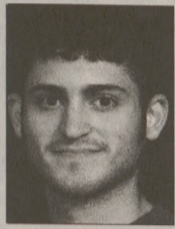


Invasive intelligence

9-11 Commission must avoid instituting domestic intelligence agency like M15

In an effort to reform the U.S. intelligence community, the 9-11 Commission will evaluate a number of available options for improved national security, finalizing its proposal in July. Among the possible recommendations are removing the FBI from intelligence gathering, splitting the current director position into two jobs: a CIA director and a national intelligence director, establishing a cabinet-level intelligence director to oversee all intelligence functions or implementing a domestic intelligence agency similar to Britain's M15 program. The commission must take its time in selecting the appropriate measures to recommend, but should throw any domestic intelligence options out the window.



CHRIS LIVELY

communication within the intelligence community. He cited further how the different task specialization of agencies such as the FBI and CIA have hampered effective cooperation for a common goal of terrorism prevention, according to Fox News. The agency may well accomplish this goal, but at the cost of unnecessary, unconstitutional measures.

“The commission must take its time in selecting the appropriate measures to recommend, but should throw any domestic intelligence options out the window.”

Britain's M15 is one of the oldest secret intelligence agencies ever implemented. It aims to gain the advantage over government targets by covertly obtaining information about these targets, which it can use to counter their activities. The idea for the United States to create a similar agency began gaining support last year when Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge visited the M15 headquarters. Such an agency would give the government more power regarding civilian population surveillance, giving "Big Brother" a whole new meaning.

Following 9-11, intelligence agencies such as the FBI and CIA have been under intense fire for their inefficient roles in protecting the nation from international terrorism. In addition to budget constraints and excessive priorities, it has been determined by everyone from the commission to the joint House-Senate inquiry immediately following 9-11 that the failure on behalf of the intelligence community was due to a lack of cooperation among individual agencies.

Proponents of a domestic intelligence agency include James B. Steinberg, deputy national security adviser for the Clinton administration. Steinberg, also the director of foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution, said that such an agency would be effective in tearing down the decade-old walls that hinder effective

CIA Director George Tenet and FBI Director Robert Mueller have been at the front lines of harsh interrogations by the commission. Referring to the 9-11 attacks, a preliminary report on the CIA's failures mentioned several shortfalls that left the country more vulnerable. One of which was the failure to even identify al-Qaida until 1999, a mere 11 years after its formation. In addition, the report cited several failures of the FBI, including confusion among agents as well as how to utilize surveillance powers. In short, the report found that "there is no national strategy for sharing information to counter terrorism," according to USA Today. There are many problems manifested within the intelligence community. Maybe they should be fixed before there is any consideration of domestic spying.

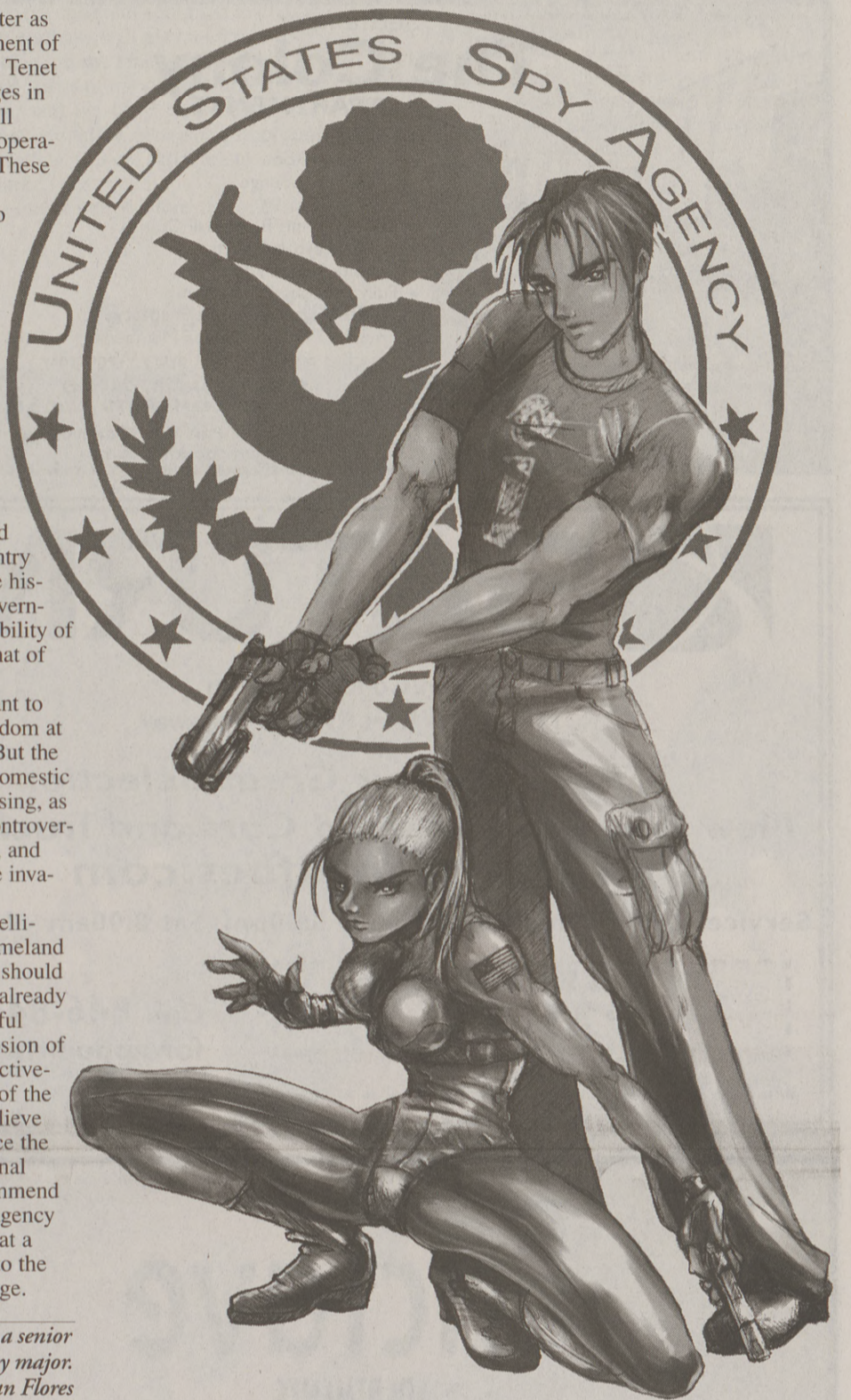
While the 9-11 Commission has been investigating any and all possible breaches in national security prior to 9-11, changes have already been made. The Bush administration created the

Terrorist Threat Integration Center as well as the well-known Department of Homeland Security. In addition, Tenet and Mueller have assured changes in their respective agencies that will increase communication and cooperation between the two agencies. These are changes that both directors believe will take several years to take effect. However, the 10-member, bipartisan 9-11 Commission has recognized that most Americans probably do not take comfort in this assurance and will evaluate all possible reformation options.

It is important to note that even with the use of a domestic spy agency, the terrorism problem will never be fully eradicated. The future of U.S. intelligence could be one characterized by success. Then again, the country may find itself reliving defective history characterized by intense government surveillance with the possibility of intelligence power abuses like that of the J. Edgar Hoover era. Most Americans should not be reluctant to sacrifice a little privacy and freedom at the cost of capturing terrorists. But the practicality of implementing a domestic intelligence agency is not promising, as many Americans feel that the controversial Patriot Act went far enough, and would not welcome a new, more invasive policy with open arms.

As the reformation of the intelligence community as well as homeland security is inevitable, at most it should result in the restructuring of an already existing and potentially successful enterprise, not in the further erosion of civil liberties. No such plan is actively being pursued by either side of the political spectrum, but many believe the controversy will heat up once the 9-11 Commission releases its final report as it may very well recommend the creation of a domestic spy agency — an agency which may come at a greater cost to consumers than to the terrorists it is meant to discourage.

Chris Lively is a senior sociology major. Graphic by Ivan Flores



MAIL CALL

Monday's opinion page lacked propaganda

I would like to commend Mr. Davis and Mr. Rainey on their articles appearing on Monday's editorial page.

Both articles were well-written and amazingly didn't contain any absurd theories or near-sighted left or right wing political propaganda. Both writers used sound logic and reasoning that has been apparently lost by other writers that contribute to the editorial page.

Maybe Mr. Ezeanyim should talk to one of these two gentlemen about writing lessons.

Justin Stone
Class of 2003

Political cartoons show extreme anti-Bush bias

I realize that I'm probably not the first to express this opinion, but I am worried about the choice of cartoons in The Battalion. It's not the half-naked anime-type cartoons that I am bothered by; it's the anti-Bush, ultra-liberal, mudslinging cartoons that grace the pages of your "Texas A&M Tradition Since 1893." I don't know if you have a

limited database of cartoons, or there is some sort of political agenda here, but I'm pretty sure it's not the former.

There are other types of political cartoons other than those bashing our current president, and I for one would be pleased to view a cartoon or drawing at least once a week that would represent a balanced political point of view. I can accept the fact that not all people own the same political opinions as I do, but I cannot accept the fact that The Battalion has become one huge mudslinging ad campaign against President Bush.

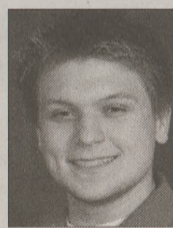
I know it's too much to ask for the majority of your newspaper to be politically balanced, but please try to print as many cartoons not bashing George W. Bush as are bashing the president.

Tony Love
Class of 2004

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 200 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number. The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters also may be mailed to: 014 Reed McDonald, MS 1111, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Fax: (979) 845-2647 Email: mailcall@the-battalion.net

Matte leaves a lasting impression on Texas A&M

Enter any discussion between informed Aggies over great leaders of this school and one is likely to hear a few of these names: Gen. James Earl Rudder, an obvious contributor whose legacy and stature seemingly grow in step with the size and continued success of this University, or E. King Gill, a man whose willingness to help his football team forged a tradition that lives on and breathes stronger every day. Aggies pride themselves on these legends of old, but one must not forget that modern-day heroes exist as well: men and women who cling to the promise this school offers and commit their lives selflessly to the service of others. It is true that many Aggies demonstrate these intangible qualities, and one man, in particular, has epitomized this role and has seen a phenomenal sequence of events as an outcome.



MATT YOUNGER

Gregg Matte, founder and director of Breakaway Ministries, will give his last talk on April 27 before he goes on to serve as senior pastor of Houston's First Baptist Church. Matte's role will change from speaker/director in Breakaway Ministries to a member of the Board of Directors.

In 1989, Matte, then a sophomore at A&M, decided to host a weekly Bible study with his roommates for a group of 12 people. The next week, the 12 people each brought a few friends, who brought a few more friends throughout following weeks. Suddenly, they were running out of space. Matte and his roommates were able to secure the College Station Conference Center as a meeting space for this popular and growing event. Again, logistical issues arose as more attended, and this group, known as "Breakaway," was forced to move again. Long story made short, after 15 years and 13 changes of venue, Breakaway meets every Tuesday night at Reed Arena and humbly reports itself to be the largest college Bible study in the nation.

But what's the draw? Why do more than 5,000 students give up two hours on a Tuesday night for a Bible study? There is no single way to answer this question, but one could definitely start by explaining what exactly is taught. At 9 p.m. students filter into the side section of Reed Arena and have a time of worship through song. Christian performers Ross King, Shane and Shane and Chris Tomlin have all graced the

stage at one point, and now the Smith Band, from Houston, leads the music for its second year. Following the music, Matte speaks for about 30 minutes on a variety of issues relevant to the average college student. His gift is in his ability to relate to students on a personal level.

Junior sports management major Nathan Randel said, "Gregg is unique in the sense that he knows what I'm going through. He's not up there to hear himself speak, but rather to convey from his heart to mine that there is a God who loves me and a life worth living."

Matte's talks, usually in a two-to-five-part series, highlight anything from dealing with extreme perfectionism to the impact that divorce has on the college generation. Week in and week out, thousands sojourn from their studies and look forward to a spiritual time of renewal, revival and an applicable message with a twist of humor, Matte's forte in speaking.

Matte's departure does not signify a fading of this Tuesday night event underlined in countless day planners, but rather a time to look forward to a new leader who will engage and motivate the hearts of this campus.

Still it is hard to say goodbye to someone who has changed this campus for the better.

"There is no way you can quantify how much Gregg Matte has meant to Texas A&M and our community," said communication professor Dr. Rick Rigsby. "His desire to carry out his call with humility and integrity will impact generations worldwide. Gregg Matte is one of my heroes!"

What started out as a desire to lead and serve a small group of 12 peers culminated to an opportunity to serve the entire Twelfth Man at Texas A&M. And just as Christ chose to wash the feet of his disciples as an act of kindness and love, so has Matte washed the feet of this University time and time again. He will be greatly missed, but it is time for someone else to receive the gifts that he so willingly bestowed upon this campus.

So now, when people discuss heroes produced by Texas A&M, do not forget that they still exist today.

Matt Younger is a junior political science major.

