

OPINION PAGES

Our VIEW

Quitting time

United States should back off Iraq attacks

As internal and external tensions continue to boil in the post-Cold War United States, the government has made it clear that it enforces a zero-tolerance policy on terrorism.

Timothy McVeigh will get the death penalty for the Oklahoma City bombing, millionaire Osama bin Laden earned himself a private missile attack for his alleged participation in the destruction of two U.S. embassies in Africa, and President Clinton, distracted with impeachment proceedings, continues to work for peace in Israel.

And when you are the strongest, richest and loudest proponent of peace on the block, you get to make your own rules.

Such is the case in the current conflict with Iraq, possibly the most blatant and enduring episode of American hypocrisy in recent years. While U.S. politicians denounce terrorism and condemn extremists, our military forces are waging a nondescript war against a third-world nation.

On Saturday, U.S. forces launched the first of two weekend attacks against anti-aircraft Iraqi military installations. According to the Pentagon, those installations were promptly "suppressed" by U.S. missiles.

Lately, our U.S. missiles have been suppressing a lot of things — such as Iraqi sovereignty, basic human rights and international will opposing armed conflict against Iraq.

With the ongoing aggression against Iraq, the United States is gaining a global reputation as a bully, a hypocrite and even a terrorist — fueled not by religion or politics, but visceral greed.

We want this oil-rich nation to play ball and we will use our might until it does. This means defying international opinion, abandoning the United Nations and waging a war without a final goal or objective.

In response to the Dec. 16 U.S. strike on Iraq, the French foreign ministry declared, "France deplores the escalation which led to American military strikes against Iraq and the grave human consequences they could have for the Iraqi people."

Russia responded with a harsh indictment of U.S. policy, particularly the decision to ignore the U.N. Security Council's vote against military action toward Iraq.

Boris Yeltsin personally criticized the strikes saying, "By taking unprovoked military action, the United States and Britain have crudely violated the U.N. charter ... and the norms and rules of responsible behavior of states."

The result of our militant attitude is becoming clear now as Arab nations met yesterday to contemplate a condemnation of U.S. actions. It is a landmark meeting for Iraq, which has been relatively isolated by the Middle Eastern community.

It's time the United States starts living what it preaches about terrorism, or U.S. citizens around the world and at home may be the final victims of our government's aggression.

EDITOR
Erin Gibson

OPINION EDITOR
Cliff Hicks

EDITORIAL BOARD
Nancy Christensen
Brad Davis
Sam McKewon
Jeff Randall
Bret Schulte

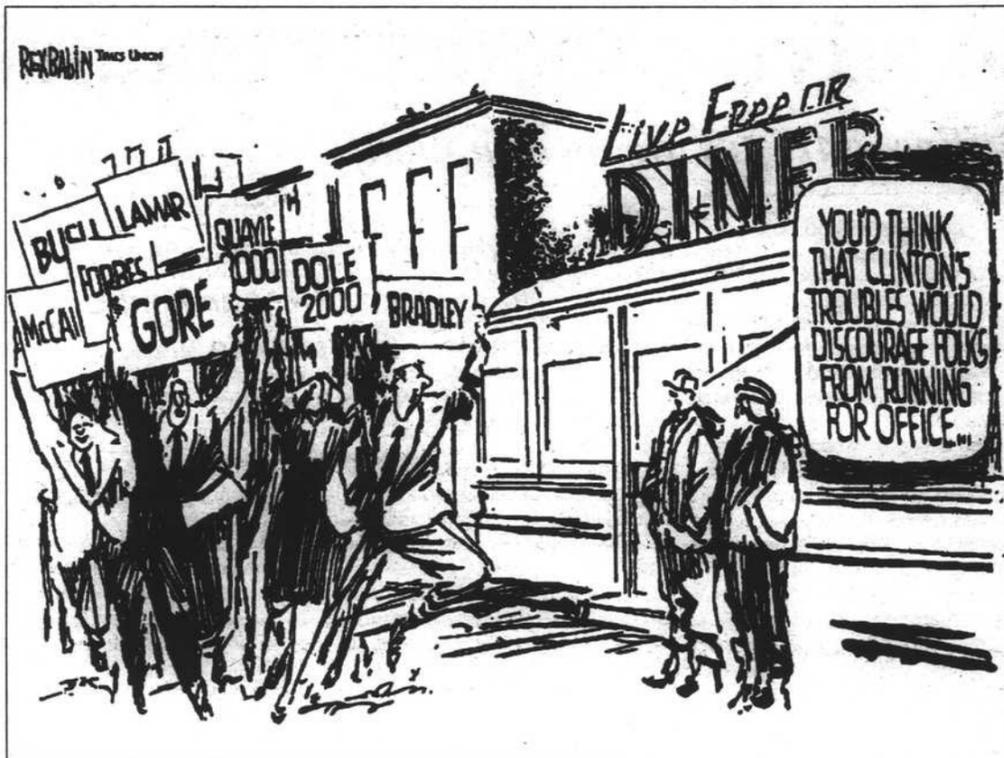
Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials are the opinions of the Spring 1999 Daily Nebraskan. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, its employees, its student body or the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. A column is solely the opinion of its author. The Board of Regents serves as publisher of the Daily Nebraskan; policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. The UNL Publications Board, established by the regents, supervises the production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its student employees.

Letter Policy

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor and guest columns, but does not guarantee their publication. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject any material submitted. Submitted material becomes property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Those who submit letters must identify themselves by name, year in school, major and/or group affiliation, if any. Submit material to: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St. Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. E-mail: letters@unlinfo.unl.edu.

Babin's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Who's slanted?

Jessica Flanagan makes assertions in her column ("Slanted agenda," 1/21/99) about the UNL Women's Studies Program that cause me to doubt her credibility, and wonder about her "slanted agenda."

I believe mine was the 20th Century Women Writers class in which she says that at least 70 percent of the reading material was "lesbian literature." Looking back at the syllabus for that class, I count 40 women writers, eight of whom are lesbians. That doesn't add up to "at least 70 percent," but I didn't count pages.

All but two of the writers are included in the latest edition of the Norton Anthology of Literature by Women. They include Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Amy Lowell, Djuna Barnes, May Sarton, Dorothy Allison, Gloria Anzaldúa and Robin Becker. Leslie Feinberg is transsexual. Even if theirs had been the only poems, stories, and essays we had read, they nevertheless represent great diversity in women's experiences, perspectives and literary talents and could not be read as promoting any single "agenda."

In her focus only on sexual orientation, Jessica seems to have missed all that these women represent about 20th-century women's lives. They write about being mothers, sisters, daughters, friends and lovers; they challenge readers to think about aesthetics, spirituality, personal and social responsibility, about love, truth, justice, beauty and ethics. Occasionally some write about the pain of living in a homophobic culture.

By implication, Jessica asserts that my class is part of a sinister "lesbian political campaign" in Women's Studies. I challenge her (and others) to reread the work of these and other lesbian writers to determine just what agenda is being advanced.

Joy Ritchie
associate professor
English and women's studies

Who's worthy?

Jessica Flanagan's premise is fundamentally flawed. If we deem subjects worthy of study based only upon the proportion of the population they refer to directly, then entire courses in, say, Western Civilization, Art History, Renaissance Literature or Philosophy would have to be scrapped because men represent only 50 percent of the population. The

Black Women Authors class that Flanagan praises would also have to go, because according to Flanagan's reasoning, the percentage of black women in the U.S. population is clearly not large enough to warrant such a course.

The whole point of Women's Studies is to redress some of these discrepancies in representation, and to question why and how some representations have taken precedence in our culture. To suggest that lesbian literature is over-represented in the academy or elsewhere is quite simply delusional — and despite Flanagan's protests, obviously homophobic.

Dr. Suzy Beemer
assistant professor
English

Whose List?

I was disappointed that Jessica Flanagan's list of "renowned lesbians" that the Women's Studies Program teaches about was so short. We also teach about the work, lives and accomplishments of the renowned lesbians and bisexuals, all women who loved women: Willa Cather, Sarah Orne Jewett, Eleanor Roosevelt, Virginia Woolf, Bessie Smith, Adrienne Rich, Lorraine Hansberry, Alice Walker, Emily



Dickinson, Jane Addams, Carson McCullers, Gertrude Stein, Louise Pound and many others.

Come to think of it, I hope that other departments are teaching about the work, lives and accomplishments of men who loved men, such as Walt Whitman, Michelangelo, E.M. Forster, Plato, Herman Melville, Henry James, Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky, James Baldwin, Tennessee Williams, Bayard Rustin, Lord Byron, George Gershwin and others.

I could go on, but I won't.

Barbara DiBernard
professor
English and women's studies

Who knew?

After reading Jessica Flanagan's column (1/21/99), I was filled with a warm sense of gratitude that I had chosen the UNL English Department to conduct my graduate studies. The university is simply unparalleled in its opportunities for knowledge — for example, neither I nor any of my friends would have noticed that the stronghold of the lesbian political wing is headquartered in Lincoln, Neb.! And all this time, I had no idea that all my class work was merely going toward the creation of a lesbo-fascist nightmare, rather than gaining a masters degree.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank one alert columnist of the Daily Nebraskan for alerting me to this heinous situation. I would change my course load, but since the otherwise admirably sagacious Ms. Flanagan suggests no alternatives to the current lesbian-centered curriculum, I must conclude that all my courses are therefore fouled with the taint of lesbianism, leaving me no choice but to drop out of graduate school and seek my career in another field. I have heard that medical research pays well for test subjects....

Paul Ward
graduate student
English

MELANIE FALK/DN