

Kill neutron bomb

A new and terrifying chapter in the story of the arms race and the development of nuclear weapons has begun. Congress is considering legislation which will fund the production of a new brand of nuclear death — the neutron bomb.

President Carter has asked for congressional support of the appropriation, explaining that he wants to keep open the option of approving the project when results from neutron bomb tests reach his office. Those results are expected to reach the White House by August, when Carter will make his decision.

Unless the U.S. leaders want to make nuclear war a more likely event than it already is, that program should never be approved. Current U.S. policy, we are told, strives for a balance of nuclear capability with the Soviet Union to insure that nuclear weapons will not be used. The neutron bomb represents a departure from that policy: it is designed to be used.

The neutron warhead, designed to be adapted to both long-range missiles and tactical artillery, is significantly different from any other nuclear warhead yet developed. It is a "clean" bomb, meaning that it produces less nuclear fallout than conventional warheads. It also produced less heat and blast effects than existing weapons. However, the bomb produces larger amounts of radiation than present nuclear warheads. It is specifically designed to kill people. The most striking fact about the new bomb is that it doesn't destroy buildings. Only life will be destroyed.

A one-kiloton neutron bomb will kill within one or two days anyone living within a half-mile radius of the explosion. Death will also come to a majority of the people living between one-half and three-quarters of a mile from the center of the explosion, but they may take an agonizing week or more to die.

The clean bomb will change the way nuclear weapons are perceived by top military brass. With more control and a minimum of destruction of buildings, there will be more incentive to use the weapons, especially as a tactical artillery weapon. Another argument is this familiar line: the bomb will be a good deterrent to Soviet aggression, particularly in Europe.

These arguments ignore the fact that the Soviet Union will regard the neutron bomb deployment in Europe as a threat to its national security. While the U.S. argues that the bombs are intended to kill an advancing Soviet army, the Soviets will argue that the weapon could be used to clear the way for an advancing allied army.

Such a threat, real or imagined, will bring some form of retaliation from the Soviet Union, either by development of a similar bomb or upgrading and expanding conventional nuclear capability.

All of this adds up to a very dangerous situation. Use of the neutron bomb could lead to retaliation with conventional nuclear weapons, leading eventually to a full-scale nuclear war. The risk of such a conflagration cannot be taken.

The development of the neutron bomb will also cause a breakdown in the strategic arms limitation talks. Carter's human rights statements and the cruise missile controversy have already caused some ripples in detente. With this more usable nuclear weapon thrown into the ring, old tensions will increase, new suspicions will be aroused, and a surge in the arms race will result.

The U.S. should not be guilty of holding a cigar butt to the fuse of the next world war. The policy of avoiding the use of nuclear weapons must be maintained. The necessary, the right and the only thing for Carter and the Congress to do is vote a resounding "no!" on the production of neutron warheads.



Letters

Boyd wrong

Contrary to what Boyd says in his letter, the Amazon rent strike involves no violation of public law. Any tenant anywhere can refuse to pay rent and the landlord can choose to evict the tenant as a response, but no public laws are being violated.

The rent monies the Amazon Community Tenants (ACT) has collected from tenants are not

state funds. The rent checks are made out to ACT, not to the University of Oregon. Boyd has no more legal claim on these funds than he would have if tenants individually withheld their rent in their own accounts. He might as well charge the banks with illegally holding so-called "state monies."

As a tenants' association, ACT is simply co-ordinating the withholding of rent by tenants as evidence of the tenants' choice of

ACT as their collective bargaining agent in relations with their landlord.

Walt Sheasby
Chief Negotiator for ACT

News parasite

Television news in Eugene has degenerated to the level of a retarded tick: it sits on the back of newspapers and sucks. Last Tuesday it reached an all time level of incompetence when rather than think up stories on its own, KVAL simply focused its cameras on a copy of the Emerald.

Rolling the camera around an Emerald photo of a woodcarver, the KVAL "newsman" read directly from the Emerald story. Now, both KEZI and KVAL have been stealing stories from the Emerald all year, but never before have they stolen us visually. Television news, supposedly the king of the visual, the massage of the media, is stealing Emerald photos.

Let us rename KVAL and KEZI "The Emerald, one and two," and have them send their pay checks to third floor EMU.

Jock Hatfield
Junior, Journalism

Letters, opinion column policy

The Emerald will accept and try to print all letters containing fair comment on ideas and topics of concern or interest to the University community. Because of space limitations, letters must be no more than 250 words, typed in a 65-character margin, triple-spaced, dated and signed with the writer's major. No unsigned letters will be published.

Longer opinion columns will be published whenever possible after being submitted to the editorial page editor. The limit on opinion columns is 800 words, and they must also be typed in a 65-character margin, triple-spaced, dated and signed.

Letters and opinion columns will be published when space permits on a first-come, first-served basis, except in instances when the submitted material is particularly timely.

