

# OPINION

THE BATTALION

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## Europe shouldn't criticize U.S. war

### Germany and France want U.N. weapons inspectors to be given more time

As President George W. Bush escalates the war on terror to include an imminent attack on the current Iraqi regime, Germany and France, according to published reports from The Associated Press, have allied themselves against any further military operations in Iraq. Publicly, the two nations cite



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that the U.N. weapons inspectors should be given more time. However, just as time is up for Iraq, time is up for Germany, France and the rest of Europe to lecture the United States about war.

The discipline of history may not be as trendy or as popular as business or biomedical sciences, but surely it has

not degraded so far as to become irrelevant in the minds of the masses, especially the enlightened masses as Europeans like to style themselves. Unfortunately, it seems the leaders of France and Germany are either ignorant of their own histories or have chosen to forget about them.

It was European countries, the very same ones that today criticize the United States, that created World

War I. Their sense of politics facilitated a system of alliances so intertwined that the assassination of one man — a man whom the vast majority of people could not even name today, Franz Ferdinand — instigated a global conflict. France and Germany lecture America about the value of waiting. Yet, within one month of the assassination of Ferdinand, Europe was at war. According to Emory University statistics, this "Great War" left nearly 10 million dead.

Myopic Europe learned nothing from WWI and the result was a second world war 20 years later. Insane reparations placed on Germany coupled with globally contagious economic depression threw the country into economic ruin. It was out of these economic shambles that a young Adolf Hitler emerged as a deceitful leader who offered as scapegoats Jews, Catholics and other minorities.

Erroneously, Europe waited. France and England hesitated as Hitler steadily increased his power. His grabs for land were met with little resistance. For Europe, no price was too high to avoid another war. Hitler's ultimate aims were realized with his invasion of Poland and within six years, 50 million were dead. The indecisiveness and lack of intestinal fortitude on the part of European leadership, as well as its desire to avoid war, caused the deaths of tens of millions.

So now one turns to this incessant lecture on the price of war and the pragmatism of waiting that Europe so loves to present to the United States. The rhetoric of Europe on this issue is worthless pulp on the international stage. The sins of Europe may be 60 years removed from the present, and

though history might never repeat itself, one can be sure that it will often appear similar.

The United States wants to remove one tyrannical regime led by one man in one country that few could name 12 years ago. This military action will not result in the deaths of 60 million precisely because the United States is undertaking this operation now, and not, for instance, after a catastrophic nuclear attack or smallpox epidemic.

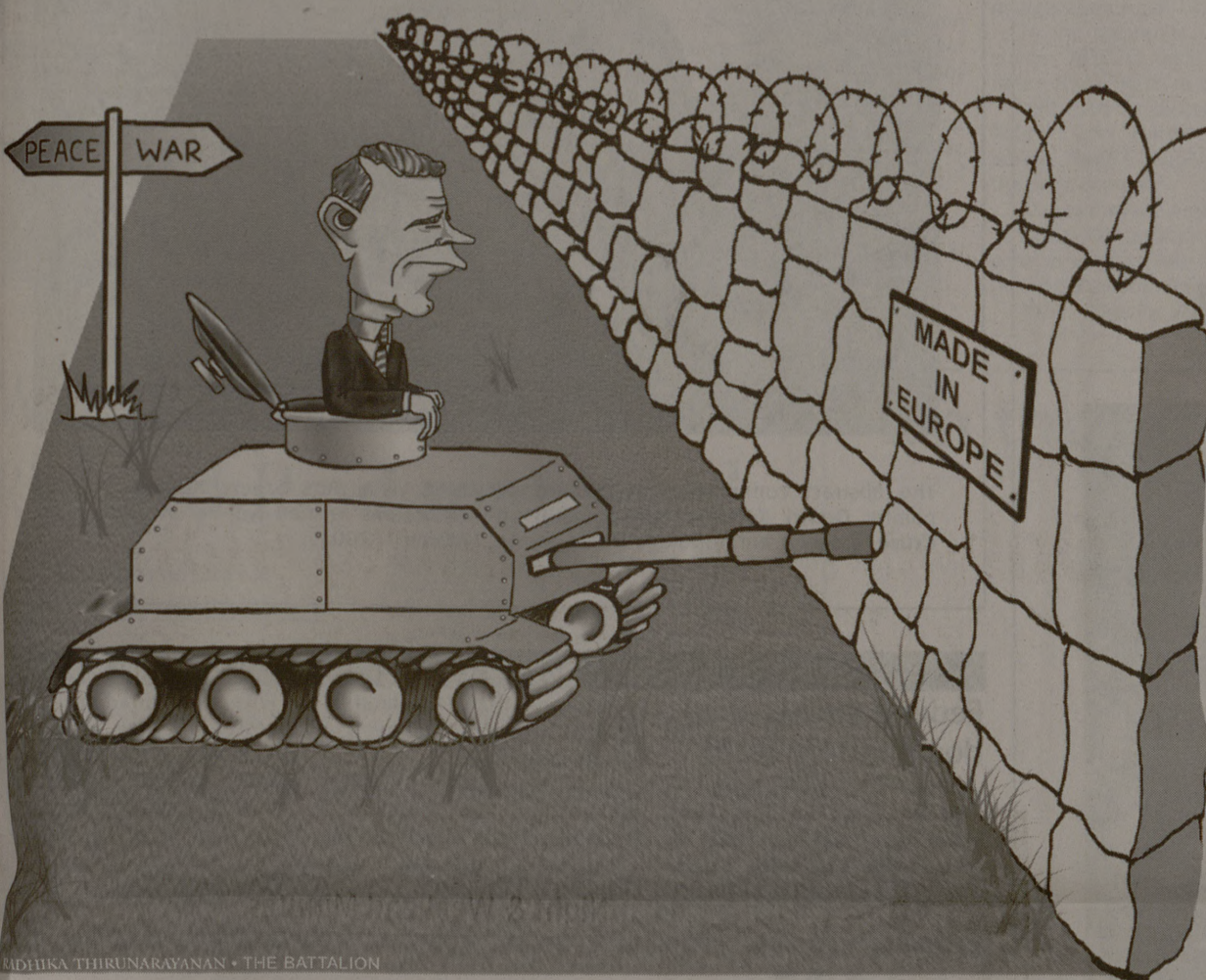
The United States cannot wait any longer to remove the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein. For the past 12 years, the United States has been in a de facto state of war with Iraq. Saddam has routinely thwarted the cease-fire resolution ending the first Gulf War.

Whether Saddam has weapons of mass destruction is irrelevant when juxtaposed with the knowledge that he will try to obtain them if he currently does not, and that he will support any nation or organization with those capabilities. Saddam is a cancer that eats away at the security of the United States and thus the security of the world.

Saddam's removal will provoke nothing but economic growth and the spread of democracy for liberated Iraqis. Unlike Europe, the United States is not so narrow minded as to not realize the necessity in confronting enemies quickly. Unlike Europe, the United States has not the albatross of 60 million dead.

America must act swiftly and decisively to assure that this world is safe not just for Americans but for all people. Saddam must go.

Michael Ward is a senior history major.



## Democrats must stop dealing race card

At the dawn of a new year and a new Congress, one might have hoped the ongoing debate about race relations would be elevated to a higher level, characterized by greater integrity and good faith on both sides. Once again, Democrats and liberals have rendered that hope piteously naive.

Of course, they really had no other option. Still recuperating from a near-criminal defeat in the recent midterm elections, congressional Democrats have reverted to their tried-and-true strategy: dealing the race card with absolutely no sense of shame.

With President George W. Bush's renomination of Judge Charles Pickering Sr., the smear campaign resumed. Basing their criticisms on a single, misunderstood case, Democrats branded Pickering a racist. Fox News reported that the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Elijah Cummings, called Pickering "hostile" towards civil rights, and several Democratic senators are planning to filibuster his nomination (a move practically unheard of in the process of judicial approval). Never mind that, according to the Wall Street Journal, Pickering has always fought for improved race relations, as a judge and as a person. He helped black businesses secure loans and helped direct federal funds to programs that helped blacks. As county attorney in Mississippi, he lost re-election for testifying against the KKK, and was later

supported by two-thirds of the blacks in his district when he won a state Senate seat. The Journal also reports that a former Democratic governor called him "one of the state's most dedicated and effective voices for breaking down racial barriers."

Instances such as this abound in today's politically correct culture, when the baseless claims of individuals or groups produce a knee-jerk reaction from Democrats and others, resulting in the undeserved persecution of those accused as throwback racists from the segregated past. For an example that may be a little closer to home at A&M, one need only look at the administration's preemptive strike against Walton Hall residents for the proposed "ghetto party." The Battalion reported that pointed letters were sent to Walton Hall advisers and sensitivity training was prescribed.

What these two examples teach us is that we live in a society in which some hypersensitive individuals or groups provide fuel for self-interested race-baiters, setting off a chain reaction in which the truth is less important than the rhetoric and good people find a scarlet "R" emblazoned on their shirts. A continuing theme of the Democratic and liberal strategy has been to use any opportunity to smear Republicans and others as outrageous bigots who long for a return to the "good old days" before the Civil War.

The worst part is that many minorities play into this propaganda and hold back progress in race relations. The fact is

that America has progressed light years in racial harmony in just a few decades. While some prejudiced individuals will always remain, institutionalized racism has been definitively squashed, and people of any racial background have the opportunity to accomplish pretty much whatever they set their minds to. The disparities in opportunity that may remain are small, and the sensationalism and exaggeration aimed at stamping these remnants out are more harmful than helpful.

However, when any little instance that may or may not have been racially motivated is turned into a call to arms by certain self-interested groups, when the reputations and careers of good people are systematically destroyed before the facts are known, and when the society of a nation can no longer conduct a coherent and reasoned discussion aimed at improving racial harmony, progress becomes impossible. The boy who cried wolf eventually lost his audience when it mattered the most.

To come together as a society and eradicate the last traces of racism in our nation, the irresponsible and sensational tactics of liberals and Democrats must end. If these groups want an attentive ear, they must stop labeling as racist anyone and everything that is not in accordance with certain preferred policies. Americans of all backgrounds should demand an end to the sad era of racial McCarthyism, once and for all.

Jerad Najvar is a senior political science major.

## Political correctness oppresses free speech

The words of the late activist Emma Goldman have once again caused controversy. Goldman, a Russian-born anarchist, was deported to Russia in 1919 because of her outspoken call to refuse conscription, to organize labor, and for women's rights and free speech.

The Emma Goldman Papers Project has been housed at the University of California-Berkeley for the past 23 years. UC-Berkeley quoted the activist in its fund-raising appeal for the project. The administration at the university did not allow the use of two quotes from the fund-raising letter. The administrator felt the quotes could be construed as the university's stance on present-day problems and were too political. Later, the university rescinded its decision. The chilling fact remains that even on the most political and liberal campuses in the country, like that of Berkeley, the effects of political correctness exceed normal bounds and create an oppressive atmosphere for free speech and opposition to government actions.

The first quote used in the appeal comes from Goldman in 1915, when she called on people "not yet overcome by war-madness to raise their voice in protest, to call the attention of the people to the crime and outrage which are about to be perpetrated on them," according to The New York Times. Berkeley officials felt the use of this quote would be seen as the university's stance on the war with Iraq. "Associate Vice Chancellor Robert Price removed the quotes because he saw them as 'expressing a political point of view' and was concerned that they might be construed as university opposition to Bush administration plans for war in Iraq," said campus spokeswoman Marie Felde in a San Francisco Chronicle article. The university overstepped its bounds when it censored the two quotes, even if they did express a political point of view. The viewpoint was not that of the university, but that of Goldman and the staff of the project, including Candace S. Falk, the director of the project.

The second quote struck down by the university echoes an irony of the decision. "In the second quotation used by Falk, Goldman in 1902 warned that free speech proponents shall soon be obliged to meet in

cellars, or in darkened rooms with closed doors, and speak in whispers lest our neighbors should hear that free-born citizens dare not speak in the open," according to an article by The Associated Press. The university argues it was not oppression of free speech but a question of the appropriateness of the use of such quotations.

However, it is clear that the university did not want to stand by the idea of free speech in place of political correctness of supporting the Bush administration. At least until there was press coverage and a petition by the faculty to "condemn administration suppression of free speech," according to the San Francisco Chronicle. Other professors expressed concern about other projects and the administration's possible censorship of other materials. "If provocative quotations from individuals are censored in university-sponsored materials, the result will be nothing but views that comply with the cautious fund-raising sensibilities of university administrators. It's a complete mockery of the ideas of free speech and the ideas of academic freedom," said David Kairys, a civil rights lawyer who teaches at Temple University School of Law in a San Francisco Chronicle article.

The university issued a statement in which it regrets its decision to delete the quotations. "(Berkeley Chancellor Robert) Berdahl said he does not think that a supervisor editing a fund-raising letter amounts to an abridgement of free speech. However, he said deleting the quotes was an 'error in judgment,'" according to The Associated Press.

While the university reversed its decision, it will remain a poignant reminder that free speech is not secure anywhere even in the places one would expect its protection. The university was wrong in censoring the letter in fear of possibly portraying a political view and it should take this action as an error that will not happen again. With the current state of the world and possible future actions in places such as Iraq, free speech should become valued and protected. It is in the opposition that true American democracy and values such as free speech are seen clearly.

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