

## Thomas confirmation worked in Gates' favor

With almost no fanfare and little rancor, Robert Gates slipped into the CIA director's chair Tuesday.

The whimper-of-a-confirmation process can be attributed to several reasons, and is surprising in light of the furor his nomination caused.

Gates and George Bush's Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas were both put in front of the Senate at pretty much the same time. In the beginning, it looked as if Thomas would have the easier time getting a job, as Gates was saddled with new scandals from the Iran-Contra affair, claims he "colored" intelligence reports with his own political philosophy, and the overriding specter of former CIA director William Casey.

It didn't work out that way. Anita Hill came forward, Thomas was pushed into the nation's spotlight, and Gates slipped quietly into the background. While the Senate Judiciary Committee grilled Thomas, their counterparts in the Intelligence Committee had quiet meetings, getting little press and attention.

But Thomas weathered the storm and was confirmed. After the long, tension-filled process, the Senate was in no mood to get involved in another brutal showdown with the administration. Public backlash against the Senate for the Thomas hearings could have only helped Gates.

But to nominate Gates in view of the negative testimony against him indicates the Senate screwed up. Again.

Gates had been nominated for the job before — in 1987 by Ronald Reagan — but pulled out because of his shadowy connection with the Iran-Contra affair, which worked against him even then. Washington has an unwritten rule: You only get one shot at the big time; don't expect another one.

But Gates, a career analyst, got another chance. This time, the strength of a 64-31 Senate confirmation vote helped him out.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman, a Democrat from Connecticut who supported Gates, said the question "is not is he the best person in the world to fill this job, but is he qualified to fill this job."

From that perspective, yes, Gates is qualified: perhaps even more than his boss was when he took the post in the early '70s. But whether or not Gates is qualified is not the whole story. He still hasn't come up with a credible denial to the charge of "cooking" intelligence reports about the Soviet Union to reflect the hard-line stance sure to please Reagan, his Cold Warrior cabinet and the military-industrial complex that made billions producing "peace-keeping" weapons.

His past record, his slippery answers about the Iran-Contra affair during the confirmation hearings, and his Cold War mentality in a time of emerging peace should have kept him from getting the job. It didn't. Score another victory for Bush and Co.

# DUKE VS. BUSH

WHO'S BETTER?

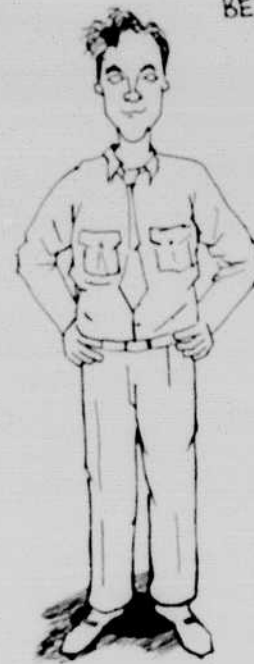
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POPULARITY SKYROCKETED AFTER SCAPEGOATING PEOPLE FROM A DIFFERENT CONTINENT

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## LETTERS

### Poll sitter

It amazes me how the media use certain statistics. I will use an example from your Oct. 15 issue which cited polls on the Clarence Thomas nomination. You printed a report from The Associated Press. Because AP reports are used widely, I ask why *Emerald* editors did not consider the implications of the AP report more carefully.

The headline states "Public believes Thomas" and in the story, "polls ... show that most Americans support him." The actual figures of the poll were 56 percent in support. This is a narrow majority, but is it "most"?

Readers are also misled when writers fail to discuss the error in poll estimates. The error in the poll is plus or minus 5 percent. Thus, there could be as few as 51 percent of people in support of the nomination. To state on this basis that "most" people are in support shows the polls were interpreted to suit a political end: to marginalize anti-Thomas opinion.

It is also worrisome that most polls are conducted by telephone. Do the pollsters account for the fact opinions are biased toward people with telephones? What about the people who do not own a telephone? What about those that work so hard they are not at home to answer a telephone poll? Are the telephone polls national or just from a particular area? These questions are not addressed in the article.

Problems with poll results are one reason why *The Emerald* should take a more responsible attitude to printing articles by influential corporate press agencies.

Roger J. Harris  
Biology

### ...ere

The EMU board's decision to ban military recruiters on campus is another example of politically correct fascism run amok.

These hypocrites claim to be "liberal," but forget some of the

basic tenets of classical Liberalism — namely that all viewpoints deserve legal equality.

They abuse their powers by forcing their values on the student body and squelching the free speech rights of those they disagree with.

They claim the military's policy on homosexuals is the reason for their ban. This is wrong. The homosexual issue is just a tactic. Many of them admit that even if the military were to change their homophobic policies, they would still oppose military recruitment on campus.

They are forcing their P.C. values down the throats of the student body, hoping student apathy will allow them to create a nice, clean politically correct environment on campus.

It's a humorous note their fascist tactics so closely resemble those used by the Religious Right and McCarthy-type conservatives. This comparison might bruise their self-righteous sensibilities, but if they could see past their hypocrisy, they would understand they are perched on the same trash heap as the extreme right-wing conservatives.

They can put that in their hash pipe and smoke it.

Michael Sears  
Journalism/Political Science

### Explore this

I'd like to take some time and address Matt Kockeler's letter of Oct. 29. As a historian, Matt, you should well be aware of the fact that from 1520 to 1620, approximately 20 million native Mexicans perished due to disease and warfare against the Spanish, and during intertribal warfare generated by the Spanish.

Another fact: The U.S. government, via the U.S. Army, waged germ warfare against the Plains Indians by supplying them with smallpox-infested blankets left over from the Civil War; this disease nearly destroyed all the tribes along the Missouri.

No, these people weren't able to adapt to such European viruses, but it took Europe until

the 1500's to deal with the bubonic plague, and to this day, we still fight diseases to which we have no immunity.

As for the political scheme, Matt, you're over-estimating Europe's and the Near East's abilities to overcome their nationalism — in fact, isn't that what's tearing the Soviet Union apart?

"Introduction of diversity to their shores?" I think, and most would agree, that diversity is something created by sharing. The whites brought goods like guns, horses and such, which added to the culture of the Indians, who on the other hand gave us beans, squash and corn. They also gave us a model for the U.S. Constitution.

Societies of all people have their good and bad points — who can forget the interned Japanese-Americans during World War II here in America? Or perhaps the genocide of Jews in Europe since 1492.

Matt, this all is the human experience, so either get out there and learn with an open mind or get out of the way.

Thomas Brossia  
History

### Chop it

To Bobby Cox and team members: My name is Misha Kassel. I collect a lot of your team players. I like baseball a lot. I am 9 years old. I would like to be in the majors when I grow up. I am rooting for you. You can win it easy. You have a lot of young athletes like David Justice, Ron Gant, Tom Glavine, Mark Lemke, John Smoltz, Jeff Treadway, Steve Avery and others. I like your team a lot.

I have a lot of Indian friends. It is disrespectful with the tomahawk chop and the chanting. Would you please change your name, song and tomahawk chop and do something else?

Thank you for your time.  
P.S. How do you like the name "Atlanta Cruisers?"

Misha Kassel  
Veneta, OR

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