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■ In my opinion

Seeking unity, peace by peace

Some days are better than others. Then there are good news days, which are the best. Take for example Monday, Oct. 3: Tom DeLay gets indicted on a second, more-to-the-point money laundering charge, Anderson Cooper finally cracks a smile and shows clips of Saturday Night Live making fun of him (and then keeps the tape rolling when the joke turns on Geraldo Rivera), and finally, George Bush nominates Sandra Day O'Connor's second replacement. But Monday was not just a good news day, it was a really good day, too, because it was the day I got cable. Let the C-SPAN marathons begin.

There is nothing I love more than when the president pulls someone completely out of left field. John Roberts was such a nominee. Prior to his nomination and confirmation, he was relatively unknown. No skeletons were brought out of his closet; he seemed like a nice enough family man. The Republicans loved how he didn't really answer a lot of questions, and the Democrats just sort of took one for the team. The politicians and the media makers assumed he would breeze through confirmation and he did. George Bush even loved him so much he bumped up his nomination to Supreme Court justice. Because, of course, Rehnquist is dead, and needs a replacement much quicker than Sandra Day O'Connor, who retired to take care of her terminally ill husband.

I have long thought that Bush's Supreme Court nominations were going to be socially moderate, as is the case with Roberts. I do not think Roberts will try to overturn *Roe v. Wade* or turn gay marriage into a federal issue, nor do I think any Bush nominee will. I think Bush used these issues to activate voters who vote according to what makes them feel "icky," and does not really care about the direction the court goes on social issues. No, Bush cares about big



ARMY FETH
RHETORIC CHECK

business and how it will fare. He cares about making his friends and loyal minions rich and powerful. So while Roberts was a moderate "nice guy" surprise, Harriet Miers is the epitome of the W. appointment. Why this story contributes to such a great news day has mostly to do with how it is being spun.

First off, Miers is — predictably enough — an old crony of the president's. Hailing from Texas, she has made her way up in the White House, from Andy Card's staff to the president's staff. According to several news reports, her latest duty has been to "regulate the flow of information to the president's desk." Most likely this includes phonetically spelling out big words in the margins, attaching acronym cheat sheets to government agency reports and deciding which Bed Bath & Beyond coupons are really a good deal and which she should just shred. Miers has no judicial experience, but she has been on the Texas Lottery Commission, where she fired two guys and earned herself the reputation of being "tough." She has also been Bush's personal lawyer, representing him during a dispute concerning his east Texas fishing cottage. I can see how hooking her up with a sweet job in Washington is a way to say "Thanks," but a lifetime appointment to the highest court in the land? Who could possibly think this is a good idea?

Turns out Democratic Senate Leader Harry Reid does. Speaking with a silent, overly eye-lined Miers

by his side, he declared, "Like 39 or 40 or so of justices that have gone before, she has absolutely no judicial experience. I think that's a good thing!" Okay....

There is nothing like unedited democracy. Reid babbled on for a while about how unqualified Miers is and how that totally qualifies her for the position. Then he started to praise her character by saying we really need "someone like her," without elaborating on what that meant. Eventually, Reid addressed the rumor that Miers gave money to Al Gore when he ran for president in 1988, adding, "That makes it better for me."

But it was the delivery that was really comical. There were many awkward pauses and — I swear this is true — actual laughter from Reid as he tried to pump up the tuffet Little Miss Miers was standing on. In sharp contrast, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman and Republican Arlen Specter commented on Miers' difficulty finding a job.

Reid also said he personally told Dick Cheney to tell the president to nominate Miers. Reid, who is Mormon and anti-abortion, might just be the kind of guy who could pull off a compromise with the notoriously stubborn administration. After all, Clinton allowed the Republicans to pick a Supreme Court justice from a pool he selected as a compromise to ensure an easy confirmation. It has come out quickly that Miers financially supported the Democratic Party, supports the idea of full civil rights for gays and backed AIDS education programs in Dallas. So while Miers has no experience being a judge, she certainly has experience being a liberal, which would explain Reid's giddiness. The immediate fallout of this nomination is funny, interesting and constantly developing; maybe the real good news is what went on last week to make such a nomination happen.

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INBOX

Strike for Peace campaign protests 'deadly priorities'

The action I'm taking is not about political parties. It's about deadly priorities that have been ruining this country for 55 years and creating a world of suffering for those here at home and our soldiers abroad. In fact, after all I have learned about foreign policy, I have come to admire General Dwight Eisenhower the most among recent presidents. He was a Republican and the only president since World War II to warn the American people about the greatest cause of the many symptoms we suffer today.

In January 1950, the United States had more than 250 atomic bombs and the Soviet Union had just tested its first. Without the consent of Americans, the administration of President Harry Truman, a "Democrat," decided to adopt a military- rather than people-based economy and launch the Cold War. Since then our nation has depended on conflict, and the world has suffered numerous wars.

The breadth and depth of the Pentagon's reach in our schools and companies, in addition to the fact that the manufacture and sale of weapons has

been our top industry since 1950, should stand out in one's mind when hearing claims that we are a peace-loving nation or debating the validity of federal priorities that have a poor response to a hurricane.

The Pentagon is pressuring Japan to rescind Article 9 of its constitution. The first nation to use WMDs, the United States, is urging Japan, the only nation to suffer nuclear attacks, to re-establish a military and arm itself with nuclear weapons. The Pentagon's plan for the next 20 years is an arms race, despite the fact that we are on top. We are telling the rest of the world to build up for war because we are the world's Wal-Mart of weapons.

Strikeforpeace.org attempts to highlight the dominant role of the military industry in America's economy. We stand for a future of shared resources instead of a future of resource wars. The weapons we help the Pentagon develop in our schools will be used in such wars unless we step away from the microscope to see the macro view and change America's priority from war-industry profit for the founding vision of prosperity for all.

Strikeforpeace.org is not anti-research or anti-weapons research. We

stand against wasteful Pentagon contracts at public expense. Strikeforpeace.org is not anti-nanotechnology. We believe nanotechnology in a people-based society can solve many problems if we stop living like warriors.

Strikeforpeace.org is nonviolent. We believe our servants in Washington should respond to popular demand, and we seek to broaden awareness to foster stronger interaction.

Strikeforpeace.org hopes Americans will recognize the suffering our way of life engenders in the world. The American people did not necessarily choose this way of life and should have the knowledge, the right and the courage to correct it.

If we do not unite to advance peace, we will perish by advancing our war technology. The CampU.S. Campaign focuses attention on statistics revealing America's disordered priorities in hopes of instigating change. This campaign will not end until America adopts a reasonable defense and declares an end to the age of war for profit and the beginning of an age of prosperity for all.

Brian Bogart
Graduate student

■ Editorial

Radio host's comments perpetuate racist beliefs

Former Education Secretary William Bennett uttered a disturbing sentiment last week to a caller on his syndicated radio show.

"I do know that if you wanted to reduce crime, you could — if that were your sole purpose — you could abort every black baby in this country and your crime rate would go down," Bennett said. He then qualified the statement by saying, "That would be an impossible, ridiculous and morally reprehensible thing to do, but your crime rate would go down."

Bennett has claimed that his statement was not racist because all he did was create an example of a morally reprehensible situation; i.e., he wasn't actually advocating abortions for black women, he was just using it as an example. Bennett added that it was important to have candor while in the process of getting rid of extremist hypotheses.

A statement like "You could abort every black baby in this country and your crime rate would go down" may be a just metaphor, meant to help Bennett explain himself to a radio audience, but it is still a metaphor that perpetuates the idea that black people are primarily responsible for crime. Statements like Bennett's put the guilt of crime on the shoulders of black citizens and lead to the unaccountability of everyone else. As a former secretary of education, Bennett should know the "intrinsic" link between race and crime won't ever stop being intrinsic until officials such as himself take racism seriously.

Bennett's words, based on the notion that black people naturally commit more crime, show serious disregard for a national history of racism. Racial minorities must work continually to overcome racism, and it was inappropriate for Bennett to demean and work in opposition to that struggle with his statement that race and crime are unquestionably linked together.

What's more, when Bennett's suggestions forced abortions on black women, he's hardly gesturing a hypothetical situation: Exactly that happened during the 1960s, when government paid to sterilize poor, black women.

We doubt that any women appreciated this statement, regardless of Bennett's primary purpose within the context of the radio show. As a representative of the U.S. political system, Bennett has a responsibility to show respect toward all people in the nation; this is especially true of the people who have not always received such governmental respect.

As someone intimately acquainted with the U.S. education system, Bennett should understand the role education plays in improving one's financial status, which in turn reduces crime. Perhaps Bennett could better apply himself to advocating educational improvement and reform for our nation's impoverished communities, some of which include minorities.

The next time William Bennett wants to demonstrate a hypothetical, morally reprehensible situation, he should look to more pragmatic solutions rather than hurtful reminders of the past. As long as a link between crime and race is created, even in the form of discourse such as Bennett's, there will be no hope for a racism-free future.

CORRECTION

Because of an editor's error, Monday's headline "Bogart shuns schoolwork for campaign" should have clarified that although graduate student Brian Bogart is not attending class, he is completing work outside of it.