

Editorial opinion

Keeping close watch

Coup in Pakistan must be closely watched for proliferation

In the past, it would have been just another coup d'état in a country on the other side of the world that no one would take much notice of.

In 1999, however, a military takeover in Pakistan must be watched very closely by the international community.

Thanks to the wonders of nuclear proliferation, the coup that took place in Pakistan last week caused the world to stop and raise an eyebrow. With both Pakistan and India possessing weapons of mass destruction, as well as a vast hatred for each other, the takeover escalated fears of a subcontinental nuclear war.

Since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the two nations have come closer to nuclear war than Pakistan and India have in the past few years. It appeared they were heading in that direction again this summer when fighting broke out over the disputed Kashmir region.

Then last week, the government in Islamabad fell into the hands of the Pakistani general who led many of the military maneuvers along the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir this summer. The world feared the worst.

Fortunately, tensions are calming. Pakistan's new leader, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has begun pulling troops from most parts of the Indian border (but not the LOC). He has promised to restore democracy in the near future.

Still, Musharraf's promises must not be accepted as fact until

he acts upon those promises.

With millions of civilian lives hanging in the balance, the United States and the rest of the international community must keep a very close eye on the subcontinent.

Tensions have eased somewhat, but the potential for widespread destruction and annihilation is still there.

The United States and several other nations have threatened economic sanctions on Pakistan if democracy isn't restored.

That's a good start, but the international community must pressure the new government to end its hostilities with India.

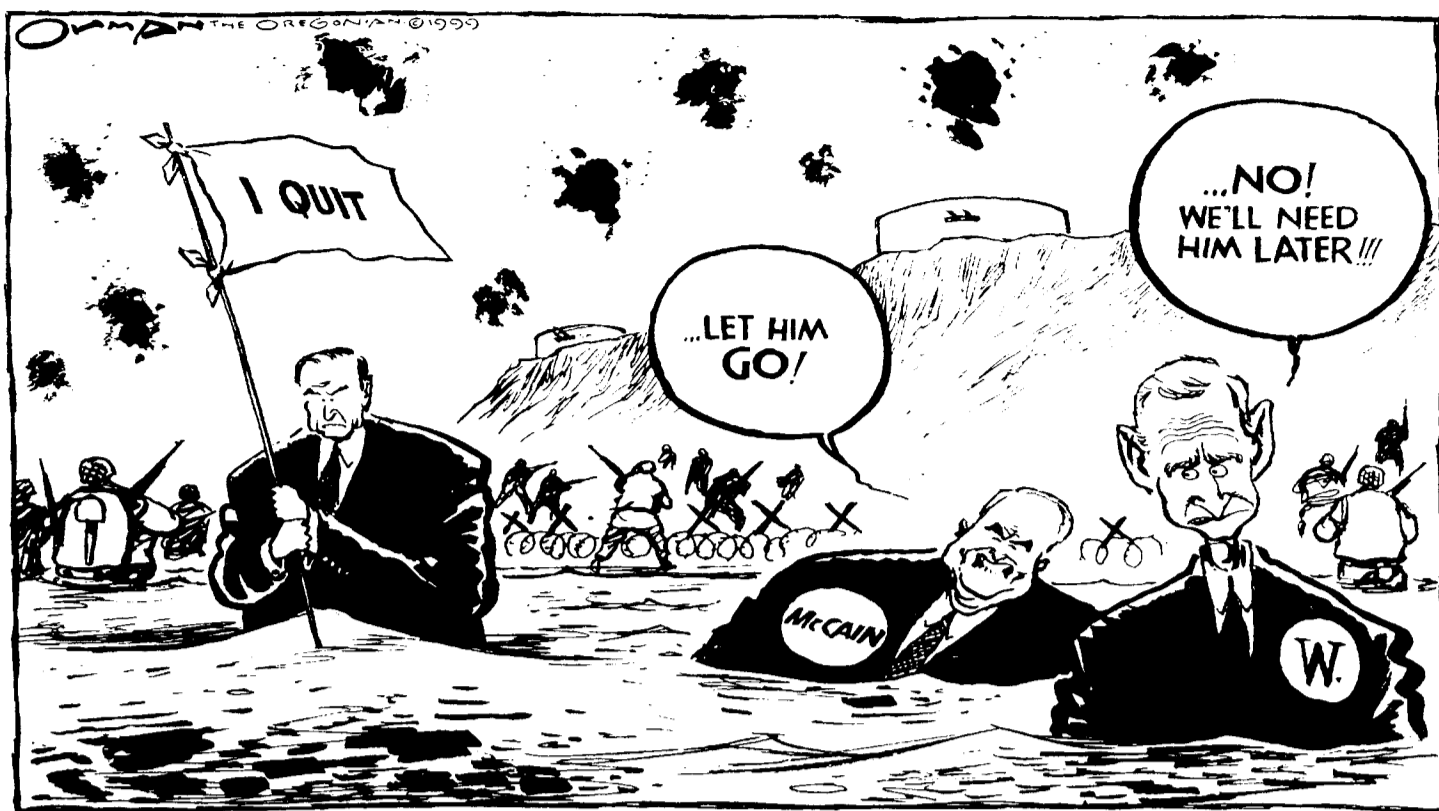
No, troops and warplanes shouldn't be sent into the region. Not yet, anyway. The new Pakistani regime deserves a chance to prove it isn't bent on destroying its neighbor.

But if the threat of nuclear war should arise, then the international community must act in whatever way it can to prevent widespread carnage.

For now, though, the United States and the rest of the world need to act like a night club bouncer. They should stand at a distance with a stern face, arms crossed, watching closely for a fight to break out as India and Pakistan sit at the bar.

Most likely, nothing will happen.

But if it looks like it's about to get a little ugly, the international community should rush in and break it up before things get out of hand.



SAVING PRIVATE BUCHANAN...

Letters to the editor

Points against Ga. built on assumptions

Adam Drake was right in his Friday letter to the editor; two wrongs don't make a right. However, his argument against affirmative action was built on faulty assumptions.

Why is it that whenever someone attacks affirmative action, they portray this intelligent white (male) student who was denied admission to the college of his choice because some inadequately prepared African-American student was allotted his spot?

Affirmative action does not place people who are not qualified into positions; it seeks to ensure that qualified people of color and women will not be denied a position because of their race or gender.

Penn State does have programs that help students who come from educationally disadvantaged areas prepare for the rigors of post-secondary education and these programs are not solely affirmative action programs. They typically serve low-income and/or first-generation college students. These programs help serve white students as well as students of color.

So, please understand a program's true mission, not the rumors that surround it, before you judge it. Affirmative action helps qualified people get the jobs that qualify for. To counter an argument that is forming in some people's minds: Yes, an employer would not hire a qualified individual simply on the bases of the individual's skin tone or gender. If you don't believe me, read a history book; they are full of examples.

Let's not attack a program that seeks to correct the prejudices of our ancestors. If you don't like the way in which it changes the system, then find a better solution, or better yet, help to end the problem so we won't need the programs anymore.

Kizzy Frey
senior-special education

Police, staff need to do jobs at stadium

This is in response to the Friday article about police strengthening security at Beaver Stadium during football games. If officers were supposed to be present to crack down on scalping and cup-throwing, then they may as well stick to their forte — parking meter patrol.

Scalpers were at their prime outside the stadium, and cup-throwing seemed to be at a season high within the stadium.

Perhaps an officer or event staff needs to be showered by a Pepsi before he or she will come to life.

Speaking of event staff, it seems that these folks seem to all but disappear once the fans have been seated. There are certainly plenty out and about to check my ticket for the correct seating, but once we've all been seated, they're gone. I rarely see another staff member picking out the cup-throwers.

If these staff members were doing what they are said to be doing, identifying to the police those persons throwing objects, then there is no doubt in my mind that watching Penn State football from the student section would be a much more pleasant (and less sticky) experience.

Bill Simon
sophomore-computer engineering

Vouchers would break separation

In Monday's column, "Separation of church and state invalid in voucher issue," Imtiaz Chaudhry argues that the separation of church and state central to American government has no bearing on the issue of whether the government should provide vouchers for families.

Chaudhry asserts that, in a separation of church and state, the state simply cannot favor one religion over another, but religion doesn't have to be eliminated from public life.

The great fallacy in his argument is that he completely overlooks the fact that many private schools support one religion strongly over other religions, and that religion is often Christianity (usually Catholicism). I have no problem with the Catholic religion, but the government has no business supporting it financially!

Chaudhry also says that the opponents of school vouchers believe that the separation of church and state means no religion in public, that religion is personal and should be practiced personally.

This is plain wrong. For those of us who choose to practice a public and organized religion, the First Amendment protects our right to do so. The separation of church and state has absolutely nothing to do with how public religion is. It is merely an assurance (a very important one) that the government may not support any one religion over another.

Third, the column states that religion is already central to public education. Chaudhry mentions that during the Gulf War, his elementary school teacher explained the importance of the American soldiers' fight to protect democracy and

liberty, and all the students made yellow ribbons to hang outside. But this is not religion!

He even argues that telling someone not to impose their morality in you is, in fact, imposing your morality on them. But this is about morality, not religion, and there are some ideals that American government is based on.

I see a very clear distinction between teaching peace, liberty, love, compassion, cooperation, democracy, free speech and tolerance vs. teaching specific religious ideology.

The separation of church and state (which Chaudhry calls "self-defeating") protects individuals' rights by preventing the government from supporting a specific religion, but has nothing to do with the promotion of morals and ideals central to American democracy (and central to human society and all religions).

Dev Thakur
freshman-premedicine

Irresponsible drinking disgusts student

Irresponsible drinking is a disgusting thing. This weekend I saw countless acts of those who could not control themselves due to one thing — alcohol. Now before you think I am some sober lunatic let me say that I do drink, but I do it responsibly. I love the grandpa's cough medicine as much as the next guy, but there is no reason why it should control your actions.

I don't care how old you are or where and what you are doing when you drink, but when you can't handle yourself it is sickening.

One guy I saw this weekend strolled into my bathroom with vomit all over himself and asked me if he could use the sink. He then walked out and spews all over the hall. He then falls down, tells me he is on antibiotics, and passes out.

This idiot is absolutely serious, what kind of fool does this? How fun can that be, being completely out of control of your actions?

It really makes me wonder how many students here are actually like this. Irresponsible drinking is something that really needs to be curbed here because it definitely is a problem.

One group that I feel has taken steps to address this problem are the Greeks, who at recent meetings have passed numerous initiatives to limit irresponsible drinking and I feel should be commended.

Chad Stevens
sophomore-environmental resource management

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the Collegian

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 1999
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Rejection of judicial candidate not necessarily racial

A former U.S. senator, during the confirmation proceedings of an African-American judge, remarked, "Does one make the judgment on the basis of his individuality or his race? Does one vote against him because of his record or for him because, as Maya Angelou has said, 'he has been poor, has been nearly suffocated by the acrid odor of racial discrimination, is intelligent, well trained, black and young enough to be won over again.' Mr. President, I believe individuality is more determinative than race."

On Oct. 5, the Senate voted to reject the confirmation of Ronnie White to the federal bench. He happens to be the first judicial nominee of the Clinton Administration to be rejected by the full Senate. It also happens to be that Ronnie White is black. He is the first African-American jurist on the Missouri Supreme Court and is well qualified to be a district judge. The White House immediately attacked the Senate as racist and called the vote a "disgraceful act of partisan politics." Almost every attack from the White House these days uses the term "partisan politics," as though politics has ever been anything else.

Coupled with the claims of racism on the Ronnie White vote, the White House and the Democrats accused the Republicans of holding up the confirmations of

My opinion



minority and female nominees to federal judge positions. There are 45 nominees awaiting confirmation by the Senate, and statistically women and minority judges wait longer than white men to be confirmed. Clinton commented at the annual meeting of the national Hispanic Leadership Conference that he was "deeply dissatisfied with the Senate's partisan handling of some of my minority nominees." The Ronnie White rejection was more ammunition for the Democrats who believe minorities and women are being discriminated against. And as always, they had a lot of colorful (no pun intended) things to say on the matter.

Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) went as far as to say, "This vote tells minority judicial candidates 'do not apply.'" Sen. Patrick

"The Ronnie White rejection was more ammunition for the Democrats who believe minorities and women are being discriminated against."

Leahy (D-Vt.) said he hoped "the United States has not reverted to a time in its history when there was a color test on nominations." Presidential candidate Bill Bradley said in a press release, "this vote unfortunately calls into question the true motives of those who oppose Ronnie White." It was full of references to racial discrimination and the plight of African Americans. The Democrats all but said that Orrin Hatch was burning crosses at Ronnie White's house the night before the vote.

Republicans countered that White's record on the death penalty was the reason, citing various law enforcement agencies that couldn't support White because he was "soft on crime." Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) reminded everyone that the Senate had already confirmed 21 judiciary nominees including four women, one black, four Hispanics and a guy named Stefan since the beginning of this year. Both sides used words such as "outrage" and "out of order" (and I even heard the overused, but fun to say

"impugned." Say it out loudly.) It all made me think about what ever happened to the dream of Martin Luther King Jr. and the day when we would all be judged by content of our character as opposed to the color of our skin. Instead Washington, D.C., has chosen to polarize the races by using the color of one's skin to further its political agenda. It's the perfect scam. One side calls into question an issue with a nominee and the other side cries racism. And I didn't have to look too far back in the congressional record for evidence of this little game.

In 1991, Daschle and Leahy voted against the nomination of Clarence Thomas. In fact, a lot of Democrats who are so easy to cry racism now voted against Clarence Thomas. They said it was because of his ideology. On Oct. 4, 1991, Daschle cited concerns that Judge Thomas' judicial philosophy was "outside the mainstream." Then-Sen. Bill Bradley questioned then-President George Bush's motives for appointing a black conservative judge with anti-affirmative action

views. And then Anita Hill showed up and there was much weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Talk of a public hair on a soda can almost cost a man a position on the Supreme Court, long before the days of a certain semen-stained dress actually made a president more popular. The Senate was enraged that the debate be shifted to one of race by remarks by Thomas that it was a "high-tech lynching of uppity blacks." And many a senator was impugned.

When it's all said and done, the Senate's job is to ensure that the president nominates qualified candidates. Rejecting a judge on a single issue is just as unfair as crying racism in a crowded Senate chamber. Washington, D.C., would be wise to heed the words of the senator I quoted in my opening paragraph. Individual merit is more important than race.

In the upcoming months, will the politicians continue to use minorities to push their own agendas and win votes, or will they focus on the real issues?

Bill Bradley should especially heed those ex-senator's words. Being that he's the ex-senator who said them eight years ago.

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