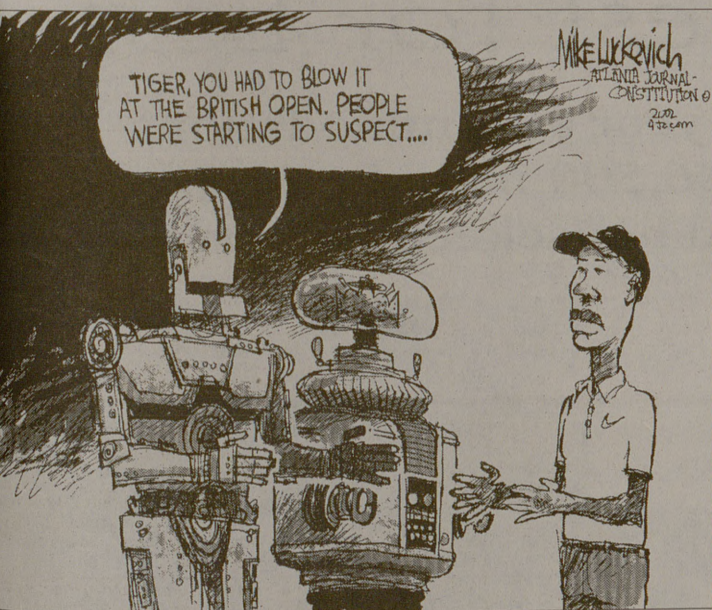
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MATTHEW MADDOX



FRANK CHANCE • THE BATTALION



Bombing is no longer needed

(U-WIRE) CHICAGO — It seems we may have won the war in Afghanistan only to lose the peace. This should not surprise any of us. Afghanistan has always been relatively easy to conquer, but it has proven nearly impossible to govern. The Soviets overran the country in just four days but were bogged down for a decade. Our own campaign in the fall lasted only two months. Even the infamous British expedition to Kabul in 1839, where only one man came back alive, had a relatively easy time conquering the country.

Unfortunately, we are not talking about how to conquer Afghanistan. We are talking about preventing the return of al-Qaida and Taliban forces. Some of these fanatics are hiding in the Pashtun-dominated parts of the country, with others watching from neighboring Pakistan. To keep them from regaining a foothold in a country, we must win a propaganda battle every bit as crucial as the military one.

Unfortunately, all the good feelings in the world will be for naught if we do not stop dropping bombs all over the country. Earlier this month, a U.S. plane mistakenly attacked an Afghan wedding party at Kakrak, killing at least 48 civilians. Reports indicate the pilot believed he was taking ground fire from Afghans who were firing their weapons into the air as part of the celebration. While this is just one incident of many, this recent bombing happened in "peacetime" (I use the term with regards to Afghanistan in the loosest possible sense of the word). Civilian casualties are expected during war, but are hard to defend in the absence of one.

Why are we still relying on air power in Afghanistan? Partly in case our ground forces come under attack. During Operation Anaconda in March, the Air Force's close-support bombing saved many of our soldiers' lives. However, the al-Qaida and Taliban forces are not stupid, and it is doubtful they will make the mistake of sending major cohesive units into conventional battle with us again. In fact, in the four months since Anaconda, it has become clear that most of our enemies have stayed across the border in Pakistan's tribal areas. So while our bomber force in Afghanistan has been substantially downgraded, it still packs a heavy punch. But one of the hazards of keeping these bombers over Afghanistan is that the odds increase that this lethality will be used on the wrong people, and increase resentment towards our peacekeeping forces.

During the war I was very much in favor of our bombing campaign, despite my desire to see ground troops introduced. However, the decision not to field significant numbers of ground troops (aside from some well-publicized raids) made sense at the time, as we could not have supported them logistically and they could not have been put into place in such a short time. Bombing, in short, was the most expedient solution. However,

now that the war is over, we are able to supply a substantial number of ground troops in Afghanistan.

Our mission requirements have also changed. Instead of fighting a country run by the Taliban-al-Qaida alliance, we are charged with keeping the peace where it exists and developing peace where it does not. These missions are not suited for air power.

Last week, *The New York Times* compiled a list of all the U.S. bombing errors since October. While the article displays a certain naiveté about the confusion and snafus that plague any battlefield (sample quote: "Before you bomb, you should be 100 percent certain of who you are bombing"), it did cause me to wonder if we haven't been leaning on air power too much in recent years. Our ability to bomb anything that moves, one of our biggest assets in combat, is one of the biggest drawbacks of using bombers for peacekeeping work. For example, there have been quite a few incidents when our soldiers have mistakenly raided villages and gotten into firefights with the wrong people. And that's on the ground. When looking down from 15,000 feet, the view must be even more confusing. Also, the victims of the previous incidents are usually in the single digits, as opposed to the massive double and triple-digit casualties of a bombing screw-up.

The final drawback is the image we have given by relying on our planes to do our dirty work. Bill Maher may have been tactless when he proclaimed that flying planes into buildings is more courageous than bombing from 15,000 feet, but he was definitely onto something. Last March, Israel launched a massive attack on the main West Bank cities, an attack that was notable for its lack of air power. In fact, before the fighting in Jenin, the prevailing view on the street was that Israel might be too soft to fight a war of attrition against the Palestinians. That view, confronted with images of Israeli soldiers fighting and dying house-to-house, changed practically overnight. Whatever else one thinks about the Israelis now, no one thinks they're cowards.

More incidents like Karak will hardly convince the Afghans that a western-style democracy is the best way of governing themselves. The presence of al-Qaida and Taliban forces means the United States cannot just abandon the country and manipulate it from the sidelines like so many other great powers have done in the past. We must find a way to guarantee the security of the Karzai government without alienating an already-suspicious population in the process.

Increasingly, air power is looking like the wrong tool for that job.

Justin Palmer is a columnist for the *Chicago Maroon*.

Animals killed for food suffer too

In response to Richard Bray's July 22 column:

Mr. Bray is right, the amount of abuse inflicted on companion animals is devastating, but he fails to admit that animals killed for food suffer no less. Being bred for a specific purpose does not change an animal's biological capacity to feel pain and fear. In many Asian countries, cats and dogs are bred for meat as chickens, pigs and cows are here in the United States. Whether the animals are tied by the neck to backyard chains or slung up by their legs to slaughterhouse conveyers, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) will continue to fight like hell to protect all animals.

Liz Welsh
PETA Staff Writer

Student says he was cheated

A few weeks ago I was cheated by the delivery driver

Clint Ullman
Class of 2007