

Editorial

U.S. pressure could foster Haiti elections

After Sunday's failed election attempt, the military-controlled Haitian government abolished the independent Provisional Electoral Committee, thereby demonstrating a lack of commitment to democracy. Disbanding the electoral committee only will diminish the possibility of free and fair elections for this strife-torn Caribbean nation.

The responsibility to conduct fair elections now lies squarely on the shoulders of Lt. Gen. Henri Namphy, the leader of Haiti's provisional government that has ruled the nation since Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier fled the country in February 1985.

But it is unclear whether an impartial electoral process can be conducted under the direct control of the military, which has been using violence to disrupt the elections. During Sunday's attempted election, for example, U.S. government officials and foreign journalists reported elements of the military partially were responsible for that day's 34 murders.

Even before Sunday's violence, problems plagued Haiti's electoral council: its offices were burned by arson, its members were threatened with violence and shot at and it had a shortage of necessary supplies, such as ballots. The military exasperated these problems by failing to protect the election committee.

Since it completely disbanded the original electoral committee, the military has not established a new electoral body to conduct the elections. In fact, the military-controlled government has been negligent in its responsibility to foster elections, prompting a response from the U.S. government.

Appropriately, the U.S. administration has cut off economic and military aid to Haiti and has called for the immediate resignation of high-ranking military officials who have shown opposition to the democratic process. This move, however, may not be enough to force the Haitian government to comply with its own February deadline for a democratically elected government.

But the administration has been reluctant to intervene in Haiti's internal affairs, reserving hope for the military government's ability to get the elections back on track. Without an independent electoral council, however, this hope seems misplaced as the Haitian government likely will continue its attempts to thwart fair elections.

If the discontinuation of U.S. military and economic aid fails to bring about elections, the U.S. government should sponsor a United Nations-backed committee, which would serve as an alternative and substitute for the disbanded electoral committee. The U.N. committee would organize and oversee the election process.

A U.S.-sponsored electoral committee just may prove valuable to bring free elections and therefore true democracy to this troubled nation.

To protect the committee and voters from violence and to keep the military government in check, the U.S. government diplomatically should pressure the Haitian military government to cease violating the sovereign right to vote for a democratic government in Haiti.

If the Haitian government fails to foster free and fair elections in the near future, the U.S. government should pressure Haiti by suspending its preferential trade status — a move that economically will force Haiti to hold elections.



"HOWEVER, THIS NEXT POPULARITY POLL FINDS YOU ONLY TWENTY-TWO POINTS BEHIND MR. GORBACHEV"

Letters

Not funny

The following remarks are in regards to Friday Nov. 20's "civil war" insert in the Emerald, specifically, the OSU "adult" Bookstore advertisement.

I am sad someone thought this was funny. I do not want to condemn who wrote this "ad," or anyone who may have found a chuckle there. I do want you to take a moment and reflect on what was humorous. Child phonography? Child abuse? As if in these terrible crimes inflicted upon our children there could be material for humor.

A child who has been sexually abused faces more than the loss of his or her innocence in these adult matters. The struggle to recover from the trauma can be lifelong.

Failure to find a balance can lead to further victimization, drug and alcohol addiction, prison, suicide or perhaps even more tragically, becoming abusers themselves. It is no small task to find balance; to go from being a victim to being a survivor.

How can the crime of child sexual abuse ever be the subject

of humor? It is much too sad for laughter.

Luanne Rolly
Graduate student, chemistry

Diverse studies

I would like to thank Tora Johnson for her kind suggestion regarding my curricular future (ODE, Nov. 19).

Certainly, taking Introduction to Women's Studies and Elementary Logic would add greatly to the diversity of my education: as her letter shows, the two have very little in common.

Perhaps one of these fine course offerings would enable me to see why the picture on my poster promoted violence against women when I affixed it to various telephone poles, but had no such effect when the same picture was reproduced on the poster demanding a boycott of Taylor's and affixed to the same telephone poles by someone else.

Can research about this remarkable disparity be obtained through the Women's Studies Department?

Jerome Berryhill
Graduate student, physics

Civil beef

Although I am supportive of University sports and school spirit, I feel compelled to voice my disappointment and disgust over the "civil war" insert in the Nov. 20 issue of the Emerald.

For those students who didn't read it, the insert contained sexually explicit spoofs of the OSU paper, the Barometer. Since the editorial staff already published these items, I'm sure they won't mind quotes.

In a parodied ad we find McGraw the ex-crime dog promoting child pornography. "You can help me, McGraw, put the bite back in porno." The editorial staff of the "Beefometer," as it was called,

were parodied as Caress-my Cervix, Editor and Suzanne Down-on-me, Edit Page Editor.

Come on people! You may be an independent paper, but don't think that this doesn't reflect badly on our university.

The hypocrisy of the editorial staff is incredible. One day you publish letters denouncing an unscrupulous country western band, a few days later you emulate them.

I know that these and similar inserts are a University tradition. I would like to add that child abuse, rape and sex discrimination are age-old traditions as well. Tradition is not a justifiable excuse for this.

Do your advertisers know that their names are associated with this sort of publication? Do students know that a portion of their fees are used to print it?

This university has a good reputation as a progressive institution. On Friday, the Emerald damaged this reputation. Do students and faculty care? I certainly do.

Jeffrey D. Willis
Graduate

Take care

The State Board of Higher Education's actions and its handling of the Olum affair is another example of a governmental body that is supposed to be accountable to the people, but once again is not.

The board members believe they are not accountable to the people, but above the people. This shows that in reality when the people think they have some influence in the decisions of the governing process, they are mistaken because political positioning and compromise are the rules.

Before Americans continue to be naive and condemn communist activities abroad, they should first take care of the communist-type actions at home.

Nils Tjolm
International studies

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, Oregon 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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