

If it worked in '66, why not try it now?

What's good for the goose isn't always good for the gander.

That seems to be the case for Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, who has been very vocal in his opposition to the so-called "Gulf Orphans" bills that have been introduced in Congress. The proposed legislation, which was defeated in the Senate, would ask the Pentagon to reassign single parents and military couples with children who have been deployed to the Persian Gulf.

Cheney opposed the legislation on grounds it would discriminate against women and people with dependents of a certain age. He said it posed problems with the deployment abilities of the forces and added that everyone who joined the military knew they might be put in harm's way.



Secretary of Defense
Richard Cheney

These are very tough and patriotic words for a man who sought and received deferment from the Vietnam draft. In 1966 Cheney, then a father of young children, avoided the draft because he believed his children should have both parents at home. But 25 years later he has no problem sending single parents, or couples with children, to fight in the desert. He neatly justifies his stance because they "volunteered" for the service while he was simply saying no to a draft.

If Cheney believes "the battle for freedom" is worth allowing both of a child's parents to die in war, why didn't he volunteer to fight for his country in Vietnam. In 1966 he felt it was more important to keep his family together than to serve.

In 1966 Cheney, then a father of young children, avoided the draft because he believed his children should have both parents at home.

His actions of late indicate he believes the concerns of the country come before that of family. It appears his beliefs about the importance of family have changed now that he is not personally involved.

The point lost on men who only see people as "units" to be deployed, is that the children who could lose their parents in the gulf did not volunteer for the service. They did not join the military to make a living or pay for college as their parents did. Those children have the right to grow up with their parents. And if the United States has one ounce of compassion left in its bureaucratic veins it should be doing everything in its power to make sure at least one parent is left out of harm's way.

The Defense Department's argument that the legislation discriminates against women is a smokescreen. Women's rights have never been high on the Pentagon's priority list. It employs equal rights as a concern in this case because it doesn't want to lose part of its fighting force.

Compassion has never been a common characteristic within the military. Part of its job is to dehumanize the enemy, and the forces it commands, but in this case the lack of compassion is glaringly visible.

In Pennsylvania, two women in the reserves were called up days before giving birth. In one case the woman was given 15 days to report to duty. In the case of 19-year-old Carolynne Zales, she was given 10 days to report. Zales's husband has been serving in the gulf since August. When Zales called to say there had been some kind of mistake, she was told there were about 250 cases just like hers.

At the moment there are 70,000 couples with children and 67,000 single parents serving in the gulf. Can a country that touts itself as being the leader of "A new world order" of peace-loving, civilized nations really commit acts so lacking of compassion.



LETTERS

Promised land

There were people in Canaan long before Moses, while in the centuries between the Islamic conquests and the late 1800s Jews had most definitely become a minority in the land; therefore, the basis of the Hebrew's claim to the place is no greater than anyone else's.

To maintain otherwise is to do so on grounds that are strictly religious and traditional — the "promised land" concept. The rest of the world is not obliged to accept this idea. Balfour Declaration and United Nations resolutions notwithstanding.

Yet Zionists seem determined to grab and hold that bit of desert and scrub for their own exclusive use, to righteously dominate it even at the expense of other nations and peoples, even at the risk of World War III.

Isn't it ironic that a group that has suffered so much at the hands of rabid nationalists has taken that same tragic road itself, rather than realize that clannishness of all kinds — the us-and-them perspective — is the root cause of so many of the world's gravest ills?

And isn't it sad that someone like Phil Zuckerman (ODE, Jan. 24) can point out the hypocrisies of a Saddam Hussein or a Bush, but ignore those of a Shamir, whose idea of justice is to answer stones with automatic weapons, to bulldoze the homes of "suspected" terrorists, and to deny gas masks to someone solely on the basis of their ethnic background?

Bill Smee
Eugene

Regressive tax?

It was very disappointing to see a recent editorial (ODE, Feb. 13) flatly state "A sales tax on non-essential items ... would be an equitable tax system."

Where's the proof? Sales taxes are regressive taxes because everyone is taxed at the same rate despite an ever-widening disparity in ability to pay. Con-

trasted with progressive taxation which requires that people with higher income pay a proportionately higher percentage, regressive taxation is plainly another way for rich people to live off the backs of the working class.

With all the crises inherent to capitalism (recession, poverty, pollution, unemployment) present, Oregon's ruling class is blackmailing the people by saying in effect, "We'll deprive the working people of health care, education, social services and various other means until they give in and accept a sales tax."

This shouldn't surprise anyone because all ruling classes do whatever they must to rescue capitalism, a system that will eventually devour itself. Using Marxism's principle of "Each according to need, each according to ability" we of the working class can challenge capitalism's doctrine of "The many of unmet need, for the few by force of greed."

By refusing to be blackmailed we can fight class oppression by opposing a sales tax in Oregon. If the Emerald purports to defend the common good, it cannot at the same time endorse a sales tax.

Kevin Hornbuckle
Eugene

Annoying Man

In response to the malicious article by Pat Malach (ODE, Feb. 13) that generalizes and displays a lack of truth regarding the Persian Gulf War. Your reference to the gulf as the "Gulf theater" is vulgar and in bad taste. So it's an entertaining show to you, Malach. I fail to share your crude humor.

"The bureaucrats wanted to shell out a few lives to get the war rolling ..." So, our democratically elected politicians want to kill Americans?

Another fallacy in your article. I quote: "There is a lot to be said for compromise. If giving Saddam Hussein one small concession so he could retain his dignity could prevent so much destruction. Why not

give it a chance? At least talk to the man before you begin to destroy his country and its people."

I question your simple answer to this complicated problem. Have we not offered Hussein many opportunities to redeem himself? We have done all we can to reason with him and nothing has worked.

Finally, by throwing disrespectful comments and not giving credit to our president you appear to be having a frenzied "tantrum." Bush did experience the hostile environment of World War II and came home a hero.

Malach, obviously you've been influenced by Saturday Night Live. As they mimic Bush by using "prudent" in a comical, fictitious context you also mimic Bush by saying, "throwing a war tantrum is the only prudent alternative for getting his way." Well I would like to mimic you as being Mr. Annoying Man, from Saturday Night Live — a man who always seems to step out of his bounds.

Bryce Michael Lane
Pre-Business Administration

Bad habit

If smokers are allowed to practice their disgusting self-indulgent behavior in the EMU, what of those men recently caught masturbating in the Knight Library and Condon Hall?

Shouldn't they also be given a place in the EMU where they might indulge? Why should smokers be given preferential treatment when dealing with people with obnoxious public habits?

I, along with most people, would find public masturbating offensive — but is it any more offensive than unhealthy, second-hand smoke which, regardless of the degree of ventilation, always seems to waft its way into the clothes and lungs of those nearby?

No smoking in the EMU.

William Pfau
Biology