

Geneva talks positive but danger remains

The recent Geneva talks between U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko on future arms control negotiations brought positive results. The superpowers have set the framework for a new round of arms control talks, and both nations have declared their ultimate goals to be nuclear disarmament.

But in this current air of optimism there is a potential for danger: President Ronald Reagan is still pushing ahead with plans for a nuclear weapons build-up in the United States. The publicity surrounding the recent Geneva talks will likely be used by the Reagan administration to bolster funding for the MX missile, the testing of anti-satellite weapons and strategic defense research. Perhaps most dangerous of all, however, is Reagan's plan for the development of the so-called "star wars" weapons system. The Soviets have consistently criticized Reagan's star wars plan for a very good reason: it is not a defensive system.

Star wars weapons would orbit the earth, passing just above the airspace of other countries. Star wars weapons would be able to attack anything in the no-man's land of space around the earth, and some would even have the capability to attack targets within the sovereign territories of other nations. To the Soviets, this means that the United States could effectively use star wars weapons to neutralize Soviet nuclear forces, and launch an offensive nuclear attack at the same time. In essence, the star wars idea can be seen as another attempt at nuclear superiority. The result will lead to an increased risk of a pre-emptive nuclear first strike, and the increased chance of an all-out nuclear war. With advanced U.S. computer and sensor technologies, the Soviets also realize that if there is an arms race in space, the U.S. is likely to win it. But just like we've won the race to deploy every other nuclear weapon, the Soviets will eventually match us, producing an even more dangerous stalemate.

As plans for a new round of arms control negotiations get under way, Americans must keep a watchful eye on nuclear weapons activity along the sidelines. Arms control will mean nothing if either superpower still entertains the idea of nuclear superiority. If Reagan is serious about pushing ahead with a star wars weapons system, then all his talk about humanity and nuclear disarmament will continue to be nothing but just talk.

Legislative agenda must make people the priority

Today is the opening day of the 63rd Oregon legislative session. As the new legislators arrive at the state capital building in Salem to be welcomed by Gov. Vic Atiyeh, they will also find themselves being greeted by 25 different groups who are calling on the legislators to "put people first."

The groups have come together in support of many social concerns. They are demanding that more attention be paid to the plight of homeless in Oregon, to issues of workers' rights, minority rights, fair taxation, job training and welfare services. We support the efforts of these groups and encourage legislators to pay more attention to the needs of low-income Oregonians.

We also encourage students at the University to keep an eye on legislative issues, specifically Atiyeh's recent budget recommendation, which goes against the standing tuition freeze. Will tuition increases be a way to make students carry the burden of funding for higher education? This and other issues deserve student attention.



letters

Gun control

I am responding to John Shewey's letter (ODE, Jan. 9) concerning gun control legislation. Mr. Shewey's argument seems to be that if there were gun control laws, some gun smugglers would be able to become rich on the black market; thus, as the tone and substance of the letter indicates, gun control is not worth the cost.

Seriously though, it is unlikely that Mr. Shewey would advocate abolishing laws against theft, for example, simply because those laws enable criminals to operate on the black market by fencing stolen goods. The argument therefore carries little weight in light of the purpose of gun control legislation.

Effective gun control laws would make it difficult for criminals and mentally unstable people to obtain guns. The law would require a waiting period, a personal background check, and registration before a person could obtain a gun. The toughest legislation would deal with handguns, since they are used mostly as a personal weapon to kill human beings at close range, and have few redeeming qualities — except to criminals.

Mr. Shewey cynically suggests that gun legislation would not have any effect on the number of crimes committed with guns, but fails to notice that by his own argument, guns would be more expensive and more difficult to get. This alone would decrease the number of

guns in the hands of criminals and crazies. I look forward to the day when this country has responsible gun control laws.

Ed Butler
Law

fear, ignorance, misinformation, and theocratic bullshit. And no, I'm not gay.

David Hixson
Eugene

Not unnatural

Five points in regard to Brad Hall's letter (ODE, Jan. 8.)

1. Brad, have you ever looked up the word "natural" in the dictionary? Generally it is used to denote things that occur in, or are products of, nature. The fact that people are products of nature means that the relationships occurring between them are natural. Homosexuality is uncommon, but is not unnatural, in the same way that a cat with six toes is uncommon but not unnatural.

2. Comparing two forms of sex between consenting adults with child molesting is the height of idiocy.

3. Regarding your claims concerning infant mortality and life expectancy, I know of no children born to homosexual couples. Nor of any viable, independent study made of the relationship between sexual orientation, or religious belief, and life expectancy. Please read some facts about the numbers of cases of AIDS reported.

4. Your letter does document your own appalling bigotry and self-righteousness concerning the private lives of other people. Who, at least, allow you the courtesy of living your life as you see fit, which is volumes more than can be said for you and a few other Christians.

5. I really have to admire your ability to call someone else's views warped after writing a letter so completely filled with

At it again

There you go again, College Republicans. Rather than trying to take money away from political/educational student groups, why not be positive about things? President Reagan doesn't like grumpiness in his America, you know.

Why not organize student groups to advocate the College Republican view of the best of all possible worlds? Just think, you could help organize groups that oppose affirmative action, oppose South African divestment, oppose consumer advocacy, oppose comparable worth, oppose Martin Luther King's birthday as a national holiday, oppose minority rights legislation, and oppose the ERA.

And just think, you could help organize student groups that support more aid for the Contras, that support the invasion of Nicaragua, that support James Watt's approach to the environment, that support further cuts in federal aid to education, that support mandatory school prayer in college classes, and that support more money for the military budget.

So, get with the program, College Republicans. Don't try to destroy political/educational student groups. Help to show us clearly what your philosophy is all about.

Roscoe Caron
Eugene

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

Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.