

De Klerk's reforms are positive signs

On Friday, 28 million South African blacks got a glimpse of something they've been waiting for a long time: a chance at freedom.

South African President F.W. de Klerk's historic announcement to legalize the African National Congress and other anti-apartheid groups unleashed a stream of praise throughout the world. Desmond Tutu called it "incredible," George Bush labeled it "positive," and organizations such as the European Economic Community cautiously approved the speech.

However, before de Klerk is elevated to the level of Great Liberal Thinker, as some groups appear willing to do, some things have to be sorted out. De Klerk has promised to free Nelson Mandela, but as yet, that hasn't happened. When it does, de Klerk's proposals will take substance, but until then, they're just talk.

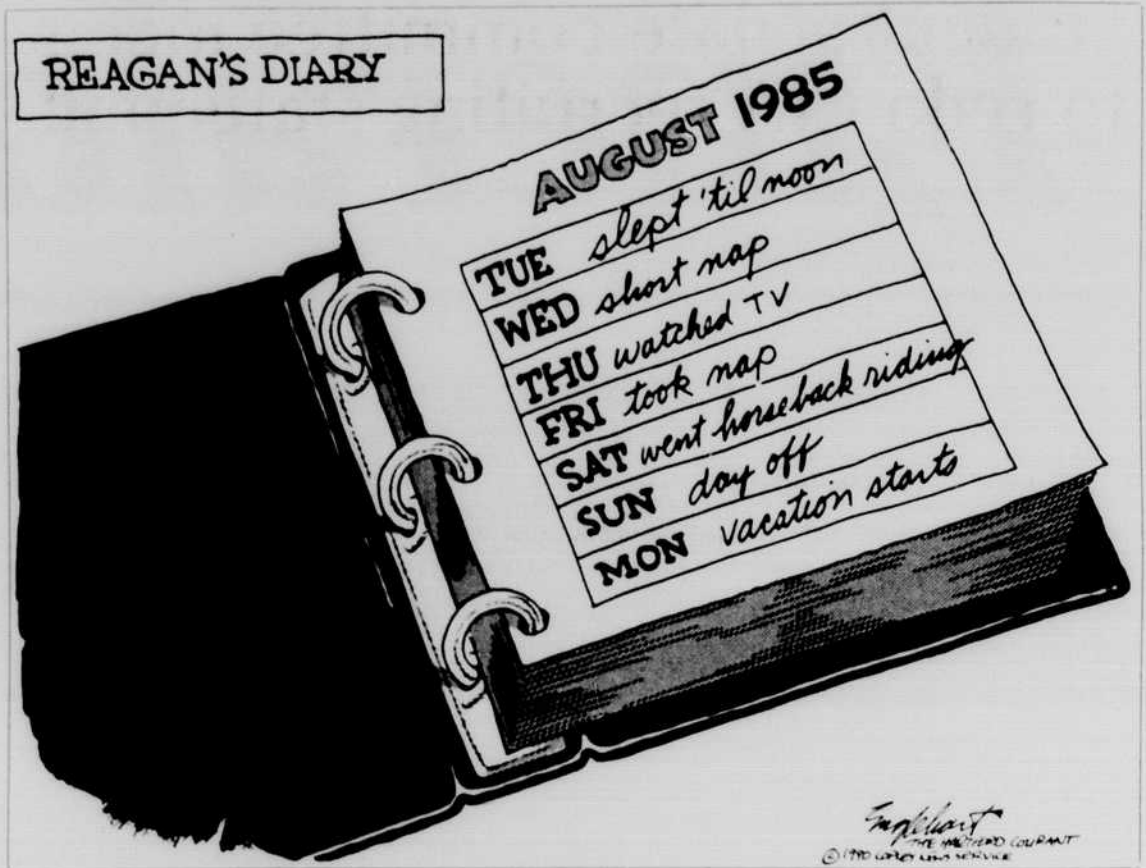
Although it wasn't an across-the-board plan to change the entire South African way of life, de Klerk's speech was the first bit of good news to come out of the country in years. The South African cabinet wants to give blacks equal voting rights. Such a plan just one year ago would have been unthinkable to the South African government, and unexpected to the rest of the world.

But then again, if Eastern Europe can fall in a wave of democracy, maybe it's South Africa's turn.

Perhaps the best way to gauge the importance of de Klerk's reforms is not to look at the reaction it has produced in anti-apartheid groups, but the anger shown by the right-wing parties in South Africa. On Monday, the leader of the South African Conservative Party urged his members to fight the "revolutionary, left-wing" proposals, and added that whites are not ready to live under a black majority rule.

Though opposition to the reforms has been small (the Conservative party controls about 31 percent of the white vote, about 3 percent of the total population), it should warn de Klerk that his proposals could produce problems in his own country. However, he should ignore these and push forward as much as he can.

President Bush has announced he will consider lifting some sanctions on the South African government. Such a plan is not a good idea at this time. Though de Klerk has promised to give blacks the vote, he has not even addressed yet or attempted to correct the problems of segregation and educational discrepancies. Until he does that, he deserves support, but not concrete bribes from the United States. Bush should deal with de Klerk *quid pro quo*: more reforms, fewer sanctions.



Pentagon stockpile disgusting

Last Friday a Senate Budget Committee report was sent to U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney. The report stated the Pentagon has accumulated a stockpile of more than \$30 billion worth of equipment, uniforms and spare parts the Pentagon does not need and may never be able to use.

This stockpile has been building up for decades, and grew to even greater proportions during the Reagan Administration's whirlwind of excessive military spending. Not surprisingly, the Pentagon has orders for more excess supplies, to the tune of \$1.8 billion.

The study and resulting report are part of the Democratic majority's efforts to portray the Bush Administration's unwillingness to reduce the military budget. Excess spending is a well-known Pentagon trait and many in Washington want to see it stop.

It is disgusting to see such a waste of money. Americans trust the government to use our federal tax dollars wisely and productively. It is hard to justify \$30 billion

worth of spare parts, uniforms and equipment sitting in warehouses for years and years as a productive use of our money.

And this is just one example of excessive military spending.

Now is the time for some healthy cuts in the military budget. In his speech to the Senate Budget Committee Monday, Cheney defended maintaining a strong strategic defense budget, because it "preserves the elements of what we think is essential in terms of protecting the nation's security."

There are many ways to ensure the safety of our nation. Maintaining the military may be one of them, but being able to compete in the international trade market is just as important to maintaining national safety.

It is past time for the government to take a good look at the global situation and realize that we need to re-direct some of the military budget into education and economic growth, because economic power and productivity are quickly becoming the tools of the 20th century.

Letters

Analyzed

After reading commentaries by ASUO President Andy Clark in the *Emerald* and the *Oregon Commentator* concerning the proposed mandatory health insurance policy, it is clear that Clark has not rigorously analyzed the policy his Student Health Insurance Committee appointees have proposed.

Clark claims that by increasing the number of participants, the cost of the policy could be lowered under \$300. But even at that price, the current plan would remain grossly inadequate. Students on a tight budget cannot afford a \$200 deductible. Also, the \$20,000 ceiling makes the policy inadequate for catastrophic health care. Cancer or extended hospitalization would eat up \$20,000 in no time.

Although students on financial aid have a health care allotment of \$350, a \$300 policy would make the prospect of dental and eye care unaffordable. As 66 percent of University students receive some financial aid, overall attention to these two areas would drop significantly if the proposal were

implemented.

When Andy Clark and Scott Wyckoff ran in the 1989 student elections, they expressed a goal of involving the entire student body in the voting process. Clark and Wyckoff have apparently forgotten their goal at a time when student involvement could not be more important.

The president and the vice president, along with their SHIC appointees, continue to support an ineffective and grossly unfair proposal that could potentially double student fees without calling for a referendum.

David Knight
Mathematics

Debate

Anti-life radicals such as Kristen Brandt (*ODE*, Feb. 5) have once again demonstrated why the abortion "debate" is "extremely emotional" and never rational. The issue of abortion is rarely debated by these self-classified "pro-choicers." Instead, they must whine that pro-life children

were present and protesting the anti-life gathering in November.

In case you were wondering Brandt, children happen to be the issue of this conflict. Pro-lifers were not the only ones guilty of this crime: anti-lifers brought in the physically and mentally disabled for their cause at the same rally. Ironically, these same people are some of these killed by the 97 percent of abortions performed "for convenience only."

Let us debate the real issue. The medical facts prove that abortion terminates an independent human life. Abortion is murder. Not the murder of a spotted owl, but of a young child ... a young child that deserves to live as much as you or I.

Kevin Allen
History

Die-hard

I take exception to the letter written by Mark Hartley (*ODE*, Feb. 5) concerning 49er "posers." Besides my objection to the strong epithet at the end (suck), I do not appreciate that

he has taken such a superior attitude, and feels he has a right to judge who may or may not root for a particular team.

I root for the 49ers because they are near in proximity (I also root for the Seahawks), and it is fun to watch the precision and talent with which they play every game.

I became a die-hard 49er fan last season upon their becoming World Champs for the third time. Remember: Joe and company are there on the playing field for everyone's enjoyment.

Michael Lindley
Sociology

Chill out

Wow! I never thought my article on Don Majkowski (*ODE*, Jan. 26) would cause such a stir. I guess being a life-long resident of Madison, Wis. has left me unaware of the magnitude of love people in the "outside world" have for Joe Montana.

When I wrote the letter, I knew my admittedly biased opinion would be accepted by

few. For those who didn't agree, I was in hopes that they would find some humor in my incredibly unpopular argument. As it turns out, though, it seems some were actually offended by my letter, enough so to respond to it.

The fact is, those who did write in made the mistake that I was claiming Majkowski is the greatest quarterback ever. Well, get some glasses guys! What I was claiming was this: Montana is not the greatest quarterback ever, and Majkowski was arguably the best in 1989.

As for Montana's lifetime statistics, they have no bearing on who was better in 1989. As for his statistics in 1989, "quarterback rating" isn't everything. And as for his post-season performance, well, there's a good reason why Pro Bowl voting doesn't take this into consideration. (Majkowski made it in, Everett didn't).

Montana's great, but great and best aren't synonyms. Who is the best? Lighten up guys; it doesn't matter that much.

Michael Simon
Finance