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In my opinion

Riots reveal *political neglect*

It took 12 nights. An old man died. Cars burned. Stores were robbed. Police and citizens engaged in gunfights. Bombs were thrown. Now the entire country is engulfed in riots. And, finally, Jacques Chirac does something about it. France is now in an official state of emergency. This means curfews can be imposed. Police can perform raids without a warrant. This is how order will be restored.

"Prevention, while indispensable, must not exclude repression each time it proves to be just and necessary," said the Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy. Repression? Correct me if I am wrong, but I think repression is the reason these people are rioting. I believe it was you, Mr. Sarkozy, who suggested the original neighborhood where the riots broke out be cleaned with a "power hose." And that was before the riots.

"He treats us like we are dirt on the car tires. I am not a tire," said one citizen about Sarkozy.

These people are poor. They do not have a lot of opportunity. Unemployment in some of these French neighborhoods is being reported at levels of up to 40 percent. They complain that they are French citizens, but get treated by authorities like foreigners. The leaders of their countries look down on them. Interior Minister Dominique de Villepin called them "raki," the French word for scum.

They do not have a voice, so they bring their condition to the political forefront through violence. And while violence and destruction may not gain the respect from those in power that they crave, it certainly gets their attention.

Alec Hargreaves, author of "Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary France" said Monday on the NewsHour with Jim Lehrer that this revolution of sorts has been a long time coming. The flaming cars, an ever-present symbol of the riots, were burning long before Oct. 27. In



ARMY FETH
RHETORIC CHECK

fact, 28,000 cars have been torched in France since the beginning of the year, and only about 5,000 during the riots. Hargreaves notes that "These problems are rooted in deep-seated social inequalities, problems of discrimination and it should be said, political neglect."

Political neglect. Now that is something we can really wrap our minds around, because lately it has been pretty easy to point out. Remember a few months ago when a big part of America was under water and nobody came to help? Political neglect. The fact that riots could last and grow for almost two weeks also suggests neglect. French leaders have criticized foreign media for giving so much coverage to the riots. They say publicity only feeds the flames. Well, I'm sorry France, but when your citizens are revolting, it's news. It should be reported. Obviously, neglecting people turns out badly.

These "scummy teenagers" were born in your country. They pay your taxes. They might look a little different, or practice a different religion but they are French citizens, and deserve to be treated accordingly.

They are torching cars. Cars are a status symbol, one they feel they will never be able to attain. They are attacking police officers. But these are not their friendly neighborhood cops; those were all taken out of their communities to save money. Now the authority on reserve is being called upon to repress these citizens.

Interestingly enough, the "state of emergency" law that is being

invoked was passed in 1955 to provide a means to curb unrest in Algeria. That unrest later led to a war that won Algeria's independence.

Of course the riots need to stop. People are getting hurt and there has already been one death. But I hope that France does not stop there. Putting an end to the effect does not solve the problem of the cause. French officials have admitted that these riots are the culmination of years of failed immigrant integration. Chirac acknowledged the "ghettoization of youths of African or North African origin," and admitted that current French society is incapable of fully accepting them.

That makes me sick. Of course America has a problem neglecting our poor as well, as we saw in the Hurricane Katrina aftermath. But at least we live in a country where that kind of behavior is deplored, not accepted. We should look at France's treatment of immigrant families as an example of something American values stand against.

France needs to do some soul searching, and quick. Villepin has already mentioned the need to speed up an urban redevelopment plan that would provide jobs, loans and scholarships to disadvantaged young people. This is a good start. But what really needs to change is the collective thinking. If these kids, many of whom are Muslim, do not feel like France wants them, they might look for acceptance elsewhere. Villepin said organized crime networks are already starting to support the riots, and that he is not ruling out the possibility of Islamic extremists also getting involved. If this is true, the kids who are rioting today might become terrorists in the future.

Why should they feel loyalty to a country that has neglected them? Racism and classism are alive today. This nasty fact about humanity can only be ignored for so long.

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INBOX

Out-of-control football fan behavior is intolerable

Please add my name to those who are disappointed and disgusted at the obnoxious and boorish behavior of some of our football fans. This rudeness cannot and should not be tolerated by a well-respected university like ours.

When we played the Huskies several weeks ago, I was embarrassed during the entire game at some of the scenes that were demonstrated. They even booed the band! What kind of nonsense was that? I was equally embarrassed when their black drum major tossed his baton in the air, missed catching it, and was then booed for his effort. As an African-American, I was personally proud of him and the entire Washington band, because their perform-

ance both musically and visually was outstanding as usual. They looked like a marching band and played marches — unlike our band who looks like rejects from the Wizard of Oz wearing military helmets.

The abhorrent behavior of some of these students is out of control, and should not be tolerated.

E.L. Coleman

Emeritus Professor of English

Advertising supplement spreads tired untruths

Wow. I hope the Emerald got a good chunk of change for that 12-page we're-down-with-the-youth-culture anti-choice insert in the Nov. 3 Emerald. Just in case the women of the University of Oregon can't decide for themselves whether or not to continue a pregnancy, we

have the likes of David C. Reardon and his Human Life Alliance cronies to help us out. Of course, he probably thinks we're all a little soft in the head for attending a university when we could have done as he did and buy a PhD in bioethics from an unaccredited correspondence school (sorry, it's no longer being offered).

The insert cover asks, "Tired yet?" In fact, yes, I'm tired of hearing the same lies over and over from the religious right — that abortion causes breast cancer, infertility, depression, cervical cancer, it might even make you left-handed. Spouting this nonsense over and over again, even with a lot of pretty pictures and funky cartoons, doesn't make it so.

Jocelyn Warren

Research Assistant, Center for the Study of Women in Society

Editorial

Congress should pass anti-abuse legislation

A new Pentagon directive released today prohibits the U.S. military from using "acts of physical or mental torture." Mandating that detainees be dealt with in a humane fashion without specifying the meaning of "torture," it does explicitly forbid the use of dogs in intimidating prisoners.

Although the government deserves praise for this policy decision, this directive is not enough. One might suppose U.S. citizens would intrinsically reject the use of torture and abuse as military tactics. U.S. soldiers captured during the Vietnam War endured the horrors of prolonged confinement and torture at the hands of an enemy that readily used such methods.

We are fighting an ongoing war in Iraq for which we need to interrogate combatants to gather intelligence information. Yet, as former prisoner of war Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., points out, "subjecting prisoners to abuse leads to bad intelligence because under torture, a detainee will tell his interrogator anything to make the pain stop" and "mistreatment of our prisoners endangers U.S. troops who might be captured by the enemy."

Unfortunately, some members of the U.S. military have repeatedly demonstrated ignorance of such concepts, as demonstrated last year by revelations of prisoner abuse at Iraq's Abu Ghraib jail.

As elucidated by McCain, it should be illegal to abuse detainees. The Senate passed legislation last month that prohibits methods banned by Army regulations and the Geneva Conventions, and the House of Representatives has yet to vote on the matter.

President Bush, however, continues to claim that the United States does not need such anti-abuse legislation, saying he will veto any measure to prohibit the inhumane treatment of detainees. Bush turns a blind eye to the recent accusations of abuse against Iraqi detainees, stating, "we do not torture. ... Our country is at war, and our government has the obligation to protect the American people." Apparently, Bush believes that punching and kicking detainees is an appropriate means to protect us.

While most recent claims of soldier abuse in Iraq remain allegations, Bush should approve an anti-abuse law. In denying the need for legislation, he turns a blind eye to documented abuses at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay.

Interestingly, Gen. Peter Pace, principal military adviser to the president and the secretary of defense, supports McCain's legislation. He recently told Jim Lehrer on "NewsHour" that "it is perfectly fine to have the Army field manual for the detention of individuals ... for the senator to say that we should be following our own rules certainly makes sense."

Bush officials should listen to their military advisor and to members of their party who support this legislation. The United States is currently holding almost 14,000 prisoners in Iraq. It is frightening to see the president take a firm stand against protecting their human rights. If the federal government wants to redeem itself from the national horror over Abu Ghraib and similar scandals and continue this "war of ideas," the House must approve anti-abuse legislation.

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