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Perspective

Nation Begins its Dissent

By Daniel Jenkins

Guardsman Staff Writer

I can't help but think back to the public mood shortly after Sept. 11, 2001. After all the flags were unfurled, I began to notice efforts to silence legitimate dissent under the guise of patriotism.

If anyone dared question the Bush administration on any issue, the right quickly circled the wagons and labeled the criticism as "treasonous." Republican columnists and pundits quickly sharpened their daggers and set out after their old enemy, academic freedom, hoping to quell debate.

Even the mainstream news media appeared determined not to question any actions undertaken by the Bush administration after Sept. 11. Leftwing activists, already suspicious of the media's seeming complicity in helping put Bush into power, were made to feel as if they had no voice in the media.

The media, which had joined the Republican chorus in telling leftwing America to "get over" the 2000 election--something they never seem to do in regards to President Bill Clinton--propped President Bush up as having suddenly attained greatness for no other reason than his outrage at the actions of terrorists against our nation.

Questions about the obviously massive intelligence failure that occurred remain yet to be asked by the media. When both President Bush and Vice-President Cheney asked Sen. Tom Daschle not to investigate the intelligence failure, the media didn't even pay attention. They were too caught up in their reporting of the war in Afghanistan.

For those of us on the left, the U.S. media looks like a propaganda arm of the Bush White House, our own version of Pravda during the Soviet era. We watch as cable television pits hard right loudmouths against squishy middle-of-the-road liberals and wonder what has happened to the voice of the left.

But the chill on dissent seems to be thawing. The escalation of violence in the Middle East has forced the media to question Bush's leadership, or lack thereof. Bush, predictably, reacted to the criticism by playing the tired old "Blame Clinton" card. But the media wasn't fooled.

Blaming Clinton for what happens on Bush's watch is the political equivalent of the boy who cried wolf. Clinton was engaged in the Middle East peace process. It was Bush who disengaged. The heavy criticism forced Bush to backtrack and do the right thing by calling on

Israel to remove its troops from Palestinian territory.

Now CNN has done something novel. They have revamped "Crossfire" and hired two hard left pundits, James Carville and Paul Begala, who are willing to play as dirty as their hard right counterparts, Bob Novak and Tucker Carlson. When Novak tried to play the "Blame Clinton" game, Carville pointed out that Clinton was "legitimately elected by the American people."

The George Washington University audience went wild with applause. Finally, someone in the media was giving a voice to what those on the left have been thinking. CNN reports that tickets for the show are selling out.

Meanwhile, the Republicans are calling for their pundits to boycott the show. Seems that they can dish it out, but they can't take it.

Is there a crack in Bush's iron curtain around dissent? It would seem so. You can't hold back the will of the people forever.

President Bush can't coast along by simply wrapping himself in the flag and repeating jingoistic slogans. He must show true leadership or the tide of dissent will rise.

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Letters to the Editor

Environmental concerns reach Phelan Campus

There is extreme soil erosion on the hillside between the library and the Student Union.

Any little kid in a farming area knows that you have to have plants on a hillside to stop soil erosion.

Despite repeated requests that they plant some ground

cover on the hills, the gardeners are still killing every plant with weed killer.

The most glaring example of soil erosion can be seen at the Student Union by the stairs to the parking lot. Here you can see the mark where the soil has eroded by more than a foot!

I hope we can convince the gardeners to plant ground cover on the hills!

Ciao Thyme
City College Student

Rants and Raves



By Meegan Rivera

Opinions Editor

There are very few people I know that don't yet have cell phones, which is bad because it's so hard to get hold of them that conversation becomes rare, and which is good because their phones don't go off in the middle of those precious moments. Better still, their phones don't go off in class.

So we all want to be in touch with the world; I don't see a problem with that. That's a great use for a cell phone, but can't you be in touch with your people *in between* classes? It's not like you can stop the world, by that I mean your super-important trig class, and take your call right then and there. Stepping out of the room makes it worse because there's just anticipation for you to return and let us read all over your face what just happened instead of reading the theorem on the board.

Let me reintroduce you, because I'm sure you've been introduced before, to the world of silent mode! Most phones now have a vibration function. Oh, yours doesn't? Well, neither does mine; that's why I turn the ringer off completely and just check for messages after class. I don't feel I've missed out on anything.

A woman walked by me on my way to class; I heard her tell her friend, "If just one more phone goes off in one my classes..." As she walked her words faded, and I'm not sure if I really want to know the second half. I can imagine it's just as horrible as your action would be next time you're interrupted by a high-pitched, off-tempo version of "Für Elise." What an insult to Beethoven.

The Guardsman welcomes all feedback from our readers! Send your letters via E-mail to guardsman_opinions@hotmail.com, or drop off a typed, double-spaced copy, preferably on disk, to our office at Bungalow 209.

We also welcome guest opinions. Please submit in the same format as the letters, between 300 and 700 words.