

Time has come for an end to military research

University should adopt Stresinger plan

By Shannon Oliver

The net increase of U.S. military spending between 1981 and 1985 — some \$190 billion — created an estimated 7.2 million job-years of work over that period. Had the equivalent sum been spent on civilian activities, it would have generated 8.4 million job-years (Source: *Worldwatch Paper '89*, p.25)

In light of current polemics between environmentalists and members of the working class,

Commentary

who are dependent on natural resources, I believe it to be of the utmost importance that the University recognize the need to divest our interest in federal military spending.

The most critical negative repercussions of military spending on the economy and higher education is in the area of research and development. Currently, the research intensity of military products has been estimated to be as high as 20 times that of civilian products. The share of public research and development outlays that goes to the military is as high as 70 percent in the United States (*Worldwatch Paper '89*, p.18)

In the United States, combined military-related R&D expenditures in the mid-'80s may have been equivalent to as much as 45 percent of total government and private spending, according to the Council of Economic Priorities in New York. This military cornucopia starves the civilian infrastructure of funds.

A prolonged heavy emphasis on defense-related research and development impairs our country's innovative capacity by drawing scientific talent away from the civilian sector, leaving our country unable to address social or environmental needs.

I would like to address the public issue concerning military funding of basic science at the University. At a rally preceding the dedication of the new science buildings last October, I spoke about the idea that funding of basic science by military organizations threatens to adulterate the type of basic science that is done as well as the profile of scientists who find success in research.

It has been argued that research scientists should be free to seek funding from any sources available and willing to fund their work.

In addition, it has been advanced that the dictates of academic freedom preclude the prohibition of military funding of basic science; such a prohibition would create the opportunity for political influences of research programs.

Further, it has been asserted that even weapons research should be fair game for the University faculty.

When we speak of academic freedom, we speak of an empowering right that ensures the ability of scientists to pursue basic questions of interest and explore the secrets of the universe around and within us. I feel that this freedom is extremely important.

Absolute academic freedom requires that no strings whatever

be attached between the funder and the funded. There are invariably limitations, and they are not trivial.

While it is absolutely the case that military agencies do fund basic research having no foreseeable military application, it is also the case that only certain types of basic research are acceptable to military agencies.

The effect of this situation is that the more money the military can channel into basic research, the greater the degree to which they are capable of determining the course of scientific investigation. This must be utterly loathsome to anyone who espouses academic freedom.

The forces that limit academic freedom can have very serious consequences that a free society responsible for funding research might want to avoid.

The late George Stresinger, a world-famous University biologist, developer of the famous zebrafish preparation that distinguishes Eugene in the scientific community, and the man after whom one of the grand new science buildings is named, first proposed to the Faculty Senate this limitation on research funding:

"Whereas defense research is

antithetical to the humanistic purposes of a University, and

"Whereas the rational location for defense research is within the appropriate agencies of the Department of Defense,

"Be it resolved that the faculty of the University of Oregon requests that the President and the administration of the University establish a policy of refusing all contract or grant research sponsored by the Department of Defense and its various branches, and of phasing out, as rapidly as possible, such contracts as now exist at the University."

Professor Stresinger was well-aware of the fact that science funded by the military may be pure and basic research. He reasoned that the freedoms we sacrifice when we take a stand against militarism are less important than the freedoms we gain when we as a so-

ciety reject the influences on science of an oppressive military industrial complex that is killing planet Earth and limiting human potential.

The view that weapons research should not be limited at the University flies not only in the face of Stresinger's motion, but also in the face of University policy. Not only has the University banned classified and unclassified weapons research on campus, but it also has banned classified and unclassified weapons research at the proposed Riverfront Research Park.

Presumably, some views favor repeal of these weapons-research bans. It is this view that I find most objectionable and most out-of-touch with the ideals of academic freedom.

Shannon Oliver is co-director of Student Campaign for Disarmament

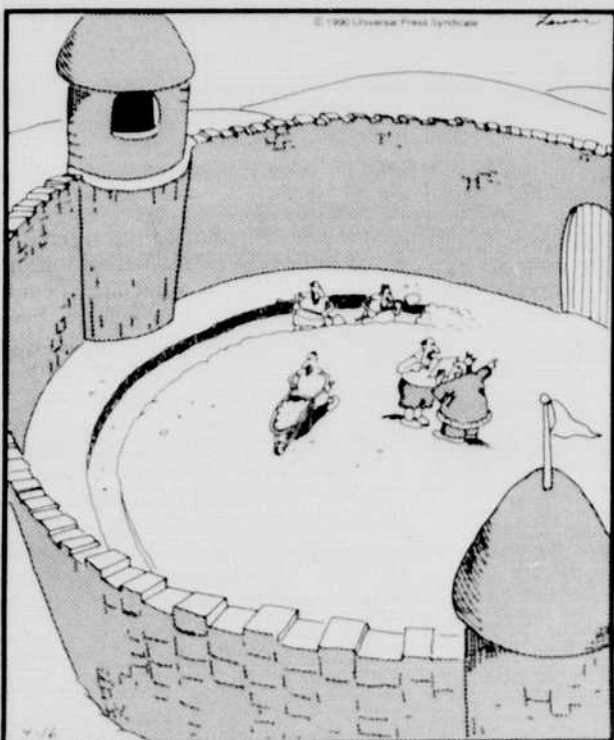
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By GARY LARSON



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