

The politics of fear

The CLACKAMAS PRINT



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That's what she said!

Erinn Lerten
Opinion Editor

The word "terrorism" has claimed a great deal of power over the American psyche since the tragic attack upon the World Trade Towers. Since Vietnam, politicians have insulated the American public from foreign policy tragedy; the product of an age of information junkies extremely critical of a leadership that calls for any sacrifice of American life. The events of September 11th have completely changed the ball game. For the first time since Pearl Harbor, Americans feel violated. No longer do the Pacific and Atlantic oceans seem like an indomitable shield against the violence we

long thought confined to foreign countries accessible only through CNN. The inevitable consequence of this shift in the American psyche is a political climate ripe for the politics of fear.

The Bush administration is undoubtedly guilty of politically exploiting the tragedy of September 11th to push his party line republican political agenda. President Bush is making speeches as though his re-election campaign receives one hundred dollars every time he says the word terrorist. His enormous approval rating is reminiscent of Reagan at the height of his evil empire propaganda. Many would argue that this is simply the benefit of being a wartime President. The notion that we are at war is a falsehood perpetuated by an administration intent upon riding the tragic deaths of Americans into re-election.

The war on terrorism is an exercise in enemy creation by the Bush administration. Had the Bush administration confined their war rhetoric to the Taliban, Al Qaeda, or Bin Laden, then their inflammatory rhetoric could be justified as consistent with a proportional response designed to maintain American deterrence against further attacks. The Bush administration, however, has chosen to make terrorists everywhere the target of America's righteous

wrath. This political maneuvering creates an enemy that can never be defined, defeated, or destroyed.

Never has an enemy been more suited for the politics of fear; even more so than communists at the height of the red scare. With John Ashcroft operating as a modern day McCarthy, the black and white rhetoric of the Bush administration has acted as a lens focusing the fear of Americans into a political weapon. Terrorism is something that can never be stopped. Globalization has created an economic system which makes it impossible to prevent deadly materials or people from crossing America's border. Programs to curb terrorism only administer a placebo, casting the illusion that a war on terrorism can be won. As long as the U.S. continues to provide billions in foreign aid and advanced military hardware to the state of Israel, the threat posed by Arab militants will always remain.

President Bush's terrorism rhetoric has very real consequences for U.S. foreign policy. Singling out Iran and North Korea within the axis of evil is a dangerous foreign policy decision. Iran's elected president has been engaged in a liberalization effort challenging the power of the ruling theocracy, and pushing for improved relations with the United States. Bush's terrorism rhetoric fuels

the position of the repressive clerical regime, and helps quash any movement toward reform. In addition, North Korea's communist economic system is on the verge of collapse. Many analysts view eventual reunification with South Korea as inevitable. Isolating the North Korean regime with terrorism rhetoric makes the odds of a bloody transition of power much greater. In both cases engagement rather than isolation offers a more stabilizing policy platform.

The act of terrorism committed on September 11th was inexcusable by any standard of morality or justice. Equally inexcusable would be to allow the pain and anguish that act of terror caused to trap our country into an inescapable cycle of violence. In order to commit such an atrocity, the minds of the terrorists must have been clouded by an enormous amount of anger, pain, and resentment. The U.S. does not have the luxury to respond in the same manner.

The spirit of America is grounded in the principles of tolerance, equality, and social justice. If we allow ourselves, blinded by anger and fear, to commit equally abhorrent atrocities, our nation will have become what we fear.

To reach Erinn Lerten e-mail goawayrocks@hotmail.com or drop by B-104

Pageants offer more than just a pretty face



Say it loud and proud!

Salena De La Cruz
Design Editor

They are more than just pretty faces smiling behind tiaras, banners and trophies. Women in pageants learn to become independent, self-reliant, better speakers and feel better about themselves and it strikes a chord in me that some women's groups at Portland State University are making such a display about the current Miss America, Katie Harmon, speaking during the school's commencement.

For years I was a quiet, reserved child and then one day my mother informed me she had entered me into a pageant. I told her I couldn't be in it, I wasn't pretty enough. All I had ever heard associated with pageants was "beauty". It wasn't until years later that I realized they were so much more than that.

There were no swimsuit competitions, contrary to what many still believe. Judging was based mainly on

poise and appearance and how we presented ourselves; meaning how confident about ourselves we were. Needless to say I wasn't, but after being a part of these momentous occasions I found myself feeling better and better about myself. Now, I won't say that there aren't some pageants that may still parade young girls in front people in swimsuits and little else. Jon Benet Ramsey's (the six-year-old who was murdered in her parent's Colorado home) pageant pictures are a perfect example.

I ended my pageant life after four separate entrances into the glitz and glamour, but walked away with so much more than trophies and tiaras. I came away with a new understanding of who I was and who I wanted to become. I was more self-reliant and independent and I knew I could achieve great things if I reached for the stars.

Harmon, like myself, isn't just another pretty face. She got her title by effectively representing Oregon against women across the nation. She should be someone that women of the future look up to not look down at because she was blessed with beauty. I think it would be a travesty if she is not allowed to speak at the commencement. Though she is not a graduate, some of the greatest lessons aren't learned in a classroom. Some of life's lessons are taught by the choices we make to get us to our personal destinies.

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Letter to the Editor

To Whom It May Concern:
RE: ASG Elections 2002-2003

Elections for ASG president and vice-president are tainted with "good old boy" tactics and a biased attitude favoring the re-election of existing officers.

During this campaign I have experienced:

Biased behavior from the current ASG vice-president favoring my opponent. To wit, Yvonne passing personal notes of encouragement to my opponent during the Public Candidate Discussion. ASG vice-president made slanderous comments to Frank Jordan and the Print, resulting in a biased and slanderous article challenging my integrity and distorting my campaign.

Prior to meeting with the Elections Challenge Committee, ASG vice-president proclaimed on May 14 in front of several witnesses that I was to be disqualified from the elections.

ASG posting policy is inconsistent and does not distinguish between campaign posters and campus club postings. After authorizing and stamping posters, ASG changed and modified the requirements.

ASG candidates admitted to taking down my posters and failing to return them to me; instead, the posters were thrown away.

The CCC ASG has compromised the following Election Rules and Bylaws:

ASG advertised a public candidate debate, which never occurred. The candidate "discussions" that did

occur did not encourage a debate amongst the candidates. Therefore, a debate needs to occur prior to the election deadline.

Voting procedures violate ASG bylaws and discourage age voting by requiring a social security number.

Web content for online voting was not posted until May 15.

The time frame for elections does not allow enough time for students to become aware of the candidates, resulting in low voter turnout. Students attending CCC satellite locations are by and large unaware of the elections. The voting process does not encourage student input or dialogue with the candidates.

Brian's (Everest) campaign posters were posted within 100 feet of the polls.

ASG failed to "distribute" absentee ballots "three days prior to elections."

For the last 15 years, ASG has proven to be a homogenized, biased organization in favor of supporting the corporate mindset. Fortified with titles and ego, and fearful of creative input or real-time objectives, this process is in desperate need of transformation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jason Gibson
ASG candidate for president