

## Pointing the finger

As international terrorism continues, people must stop blaming world leaders

The terrorist bombing in Madrid on March 11 and the recent passing of the one-year anniversary of the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom has brought a recent surge of global opposition to the War on Terrorism. The New York Times reported that, last Friday, a crowd of as many as 100,000 people gathered to protest the war in Iraq, with similar demonstrations occurring in Vancouver, Seville and Rome. But instead of rebuking the terrorists who murdered thousands of innocent people on Sept. 11 and March 11, they blame world leaders such as George W. Bush and Tony Blair, two of the few men bold enough to assert moral courage to defend the freedom that these terrorists seek to destroy.



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blamed for their acts, and they deserve utter annihilation as punishment for them.

"It is only as retaliation that force may be used and only against the man who starts its use," novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand once said. "No, I do not share his evil or sink to his concept of morality: I merely grant him his choice, destruction, the only destruction he had the right to choose: his own."

Some disagree with the U.S. invasion of Iraq on the grounds that it was not openly and directly attacked, but this is an ignorant stance. The thousands of Iraqis unjustly slaughtered at the hands of Saddam Hussein proclaim the evidence of his guilt. His crimes against humanity are just that — crimes — and an affront to those who value human life.

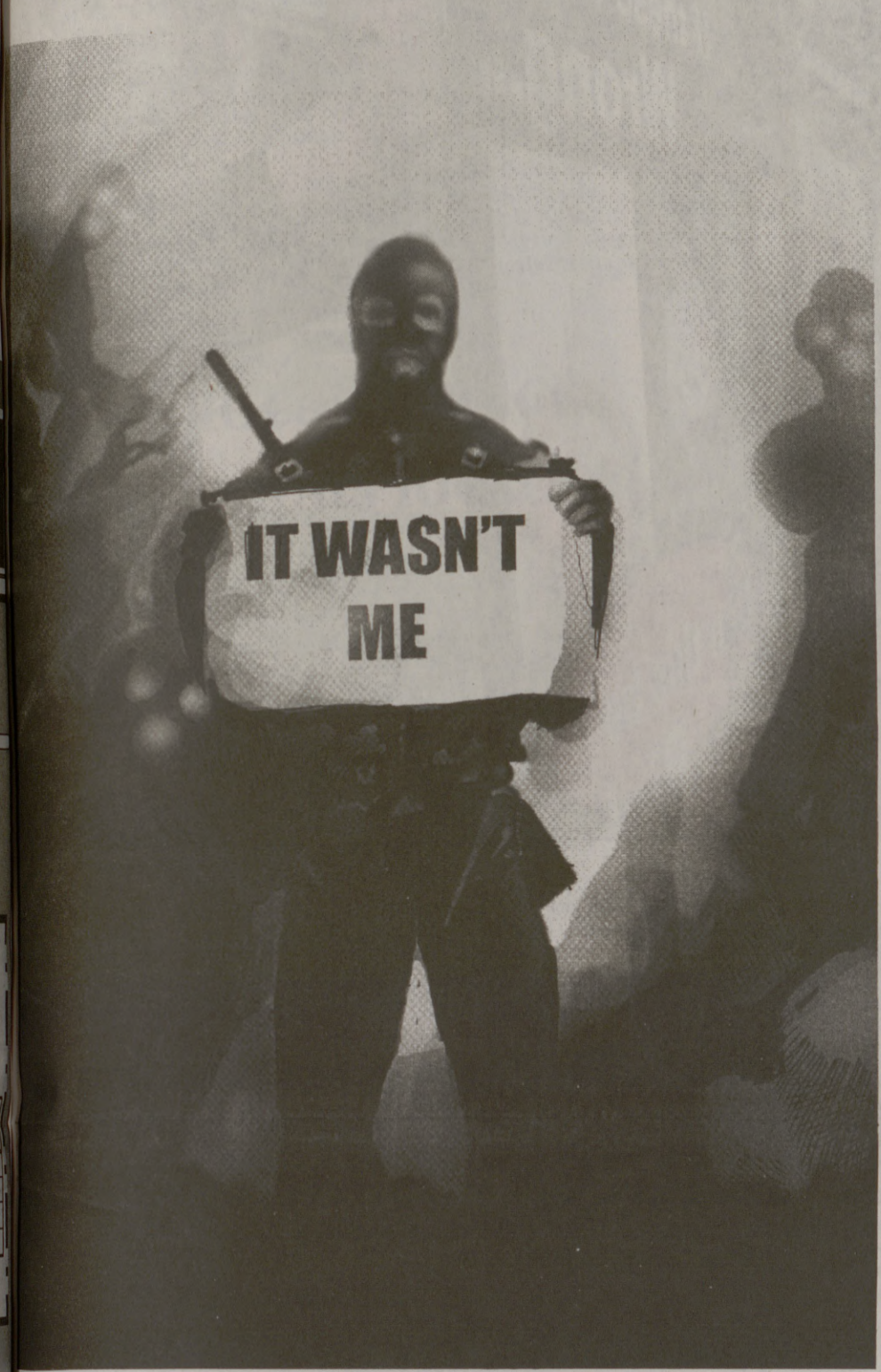
**“These protesters claim a love of peace, but they must understand what peace requires. ... A coward surrenders to the lesser enemy in a fight in defense of the innocent ...”**

The old saying of “what is right is not always popular,” has never been more true when looking at the thousands who attack Bush and Blair for their stance in seeking an end to Saddam’s reign of terror and for trying to bring democracy and peace to a country that has seen neither in decades. Deciding one year ago to not go to war in Iraq would not have brought peace to that country — it would only have meant more mass graves to be dug and filled. Some realize that, and now it’s time for the protesters to come to that same realization. As Martin Luther King Jr.

said, “True peace is not the absence of tension, but the presence of justice.” Justice must be brought to regimes of tyranny if world peace is ever to be achieved, and justice also means blaming those who have committed a crime.

A coward surrenders to the lesser enemy in a fight in defense of the innocent, of the U.S. way of life and of all this nation holds to be morally right. And while innocent people do get hurt and killed in even the most moral of wars, it is a mistake to equate those acts with the deliberate targeting of innocents as terrorists do. To fight against these leaders instead of fighting the terrorists is even worse. These protesters must either decide that they are pointing their fingers in the wrong direction, or acknowledge that peace is not really what they want.

Mike Walters is a senior psychology major. Graphic by Paul Wilson



The news of American soldiers dying daily in Iraq is heart-breaking for those back home, and though they take an oath to uphold the U.S. way of life at the possible cost of their lives, no one wants it to come to that.

These protesters claim to love peace, but they have to realize that if they truly love peace, they must understand what peace requires. Every rational individual wants peace, but groups such as al-Qaida are not leaving us that option. The mass graves unearthed in Iraq will not be undone by simply desiring peace — to uphold peace, the world must be rid of those who seek to destroy it.

And yet, even days after the terrorists attacked Spain, the Spanish did not become angry at those who murdered them — they blamed their leader for inviting the attack by supporting the United States, and elected his rival, Jose Zapatero, who the Toronto Star reports vowed the withdrawal of 1,300 Spanish troops from Iraq.

One cannot help but wonder where the world’s sense has gone when people are killed and protesters don’t blame the murderers but instead blame those who are trying to fight them.

“Any sign of weakness or retreat simply validates terrorist violence and invites more violence for all nations,” Bush told representatives from 83 countries at the White House last Friday. And he’s absolutely right — by allowing the terrorists to achieve their goal in backing out of your defense against them, you give them victory. Killers who deliberately target the lives of innocent men, women and children do not deserve victory — they deserve to be rightly

## Allegations against athletes blemish University’s image

Sometimes the opportunity to recruit for Texas A&M comes at the strangest times. For me, it occurred on Saturday while eating lunch at the Northgate McDonald’s when a black woman walked in with her daughter and asked for directions to particular spots on the A&M campus. She said her daughter was interested in the engineering program. She then asked about the campus in general. Were there many blacks here? Were they treated well?

Considering the incident over spring break involving two A&M football players, Geoff Hangartner and Cole Smith, allegedly shouting racial epithets at a group of blacks, I didn’t know how to answer her.

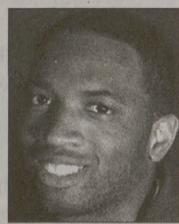
Regrettably, A&M football players being arrested has been a common occurrence since September. But the allegations related to this particular incident are so serious they deserve separate commentary.

On his Web site, coachfran.com, head football coach Dennis Franchione said both players have denied making the racial slurs. Hangartner went as far as to take a polygraph, which he reportedly passed. But no matter how this incident plays out, A&M’s reputation has already suffered irreparable damage.

Hangartner was charged with a DWI and Smith with public intoxication, but the story garnered national interest because of its racial angle. The drunken driving charge levied against Hangartner is extremely serious. Unfortunately, drunken college students stupid enough to drive are all too common. However, what put this story on the front page of popular Web sites such as ESPN.com and SI.com are the allegations by the blacks in another car that Hangartner and Smith shouted racial slurs at them. A College Station police officer also wrote an affidavit claiming he could hear the slurs from across the street.

The potential consequences of this incident are far-reaching. This incident will hurt A&M’s recruiting efforts. It is too easy for A&M’s athletic rivals to pull up this story from the Internet and show it to minority recruits. It will also undoubtedly hurt A&M’s academic recruiting efforts for more minority students. In turn, the stature of A&M as a world-class university will suffer.

The A&M community’s reaction to these events is just as



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important as the incident itself. Frankly, some of the reaction by Aggies to this incident has been disturbing. On the Texags.com football boards, some posters have argued that there are even acceptable times to use a racial slur. It is important Hangartner and Smith are treated fairly and given due process, but the Aggie family must vigorously condemn any prejudicial attitudes and redouble A&M’s diversity efforts.

Some might fear this involves instituting affirmative action into A&M’s admissions policies. While this is not necessarily true, it certainly involves Aggies telling other students to stop acting like fools and embarrassing this school.

Perhaps the only positive incident to come from this story is its potential to instigate a serious dialogue about racial relations on the A&M campus. The question that should be considered is why some Aggies still harbor disgusting, outdated attitudes. I once received an e-mail calling me the “n-word” from a student who was upset over an article regarding diversity. Nothing hurts more than being told by a fellow Aggie that you are less than human, unworthy of respect.

It should upset Aggies everywhere that enrolled minority students have a more negative perception of A&M than non-enrolled minorities, according to a study by the Race and Ethnic Institute at Texas A&M. This means minority students have negative experiences that solidify their perception that A&M is a racist school.

It seems every semester there must be some racial incident that conveys the message that minority Aggies are not welcome here. Whether it is a “ghetto” party planned on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, an offensive comic that appears in The Battalion or controversy over the election of a black yell leader, minority students are tired of being the butt of so many racial incidents on this campus. This must stop immediately. If that comes at the cost of two of A&M’s football players facing serious consequences, then so be it.

Collins Ezeanyim is a senior computer engineering major.

### MAIL CALL

#### Abortion can’t be judged on appearance

In response to Cody Sain’s March 22 column:

I was surprised, at the end of Cody Sain’s March 22 editorial “Opening the Casket on Abortion,” to find that Sain is a philosophy major. Judging from the content, I am forced to conclude he cannot distinguish between rational arguments (and there are many to be made against abortion), and logical fallacy.

Sain’s first “point” is that “one should be able to decide from the pictures if the fetus is indeed a ... person.” If personhood is determined by visual judgment alone, would Sain grant legal autonomy to a particularly realistic computer rendering of a man? Early-stage fetuses of primates and other higher mammals are virtually indistinguishable to the layman. Shall we then grant chimpanzees personhood based on how their unborn look? These absurd examples demonstrate that argument from appearance is hardly a firm base for a moral stance.

His second “point” claims that abortion, if a normal medical procedure, should not induce repulsion. This is both appeal to emotion and a strawman. Comparing suction aspiration and dilation cutterage to something as mild as stitching a cut to prove a moral point is blatant intellectual dishonesty. Plenty of medical procedures are beneficial, yet horrifying to look at. The effects of chemotherapy on children, for example, can be visually devastating. Yet I don’t see any picketing at the oncology wards of children’s hospitals. I doubt many have the stomach to watch a bone marrow transplant. Shall we condemn liposuction because it makes us go “Eww?” Of course not!

To morally judge something based on appearances and emotional reactions is to throw away all semblance of reason. If the only arguments you and “Justice for All” can offer on behalf of the pro-life camp are these assertions, I implore you to step aside before you harm your cause any further.

Josh Shamburger  
Class of 2006

