

OPINIONS

Editorials

New regulations on privacy

John Ashcroft wields some pretty serious power and influence, and the American public should keep an eye on him.

The U. S. attorney general is overzealously pushing Congress to pass a bill in which he frees himself up to bend rules in many ways. He intends to use electronic surveillance and other methods to great advantage, but needs Congress to pass the bill to get started.

"You can't fight terrorism with words," said Ashcroft. "You need tools."

The government will have more clearance to wiretap phones, track Internet communications and prosecute anyone who knowingly harbors a suspected terrorist.

Currently, our laws allow the deportation of aliens who engage in terrorist activity. Fair enough. The bill would allow detention of immigrants who support organizations that now or previously participated in a "broad definition of terrorism."

Worse yet, another part of the bill permits the United States government to indefinitely detain immigrants whom the attorney general certifies as threats, without any proof required. Not only that, but no court outside the federal district court in Washington, D.C., "shall have jurisdiction to review, by habeas corpus petition or otherwise, any action taken, administrative proceeding brought, or determination made to detain an alien," according to the bill.

Ashcroft should be given every reasonable helping hand in seeking out the terrorists, but let's try to keep the long-term consequences in mind.

On the bright side, most of the expanded wiretap provisions in the bill would expire in December 2003. It is unclear how long the other provisions will be in effect.

Still, any time the Constitution and Bill of Rights are tweaked in this way, it must be done with the greatest of care. Ashcroft may not be exercising that care.

If we embrace these requests for greater freedom to survey Americans, we may also be falling into a pitfall that the attackers may not have even foreseen: the removal of privacy rights by our own attorney general.

A new mascot for UNCA

UNCA needs a change. The original mascot, the Bulldogs, is old and needs a facelift. The University needs a mascot which reflects symbols or defining marks often seen around campus.

In light of all the construction abundant on every corner of the UNCA campus, the University should consider changing their mascot to one that best reflects all the construction.

UNCA should change its mascot from the Bulldogs, which are often afraid of large crowds and ultimately die since they are inbred animals, to the UNCA Dump Trucks.

What other symbol of UNCA is more obvious than the omnipresent, slow-moving, smelly symbol of construction? Athletic teams could be escorted in hard hats out onto the field before games, or construction workers could become cheerleaders at athletic events.

Since dump trucks are all over campus and seem to be the first thing one sees when driving into the main road, what entity better symbolizes UNCA?

If the UNCA Dump Trucks doesn't fly with students, UNCA could become the Squirrels. Those small, rabid creatures which are more ever-abundant than dump trucks would be a perfect mascot.

Students can't go anywhere on campus without a squirrel darting out from the shadows of the trees or running out underneath your vehicle. It's almost as though they are begging UNCA to let them be the mascot.

It's not like it would be hard to find one to capture; just look in any garbage can. Just be sure not to throw anything too heavy in there; you may kill one of UNCA's potential new mascots.

If no one can agree which mascot would better represent UNCA, the University could always incorporate the two: we could replace the silver Bulldog in front of Justice Gym with a silver squirrel perched inside a dump truck. Then, visitors to UNCA would get a true sense of what our campus is like.

Staff Member of the Week

Congratulations to Ed Fickle of the News Department. Ed is *The Blue Banner's* Staff Member of the Week.

A few alternatives to gun control



Sean Clancy

Columnist

Everything has been serious lately, so I should probably write about something funny, something harmless and uncontroversial.

I know. How about gun control? There's a subject that has been beaten to death, but still begs for more.

Let's start by reminding everyone that guns are designed to kill things, for the most part people. This doesn't sound that bad, because God knows there is no shortage of them this year. Unfortunately, I do not look forward to being shot.

Here in America, we have the freedom to own guns, so we can enjoy the right to hunt, target shoot and protect our families. That is really sweet.

We also have a problem with overpopulated prisons, drive-by shootings, robberies, road rage, angry couples, angry kids, stupid people, rednecks and anyone who is drunk and has access to a gun.

According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, taxpayers foot the bill for about 80 percent of firearm related medical treatments, or about \$16 billion.

In 1994, firearms were the second leading cause of death for people

aged 10 to 24 years old.

I'm kind of biased since I don't hunt and think it's kind of stupid. "I'm keeping the deer from overpopulating." Right. Good thinking. Mother Nature has been doing a real crappy job at that sort of thing since the dawn of time; good thing you came around.

I love the outdoors, and out on the trail, one thing really puts the icing on the cake for me. It's that creepy feeling you get when you realize there is a hunter hiding 15 feet away from you with a gun. What a rush.

It's almost like being real prey for just a second. I don't know if I'd even want to be out there without the fear that some optically-impaired mountain man with a flask full of moonshine might shoot me. Enough about hunting, how about at home? First of all, when making informed choices about gun control, you must first remember that real life is almost just like the movies.

For instance, if someone ever breaks into my house, I will wake up just in time to reach under my pillow, grab my trusty side arm, and shoot the evil mastermind be-

fore he can kill my family and take over the world.

It's just like that, except if your gun was under the pillow, your kid probably went crazy because you're his parent and shot you with your own gun.

If it was responsibly locked away in a safe place, it probably would not do you that much good.

However, you're quick and you rush towards the terrible criminal and blow him away, except he's some 16-year-old kid with nothing but a bad attitude.

Maybe he's a 16-year-old with a gun of his own, and as you rush in to save the day and your family, he sees your gun and kills you dead in your home. Seeing as you had a gun too, there wasn't much of a choice.

Now you're dead, and this where the movies and real life are just a little different.

In our free country, I could theoretically get a bunch of angry complaints about this article, even though in reality, you are all too apathetic to care that much.

I could then go to a department store and buy a shotgun or a rifle. I

would start coming after you.

That's what freedom is all about. Don't you think if it were hard to get a gun, people wouldn't bother so much with trying?

If the street price of guns was drastically increased, people would be more inclined to use other weapons like mace or knives, especially if the likelihood of their victims having a gun was reduced.

This may not sound very pleasant, but I'd rather take my chances with some common criminal wielding a knife or a bat than one carrying a gun.

Would a 13-year-old be more likely to kill or injure 30 or so students with a gun or a pocket knife?

Wouldn't you rather see postal workers going out in a blaze of brass knuckles instead of a hail of gunfire?

The less guns there are floating around, the less people are going to be shot by them.

It seems strange that a country that punishes murder with death would be in favor of its citizens toting firearms around.

Wait a second. No, it doesn't.

"Don't you think if it were hard to get a gun, people wouldn't bother with trying?"

Letters to the Editor

Response to McCorkle's column

Dear Editor:

Let me be the first to say that I am deeply concerned that my student fees seem to be underwriting students to publicize their obvious contempt for me and my kind.

We're called realists.

To have Dearborn McCorkle express a rather myopic opinion concerning world policy is worrisome.

To hear more anti-governmental paralogia, a la X-Files, is annoying. To be called an ignorant sheep is just downright unnecessary.

To answer her question, yes Dearborn, I have gone over the *Congressional Record* several times. I'm also one of the 12 viewers of either/both C-Span channels, if you can buy that. I've spent a good chunk of my life studying political science and history.

The common assumption among apologists is that America brought

this on itself through indifference towards the Middle East in the pursuit of our own economic interests.

Terrorists are just what the big army calls the little army. This ignores some very telling realities.

1) Whatever political/religious agenda Arabian terrorists have has been decimated, perhaps irreparably. By giving America just cause to increase our control of that area, while at the same time weakening their own organization and destroying any credibility they might have had. It was a poorly considered political action.

2) Those who cite Pearl Harbor are perhaps unaware of how closely related the event is.

Those who say that the attack is a result and was caused by American foreign economic policy need look no further than our cessation of our oil pipeline to Japan to see the immediate cause for the attack on our military base then. It was not a random assault, but a direct response to Japanese military adventurism.

3) Those who say that it was coming to us are apparently excusing the terrorist attacks on the grounds

that we did something to incite them. By this same logic, cutting me off in traffic entitles me to follow you home and run you down in your own driveway.

There is a very clear distinction between political protest, even violent political protest, and outright lunatic assaults.

Political protest of our policies regarding oil would take the form of boarding tankers and dumping oil overboard, levying unreasonable tariffs and taxes against American imports or exports, or banning our presence entirely.

Those in oil-producing Arab nations are caught in the classic salesman/waiter's curse: they hate the customer but love the customer's money. If there is truly something inherently wrong with our presence, it is their right and obligation simply to not sell to us.

4) Those who say that cutting off medical and food supplies to Arabian nations has brought this upon us and demonstrates our hypocrisy are overlooking the very real hypocrisy supporting the very oppressive regimes that those sanctions are designed to upset. One does not

feed the dog that bites young children.

Any citizen who is not in open revolt of a policy they consider wrong is acting in compliance with it. This is why we admire men like Nelson Mandela; those who would rather live their lives in prison rather than in support of a despicable political body. Any Afghani who is not in opposition to the Taliban is supporting it in their silence.

While this is a lengthy diatribe, I hope it has been a worthwhile one. A liberal campus has no excuse for a lack of information in the creation of our opinions on subjects; the very reason for liberal education is to expand upon the purview of information available.

To have a columnist being paid by students to show contempt for students seems a rather unworthy proposition.

Always approach a difficult issue from a position of informed strength, Dearborn, not utopian well-wishing.

Keith Dramm
Junior, History and
Political Science

HAVE A SAFE FALL BREAK!

-The Blue Banner

Singer needed for heavy metal band in Asheville.

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Notice: Important Event!

The American Cancer Society's "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer" 5k non-competitive walk will be held on Saturday, October 27th at the Biltmore Square Mall here in Asheville! Get involved either by raising money, donating money individually, buying merchandise, and/or participating in the walk. For more information and to get involved, contact Melissa Rohr at makingstrides2001@yahoo.com or (828)254-6931.

Thank you for your support and donations!