

opinion

'Build-down plan': a one-for-two deal

The old saying "the more things change, the more they remain the same" justly applies to Pres. Ronald Reagan's "build-down plan."

This latest in a slew of Reagan plans, proposes to the Soviet Union that each side remove from its arsenal two nuclear warheads for each new nuclear warhead deployed. Reagan will be outlining this "build-down plan" at the United Nations General Assembly today.

Sounds like a one-for-two bargain that only a fool would pass up. Or does it?

The "build-down plan" would achieve a reduction of nuclear arms in number but not in effect. Consider which nuclear warheads the U.S. or the Soviets would eliminate for each one deployed. Rather than arms limitation this seems an opportunity for each side to rid their arsenals of those outmoded Cold War era warheads for the newer, more technologically sophisticated warheads.

The "build-down plan" in no way serves to ease the tense worldwide situation. Rather than a bargain only a fool would pass up, the "build-down plan" is a fool's paradox.

The Reagan administration, in previous arms talks, has proposed a ceiling of 5,000 nuclear warheads on each side. This means the U.S. would have to destroy 2,200 warheads, while the Soviets would have to destroy 2,900 warheads. The "build-down plan" isn't presently part of the ceiling proposal, but officials say it could be incorporated when negotiations resume Oct. 5 in Geneva, Switzerland. If the "build-down plan" were in operation then those 5,000 warheads would be state-of-the-art and as effective as twice their number.

The "build-down plan" is the second arms reduction proposal to be offered by the United States government in the last week. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee sent the Senate a nuclear freeze resolution and the alternative — a "build-down" proposal. Instead of a one-for-two offer it appears the Foreign Relations Committee was acting like a used car salesman slapping an arm around a buyer saying: "If you don't like that plan, try this one." It would appear that way except that the Foreign Relations Committee, in sending the proposals to the Senate, suggested both be defeated. Why did they bother?

Despite all the activity very little has changed at all in the worldwide nuclear arms situation. Reagan's "build-down plan" seems more an exercise in phrasemongering as enduring as his "zero option." Rather than "building-down" or "zeroing" the Reagan administration should take a unilateral nuclear freeze proposal to the Geneva talks and stick to it.

New bicycle plan promotes campus safety

A pedestrian on campus occasionally puts life in peril walking from class to class — not so much from crossing the street but from hordes of bicycles charging down the narrow pathways.

However, after a three-year study by the University Campus Planning Committee, there are now bike-free no-ride zones where pedestrians can walk without having to constantly look over their shoulders.

We applaud the plan and urge every student who rides in and around campus to follow the routes and steer clear of those areas in which bicycles are prohibited.

Bicyclists are, under the new regulations, required to dismount and walk their bicycles in these areas:

- The residence hall area from Agate Street between 13th and 15th Avenues.
- The pathways between University Street and the library north of Gerlinger Hall.
- Riding is prohibited in the entrance to Science I.
- The EMU breezeway from University Street to Onyx Street is off-limits to bicycles.

"The idea is to promote the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in these...especially crowded areas of campus," says Don Brooks, associate director of public safety.

The new regulations are a positive step toward ending frequent bicycle/pedestrian accidents.



An inept EPA and a dioxin scare

The Environmental Protection Agency under Ann Gorsuch Burford and Pres. Ronald Reagan has again revealed itself to be not only negligent, but incompetent and inept as well.

Government agencies like the Forest Service, the BLM and the EPA like to paint environmentalists as well-meaning but misguided Don Quixotes who ride jackasses and rail romantically against benign windmills, but this summer's dioxin scare in Oregon is the first phantasm in recent memory conjured by the government itself.

Reporter's notebook Brooks Dareff

Consider the story, so far, as a three-act farce, possibly to continue as an ongoing serial.

Act 1. Day: Wednesday, Aug. 3. Setting: a hearing in Eugene's Circuit Court on a lawsuit aimed at terminating all herbicide spraying by government agencies in Oregon and Washington.

Three years after taking 2,4,5-T exposed samples from Oregon's Five Rivers Area, the EPA finally coughs up the test results after concealing the information from people ranging from its own regional office in Seattle to a Five Rivers Area resident who appealed repeatedly by mail to the Freedom of Information Act.

The time frame indicates the testing was undertaken by the EPA during the Carter administration, the failure to release the results occurred during the Reagan administration, and the release of the information occurred after Ann Gorsuch Burford resigned as EPA director.

The testimony given by the chemist who conducted the tests indicates extremely high levels of dioxin are present in the Five Rivers water supply system, but when queried by reporters, the chemist's supervisor at the University of Nebraska and EPA officials from Washington, D.C., suggest caution, advise against panic and deny that there was anything conclusive.

Act II: On Friday, Aug. 5, an EPA official from Washington, D.C., says the samples were mislabeled and had actually been taken from "somewhere in the Midwest." The official suggests people in the Five Rivers Area — located 24 miles east of Waldport — shouldn't be worried because they'd found two samples from the Five Rivers Area that contained what is considered to be almost imperceptible

amounts of dioxin.

Rep. Jim Weaver, D-Ore., says he has asked EPA Director William Ruckelshaus for a complete report on the tests.

Act III: On Monday, Aug. 8, the EPA reports that the two samples may not be accurate or representative, that additional tests may be conducted, and that they had narrowed down the origin of the initial samples to "somewhere in the upper Midwest."

At last report, the EPA is trying to obtain a frozen chicken from Five Rivers resident Carol Van Strum, who has been keeping the fowl in her freezer since 1980 as a test sample on instructions from the EPA. Van Strum tells a reporter the EPA was supposed to return for the bird years ago, but assures the media that the EPA is unlikely to get it now because in light of recent developments she considers the agency to be untrustworthy.

Subplot: On Friday, the last day of the hearing, Bob Lee, the attorney for the defense, requests that a ruling on the trial be delayed until a new hearing takes place, in which the EPA can defend itself against attacks made on it by the plaintiffs.

At last report, the EPA is trying to obtain a frozen chicken from Five Rivers resident Carol Van Strum.

(The day before, former EPA official Rita Lavelle is indicted by a federal grand jury on five felony counts of lying to Congress and government about her actions when she headed the EPA's toxic waste cleanup program.)

Judge James Burns denies the motion. Reporter's Prologue: If the EPA's mislabeling is supposed to make Oregonians breathe and drink their water easier, what about all those poor people who live "somewhere in the upper Midwest?"

By its carelessness and secrecy, the EPA has certainly caused a great deal of people a great deal of consternation. How many of those people would have chosen to move if they'd known two or three years ago what they had every right to know?

The Five Rivers mislabeling doesn't excuse the fact that the EPA concealed the information in the first place, or eliminate the possibility that dangerous levels of dioxin are present there.

Where else could they be present? What else isn't the EPA telling us?

My confidence level in the EPA certainly hasn't been enhanced by this "farce" — and I don't suppose Carol Van Strum will ever be dethawing that chicken for dinner either.

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letters

Profound

"No Toto, This could never be Kansas."
— too much a laid-back throwback to the sixties.
— Co-ops converge into natural food nirvana... granola, sprouts and tofu.
Public notice profusion paints a mural of paper patchworks pronouncements:

— "Free kittens to a good family...homebroken, mellow."
— "Lost dog, answers" to 'Peyote'...mellow;
if fed a vegetarian diet."
— "Meditation group for people who love humanity" ...mellow.
Students ponder the imponderable: they sit in cafes, with their Kierkegaard, java and croissants,

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