

editorial

Nerve-gas vote is a historic mistake

The U.S. Senate's decision Wednesday to support the domestic production of nerve gas was a grave mistake.

Since the late 1920s, a vast majority of the world's countries have refrained from either the production or the use of chemical weapons. The horrors experienced by soldiers exposed to poison gases during World War I were enough to prevent the use of the poisons in ensuing wars. Even Adolf Hitler avoided their use because he feared the Allies would retaliate with their own chemical weapons.

But the Republican-controlled Senate is not concerned with precedent. Instead, the Senate by a 50-46 vote, decided to end a 16-year-long U.S. moratorium on the production of the weapons. The vote came in response to a legislative move to eliminate nerve-gas production from the Pentagon's record \$302 billion budget for 1985-86.

Proponents of nerve-gas production argue it will enhance America's military arsenal, while providing an increased deterrent against America's enemies. But although they argue for its effectiveness as a military tool, nerve-gas supporters ignore the effects of its past use.

Throughout World War I the use of poison chemicals by one side invited their use by the other. Rather than providing a deterrent, the use of these chemicals raised military conflicts to a new level of aggression.

Poison chemicals indiscriminately strike anyone in their area of contamination. And their effects are virtually impossible to prevent, as well as long lasting and often permanently disabling to humans.

European opponents of nerve-gas development fear that the United States will be willing to use the weapons in a European conflict, while discounting their use within America's boundaries. They know that the next major war could be fought on European territory. Unlike America's leaders, however, European chiefs of state remember the carnage that resulted from the use of toxic gases in the "first great war."

Fortunately, for Americans and Europeans the House has yet to vote on the issue. We hope that the Democratic-controlled House will be able to see through the shallow, militaristic arguments of nerve-gas proponents and instead work to maintain the current moratorium.

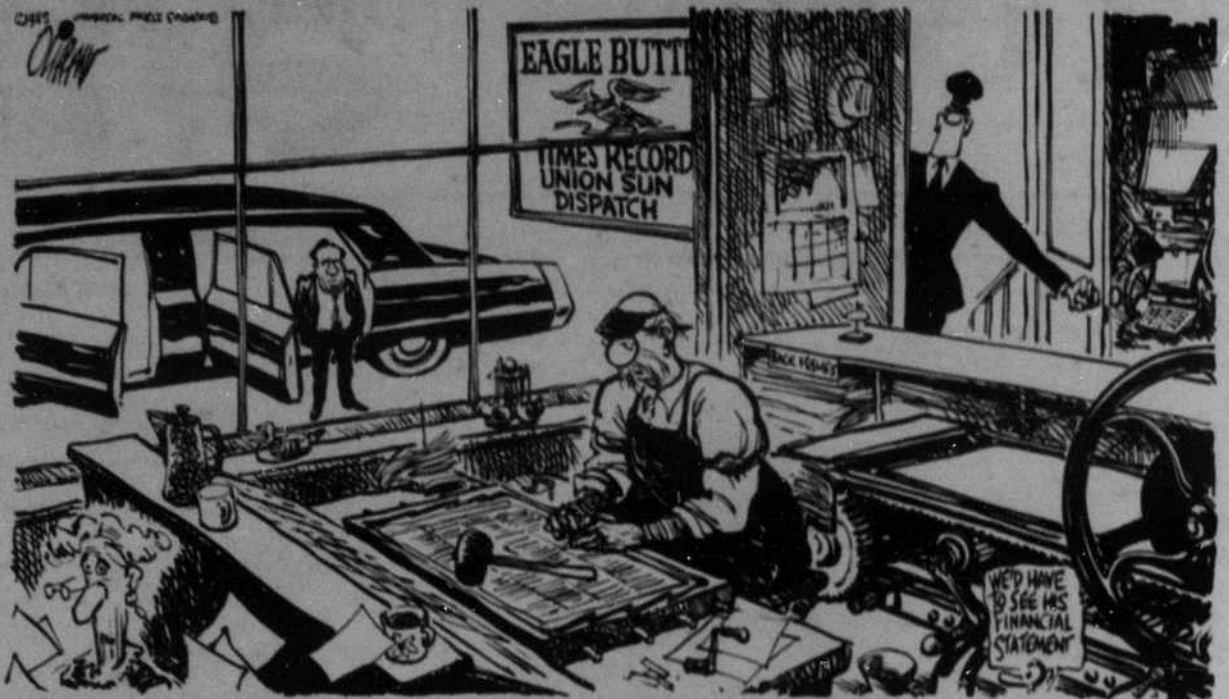
Senator's conversion will help apartheid opponents

The Reagan administration Wednesday lost a powerful supporter of its South African policy. Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said he was ready to consider immediate economic sanctions against the minority-controlled nation.

Lugar said he was prepared to consider a ban on new U.S. investments and loans in South Africa and a prohibition on both the import of South African gold Krugerrands and the export of U.S. computers to Africa's largest country.

Aside from his foreign relations chairmanship, Lugar is chairman of the influential Senate Republican fund-raising committee and was considered by Reagan for the 1980 Republican vice presidential nomination.

Opponents of apartheid should be proud of Lugar's conversion. The efforts of thousands of Americans who oppose South Africa's racist regime have undoubtedly had an effect on Lugar and his colleagues. How much longer will it be before a majority of the U.S. Senate supports embargoes against South Africa? It's only a matter of time.



'WE APPRECIATE THE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLAR OFFER, BUT TELL MR. MURDOCH WE AIN'T SELLIN''

letters

Ask not...

No smoke and no fire: my response to Mr. Jesudas Menon's comment on racial discrimination in Singapore, (ODE, May 3).

May I ask you, Mr. Jesudas, a fellow Singaporean, what do you mean by racial discrimination in Singapore? No doubt, I am a majority. I have worked with fellow Singaporeans of minority races. We worked in harmony and enjoyed each others' company.

Singapore is a multi-racial country. You, me and fellow Singaporeans are descendants of our forefathers who are immigrants from China, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, etc. Singapore being able to achieve the second highest standard of living in Asia is credited to the multi-racial citizens working harmoniously together in building a better future for our future generations.

If Jesudas has not known, last year Singapore celebrated the 25th year of nation-building. I am proud of Singapore's achievements. The credit does not belong to the Chinese. It belongs to every Singaporean. Aren't you proud of being a Singaporean, Mr. Jesudas?

Many nations envy Singapore for being able to progress in a multi-racial society. Let us not start a racial discord among the various races in Singapore.

Mr. Jesudas, why didn't you voice your dissatisfaction during the general election last year? Stand up, Jesudas and

face reality and tell the truth. Every Singaporean is given equal opportunities in term of employment, welfare and housing. Ask not what Singapore can do for you but what you can do for Singapore.

Albert Lai
Economics

Big change

I noted with interest your recent story and editorial regarding ASUO President Julie Davis' veto of the "unjustified" athletic department budget. It seems that Julie has suddenly become a fiscal conservative, a strange metamorphosis from just a few short months ago, when she herself used our student funds to take a political vacation junket to sunny Nicaragua.

Perhaps Julie will now use the dollars saved from the athletic department to treat us to a slide show of the Soviet countryside. Das Vedanya, Julie...

Willy Bils
Law

Worthless

Before I get started here, let's forget about the notion that I'm a "redneck" and have never been involved in any movements in the past. I've grown quite distressed every time I pick up the Emerald and read somebody's beef about the world. If they're not mad at our president, or a country on the African continent, they're just looking to bitch about our system.

Anti, anti, anti, what a worthless way to affect change.

Maybe we should remember that in our country we can travel freely, speak freely and attend the school of our choice. In the Soviet Union, if you wanted to travel to Salem, you have to apply for a travel pass and state how long you would be gone, where you're staying, and purpose of visit. It might take weeks to get it approved, whereas if your father was a government official, possibly you could get into a college.

Let's stop working overtime on our own government, which does not annex people and countries under their rule, and hold them against their will.

I would sure like to see the people who are so quick to bitch about things they know very little about, use facts in their opinions. It seems like all the opinions on campus are just feelings.

If we would all base our opinions on facts, or our feelings would not be so far apart, and a change in the dissatisfactions could be affected.

Benjamin Grote
Eugene

The winner is

The recent award-winning behaviors of the city prosecutor and members of the Eugene Police Department concerning the anti-apartheid action at the Federal Building deserve public mention.

Members of the police department deserve the "Above and Beyond the Call" award for arresting not only those demonstrators inside the building, but also a supporter who was on the outside giving an interview to television reporters. Somehow the television reporters escaped such special attention.

Honorable mention for "creative excellence" goes to whoever thought of the humorous charge of "obstructing justice" to justify the arrest.

The "honky" award goes to the police officer who ticketed a woman for honking her car horn in support of the demonstrators. Imagine how busy that peace officer would be following one of the Ducks' few football wins!

And last but not least, the "business as usual" award goes to the city prosecutor who is throwing the book at those who would use the name of Steve Biko in vain while making a public statement about U.S. government and business support of apartheid. Lucky for us that the prosecutor, his friends at City Hall, and their friends at the Chamber of Commerce know that allowing too much right of expression is bad for business.

So here's a toast to the award winners, and a vote of thanks for showing us their true colors.

Roscoe Caron
Elementary Education
Friday, May 24, 1985

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