

joan nyland

suitable for comment

My current pessimism has something to do with knowing this nation is not coming up with solutions to our problems.

To name but a few problems: We have the largest unemployment since the Depression — much of it due to a shift from manufacturing and professional jobs to service jobs. We are in the fourth decade of avoiding ending nuclear warfare. We lack leaders.

I could be bullish about the future if I thought these problems were being met with innovative solutions and carried out by caring public servants. But they are not. And it looks like the generation to come, my own, is even less inspiring.

To the problems of manufacturing and unemployment in the major U.S. industries such as auto and steel, the solutions being offered and implemented include increased protectionism and automation. The first means higher prices for good and more time for domestic manufacturers to revamp or procrastinate retooling their plants, witness last year's 20-percent decrease in auto imports from Japan.

Automation, with the parallel move to manufacturing in Third World countries where labor is cheaper, means fewer jobs, more unemployment and more wealth for the few here.

My favorite "non-solution" is the suggestion that we protect dying industries and let the private sector come up with all the creative solutions to the problems of change — sort of like letting the criminal reform himself.

Many firms and the federal government are unwilling to risk investment in new ideas, hence they continue to pour money into outdated and unresponsive industries.

What I consider non-solutions for decreasing unemployment include such gems as more vacations, job-sharing and shorter working hours. Free time is appealing, but it is an inadequate option when most families cannot make it on one budget and I question the quality of life in a leisure society that is anti-intellectual if not uneducated (note the National Commission on Excellence's Report) and poor.

The federal government could aid major industrial trans-

sitions by retraining workers or even funding the art and leisure education. However, education costs money and government expenditure raises inflation.

As anyone can see from a cursory look at the federal education and defense budgets, the current administration would rather increase defense spending than help workers. In 1983 Reagan asked for \$238.6 billion for the Department of Defense (the real money grabber) and \$13.5 billion for Education. The Journal of Commerce foresees, should the trends in both budgets continue, a \$377-billion defense budget and a \$13-billion education budget by 1988.

The nuclear freeze movement has not influenced Congress as the passage of MX funding shows. We are immersed in double talk when it comes to real solutions for ending nuclear warfare — not a particularly novel thought, perhaps that's what makes us all so pessimistic about long-range planning.

I still would like to think some of the "best" minds in the country hold strong convictions and leaders will present themselves. But the dire selection among the 1984 presidential hopefuls and popular support for Reagan makes me dubious. And as friends usually point out, "Do we blame them for not coming forward to get shot?"

I have some basis for optimism. There are creative solutions being tried — in research here at the University, in the vegetable gardens of friends, in my own life. I just don't see them happening at a national level (New Federalism?) and I don't see much hope for a change soon.

Perhaps the most disheartening aspect of being in college in 1983 is the lack of idealism among my peers. They do not seem to care for politics or poetry or philosophy — which is sad in a society that needs change and will have more leisure.

But they are "realistic" if shortsighted. They are either bent on getting out of here and making money before it isn't possible (the next market crash) or they are, like myself, pessimistic about the future even if they are optimistic about choices they are making in their own lives.



YOU SHOULD SEE ME AT WILLIAMSBURG — URBANE, RELAXED, POISED, OBVIOUSLY WELL-PREPARED, SUAVE, DEBONAIR, WITTY, ELEGANT... WOW!

your turn

MX watershed marked

The passage of funds for the development and flight testing of the MX missile by the Congress marks a watershed and provides cause for reflection.

With this vote, conservatives, industrialists and the Pentagon have gotten virtually everything they've wanted. We certainly now should feel secure with the MX, Minuteman III, Pershing II, air, sea, and ground-launched cruise missiles, Nimitz-class supercarriers, Trident submarines, B-1 and next the Stealth bombers, not to mention the reconditioned and retrofitted B-52's and that Joy of Detroit, the Chrysler M-1 tank. Don't mention the cost.

The liberal Democrats in the House of Representatives did their about-face in voting for the MX on the basis of a blanket promise by Pres. Reagan that he could now push for "meaningful" arms control negotiations and reductions. He gave no specifics.

The Democrats have a craftier reason for the vote; they're sure now that Reagan will trip all over himself on the arms issue in the 1984 elections. Under the leadership of Tip O'Neill et al, the recent history of Congressional legislation shows exactly who has done the tripping.

The credibility of the American peace movements, or rather fragmented movements, has been shattered; they have neither teeth nor friends, least of all the Limousine Liberals of the Democratic Party.

All they and the Freezeniks were able to do was to get the

house to pass a watered-down, non-binding resolution; a suggestion. Then the same Democrats capped Reagan's \$1.5 trillion military dream with the force of law.

With \$625 million now committed to the MX, basing and deployment are certain. What Congressman wants to face his or her constituents having spent those millions on a missile only to blow it by not allowing a place to put it?

So now we have committed ourselves to the "new generation" of strategic weapons: multiple warhead missiles, cruise missiles, space platforms and launch-on-warning (or even first-strike) systems.

The American people always have opted for the concept of "peace through strength" ever since Pearl Harbor. And for many, the MX vote is a reaffirmation of that concept, although using the Pearl Harbor analogy to compare our military capabilities with the Russians is ridiculous.

And the American people also have sided with the military-industrial complex because they believe there will be more jobs. Witness organized labor's endorsement of the MX in particular and military spending in general. Just what kind of jobs are created for how many and what kind of people is not mentioned.

What the Russians will do is not at all clear. They can say with all logic that the current Administration has not offered one shred of evidence to convince them of our peaceful intentions. Two scenarios arise.

One is that, the Soviets, convinced that an arms race is impossible, will now enter into

serious negotiations. The other more hideous prospect is that the Soviets will become alarmed at a gigantic, and to them unjustified, American military buildup and so respond. After all, their land-based missiles are their key strategic force. Should American land missiles become dominant, our naval and bomber triad "legs" would be intolerable. They would have no choice but to rearm.

One thing is clear. Through our elected representatives, we Americans have paid our money and taken our choice. MAD must go on. We deserve everything we are going to get.

Michael Peterson

Peterson is a Eugenean currently working as a cook. He hopes to attend the University next fall.

letters

Active issue

The May 31 issue of the Emerald quoted Mary Hotchkiss in reference to the ROTC issue as saying, "if there's active discrimination, then it becomes a student body issue." I would like to remind our new activist student body president of two things: First, discrimination is, by definition, active. Second, discrimination is a student body issue, not only when it reaches a certain level of awareness.

Debi Lance
senior, psychology

letters policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community:

Letters to the editor **must** be limited to 250 words, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in to the Emerald office. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, style or content.

"Your turn" is an Emerald opinion feature submitted by members of the University community. "Your turns" must be limited to 500 words and typed. This editorial column will not be edited by the staff, but selection will be based on appropriateness.

Letters to the editor and "Your turns" should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300 EMU.

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emerald

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