

Pack up and move out

Vermont town should not be forced to make up the tax-burden of other cities

Consider a scenario in which a newly-founded town has established itself as a prosperous, efficient member of a state, in which the citizens of this town are forced to pay more than their share of taxes. Now imagine that this town receives only 10 percent of the taxes it pays back because the state considers it too young to handle money on its own. What right does this state have to steal this town's hard-earned money?



MIKE WALTERS

The answer is, "by no right." While this scenario might seem fictitious and beyond the realm of possibility, the citizens of Killington, Vt., are asking themselves the same questions. For a population of 1,000, they pay \$10 million to the state in taxes every year and see only \$1 million of it in state aid, according to USA Today.

"We have no justice, no representation," said City Manager David Lewis. "We're being used as a cash cow to support others."

Lewis has the correct grasp of what taxation amounts to — the seizure of one's property so that it may go to support another. The Fifth Amendment guarantees that no American will "be deprived of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." This speaks of justice, which is giving a person that which he has earned. Income taxes serve to take away what someone has earned and given to someone who hasn't earned it.

Some may argue that the seemingly innocent concept of wage withholding — a euphemism for theft — for things such as social security, do get returned to you. However, this should be an insult to everyone, directly implying that you are not intelligent enough to save for your own retirement, and the money that the government withholds from you is being taken until you reach their subjectively-chosen age.

In the meantime, you are deprived of the opportunity to invest the money you might save and lose out any potential earnings on it. While it is true that someone could squander their retirement savings, this is no one's fault but their own. To assume all American workers are like that is to presume we are all irresponsible with our money during the entire duration of our working lives.

For years, Americans have been content to hand over their money to those who have no right to it, but the injustice of the situation should not be ignored anymore. The citizens of Killington are tired of all the money taken by force each year and will vote this March

to secede from Vermont to become part of New Hampshire. They want to live in a place without state income or sales tax, where they keep the money they earn.

The entirety of America was supposed to be that place. When the Founding Fathers could no longer stand having their money stolen from them and used for another's sole benefit, they created a place where justice existed in courtrooms and checkbooks.

The idea of eliminating taxes that have stood for decades may sound radical. Sweeping change is radical, but that doesn't make it wrong. What is wrong is enduring injustice in accepting less than the free country our ancestors fought and died for. New Hampshire, the state Killington wishes to join, has the state motto of "Live free or die." The choice of death over slavery is a choice the early Americans made in two of our wars, enslaved to other men in different forms of the same evil. In accepting any tax or code that allows the state to seize what we've earned to give it to those who haven't earned it, we violate justice and surrender freedom. If we call ourselves the heirs to the country the founders created, we must recognize evil



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for what it is, regardless of the excuse it is committed in, and how difficult it would be to renounce it. Americans must look to Killington and stand with them against unjust taxation and reaffirm our right to our own lives, freedom and property.

Mike Walters is a senior psychology major.

Friend or foe?

Not every Pakistani leader can be trusted

As the war on terror presses forward, the United States faces the critical task of identifying international allies. For most nations this is simple, but when it comes to Islamic nations, peering through the facades and recognizing those states truly opposed to terrorism is an arduous task. Pakistan is one of these suspicious nations, and recent events have levied more reason to question the country's true intentions.



NICHOLAS DAVIS

On Jan. 17, in an address to Pakistani parliament and the Pakistani nation, President Pervez Musharraf vowed to crack down on religious extremism, strive for peace with India and prove to the world that Pakistan is a responsible nuclear power. Musharraf further stated that a negative image looms over Pakistan and it must be changed.

According to Musharraf, this negative image is the consequence of several elements. According to The New York Times, Pakistan has, for years, promoted Islamic insurgency in Kashmir, an Indian-controlled area, which remains the primary source of conflict between Pakistan and India. Furthermore, Pakistan has been accused of failing to crack down on Taliban supporters along the Afghan border, spreading nuclear weapons technology to countries such as Iran, and being an intolerant society.

Musharraf stressed that Pakistan could no longer tolerate a small number of extremists damaging the country internally. Obviously, such an address must have received a positive response from the Pakistani parliament and encourage more. However, under no circumstances should Americans beguile themselves into believing Pakistan is their friend and ally. In fact, the country is far from it. As for now, the United States must keep a watchful eye on Pakistan and remain optimistic that Musharraf's reformative measures will continue.

What in the world is going on over there? There is absolutely no reason for any member of the Pakistani parliament to oppose the call for aggressive reform. Any reasonable person, who truly abhors the practice of terrorism and longs for peace, would have met the remarks with applause.

Though some controversy resides over the fashion in which Musharraf took office in 1999, his behavior, nearly five years ago bears no relevancy to the need of ridding Pakistan from Islamic extremists, facilitating peace talks with India and abstaining from the distribution of nuclear technology.

Days after Musharraf's address, Pakistan's nuclear scientists were restricted from traveling abroad, and several underwent strenuous questioning regarding U.S. allegations of leaking technology to Iran. Similarly, this matter received criticism from parliament members and Pakistani citizens. The Times reported, "Qazi Hussain Ahmad, the acting head of the religious alliance, which holds the third-largest number of seats in parliament, called the inquiry the worst kind of victimization of national heroes to please the Bush administration."

Understandably, Pakistanis may be wary of the United States since two Islamic countries have already been attacked. Nevertheless, given Pakistan's dubious reputation and the fact that almost all acts of international terrorism are perpetrated by members of the Islamic faith, the Pakistani people should be more than willing to go the extra mile in clarifying to the international community their true stance on terrorism.

No rationalization or justification exists for condemning Musharraf's reformative plan. If members of parliament oppose these positive measures, they are not serious about combating terrorism. In fact, they must support it or at least sympathize with the perpetrators. Why else would they be opposed?

Where are the moderate Muslims at and why have they not vehemently spoken out in support for Musharraf's actions? If they are waiting for the opportune moment to speak up, it is upon them.

No one knows if Musharraf's actions are the byproduct of succumbing to pressure from Washington or if he truly desires to change Pakistan's reputation. Either way, his motivation is not of great concern, his political future is. Time magazine reported, "However dedicated Musharraf may now be to weeding out Pakistan's extremists, the task will be long and dangerous." Already, he has narrowly survived two assassination attempts, and more are likely.

The United States must take advantage of the positive steps initiated by the Pakistani president and encourage more. However, under no circumstances should Americans beguile themselves into believing Pakistan is their friend and ally. In fact, the country is far from it. As for now, the United States must keep a watchful eye on Pakistan and remain optimistic that Musharraf's reformative measures will continue.

Nicholas Davis is a senior political science major.

MAIL CALL

Network didn't ignore the issue

In response to Collins Ezeanyim's Jan. 30 column:

The CBS executives decide what advertisements are worth of airing, so while Mr. Ezeanyim may think everyone should hear and listen to arguments he supports, CBS has the right to not want to listen to or air certain views.

The other commercials he cites as political are not designed to attack a politician or be as divisive as the MoveOn.org commercial, so CBS's policy of not airing politically-geared commercials during the Super Bowl makes sense and is in line with the decisions they made on what to air. Just because CBS doesn't air an ad does not mean at all that it is stifling debate on an issue.

Brandon Green
Class of 2005

Liberal ad would make CBS biased

A few months ago all the conservatives were tearing CBS apart for their supposed liberal bias demonstrated by a made-for-TV movie about Ronald Reagan's presidency. Then, about a month ago, they were about to air a whole special on Michael Jackson before he got arrested on child molestation charges.

Now put yourself in their shoes. If they air the ads that people are complaining about (a PETA ad and a negative ad about Bush, both definitively liberal ads) during the most-watched TV slot of the entire year, then everyone will once again complain about how liberal CBS is. They were trying to avoid controversy. Obviously it didn't work, but I don't think anyone who's paying attention can claim that CBS is suddenly a conservative network.

Adam Kemp
Class of 2005

Reverend is just as able as others

In response to Holly Coneway's Jan 30. column:

Throughout the article, Robinson is accused of not being able to preach Christianity properly because he is not leading by both explanation and example. This is a fundamental flaw in which the article is based. The assumption that there is only one valid interpretation of the Bible is blatantly ignorant. The Christian religion is splintered into hundreds of different denominations, all taking a look at the Bible from a different angle.

The article goes on to condemn him for living with another man for 13 years out of wedlock. If a pillar of the Christian faith is helping save others, then it is your duty to support gay marriages. That way, they will be able to live with their significant other, without the sin of not being married.

Furthermore, a sentence fragment from the Old Testament is used, I only assume, in an attempt to justify the intolerance of homosexuals. Unfortunately, the Bible has been historically misinterpreted to justify evil discriminatory actions, and I see no difference in this case.

I applaud the Episcopal Church for their dedication to what is right and just.

Kevin Reilly
Class of 2006

Edwards is a bipartisan Aggie

In response to a Jan. 20 mail call

Over the last month, I have had the opportunity and privilege of getting to know Congressman Chet Edwards well, both personally and legislatively. The letter published last Thursday, though,

demonstrated neither of these familiarities.

First, Chet Edwards was attacked as "nothing more than a liberal." If you look at his legislative record, you would see a different story. Chet Edwards is a fiscal conservative, placing the United States' fiscal responsibility as one of the main points of his platform. He even sponsored a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Chet Edwards has been a major proponent of national defense and security in his 13 years in Congress. He has worked tirelessly to support military personnel and their families at Fort Hood, while others have tried to take away their education and health care funding.

Chet Edwards was also attacked as just "trying to pander to Aggies." Nothing could be further from the truth. Chet Edwards is an Aggie who shares Aggie values and is very excited about having the opportunity to represent Aggies in Congress. The same cannot be said for his likely challengers, as a state representative, voted for tuition deregulation, which is costing Aggies money they don't have.

Texas A&M is lucky to have the opportunity to support such a dedicated and proven leader. In the past, Chet Edwards has had the support of democrats, independents and republicans, due to his bipartisan leadership.

Nick Anthis
President, Aggie
Democrats
Class of 2005

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