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■ In my opinion

Election aftermath

In October I wrote a column about Ahmad Chalabi and his role in providing false information to the Bush administration that later became their justification for the war in Iraq ("Chalabi makes spy game a reality," 10/22/04). I wrote, in part:

"When future historians write about this war, I suspect they will sum it up like this: In the year 2003, neoconservatives within the Bush administration were duped by an Iranian double agent into attacking Iraq and removing Saddam Hussein in order to pave the way for a pro-Iran, Shia-controlled Iraq. It was one of the greatest acts of espionage ever perpetrated against the superpower."

My prediction became a reality this week when the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq tallied the final votes for last month's election. The Shiite-led United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), backed by Iraq's most influential Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, received over 4 million votes, nearly half of the Iraqi electorate. By contrast, U.S.-backed interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and his Iraqi List received a measly 14 percent of the vote, at distant third to the Kurdish alliance. It is official: President Bush has lost an election, and the Supreme Court can't save him this time.

The UIA will hold 140 seats in the 275-member National Assembly, a majority that will require them to appease the Kurdish factions in order to achieve the two-thirds majority necessary for most Assembly decisions. Keeping the UIA united is another concern; after all, it is a coalition of several different parties with several different agendas, mainly the Dawa Party, the Supreme Council for the Iraqi Revolution in Iraq, and the Iraqi National Alliance headed by Ahmad Chalabi.

Ahmad Chalabi? The last time we



DAVID JAGERNAUTH
CRITICAL MASS

heard from him was when his neocon friends in the White House, who originally fingered him to become the leader of the new Iraq, had abandoned him due to accusations that he passed U.S. secrets to Iran. But now Chalabi is back and in power. In fact, he is in a two-man race to become the next prime minister of the new Iraq.

For what it is worth, Chalabi has my vote. He would make a fantastic leader during this critical transitional period when the Assembly is charged with the lofty task of crafting a national constitution from scratch. He is a shrewd secularist that has managed to ingratiate himself with Iraq's various religious and ethnic sects. I believe he desires to see Iraq become an inclusive modern democratic state informed, but not controlled, by the Islamic religious elite. And though he is close to Tehran, he is also a vocal supporter of the democratic reform movement currently rising up from the grassroots in Iran.

Unfortunately, it appears as if Chalabi is going to lose the prime ministership to Dawa Party leader Ibrahim al-Jaafari. Gossip has him in front as the Assembly sets to vote in a secret ballot. The final results might not be known until Monday.

Though Jaafari's rhetoric has been moderate as of late, there is still much fear that he intends to impose Islamic law on Iraq; some even describe him as a cleric in a business suit. It is true that the Dawa Party platform calls for

the Islamization of the Iraqi government, but Jaafari backed away from that position in a recent interview with the Associated Press. Others fear that Jaafari is too close to the Iranians. The late Dawa leader Muhammad Baqr al-Sadr was inspired by the Iranian revolution and after membership in Dawa was made punishable by death under Saddam Hussein, many members fled to Iran, where they remained until the American occupation.

Regardless of how secular and democratic Iraq becomes, Americans need to come to terms with this simple fact: The democratization of the Middle East will most likely result in more anti-American sentiment, not less, in the short term. The U.S. installed oppressive dictators in Central and South America for a reason — getting a dictator to push a pro-U.S. agenda at the detriment of his or her people is far easier than a democratically elected leader. I would anticipate the new Iraqi government will push U.S. contractors out of their country in favor of Iraqi ones, especially when the security situation improves. From a U.S. perspective, we have endured much suffering for very little gain. But from an Iraqi perspective, their suffering has resulted in a new hope for long-term freedom, peace and prosperity.

I doubt this is what the neocons in the Bush administration had in mind when they embarked on this war. But I am sure that this is exactly what Chalabi envisioned from day one. He is Iraq's best hope to avoid falling into a repressive Islamic theocracy, ala the Taliban. Chalabi has done more to bring about the new Iraq than any other Iraqi — who could possibly make a better prime minister?

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■ Out loud

"His topic was not the main focus of the conference. It wasn't part of the original intent." — Morse Center Director **Margaret Hallock** explaining the center's decision to un-invite keynote speaker and controversial University of Colorado professor Ward Churchill from a conference on Feb. 11.

"I was just observing and I saw it. I got really excited. I knew it when I saw it, and I knew I got it. It was a shot you get giddy about right away." — **Aaron Rogosin**, University fine arts major and winner of the Red Bull Rampage "In Focus" photography competition on his prize-winning photo.

"The goal is that every law-abiding Eugenean should be able to have equal rights in employment, equal rights in housing and equal rights in public accommodations, and surely one of those is the ability to use the bathroom when you're at the movies." — Ward 3 City Councilor **David Kelly** on an ordinance that would add discrimination based on gender identity or gender orientation to Eugene's anti-discrimination code.

"I get asked if the campus is really safe and then to prove it. I can't prove if I feel unsafe. They have to take my word for it until it gets violent. It shouldn't have to get to the point of someone actually being put in danger." — University sophomore and former ASUO Student Senator **Emily Sousa** at a forum focused mainly on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students' feelings of personal and emotional safety on campus Tuesday night.

"I was under the impression, at least from the elections coordinator, that it was merely like a rubber-stamp-type thing. I'm rather confused right now." — University sophomore **Silas Snider** on the ASUO Constitution Court's denial of his request to begin gathering signatures to initiate a recall of the ASUO Executive and the ASUO Student Senate on Tuesday.

"While it is regrettable that a student of the University and a member of the ASUO would feel this way about the attitude of their elected officials, the attitude by an elected official in conducting their official duties, short of a violation of the ASUO Constitution or the rules promulgated under it, does not constitute a viable case for a recall of that student." — Chief Justice **Randy Derrick** in the ASUO's Constitution Court decision released on Tuesday denying Snider's petition.

"It's not about their safety. It's about writing them up." — University junior **Michelle Rose**, a Resident Assistant at Barnhart for the 2003-04 school year, discussing the Housing Department's policies requiring RAs to write up students they believe have been drinking alcohol. She believes the process encourages student to take undue risks in order to avoid the Residence Halls after drinking.

"I think when you get into that decision, that's an unfortunate place to be in the first place. The bad decision didn't come as to whether they should come home or not. The poor decision was made when they chose to get so intoxicated they weren't able to be safe somewhere or feel safe coming back to the residence halls." — Barnhart and Riley Complex Director **Stephen Jenkins** arguing that the safety of residents is not compromised by efforts by RAs to catch students who drink.

— From Daily Emerald news reports

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■ Guest commentary

Nondiscrimination policy must be enforced in fee-funded groups

The ASUO Multicultural Center would like to echo the LGBTQA's request stating that the three branches of the ASUO and the Office of Administration should create and enforce a Code of Conduct for incidental fee funded groups. The code would comply with the University's nondiscrimination policy and the University's mission statement. Currently, there are no mechanisms to enforce compliance or to hold students and student groups accountable for discrimination.

Contrary to the recent claims about the Oregon Commentator, the PFC and Toby Hill-Meyer, the issue is not about free speech or the PFC's "attempt" to suppress it based on content. We believe the Commentator has the right to exist and express its viewpoints, just as any other person, group or publication does.

However, according to the U.S. Supreme Court Southworth decision, since it conducts its business at the University and receives student incidental fees, it should be held accountable to the University's mission statement. The mission states: "... a dedication to the principles of equality of opportunity and freedom from unfair discrimination for all members of the university community ..." In addition, it should be held accountable to the University's nondiscrimination policy, which describes prohibited discrimination as "any act that unreasonably discriminates among individuals on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or any other extraneous considerations

not directly and substantively related to performance."

The Commentator is obviously not conforming to the mission statement and the nondiscrimination policy of the University. The MCC is not requesting that the Commentator's budget be terminated, but rather that a mechanism be created to hold student groups accountable for noncompliance of the discrimination policy. Students should feel safe on campus, and any person or group inhibiting that safety should be held accountable. Thus, it should not be the responsibility of the PFC to handle this situation, but rather it is the ASUO and the administration's responsibility to act on this and any future noncompliance.

ASUO Multicultural Center

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