

Editorial

Free trade agreement will benefit economy

When President Ronald Reagan and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney signed a trade agreement Sunday, the leaders opened the two countries to a variety of free trade options.

The agreement will eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, but both Congress and the Canadian Parliament must ratify the agreement before it is implemented. This should be done soon. In the long run both countries will benefit from the increased trading generated from such a measure.

The program will be implemented over a 10-year period. If ratified it will begin Jan. 1, 1989.

Reagan appropriately has praised the agreement saying it will create more jobs and lower prices of goods in both countries through rapid economic growth. Similarly a survey researched by the Commerce Department projects a \$25 billion increase in trade between the two countries over a five-year period. This, in turn, will generate more manufacturing jobs, specifically in machinery, textiles, clothing and paper.

Small businesses along the border also will benefit from the agreement. Trade restrictions currently make it difficult for people to take goods from one country into the other. Business from tourism, particularly along border states, will improve when these restrictions are removed.

But Canadian opponents of the agreement say the United States has an unfair advantage because the exchange rate makes U.S. goods cheaper. This will balance out in the long run, though. Both countries will experience an increase in trade and the economic benefits that accompany it.

It also is important to recognize the 1987 \$13-20 billion trade deficit the United States already has with Canada. The agreement will improve this problem as well as economic relations between the countries. Granted there inevitably will be a difference in gains, but this program will help offset the debt.

Canada also will benefit in other ways. One stipulation of the agreement includes the "fullest possible" energy trade between the countries. This includes Canadian access to Alaskan oil. This will reduce Canada's dependency on countries from which it imports oil.

The agreement also reduces restrictions limiting cross-border investments. Investors will be able to enter each others' markets, providing another way to stimulate the economy.

A five-member board also will be established to resolve disputes. This should make the transition process smooth.

Protectionists should not balk at this agreement. While it is important to protect a country's products from disparate trade practices, the long-run benefits of this agreement will overcome any immediate difficulties. The program will stimulate the economies of both countries.

Reagan and Mulroney took a bold, insightful step when they signed the agreement, and the countries should not hesitate to endorse it. Initially, it will be awkward when the tariffs are lifted, but through time the 10-year program's benefits will materialize.



"It's a two-for-one special... when you see the way Palestinians are treated, it's like getting a trip to South Africa."

Letters

Perceptions

As an exchange student from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, I want to say that I thoroughly enjoyed my stay here in Oregon, and I will miss the good friends I've made during my exchange.

The main point of this letter, however, is to discount some of the generalizations Sheri Konowitz, a former exchange student from UMass, made in reference to the East Coast (ODE, Dec. 11). She stated that "students of the same nationality 'all hang out together, and Americans don't get to know them.'"

Au contraire, Ms. Konowitz, for some of my best friends are foreigners, all of whom I met at UMass. She also made reference to a supposed trait of those from the East Coast, namely that we talk "loudly and quickly." Unfortunately, these types of people are found all over the country, and the world, for that matter. I don't believe that "they" are confined to the East.

I don't mean to sound rude or angry. What I'm trying to say is that I don't agree with reinforcing the misheld beliefs that there is such a major difference

between the coasts. I've found the people here to be just the same as those in the East. I agree with Ms. Konowitz when she said that "the students from opposite parts of the U.S. often know little about the rest of the country."

So please readers, don't let your perception of the East Coast — or any place for that matter — be tainted by hearsay. Find out for yourself.

Jenifer Locke
Senior

A chance

OK. Here's your chance.

This is your chance to avoid the burnout and stress you probably felt last quarter. Do you remember back just a few weeks ago when you had all kinds of papers to write and exams ahead of you?

Do you remember putting aside all those people you love and all those things you really enjoy doing? Do you remember? Is that how you want to live your life?

Resist the urge to swamp yourself with credits. Take care of yourself by planning a realistic quarter and start living as if school were only a part of your education.

This is your chance, friends.

Allen Hancock
Eugene

A dictatorship

Frequently, we read about something being hushed up or sealed for 50 years or forever by some agency of the government, a judge, the State Department or Congress. Sometimes it concerns something disreputable about a politician, or may be some truth that does not coincide with the propaganda.

The United States is supposed to be a government of, by and for the people and if it is, the people necessarily must have full and honest information to vote intelligently.

How come these agencies

have assumed the authority to seal or conceal information? Does the Constitution give them this power, this right?

If it does, should we not stop thinking of ourselves as citizens of a democratic nation? Such actions are to be expected of a dictatorship or a communist nation, but not the United States of America.

O.L. Brannaman
California

Protect liberty

Now that we have 1987, the bicentennial year of the U.S. Constitution, behind us we must not forget the call that we all have to befriend the document that guards our freedom.

Some of the leaders of our country know the importance of guarding the Constitution. I was recently reading an article in which former Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson, challenged us all to study that very document.

He encouraged Americans to seek out honest leaders and to become more involved in the civic and political affairs of our great nation. "We must become involved in civic affairs," he said. "As citizens of this republic we can not do our duty and be idle spectators."

We must not forget that if we don't safeguard our freedoms we will lose them, not necessarily by war, but from within. The actions of a corrupt few can threaten the very fiber of our country. The same fiber that many Americans have lain their lives down to preserve.

Knowing that hundreds of thousands of Americans have given their lives to defend our liberty, is it too much of a sacrifice for us to get out of our arm chairs to preserve the principles that have been paid for with blood?

Grady Farris
Springfield

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