

Editorial

Proposal a chance to withdraw troops

On Monday Najibullah, the communist leader of Afghanistan, unveiled a new constitution as an effort to invoke a policy of "national reconciliation," and established a 12-month timeline for the withdrawal of Soviet troops in the country.

These proposals will be top priorities at the summit meeting between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan. Therefore, Reagan should seize the opportunity to reach an agreement removing Soviet troops and ending American supplies of weapons to Islamic fundamentalist guerrillas fighting in Afghanistan. With continued pressure, a reasonable compromise could be negotiated for both sides.

The new constitution is a step in the right direction, but it is not foolproof. The constitution creates an all-powerful president who also would serve as a commander-in-chief of an army. The president would have a wide-range of emergency powers as well. After Najibullah introduced the constitution, he unanimously was elected to this position.

Najibullah extended an invitation to guerrillas to end their rebellion if he pulled Soviet troops out of the country. His new presidential power will prevent a reconciliation with guerrillas, diplomats say. They would not be willing to join a coalition government.

Soviet troops have occupied Afghanistan since December of 1979 in an attempt to control factional fighting. Currently 115,000 troops occupy the country and protect the current leadership. Moscow diplomats say that the Najibullah regime would collapse without the support of the Soviet sponsorship.

However, Gorbachev recognizes the need to withdraw troops from Afghanistan. The invasion has become an embarrassment and an economic burden for the Soviet Union. Najibullah also seems ready to lead the country without Soviet assistance.

During an interview with NBC News, Gorbachev said a political solution to the problem "could be done very quickly" if the United States was willing. This is an open invitation to Reagan to negotiate with Gorbachev at the summit meeting. The opportunity is present and Reagan should take advantage of it.

The Reagan administration already has expressed disappointment in Najibullah's proposal for removing Soviet troops over a 12-month period. The administration contends the proposal is inadequate because the withdrawal would start after American and Pakistani aid to guerrillas was cutoff and a coalition government was created.

Despite the hindrances of the withdrawal proposal, many expect Reagan and Gorbachev to discuss the issue and develop a formal proposal in their meeting.

Najibullah has expressed his desire to lead the country without the Soviet's support. We should honor his initial wish by stopping aid to the guerrillas. In the same tone, the guerrillas should consider Najibullah's proposal. The situation is open for reconciliation and potential peace.

Najibullah's constitution and withdrawal proposal have come at an ideal time for Soviet and American negotiations. It would be foolish of Reagan to waste a prime opportunity to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan.



Letters

Self-destructive

I have been a professor at the University for 38 years, and recently became an emeritus but still interested professor. Although I have opposed President Olum, and still do oppose him on some important questions (ROTC on campus, the Riverfront Research Park, and method of distributing "across-the-board" faculty board raises), I have always liked him personally and felt that he is a good and effective president.

If the State Board's objective in forcing his early retirement is to "promote an orderly transition" as stated several times, they certainly muffed it in a big way. In all the time I have been here I have never seen what promises to be a more disorderly and frustrating transition.

The board has succeeded in pitting almost the entire University community against it, and caused many people all over the state to question their good sense and integrity. "Wise Owls?", perhaps bird brained.

The board also recently has grabbed more power in the presidential selection process and reduced the role of the University.

What really good man would want to step into this mess, or would operate well in it? The next president will almost certainly be received with less enthusiasm and more skepticism

on campus than would otherwise be the case, and will feel very uneasy about his or her relationship with the board.

I can't think of any way the board could have more effectively inflicted wounds upon itself and the state system than the processes by which it reached and implemented this decision.

Bayard McConnaughey
Professor Emeritus

The irony of it

The irony of the Nov. 18 decision by the State Board of Higher Education regarding University President Paul Olum should not be overlooked by any concerned citizen. The decision by the board came on the same day the Senate Select Committee on the Iran-Contra affair gave its final opinions regarding the president of the United States. And the date is not the only irony.

The final decisions, in both cases, left much to be desired by anyone with a sense of justice, a concern for the future and a clarity of perception. One president was found, through a consensus opinion produced by a series of checks and balances, to be out of touch with the demands of his job, incapable of meeting out the constitutional requirement to "care" for the laws of his country, and to possess a cavalier attitude regarding the ultimate need to care. The other president, almost

universally applauded by educators, lawmakers, faculty colleagues, and students was found to be — apparently without the need for checks and balances, total legality, or even the clarity of decision — in some way (though never clearly defined) unsatisfactory. The first president, though every major opinion poll suggests there are serious doubts about his past actions and future capabilities, remains firmly in place. The second president, though every major group with an opinion that should matter has proclaimed its total support, is going to be forced to leave the job that clearly needs him.

Does this state board want to embrace, foster, and implement qualities that help produce a society that disregards overwhelming public opinion, defies its own stated goal to produce quality education, and does so in ways which anger and disillusion the very people it claims it is trying to help? Questions like these are difficult to answer and still keep a straight face. Just ask Ronald Reagan.

Dr. Erik Nelson
Writer/Dept. of education

Good judge

We may never know for certain whether Douglas Ginsburg was a "more qualified" nominee for Supreme Court justice, but it is obvious that he has infinitely more class than Robert Bork.

Knowing that he didn't have a snowball's chance in hell of being confirmed, Bork selfishly chose to waste the taxpayers' money, the Senate's time, and to embarrass the president and the administration by fighting his lost cause to the bitter end.

Ginsburg's frank admission of having smoked marijuana should not even have entered into consideration of his judicial abilities, but of course it was a political *faux pas*. His voluntary withdrawal of his candidacy demonstrates greater concern for this country and its people than Bork has ever shown.

Hiawatha
Graduate, music

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Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style. Letters should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.