

The Daily Tar Heel

94th year of editorial freedom

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Editorials

Toward harmonious leadership

Amid nearly audible sighs of relief, President Corazon Aquino Sunday dismissed Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile. The credit for the long-needed move should be shared with Gen. Fidel Ramos, the armed forces chief of staff. Together, the pair is providing more reliable and cohesive leadership for the Philippines.

It was Ramos who detected and defied, the weekend's planned coup against Aquino. The push originated within the military, as several colonels and other junior officers who supported Enrile decided to stop threatening a coup and get on with it. Such threats came twice earlier this month, but Ramos deflected the movements with his equal devotion and support for both the military and Aquino. Ramos stood behind both sides of the issue, and his most pressing concern seemed to be defending each faction from the other.

In the process, however, the status quo prevailed, as did the plots to overthrow Aquino. Ramos' neutrality worked in the short run, but could not serve anyone over the long run. Thus, Ramos' most recent actions are heartening. Instead of allowing questions of his real loyalty to further circulate, Ramos has shown that he places the highest priority on a stable presidency. The Aquino administration had been

frantic for such backing, and it came when the president needed it the most.

Enrile's reasons for the coup involve Aquino's outlook on handling the nation's Communist insurgency. The president attempted reconciliation, a policy that gave Enrile and others of like mind justification for overthrowing a "soft" president. As she fired her entire Cabinet, Aquino vowed to refute any claims of weak and indecisive leadership: "This cannot continue."

Faced with the coup, Aquino took this ammunition away from Enrile, and embarked on a new, harsher course in dealing with the rebels. Aquino announced that the Communists have only until the end of the month to accept her peace proposals. Such firm action — regardless of its political practicality — has been unbearably absent in the chaos of the Philippines.

Like Ramos, Aquino has adopted a stronger approach to government, one that will give pause to opponents like Enrile. Further, with a clearer message to the Communists that she is no weakling, Aquino hopes to convince the rebels that peace is the better option. Regardless of whether she's right about the Communists' resolve, Aquino could finally provide the coherent guidance that the Philippines so desperately needs.

No job for machines

In a time when school children are learning to program computers, and laser surgery yields regular medical miracles, there are some things man should not relegate to machines.

By overuse and over-dependence, some innovations are superseding some responsibilities better left to man alone. Private businesses are increasingly reliant on polygraph machines to determine an employee's integrity — when even manufacturers admit the machines are not foolproof.

Some inventions designed to give flexibility to corrections programs also have dangerous potential. Take the tracking experiment being conducted in Winston-Salem. A computer device keeps tabs on about six juvenile delinquents being supervised under a house arrest program.

The youths, repeat offenders without violent records, are required to wear a leg transmitter. A frequency is maintained with a small box attached to the family telephone. If an offender slips out of the house during

an unspecified hour, the frequency is broken. A computer emits an alarm and produces a printout identifying the violator and time of departure. Removing the transmitter can send the violator to jail.

The computer surveillance in and of itself may be an asset for some offenders; it can keep youth out of jail at about half the cost of detention. But it becomes too easy to relegate the care and supervision of these offenders to computers. And no computer can set a wayward youth on a better track.

The concern may seem to be Orwellian paranoia. But even supporters of the current surveillance experiments are nervous about newer equipment which is being designed to record conversations and detect drug use by probationers or parolees.

Americans cannot impede technology. They must guard their own responsibilities. Humans are often wrong, but they know truth, lies, strength and weakness in a way no machine can calculate.

Tar Heel Forum

Does polygraph really measure truth?

Walter James III
 Guest Writer

Recent articles in The Daily Tar Heel have renewed my memories of — and hatred for — polygraph tests.

As an undergraduate student, I was employed part time as a clerk-cashier at a convenience store. Within two weeks of applying for the job, I was contacted by the district manager for an interview. Excited because jobs in my hometown were hard to find, I went to the interview with enthusiasm. Even after being told that I would be subjected to a polygraph test before being hired, I was willing to travel 80 miles to another store to take the test. I couldn't wait until the polygrapher could come to my hometown three days later.

The thought of taking a polygraph test did not bother me, because, like Laura Line ("Lie detectors no test of honesty, moral character," Nov. 20), I had nothing to hide.

I was first questioned without the machine. Some questions posed by the polygrapher included: Are you using your legal name? Have you ever been convicted of a crime or a felony? Have you ever used or experimented with any illegal drugs? Have you ever told a serious lie? Have you ever stolen anything from anyone or any previous employer? After I answered "no" to all these questions, the polygrapher brought out the cords and wires.

I felt a bit nervous, with two cords around my chest and stomach and the fingers of one of my hands taped to a cord from the machine. However, the polygrapher told me to relax, assume a regular breathing rhythm and close my eyes. I was asked the same questions as before and asked to respond truthfully.

I passed the test with flying colors and began work the next day. But my encounter with the so-called lie detector had not ended. I was shown the company's handbook and

informed that all corporation stores were audited once a month. In the event of an inventory shortage of \$250 or more, all employees would be polygraphed.

The handbook stated: "Polygraph testing is an important investigative tool that protects the continued employment of honest employees. Refusal to submit to a polygraph test will be grounds for immediate discharge."

Within a year, I had taken another polygraph test because of an inventory shortage. The machine accused me of giving merchandise to customers. Knowing this was untrue, I became a little disturbed — but not too heated, since I wasn't fired or threatened with dismissal. The machine indicated a lie on only one question. It did anger me to see co-workers fired after being told by a machine that they were stealing, using drugs or violating other policies.

Meanwhile, evidence had been found repeatedly indicating that a store manager in the district was stealing company money, but he had passed the polygraph test three times within five days. Other employees had been fired, the only "evidence" against them being failure to pass the polygraph test. After two years the suspect manager was dismissed for reasons other than his polygraph results.

I was transferred to another store to help fill the vacancies. Within seven months, I had taken six polygraph tests. My hatred for the tests and the company grew. The company needed some method of protection from inside theft, but why was the test the

sole determinant of continued employment without even a re-audit of the store?

On the day of the fourth test, I had been rushed at school and was depressed and upset. Before being connected to the machine, the polygrapher told me that honest people like me who said they never violated company policy were more likely to be caught by the machine than someone whose conscience did not bother them for stealing. I had probably done or stolen one or two small things which were nagging my conscience, he said.

The machine accused me of telling a serious lie and stealing from my previous employer. The polygrapher asked me what I was hiding from him and gave me the test a second time. It accused me yet again. The third time, the machine cleared me.

I was irate, but I needed the money provided by the job. One and two months later, when I was out of school and relaxed, the machine cleared me on the first round.

I decided to leave as quickly as possible, considering it asinine that a company could fire me solely on the basis of a machine's indications. The polygraph is not an effective evaluator of truth; it can only indicate the state of mind or emotion of the person at the time of the test.

As Mike Radford of North Carolina Polygraph Services Inc., said in the Nov. 10 Daily Tar Heel, "Man has not yet invented the device that absolutely measures the truth." I doubt Man ever will. A device with no mind-reading abilities will never be able to accurately measure and decipher the reactions or responses of a human being.

Walter James III is a graduate student in romance languages from Florence, S.C.

Absurd logic

To the editor:
 I find Richard Archie's positions about Human Rights Week contradictory and absurd ("Fund shortage," letter, Nov. 17). Consider Archie's claim that David Hood and Jeff Taylor, recent column writers, might be "concerned with violations only to ridicule the only campus program that attempts to address them." I can see it now, Taylor saying to Hood, "Hey, the Campus Y is having a Human Rights Week, why don't we make fun of it." Hood responds, "Great idea. Let's go over to Davis and research it. Just one problem though: what's a Campus Y and what's a human right?"

I also find interesting Archie's implication that UNC students, if they care about human rights, must use the Campus Y as a focus of their human rights activities.

Furthermore, Archie claims in a letter to The Phoenix that the reason the Soviet Union was not included in Human Rights Week is that its abuses of human rights are well known and to put them on the agenda would just lead to a lot of "propaganda" being thrown about. However, that obscure place about which huge quantities of unpolarized opinions exist — South Africa — was included.

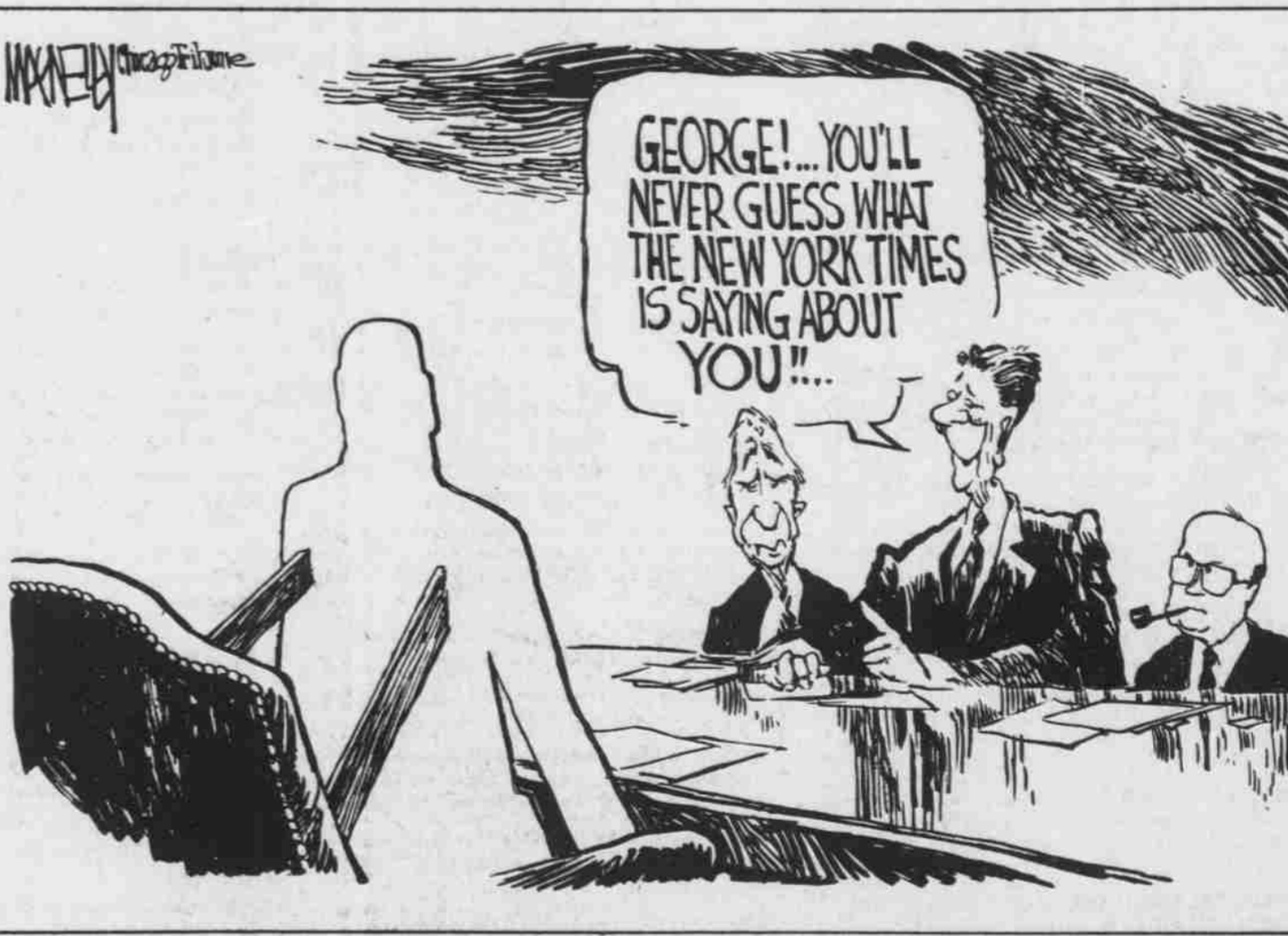
A second reason given was that only three groups had protested this. I guess a human rights violation occurs only when enough people decide an event is a violation. Yet in his letter, Archie said that the Soviet Union and other areas "were not covered because no one came forward with programs on these areas." Which of these statements is true?

Which brings me to the question of responsibility, or Archie's apparent lack thereof. If you are one of the two people in charge of Human Rights Week, it is your job to make sure that adequate funding, support, interest and balanced programs exist. If you do not succeed, the fault is your own, not that of the people who choose — for whatever reason — not to involve themselves.

The most bizarre part of Archie's letter comes when he strongly and repeatedly suggests that Hood and Taylor don't really have a right to criticize his leadership or the Human Rights Week, because they were not involved in it. If one takes this to its logical conclusion, then a person who is not involved in a given government has no right to criticize its actions.

For example, according to the Archie edict, we have no right to complain about apartheid because we are not involved in South Africa's decision-making processes. With logic like that, why have a Human Rights Week at all?

MICHAEL LOWREY
 Junior
 Economics/ Political Science



Elusive truth

To the editor:
 Congratulations and good luck to Rick Spargo and Lori Taylor, co-founders of the "UNC Straights Who Wait Association." According to Spargo and Taylor ("Funding waits," letter, Nov. 20) this "organization consists of heterosexuals who have decided to postpone their involvement in sexual relations until they are married," language that suggests that virgins would not even qualify for membership if they "fooled around."

I wish them congratulations for their freedom to pursue their own form of sexual practice and preference, a freedom that unfortunately does not legally extend to protect homosexuals or those who engage in extramarital or non-missionary sex. I wish them good luck, because I suspect they'll have a harder time finding celibates than homosexuals on this campus.

But seriously, I would like to offer some advice to Spargo, Taylor and the so-called Students for America. Do not be too quick to use religion as a tool to excuse hatred, prejudice and persecution. When religion

is used in this way, God's love and compassion are too easily forgotten, and only His wrath remains. In addition, it is somewhat presumptuous to assume that you can use your own mortal (and fallible) judgment as a substitute for His.

Everyone should be pre-

pared to eventually face his or her own Judgement Day, but no one should be compelled to submit to the dictates of a self-appointed and self-annointed group professing to know the truth.

MITCHELL POTE
 Graduate

CGLA doesn't discriminate

To the editor:
 I would like to address Lori Taylor and Rick Spargo regarding their letter, "Funding waits" (Nov. 20). Have you ever been denied a job because you are "straights who wait"? Have you ever been evicted or refused as a tenant because of your sexual preferences? Have you been subjected to public ridicule and snide, derogatory comments based on your sexual practices? Have you been physically abused by strangers who have heard about your recent declaration on the back page of The Daily Tar Heel?

Your sexual practices are your own personal choices, right? And you, although claiming to be part of a minority in today's society, are able to enjoy the protections of the

law and are not persecuted because of your minority status, right?

Homosexuals, with whom you have paralleled yourselves, can only respond as you would to one of my questions. When homosexuals can also say no to the first four questions and yes to the sixth one, there will be no need for a support-education group like the Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association.

Until that time, however, the CGLA is a needed and helpful resource group for ALL students who will open their minds and allow themselves to be educated.

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The Daily Tar Heel

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