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FALSE ADVERTISING

Mr. Bush campaigned in 2000 on the promises to set a new tone in Washington, to be a uniter, not a divider, to promote a humble foreign policy, to be a compassionate conservative, and to not leave problems for others to clean up. Instead we have the most polarized society, the most closed and secretive administration and the most bullying foreign policy in living memory. We've left more of our citizens behind than ever before, rolled back many environmental protections, and have the largest federal deficits in history, which our children will inherit. This is false advertising and poor leadership.

In studying Mr. Kerry's positions on the issues, I've found that he has a thoughtful plan for energy independence and the transition to renewable sources and conservation, which will also create many good jobs. He has a health care plan which, according to independent experts, would cover about 60 percent of the uninsured vs. less than 10 percent in Mr. Bush's plan. He understands that cooperation and diplomacy are a more effective starting point in foreign policy than the use of brute force. He understands the need for fiscally responsible budgets. In short, Mr. Kerry would offer the kind of real leadership we're lacking under Mr. Bush's tenure.

I'll be supporting Mr. Kerry in November and I encourage you to do the same.

*Michael Wherley
Eugene*

SAD LEGACY

Anyone who a) earns less than \$200,000 a year or b) has an ounce of concern for the fate of the world and its people, should be hoping for George W. Bush to be decisively beaten in November. But as important as this is, we should also be concerned about the method of that defeat.

Not a day goes by without the Bush administration handing John Kerry more ammunition to use against it, and yet Kerry seems happy to play it safe, to let Bush Co.'s hubris prove to be its own undoing. But is it enough to hope that a group of people this demonstrably bad for the world will defeat itself? Should there not also be outrage and condemnation? What does this silence presage for a Kerry presidency?

Given that the mainstream media treats Bush with the kind of deference and leniency that it refuses Kerry, this is probably a smart election strategy on Kerry's part. But a presidency that follows one as destructive as this one needs to have more in mind than gaining a majority of Electoral College (or Supreme Court) votes. It needs to stand up for something, rather than just be the safe alternative that has little boldness about the constitution-shredding now taking place.

As flawed as Kerry is, I hope he wins the election. I just wish he knew how much better his campaign, his chances of victory and the likelihood of a successful presidency would be if he ripped wide a few of the multiple holes in Bush's sad legacy.

*Mervyn Duddy
Eugene*

ARE WE SAFE YET?

Einstein said that problems cannot be solved with the same level of awareness that created the problem in the first place, and I believe

that the 9/11 Commission and all the rich white boys in Washington are simply cowards, shaking in their boots, completely helpless to deal with the terror of uncertainty. This kind of leadership has created an America that is a militarized fortress, a police-state nation, which only creates more uncertainty. Fifty percent of our tax dollars serves the Pentagon, 1 percent goes to foreign aid, we export arms to 92 percent of current wars, 80 percent of arms exports go to non-democratic regimes and the arms industry receives the second largest subsidy from the federal government. Are we safe yet? I hear the sound of hollow laughter...

The U.S., the world's only superpower, ranks 21st in the world in foreign aid as a percentage of GDP. Just how much safer would we be if all the nations of the world were able, because of our generosity, to eliminate starvation, malnutrition, illiteracy, HIV epidemics, overpopulation, and were able to provide housing and clean water? What would that cost us? Twenty-five percent of the military budget. What would happen to the image of America if we struggled to give up our fear of strangers? What would that cost us? A big change of heart, a leap of faith, and a whole lot of humility.

So the choice we face as a nation comes down to humiliation or humility. What's your choice?

*David Hazen
Eugene*

TIBET UPDATE

My name is Robert MacFarlane. I am a Buddhist in this fair city of Eugene and would like to share some frighteningly dreadful information about what is currently happening in Tibet and to the monks and nuns, as well as the countryside as a whole, and hopefully you can help me in spreading this knowledge of atrocities to the greater city limits and abroad...

China's Vice President Hu Jintao made his first visit to Washington, D.C., at the end of April. Members of Congress should know about Hu's involvement in Tibet, which was invaded by the Chinese in 1949 and where Tibetans are still persecuted for their political and religious activities.

Hu's record remains a mystery to many outside observers, but Tibetans know that during his stint as party secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region from 1989 to 1992 he was responsible for brutal crackdowns inside Tibet.

During his time there, Hu oversaw the imposition of martial law in Tibet and continued a campaign of oppression of the Tibetan people by the Chinese government, which continues today.

As a consequence of the brutal nature of China's occupation of Tibet, Tibetans face torture, arbitrary detention and harassment. Tibetan nuns and monks, peaceful demonstrators and children among many other sectors of Tibetan society face an intolerable situation in their homeland.

We should hope and trust that our administration and members of Congress share our concern for Tibetans' human rights to practice their religion, to share their political views and to self-determination. We should hope that they use every opportunity to raise these concerns whenever they meet with Hu Jintao any other Chinese officials.

*Robert MacFarlane
aka Karma Jinpa Tarchin
Eugene*