

Stealth batplane truly a batty idea

Does the cartoon at right look familiar? Ken Alexander's rundown on the price tag of the B-2 Stealth bomber first ran in the *Emerald* on May 24, 1988. We've dusted it off from our archives because it still provides the most succinct explanation of why this country should not purchase a B-2 fleet.

The Stealth bomber looks like something out of *Batman*, but it isn't fiction. With its radar-evading design, the B-2 flew for the first time Monday. It has yet to clear Congress, which, if it displays any proper sense, will shoot it down.

Spending half a billion dollars for one warplane is a staggering sum, even by contemporary defense standards. The cost for an M-1 Abrams tank is more than \$1 million; it's about \$16 million for an F-16 fighter-bomber. And we assume the Air Force is getting a volume discount for the B-2; it wants to purchase 132 B-2s. That's almost \$70 billion.

We won't even bother to catalog the social programs that could be improved with \$70 billion to spend. They're innumerable, and obvious. After all, we recognize national defense is a necessary enterprise that all free societies must regrettably engage in. And one day, the country's aging fleet of B-52s will have to be replaced. But that day hasn't presented itself yet.

The B-52s are still effective in dealing with Third World nations. And against a superpower? The Air Force claims that the B-52 is not able to penetrate the Soviet Union's air defense with great reliability, but newspaper accounts of German teenagers landing planes in Red Square and unmanned MiGs zipping across the Warsaw Pact nations show that the B-52 would do quite well against the enemy.

And just who is the enemy? Relationships with the Soviet Union have improved to the point that a major war with that country is unthinkable. International relations are unstable over time, but by the day the Next War comes, it seems likely that the B-2 will have been replaced by a new generation of technology.

Hardware generations are very brief nowadays; the same technology that makes the B-2 bomber possible today will render it obsolete tomorrow. And then that \$70 billion will be wasted.

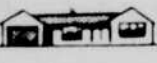
The B-2 can fly, which is more than can be said for the B-1, the last Air Force overpriced obsession. The B-2 can also do a lot of neat, high-tech things, and it looks pretty with its sleek, shiny black paint. But leave the *Batman* mania to the adolescents; those in charge should recognize some budget priorities and be free of a fascination for bright, shiny objects.

\$450,000,000
THE COST OF ONE STEALTH BOMBER



WOULD BUY

KENT ALEXANDER
© 1988 NEWS SERVICE

-  **16,364**
1988 TOP-OF-THE-LINE
CADILLAC SEDANS, EQUIPPED
-  **2,903**
3 BR, 2 BATH MEDIAN PRICE
CALIFORNIA HOMES
-  **381,000**
TONS OF GRADE A, WHOLE
FRYING CHICKENS
-  **1,125,000**
20" REMOTE CONTROL
SONY COLOR TV MONITORS
-  **15,025,041**
GOODYEAR TIEMPO RADIAL
TIRES, SIZE P155/B0R13
-  **2,284**
57 FT. CHRIS CRAFT 6 ROOM
MOTOR YACHTS, MINT (USED)
-  **12,857**
KIDNEY TRANSPLANTS, INCL.
SURGERY & HOSPITAL

Twenty years later, Apollo still exciting

It is ironic, at least, that as the country wrestles with one decision over a costly high-tech program, the B-2 Stealth bomber, the United States is celebrating the 20th anniversary of another such venture — the Apollo 11 moon landing.

On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong set his footprint on the untainted surface of the moon, a place that had never been explored before, except in imaginations. The United States returned to the lunar surface a few more times, but it's been a long time now since we've visited the place.

In 1969, it seemed we were ready to make science-fiction into hard reality. But the world of *2001: A Space Odyssey* will not be our world by the end of the century. There are no moon colonies in operation; in fact, the United States seems to have given up on traveling to other worlds, concentrating instead on the lucrative space shuttle program. The Soviet Union has expressed an interest in going to Mars, but that seems very far off.

The question on everybody's mind now, and expressed bluntly in Sunday's *Register-Guard*, is "did it matter?" Did Apollo 11 make our world a better place, or was it all a

colossal waste of time and money?

Even with disappointed hindsight, our feeling is that the moon mission was, and that manned space flight remains, a noble enterprise. Some may claim that we are arbitrary (and perhaps even hypocritical) in blasting the costly B-2 for the dollars it robs from social programs and condoning something so romantic and impractical as space travel. Okay, we admit it: we'd rather spend our tax dollars on rockets of knowledge than rockets of destruction.

But the Apollo moon landing did more than just burn up dollars and provide a neat picture to stamp on coins. The enormous cost of putting a man on the moon did take from social programs of the 1960s, but it also symbolized what the country *could* do if it put its resources in the right place. The failure of America's social programs today, such as HUD and health care, isn't due to a lack of resources so much as the wrong prioritization of those resources.

"If we can put a man on the moon, why can't we ..." goes the familiar complaint. The truth is, we probably could do whatever the cliché asks, if only we re-experienced the national unity that precipitated the Apollo landing.

Letters

No voices

Regarding Mark Curry's letter (*ODE*, June 19) in which he states "I personally have given many tours to ... community members," allow me to address this statement.

I am one of at least three people denied access to his tours of the animal labs at the University. Lucy Kaplan, a PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) attorney, Brigitte Leach, president of SETA (Stu-

dents for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), and I were all told last month we could not visit any animal labs at the University.

Each of us is a "genuinely interested party" as Lee Swanziger qualified in his letter (*ODE*, June 22). PETA and SETA have taken numerous above-board, legal avenues to protect animals in University labs, including court actions, attempting to work with IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) members, con-

tacting veterinarians and physicians and offering refuge to animals at the University as a substitute to their slaughter. Our concerns and complaints have been dutifully and repeatedly documented.

The University, however, has given no indication that animal practices have changed and continues tactics to keep public scrutiny out of the labs. The University insists on being left alone. No other publicly fund-

ed segment of our society has this right, nor should they. As long as sentient beings suffer and die in the labs, we cannot sit silently by as the University tries to sweep this entire matter under the rug.

The animals have no voice. The University wishes that the

humane community was also at such a disadvantage, but such is not the case. The fight for the animals at the University continues and will not be silenced.

Ann Chynoweth
People for the Ethical
Treatment of Animals

Letters Policy

The *Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

Reminder

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* is polling its readers to see what comic strip they would like to see in our paper after Berke Breathed's *Bloom County* ends publication Aug. 19.

Please send a postcard with your choice to: Comic Survey, *Oregon Daily Emerald*, P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403. The deadline for votes is July 21.

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