

Transportation bill ignores big picture

George Bush proposes to spend \$105.4 billion over the next five years to prepare and repair the nation's highways and mass transit systems. One thing is for certain, the country's dependence on oil will do nothing but increase.

The bill allocates \$87 billion for federal highways while earmarking only \$16.3 billion for mass transit improvement.

The administration should be concentrating more on mass transit systems instead of conceding the nation's reliance on oil. A switch to alternative transit systems is not an overnight project, but it needs much more than the lip service it is now receiving.

Mass transit, along with developing more alternative energy sources, should be the cornerstones of the administration's energy goals. Both this new bill and the president's energy plan ignore conservation and pollution problems caused by fossil fuels. Instead Bush's policies continue to pander to oil and automobile lobbyists.

The government should work to have rail systems in every major city and its suburbs instead of making automobile travel more appealing. Single-occupant vehicles in big cities are a prime example of petroleum abuse. Light rail systems will be more energy efficient and give people an alternative means of commuting in the big cities.

The United States has known since the 1973 oil embargo that it cannot continue its current energy policies which emphasize the use of petroleum.

Environmentalists are concerned, and rightly so, about the continued emphasis on highway travel, which adds up to more automobiles, higher oil consumption and more ozone-depleting poisons in the air.

Governmental and independent studies prove the earth's atmosphere is changing rapidly and that global warming is a very real concern. Bush's now policy, by ignoring mass transit alternatives, ignores this problem.

This country places too much emphasis on car sales as an economic indicator. Auto sales are down for the year, but analysts predict an upturn as soon as the Persian Gulf War is over. Cheap, accessible oil means more cars sold which translates into more driving. Americans are so hung up on their cars and the convenience of individual transportation that they won't drive less unless forced to.

The nation's roads need repair, but the country also needs a definite change in its transportation policy. It must face the future with the idea of using less oil, not more.

Automakers and oil companies have too much influence in the government, and so much of the nation's economy depends on the use of gas that any attempt to switch the focus of energy to solar, geothermal, wind or others merely brings cries of foul from the rich companies.

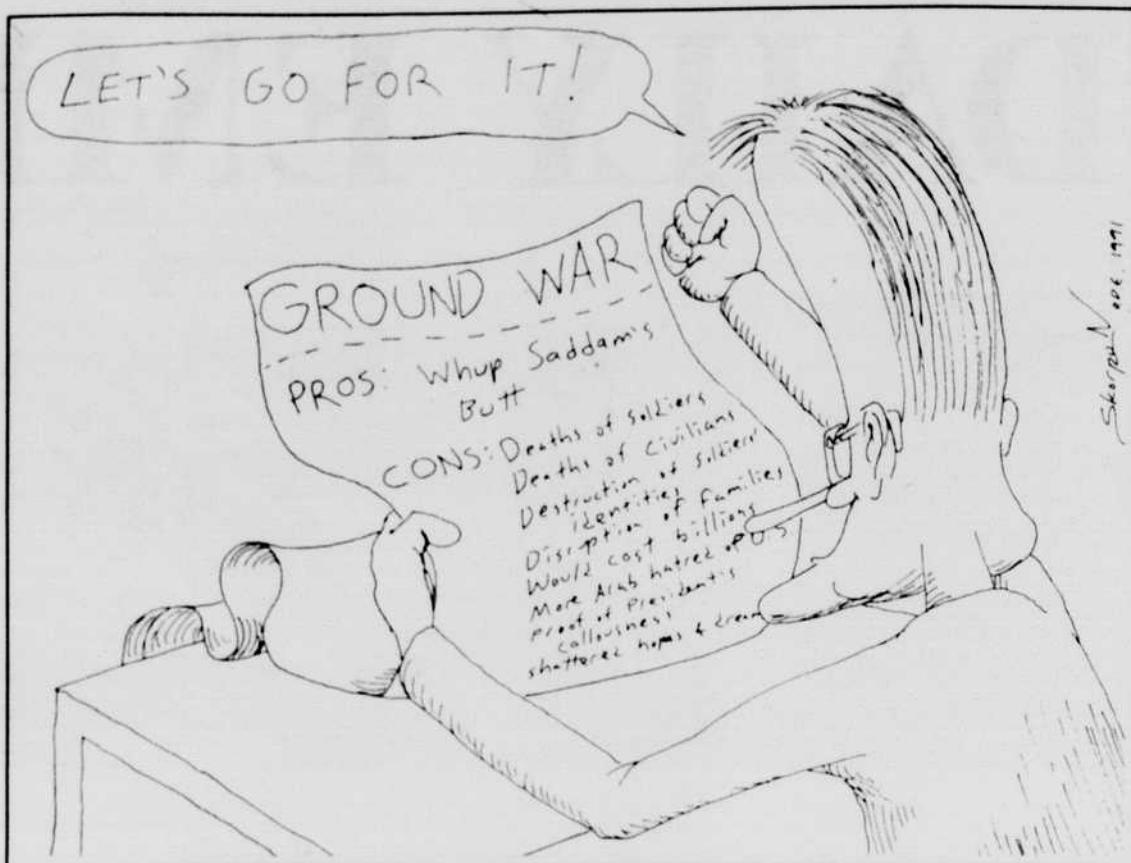
All they see is the profit margin. They fail to see the benefits in healthier living, cleaner air and less foreign dependence on energy. What's good for the country is not always good for bottom line.

When the gulf war is over, every American should be protesting the nation's energy and transportation policy.

If not, they can look forward to facing a similar crisis down the road because of the country's neglect to implement a safe, clean and beneficial energy policy.

What do you know?

"We don't know how this war is going to end; we don't know what Saddam is going to do; we don't know the exact course of it. ... We don't intend to go beyond the U.N.'s resolutions at this time." — *White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater speaking about the allied goals in the Persian Gulf War.*



LETTERS

Neither nor

It is ironic to see, in the letter by Jonathan Bernstein and Jim Bridge (*ODE*, Feb. 14), the claim that "ignorance...often prevails even the best intended of protests."

In addition to the minor point that "prevail" is never a transitive verb, I also note that, in explaining the non-economic reasons for fighting the Persian Gulf War, they themselves demonstrate an appalling ignorance of the inconsistencies in Bush's position.

Neither Reagan nor Bush ever noticed what a "mad, ruthless tyrant" Saddam Hussein was while he was our ally against Iran. No one in the administration felt moved to defend the Kurds from chemical weapons as long as Hussein stood with America against the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Neither Reagan nor Bush seemed to feel that "we cannot allow one country to invade another and expect to get away with it" when those presidents invaded, respectively, Grenada and Panama.

Bush did not regard a United Nations Security Council resolution as a categorical imperative when it condemned his invasion of Panama.

Neither Bush nor Reagan objected to arming the man Bernstein and Bridge define a "barbarian who has been twisted with years of hate and aggression."

I have not forgotten that America bombed an insane asylum in Grenada by mistake. Now we have bombed civilians in a shelter which an AP correspondent who saw it described as not apparently a military structure.

I, and other war protesters, can be in favor of "freedom for other people" without wanting to equal Hussein in aggression.

Regina Psaki
Romance Languages

Nukes no option

Amid the din arising from the clash of the pro and anti-war voices that fill the air,

where is the credible, reasonable and convincing voice we need to hear, a voice that can explain why the mixture of patriotism, logic, morality and historical accuracy is proving to be so inadequate to move Americans toward each other instead of leaving the two camps polarized, accusing each other, unable to be moved by the irrefutable commonality of their humanity?

Bertrand Russel, the famous British philosopher, once wrote, "I appeal as a human being to human beings: above all else remember your humanity and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new paradise; if you cannot, nothing lies before you but universal death."

At this point in human history, must we not be starkly aware of the validity of this admonition? Yet, like the proverbial lemmings who periodically march blindly to their death as they follow their leader into the sea, we too, mindlessly and willingly feed our loved ones into the slaughterhouse of war at the behest of our leaders.

Bloody military engagements are not a solution. They are the problem.

And when Vice President Dan Quayle publicly announces that the use of nuclear weapons to defeat Saddam Hussein is a considered option, (it should not for a moment be forgotten that he is only a heartbeat away from the presidency), it gives one sober pause as we note the frayed thread from which "the sword of Damocles" hangs so threateningly over our heads.

Joe Austin
Instructor
Peace, Glasnost,
and Perestroika

Indiscreet valor

A colleague of ours, Jim, has notified me of late that he is going to join the fight against Saddam Hussein's evil tyranny.

I find it comforting to know that Jim will be out there, putting himself in harm's way to win one for his "Gipper." It is

just his sort of indiscreet valor that makes for the kind of men we need in the gulf.

That madman Hussein will rue the day he decides to incur the wrath of men like Jim — who knows what needs to be done and is not afraid to tell us how to do it.

My only reservation to Jim's decision to enlist is that his career in primary education will have to be sacrificed for the moment. But alas. Great men are not satisfied to be merely "kindergarten cops."

Kevin Miller
Student

Lacking logic

In her letter (*ODE*, Feb. 19), Koalini Roberts' logic is "questionable at most."

In designating the business school as "less important" than other departments at the University, Roberts employs the same biased, normative judgments she accuses the University of making in its choice of programs to be cut.

It doesn't follow that because students are business majors, they will be consumed by a relentless drive to "seek profit at any cost," will "protect the business interests of oil companies and weapons manufacturers," or will make only marginal, if any, contributions to society. Do all students in other majors then follow the opposite path in life?

Clearly we must appreciate the value of all programs at the University, or at the very least, recognize the diversity of educational experience a widely varied choice of programs allows for.

It is important that students are united in opposing cuts in any and all departments. Only this kind of unification will be strong enough to send the message to the University administration that what we want first and foremost is choice in our education — not choices made for us by the administration or those with one-sided views such as Roberts expounds.

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