

OPINION

THE BATTALION

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FACING UNITED KOREA

South Korea's friendly new policies toward North Korea could prove bad for U.S.

Fifty years ago, the United States came to the aid of the young Asian country South Korea, and ever since, the United States and South Korea have presented a united front against North Korean aggression. But recently, South Korea has turned its policy in a new and dangerous direction. By pursuing the "Sunshine Policy" of engagement with North Korea, they risk worsening relations with the United States,

By feigning friendship with South Korea, North Korea hopes to melt icy international relations. This will allow it to import the technology needed to modernize its military and build more sophisticated nuclear weapons. It has no intention of reuniting the peninsula

except under the rule of Jong II or his son Kim Jong Chul, who is now the focus of a media campaign to paint him as successor to the elder Jong, according to The Houston Chronicle. There is no sign that the North Korean dictatorship has decided that it should eventually step down and reunite its impoverished country with South Korea due to its Sunshine Policy. And by using its acceptance of the policy as a tool against South Korea in disputes with the United States, North Korea seeks to separate South Korea from its staunchest ally and defender.

By allowing its pursuit of a sunshine policy to separate it from its allies, South Korea is setting the stage for instability. Besides raising the risk of an eventual armed takeover of South Korea, a peninsula united under North Korea would pose a serious threat. A united, hostile Korean peninsula would be a dagger pointed straight at the heart of the Japanese.

According to an article on janes.com, Japan has already considered buying North Korea's medium range missiles and paying it not to make more after North Korea launched one on a test that passed over Japan. If the North were allowed to progress unchecked, the Japanese might also be forced alter their defensive military stance and consider developing nuclear weapons of their own to deter North Korea's regional ambitions.

The United States would also be at risk, as North Korea has been continually improving its missiles and will eventually field one capable of reaching the United States. This ability could be used as blackmail by North Korea to prevent American intervention in its activities. Eventually the desire of North Korea to dominate its regional arena could be fatal for Russia and China.

All of these possibilities should make the countries of the region aware of the risks South Korea is taking. By continuing their Sunshine Policy of appeasement, South Korea is flirting with danger and destruction for itself, its allies and its region.



David Shoemaker is a junior management major. Graphic by Josh Darwin.

MAIL CALL

Rec Center fee will directly benefit student body

In response to the Feb. 25 Rec Fee editorial:

As a full-time student and a part-time student worker, I understand as well as anyone that frugality is a necessary evil during these tough times. However, before you vote on the Rec Sports Fee referendum, let me remind you all of a few key points left out of Tuesday's editorial.

The Rec Center is one of the most visible signs that a student fee is being put to good use.

How many other fees do you see directly helping students on a consistent basis? Granted, tuition will probably increase, but how many people would make a big loss about a \$310 tuition increase, but not a \$300 one?

The expansion of the weight room alone could mean the difference between paying \$10 per semester more for a less crowded workout and paying for the more expensive membership to Gold's Gym and other fitness centers.

It would also keep student money with I&M instead of private businesses.

If you play intramurals, exercise at the Rec, work at the Rec or play on a sports club, this choice should be a no-brainer. But even if these do not apply to you, trails, lakes and picnic tables are something anyone can enjoy.

In short, vote yes today and eat two less blue meals at Wendy's.

Todd Alsop
Class of 2004

Student Services fee does not fund vital programs

In response to the Feb. 26 Student Services Fee editorial:

Gabby Oroza, the chair of the Student Services Fee Advisory Board, says that the increase is "to provide services vital to student life." While some of the ways in which the additional fees are going to be used are definitely worthy of the increase, "Choral Activities" and "Aggie Nights" are clearly not vital to student life.

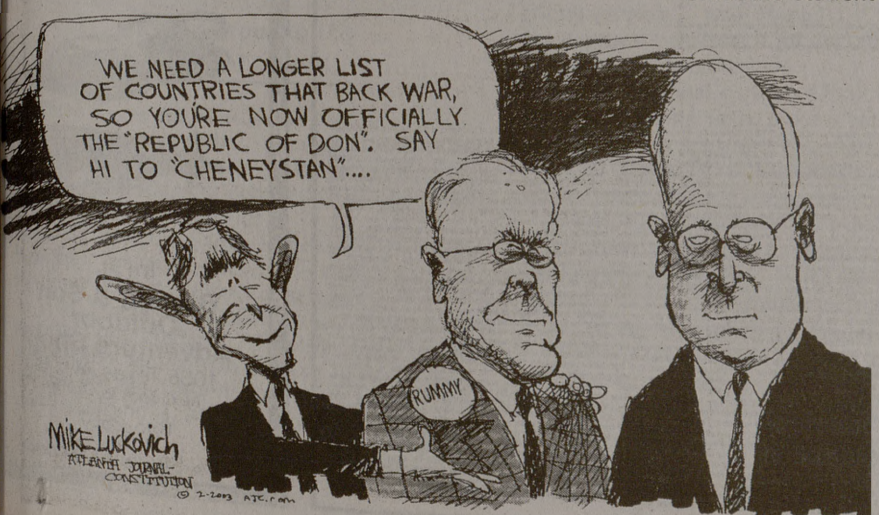
"Aggie Nights" alone gets almost \$200,000 from the increased fees.

Secondly, the report mentions that the SSFAB had a \$1 million windfall in 2001 when the transportation fee was approved. There is another windfall that the report fails to mention — the one that came about because of the previous Rec Sports Fee referendum, in which students voted to increase the actual fees by \$7 and consolidate that with \$21 the Rec Center was getting from the Student Service Fee into one fee totaling \$78.

Students were supposed to see a DECREASE of \$21 in their Student Services Fee, a point stressed several times in the days leading up to the above mentioned referendum, but they never did.

The proposed fee increase just barely breaks the current cap of \$150 (SSF would come to \$150.84). Could the SSFAB not have managed with \$0.84 less?

Vinod Srinivasan
Graduate Student



Mike Luckovich
ROBERT J. JARVIS
CONSTITUTIONAL

Prison violating First Amendment rights

Earlier this month, an advocacy group sued members of the Iowa state prison system, contending that a Christian inmate rehabilitation program funded by state tax dollars violates the idea of separation of church and state, according to The New York Times. Americans United for Separation of Church and State argued that because the program, called Inner Change, receives state tax dollars, it violates the idea behind separating church and state as implied by the First Amendment. This group should be praised for defending a fundamental right of American citizens.

The first and most important strike against Inner Change is that it is simply unconstitutional.

The First Amendment clearly outlawed the type of behavior in which Inner Change partakes. The amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion..." By providing state tax dollars to the Christian program, the state clearly endorses Christianity over any other religion, which is unconstitutional.

Americans United also claims that the prisoners involved in this program receive special privileges, such as televisions, keys to their cell doors, and free phone calls. These privileges also reward a state-supported religion because of the benefits inmates receive while participating in Christian activities. Not only does this program violate a fundamental right, but other programs have proven more effective.

Mark Earley, president of the group that funds Inner Change, told The New York Times that three other states have adopted the program, including Texas, and that all of the states except Texas provide state funding for the program.

Earley responded to the lawsuit on Feb. 12. In his group's defense, he cites a recent Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council publication reviewing the effectiveness of inmate rehabilitation programs. "Of the inmates who completed the Texas Inner Change Freedom Initiative program, only 8 percent returned to prison within two years," he said, "compared to a 22 percent return rate for inmates who were eligible for the program

but did not participate."

On the surface, this seems like a miraculous achievement for the program, but a closer inspection of the report reveals the truth. Earley's claim only takes into consideration inmates who completed the program. All participants in the program suffered a 24.3 percent re-incarceration rate, which is actually 2 percent higher than the control group that Earley cites. In other words, the inmates who began but did not complete the program were actually more likely to return to jail than inmates who were never exposed.

According to the Inner Change Web site, the program "utilizes a transformational model of change rather than a therapeutic model." These models differ in how they attempt to rehabilitate the inmate. Inner Change focuses on rehabilitation through reading, understanding, and applying the lessons taught in the Bible; whereas therapeutic programs focus on interaction with people. However, in the Texas report, a therapeutic model boasts better results.

The In-Prison Therapeutic Community program shows only 5 percent of inmates who completed this program returning to jail — three points better than Inner Change. This improvement continues throughout the program.

Overall, all participants only returned to prison 12.1 percent of the time — nearly half that of the Inner Change program.

IPTC is a program for serious drug abusers and, for most participants, is a mandatory step in the parole process. Inner Change is a voluntary program. If IPTC can achieve better results using inmates who have more serious problems and are participating in a program they were forced into, imagine what a similar program in Iowa could accomplish with more funding.

Because Inner Change violates the First Amendment, it should be stopped. The extra state funding should be spent on other programs that do not violate the Constitution and are more effective in rehabilitating inmates.

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