

## EDITORIAL

# A little more action please

The Pentagon was rocked this spring by revelations that the Air Force had mistakenly shipped fuses used for ballistic missiles to Taiwan, one of the biggest flashpoints in the geopolitical landscape. Worse still, no one knew about it until almost two years later. The blunder could have seriously jeopardized relations with China, who still claims Taiwan as a province and is feared by some experts to be willing to use force to discourage any move toward independence.

But the more unbelievable screw-up was that a B-52 bomb-

er was allowed to fly over United States soil in August — mistakenly armed with six nuclear missiles.

But in a show of leadership all too rare in Washington these days, Defense Secretary Robert Gates accepted the resignations of both the Air Force secretary and the Air Force chief of staff in an unprecedented double-firing after an exhaustive investigation revealed the Air Force has serious flaws in control and accountability.

President Bush's press secretary Dana Perino remarked that the White House had "not played any role" in the matter.

Frankly, that's not surprising.

This administration has gone out of its way to obfuscate and avoid responsibility for some of the worst governmental failures in history. The total lack of planning and the dismissal of contrary viewpoints in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq has resulted in a military operation whose costs in blood and treasure seems to have no end.

Never mind the extraordinarily lackluster response to Hurricane Katrina almost three years ago that exposed the enormous shortcomings in government pre-

## Our Opinion

Editorials represent the majority opinion of The Daily Illini Editorial Board, whose members are Steve Contorno, editor in chief; Susan Kantor, managing editor; Kathleen Foody, assignment editor; Andrew Mason, opinions editor; Meghan Montemurro, assistant assignment editor; Wes Anderson, copy chief.

paredness and the President's penchant for patronage in his appointment of horse racing judge Michael Brown to FEMA who later resigned as a scapegoat. Unfortunately, we may never know the full extent of such bungling.

At last, Secretary Gates is showing Americans that there is still some in government who believe in accountability and responsibility for mistakes. Unfortunately for this White House, they have no part in it.

## EDITORIAL CARTOON PARKER, FLORIDA TODAY



## Readers' opinions

The Daily Illini reserves the right to edit or reject any contributions. Summer letters must be limited to 200 words. Contributions must be typed and include the author's name, address and phone number.

University students must include their year in school and college.

Inquiries about possible guest columns should be submitted to opinions editor Andrew Mason via e-mail or by calling 217.337.8366.

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# Obama: The Candidate At Last

After way too long of a primary season, we finally have our presidential field. It's a good thing that I do not wager on competitions, because each horse I have backed in this race has come up lame, right until the end. Hopefully, for the sake of all Americans, that will not be the case in November and we will have the best leader on the ticket, Sen. Barack Obama.

At first, I was torn between hometown heroes: Hillary or Obama? After getting my absentee ballot, I agonized, trying to figure out whether Hillary's superior knowledge and calculating leadership style trumped Obama's energy and fresh perspective. Ultimately, I opted to do what all voters should do: follow my heart and vote for the person with whom I agree most, John Edwards.

Well that turned out perfectly, seeing as he dropped out of the race two days after I mailed my ballot. The loss also forced me to revisit the original question and again decide who my guy would be. After much consideration, my affections remained split 55-45, with my guy turning out to be a woman.

Hillary's command of policy, government functioning, and how to get something done in Washington trumped Obama's inspiration. At least for me.

Well that turned out about as well as the vote for Edwards did, and now we are "stuck" with Obama — only one of the most charismatic, idealistic, and inspirational politicians of the last five or so decades. While losing Hillary's ability to work the Washington system is lamentable, Obama has the potential to change the machinery altogether.

Listening to Obama brings to mind the Kennedys. The three of them spoke not in policy details, but in vision. They paint with words instead of describe and obviously want to work in the best interests of the nation.



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At this point in American history, perhaps the nation needs audacious hope more than it needs coldly efficient legislation.

After eight years of cataclysmic failure, obscene corruption, incompetent leadership and a hypocritical perspective on freedoms, idealism sounds like the perfect medicine for the ailing nation. Obviously, we have tangible problems like a sputtering economy, two wars and low international respect, not to mention the standard palette of problems a President must face, but solving difficult problems is always easier with a positive attitude. Obama has the attitude that no other candidate who was ever in the race has. His "can-do" perspective on rebuilding American pride and public trust in government is neither corny nor superficial. His speech lifts people's spirits and has electrified a generation apathetic to governance. Obama has the charm the right saw in Reagan, but superior intelligence, morals and judgment.

The cliché says that the third time is, shockingly, the charm. Perhaps now that I finally have a horse in the actual race, Sen. Obama will win and bring to fruition his vision of a better of America. We can only hope...

Lee is a recent graduate of the U of I and (shudder) wakes up early in the real world.