

## RESTRICTING TRADE WITH CHINA

The United States' continuing trade relationship with China, despite the enduring unfavorable human rights practices that are still evident there, sends a message of acceptance and tolerance to the oppressed in China and to nations around the world.



SARA FOLEY

However, American businessmen, politicians, and economists insist that a few million suffering Chinese is not the question at hand. They maintain that through continual trade with the United States, American principles will eventually seep into China's ideology until the human rights issues magically solve themselves.

*"China is far from enjoying equality of opportunity or a fair and organized court system, but worse, the basic and intrinsic rights of the people are being denied."*

These businessmen and politicians believe that through trade, the United States will ship its beliefs to China, and that by commercial interaction with the Chinese, America provides the best opportunity to improve their lifestyle. However, the concern is not solely about trade. Merely shipping products is not going to communicate freedom to China any more than importing their products convinces us to adopt communism.

The United States acted selfishly in the admission of China into the status of permanent normal trading relations in 2000, proving

to be arrogantly concerned with increasing its own wealth, even at the expense of countless unseen slave-driven children in a factory.

In all aspects of politics, there is a growing trend to separate morals from actions and to force the ends to justify the means. However, for economic transactions, one cannot simply choose to ignore the rights of those who produce the goods, especially when such people are too oppressed to speak out for themselves. Ideals and rights are inextricably intertwined with business and cannot be ignored. Trade is not a right given to every country, but the fundamental human rights that China denies its citizens should be.

Trade with China should not continue to go unnoticed. To get results from the Chinese government, instead of further empty promises, the United States must restrict commercial actions to see improvement.

The Chinese economy depends upon the United States just as the United States' economy depends on Chinese trade. However, life and freedom should be more important. The United States must begin to uphold principles instead of destroying them.

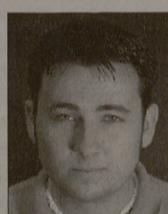
*Sara Foley is a sophomore journalism major. Graphic by Leigh Richardson.*



## Vagina Day objectifies women, vaginas

*Vulgar games and rhetoric dehumanize women, reduce them to a body part*

Today marks the conclusion of V-day's second annual Vagina Day, which started Feb. 13. Don't be confused by the name, it will be objectifying women for two days in the Academic Plaza.



THOMAS CAMPBELL

V-day does nothing to accomplish the avowed objective of bringing awareness to women's issues. Through vulgar displays in public, the organizers are able to slowly objectify women by focusing on single pieces of the woman's body, effectively dehumanizing women and making the focus only on one body part.

One of the stated goals of V-day is to make people comfortable saying the word "vagina." If V-day is working to further this cause, vagina should not be abbreviated in its name. Interestingly, in no way does overuse of the word vagina do anything to help women who are abused, raped or otherwise

hurt. V-day is nothing more than an excuse to bring out vulgar exhibits, play vulgar games, say vulgar things and draw attention to people who would otherwise receive none. Attempting to say that V-day is about anything else is flat-out wrong.

Such a misguided attempt to bring attention to women's issues does more to set the women's movement back than it does to further the cause. V-day is a laugh-stock — a joke between classes or at the water cooler.

Eve Ensler, the founder of V-day and the author of the Vagina Monologues, says, "the word (vagina) should be said over and over until the shame and pain and disdain are gone and love, compassion, respect and appreciation are all that are left." By celebrating that part of a woman's body in such a manner as the "pin the clit on the vagina" game,

organizers are not representing a love and respect for the vagina, but rather making a game out of it. Making the body into a game will not automatically achieve the respect and appreciation for the vagina that Ensler seems to think it will. This only makes it more of a joke, dehumanizing and desensitizing people even more.

V-day's Web site says organizers believe that "bringing the word vagina into common usage allows us to openly address the terrible issues of violence." This contradicts another goal later mentioned on the page: "to break down the barriers people have constructed around the word 'vagina' and to focus not on the victimization of women." These stated goals on the same page completely contradict themselves. Talking about violence against women is the same thing as talking about the victimization of women.

Clearly, V-day exists only to attract attention. Texas A&M's campus is not the place for such a

display. While most college students are mature enough to view adult material, there are children visiting campus every day who are not. These children should not be subjected to such unnecessary vulgarity as the "best moan" or "the most vagina slang." Having obscene contests such as this is an embarrassment to A&M.

This day will do nothing for anyone, especially college men who, after going through puberty, are completely aware of the vagina. Throwing condoms around on Academic Plaza will not change that. However, it will provide material for countless jokes.

Sadly, V-day does absolutely nothing to further any of its contradictory causes, but rather dehumanizes women and their bodies by reducing them to a single part.

*Thomas Campbell is a senior agricultural journalism major.*

### MAIL CALL

#### Student body president responds

*In response to the Feb. 13 editorial:*

I am disappointed at the antagonism expressed towards Student Government by the Battalion's Editorial Board on Feb. 13, 2003.

Furthermore, I am concerned by the inaccuracies reflected in the article covering Orange & Maroon Day. I was never contacted for comment, and the Battalion reporter was not present for over half of the day's events.

The realities related to the budget shortfall in Texas are very concerning. The state of Texas currently funds approximately 30 percent of the costs associated with each student who attends Texas A&M University. This is a drop from approximately 45 percent in 1990. The primary goals of a public institution of higher learning are to educate the

people of the state and perform research vital to our state and nation. The current budgetary crisis threatens the balance of quality with affordability.

The primary objective of Orange & Maroon Day was to communicate the need for continued funding in higher education. Texas A&M is faced with the challenge of maintaining our tradition of academic excellence at an affordable price. The notion that student leaders support the concept of deregulation is completely inaccurate. As student body president, my team and I have been at the forefront of this issue and will continue to communicate the need for state-supported funding for the growth of our institution.

*Zac Coventry  
Class of 2002  
Student Body President*

## Mandela's comments regrettable

Nelson Mandela owes an apology to the United States for the unfounded remarks he made last month.

According to a story by Fox News, on Jan. 29 Mandela asked whether President George W. Bush and Tony Blair are ignoring the United Nations because its current secretary general, Kofi Annan, is black. He then said that Bush's main reason for preparing for war against Iraq is because America wants all of Iraq's oil. Mandela later denounced the United States for the offenses that it has supposedly committed in all parts of the world.

"If there is a country that has committed unspeakable atrocities in the world, it is the United States of America," Mandela said. "They don't care."

If Bush were a racist, he wouldn't be in office today. To imply that the citizens of the United States — the world's leader in democracy and a melting pot of every culture under the sun — would support a prejudiced leader is an insult to all Americans. Mandela must think Americans are racist or stupid to elect such a president.

Mandela is also forgetting that two of Bush's top counselors, Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell, are black. And while having a working relationship with blacks doesn't automatically

exclude one from being a racist, Rice and Powell would never support a racist president.

Mandela further slandered President Bush's character when he said his main reason for pushing for war against Iraq is its oil supply. Nevermind the fact that Bush has said repeatedly that Iraq is hiding weapons of mass destruction. These weapons might be used against the United States because it's the world's most powerful nation and the reason Iraq couldn't take over Kuwait during the Gulf War.

If Saddam Hussein threatened to use his weapons on South Africa, would Mandela meekly sit by and wait for the Iraqi dictator to make good on his threat? Or would he expect South Africa to try to defend itself? In reality, South Africa isn't at risk; the United States is. That's why Mandela isn't concerned.

Of course Mandela wouldn't understand why the United States feels so threatened by Iraq. It was New York City that was devastated by Sept. 11, not Johannesburg. As a result of the terrorist attacks of 2001, America realized that it has enemies bent on destroying it by either terrorism or biological warfare.

If the United States was going to take Iraq's oil supply, it would have done so during Desert Storm a decade ago. The fact that America never attempted to militarily occupy Iraq or replace Saddam with a puppet dictator shows that Iraq's



KATHARINE MCHENRY

oil was never an issue.

For Mandela to accuse the United States of atrocities while mentioning nothing of Saddam Hussein's torture and genocide makes one wonder if perhaps Mandela's underlying motive for attacking Bush amounts to nothing more than resentment of America's power.

Mandela conveniently forgets that the United States has provided economic and military assistance to many nations around the world, including various African countries. Those nations gladly accept the help. Then when the United States asks for help from other nations, no one feels indebted enough to acquiesce. Not even France will support America half a century after the United States helped to liberate Europe at the cost of hundreds of thousands of American lives.

Mandela's speech implies that the choice of war with Iraq lies solely at Bush's feet. If Iraq was truly intent on avoiding war with the United States, Saddam would already be in exile by now.

It's easy enough for Mandela to rant about how awful Bush and the United States are, but why doesn't he attack the real villain, Iraq? After all, the road to war is never one-sided.

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