

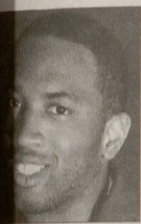
# OPINION

THE BATTALION

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## Doubtful deadline

*Necessary stability to hand power over to Iraqis will not be in place by June 30*



COLLINS EZEANYIM

President Bush has made two big mistakes during the Iraqi war. The first occurred March 19, 2003, when he authorized the war to begin. The second was to set June 30, 2004, as the date to transfer sovereignty to the Iraqis. It is now obvious he set this date with one eye cast to the 2004 presidential elections in which American progress in Iraq is sure to be a huge issue.

But due to various important and obvious reasons, the Bush administration should push back the transfer date to a more reasonable time.

The most obvious argument for moving back the June 30 deadline is the upsurge in violence. Last week, conservative talk radio show hosts Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity counterintuitively claimed that the increased violence was a display of weakness on the part of the insurgents. But this type of inverted logic ignores what has been a disturbing development in the Iraq war: the emergence of two separate uprisings. One is crafted by the Sunnis and the other by Shiites who were supposed to be more hospitable to America's presence in Iraq. But this has changed due to the appearance of a new Iraqi villain, radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who has led a Shiite militia against American forces in Iraqi cities such as Nafaf and Kufa.

The growing chaos in Iraq is a signal that the necessary security to successfully transfer sovereignty is not in place. Many doubt a secure Iraq can be guaranteed before the June 30 deadline. Of course, Bush, as he is prone to do, stubbornly reiterated his decision even though evidence and common sense should have encouraged him to change his mind. In his Saturday radio address, Bush stated, "Iraqi sovereignty will arrive on June 30." But senators on both sides of the aisle see the situation differently.

Illinois Sen. Richard Lugar, Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, fears civil war might break out on June 30. Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told the CBS Early Show that he, like many others, doesn't know to whom control will be handed when June 30 arrives. It has become obvious that the

Bush administration has no clear plan as to what will happen on June 30. A plan should be developed long before any attempt to transfer power is made. According to USA Today, the Bush administration's most recent option has been to add members to the U.S. Governing Council it appointed last July. But the newspaper reports Lakhdar Brahimi, special envoy of U.N. Secretary Gen. Kofi Annan who is meeting with the Governing Council in Iraq, is unclear as to how this will actually be done.

With 79 days and counting until the proposed handoff, shouldn't these plans be crystal clear? It is reasonable that Americans and Iraqis should assume so. The Bush administration should delay the transfer date to get a detailed, competent course of action ready.

Speaking of the United Nations, another reason the Bush administration should move back the transfer deadline is to exercise some diplomacy and gain more U.N. support. But as most Americans know, diplomacy is not this administration's strong suit. The United Nations will be critical in making a transitional government legitimate in Iraqis' eyes and relieving some of the financial and military burden from the United States' shoulders. But unfortunately, such involvement by the United Nations is not likely to happen soon. Both because Iraq is not adequately secure to engage in a peacekeeping mission and because the United Nations and other U.S. allies will be hesitant to help the Bush administration after it defiantly invaded Iraq without their explicit permission.

With regard to America's soldiers, 25,000 troops, who were looking forward to the end of their tours in Iraq, were delivered heartbreaking news last week: Their return home would be delayed because of the escalating situation in Iraq. This is a much different scenario from the one predicted by aides of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in which U.S. forces would be reduced to 30,000 a few months after the war, according to British newspaper The Guardian Unlimited. Any announcement of a transfer of sovereignty should be accompanied by news that forces in the United States will be greatly reduced, not increased. If it is not possible to decrease the number of soldiers in Iraq, the world will know a transfer of sovereignty is also infeasible.

There are many who are still angry that the war was ever conducted in the first place, and there are many whose resolve has been weakened by the terrible images coming from Fallujah and other places in Iraq. But because the consequences of failure are serious, America must finish what it has started. Setting back the June 30 sovereignty transfer date will allow time to figure out how to better accomplish this.



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### MAIL CALL

#### Religion is 'relevant to a candidate's qualification'

In response to Josh Peschel's April 8 column:

In his April 8 editorial, Josh Peschel asks how political candidates' religious beliefs might affect their qualifications for office differently than does their skin color. Peschel claims there is no difference and suggests that candidates "should never seek an advantage because of membership in a particular religious category."

No doubt, many who announce their religious views do so, not to identify shared values, but rather to identify themselves with a socially prestigious position.

To the extent this is the case, I agree with Peschel's objection. He seems to argue, however, that strongly held religious convictions are not significantly different from skin color as a criterion for selecting a candidate. But if I know that someone shares my views on many of life's deepest questions, doesn't it seem this might give insight into how she would represent my political interests? In contrast, just knowing someone's skin color doesn't offer any directly relevant information about her suitability for public office.

Regardless of the frequent inappropriate use of religious labels, religious convictions are relevant to a candidate's qualification for office in a way that is materially different from skin color. We ought not make the mistake of confusing these two important issues.

Neal Audenaert  
graduate student

#### Inequalities in education call for race-based admissions

Being a fellow Aggie, I have been a little disappointed in the arguments to end racially-based admission at Texas A&M. There have been many arguments but no solutions given.

The problem does not exist within the admission offices of universities across the nation. The problem is within the education of our young people.

Until the gaps of limited educational resources in our public education system are filled and the system becomes equal all around, then there will be a possibility to admit someone solely on the person's merit.

Coming from a school that had these educational gaps, I was still admitted to A&M based on my merit. But there were other students in my high school that have "fallen" in those educational gaps so to say.

A little note to groups like the Young Conservatives of Texas: I was always told when I was a little girl that to solve a problem, you have to start at the root. So, instead of attacking Dr. Gates and the admissions office of A&M, start with the public education system.

Ask lawmakers of Texas to improve the education system and then you will start to see the beginnings of the solution that you are looking for. Start at the root.

Kellee Carr  
Class of 2004

## Content guidelines censoring textbooks

As a defining characteristic of modern-day America, political correctness has infiltrated the education system over recent years. As a result, many states have adopted the use of social context guidelines for textbooks to provide equal representation to meet the demands of feminist, ethnic and other segments of the population. Consequently, in some states, children are not being exposed to accurate historical information as it is being sugar-coated or distorted at the hands of politicized educational boards.

A recent study conducted by the American Federation of Teachers found that only 11 percent of eighth-graders show proficient knowledge of U.S. history on standardized tests. This figure, 6 percent lower than the percentage in 2001, shows a disturbing trend in the quality of education that today's youth are receiving.

California was the first state to adopt content guidelines beginning in 1982 and has played a leading role in the utilization of censored textbooks, as it is a large state and therefore a large buyer of textbooks.

Former U.S. secretary of education and New York University professor Diane Ravitch said that due to the recent evolution of a censorship culture in the nation's schools, the result has been "dishonesty and a purposeful shielding of children from anything challenging, controversial or just plain interesting," according to The Los Angeles Times.

Such content regulations might include the portrayal of men and women in equal numbers as well as the fair representation of certain ethnic groups in a wide variety of roles. The intent to portray all groups as equal is justified, but unfortunately the depiction of certain historical events has been altered in the process.

For example, Holt and Rinehart revised an eighth-grade textbook to suggest that an obscure Portuguese explorer, Batolomeo Gomez, incorrectly defined as Spanish, was the first European discoverer of the Hudson River, not Henry Hudson. In another case, most textbook accounts



CHRIS LIVELY

of the Boston Massacre and its aftermath now make Crispus Attacks, a black man killed by British soldiers, the central figure. They give little regard to the roles of Samuel Adams and John Adams, according to the National Center for Policy Analysis.

The problem does not lie within the publishing community, for publishers must meet the demands of the market to stay alive in the business. It is the demands of certain state educational boards that are leaving no other option but the derailing of factual historical accounts to be compiled into the essential learning sources that our youth prize so dearly.

America's youth cannot be done a disservice at the cost of political correctness. History is a delicate subject not to be tampered with in such a manner. While filtering is an inevitable byproduct of compiling an infinite amount of information into a finite textbook, it should nevertheless be left only to historical and social experts, not political "language police." Interestingly enough, proponents of such content censorship come from both sides of the political spectrum. A line must be

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drawn when history begins looking more like a fairy tale than anything else.

There is no single method of giving students the most accurate and unbiased historical education possible. However, censoring history and social studies textbooks to meet the needs of all social groups has proved an unreasonable as well as dis-serving task. It is up to communities in states who implement drastic measures as well as interest groups to resist this trend of politicizing education. It is in the best interest of the nation as a whole to do away with social content censorship policies as children will have a more accurate and valuable understanding of their nation's history and one that is vital for all of society's future.

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