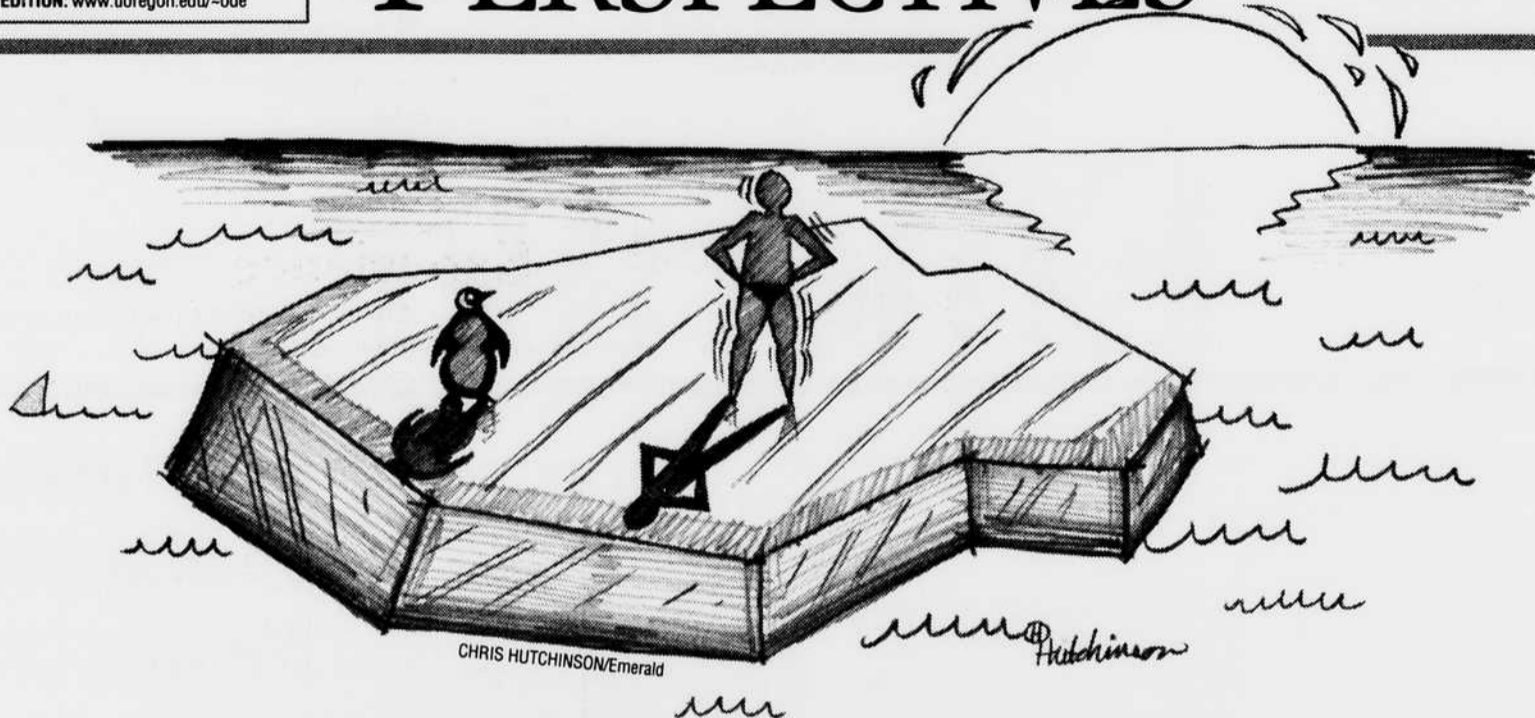


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Failing to pay U.N. leaves U.S. isolated

Conservative forces pushed Congress to pass a foreign aid bill without paying U.N. dues

Sen. Jesse Helms is an embarrassment to the United States and the state of North Carolina.

If North Carolina won't take the incentive, the United States should begin the long battle for respectability by shipping Helms off to a little island in the Arctic Ocean with nothing but a string bikini to keep him warm.

Once Helms has been safely removed from the picture, Congress should finally pay the United Nations all the money the U.S. government owes the international agency. Unfortunately, in the status quo Helms remains firmly entrenched as the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Congress just passed a foreign aid bill that did not include the \$900 million we owe the United Nations.

At one point, the Senate had approved payment of the debt, but Helms had placed restrictions on the money in the form of a series of demands for U.N. reform. Then, President Clinton miraculously held to his beliefs and threatened to veto language that would have prevented aid from going to family planning groups that deal with abortion.

AN EMERALD EDITORIAL

Suddenly, Congress felt it had Clinton over a barrel, and a whole new round of political fighting began. First, Congress offered to grant Clinton fast-track approval of trade agreements in exchange for leaving the anti-abortion language in.

Miracles continued, as the American people not only won an end to fast-track approval of economically and socially destructive free-trade policies, but also prevented the anti-abortion forces in Congress from winning on foreign aid when Clinton rejected the deal.

Instead, the United Nations found itself under the guillotine. In the final foreign aid bill, the anti-abortion language was gone, and so was funding for the United Nations, a \$3.5 billion loan to the International Monetary Fund and \$50 million in increased funding for international family planning.

Not everything about the bill or the deal is unfortunate. Despite not increasing money for family planning, Congress did maintain donations at the current level of \$385 million. In addition, the bill grants \$222 million for the Peace Corps, \$700 million for refugee aid and \$650 million for "child survival and disease programs," according to The Associated Press.

Such provisions are admirable because

they help impoverished and suffering people throughout the world and because they indicate the United States has not abdicated its role in the world. After all, many of the world's economic problems are caused by U.S. economic imperialism and private corporations; it only makes sense that the United States attempt to rectify some of the harm it causes in addition to helping those affected by other unfortunate circumstances.

Failing to loan money to the IMF is not necessarily a bad policy decision. Some political observers believe foreign investment and heavy reliance upon international loans helped create the economic crisis in Southeast Asia that the IMF funding was supposed to solve.

Conversely, the \$1 billion Congress provided for the World Bank is also questionable. While Third World nations do need capital in order to develop their economy and provide for their citizens, too often World Bank loans (like those of the IMF) are tied to the political interests of the First World lending nations.

It is in the decision not to pay the United Nations that Congress most clearly failed, however. No matter what the John Birch Society says, paying our U.N. dues is not going to enable blue-helmeted troops to invade the

United States and force us into prison camps while the entire West is converted into a giant wildlife refuge.

The United Nations is, if anything, often a tool for U.S. political purposes. Nevertheless, it does provide valuable social services throughout the world and at least allows nations an opportunity for productive diplomatic discourse before they start lobbing missiles.

The United States had no problem pumping \$5.4 billion into the Middle East, much of it to economically and militarily secure nations with questionable human-rights records. But we refused to pay money we are obligated to provide to an organization that helps prevent human-rights violations. Something is profoundly wrong with this approach to policy-making and foreign aid.

Whether the United States ever places Helms on an island, we cannot isolate ourselves. Our role in world politics should change dramatically, but we need to continue to play some role. The United Nations is an important part of that role, and if we place any value on the benefits it provides, we need to pay our U.N. dues.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Squirrel story silly

Recently, the lead article in the Emerald was "Squirrels may face nut shortage" (ODE, Nov. 10). Is this a joke? Out of all the current events on campus, in the neighborhood and extending out to the state, this deserves the front page? I do not believe that it does.

The University is an acclaimed research university. The students and faculty address intellectual questions and strive to find the solutions to problems that perplex us as individuals and citizens. Articles such as the squirrel article are insulting and embarrassing.

To begin with, the article is poorly written. One man, who is a romance language instructor, not a biologist or ecologist, has been taking an eyeball inventory of the number of nuts produced on the campus. In the article every scientist and specialist interviewed disputed the instructor's claims. I do not believe that adequate information is given in the article to show that there might be a nut shortage and that the squirrels are hungry.

Aside from this lies the major problem — the article is insulting on an intellectual level. By running this squirrel article, the Emerald is making the statement that this is the most important issue of the day. Personally, I do not believe this is true. In the same issue of the paper, there are articles about a sustainability symposium, student entrepreneurs and Kwanzaa. I would much rather read a more elaborate story on any of these subjects. They have the potential of reporting the news while educating students.

The Emerald needs to look more closely at the ramifications of its actions. By running such ludicrous articles as this one, the University, the students and the paper portray a negative image. This is a research university where discovery and knowledge are abundant. Interesting questions are being raised on a daily basis. The Emerald needs to start reporting these stories so that the students can rely on the current events in the paper to add to their education rather than just relying

on the paper for the crossword puzzle in the back.

Kimberly Lewis
 Environmental studies

Rape awareness crucial

Jim Wood's letter regarding urinal screens is sadly misinformed (ODE, Nov. 7). The screens say, "You hold the power to stop rape," not "have" as he suggested. I don't want to get into an argument over semantics, though. To answer his questions: yes you do; no you're not; yes it is.

What Wood is missing is that everyone holds the power to prevent rape and that we in the ASUO decided to start our educational campaign with men as the target. While the screens do imply that men are physically holding the power to prevent rape while urinating, the actual message is that men need to play a much larger role in preventing rape and in working to the end of the rape culture we live in. While you may not be a rapist or even someone with violent tendencies, men perpetuate this rape culture by using sexist language, purchasing

pornography and by generally not acknowledging the privileges they are accorded as men.

To use your own analogy, you can in fact prevent rape much in the same way you can help prevent robbery. By not buying stolen goods and by not accepting thievery in any way, you are not facilitating theft. Much in the same way that you, as a person that says he will never rape, can prevent thefts, you can help to prevent rape. If we as men would get together and stop accepting the rape culture that has been handed to us, then we can start to make a dent in the statistics that tell us that one in four college-age women will be sexually assaulted.

The rape culture we live in blames and shames women for being sexually assaulted by looking at how they are dressed, whether they were drinking and how they were acting (maybe they were asking for it). The rape culture demands that women be dressed and made up sexy but not be sexually active (unless it bene-

fits us). It supports the pornography industry (over \$4 billion annually) and validates the commodification of women and images of the women. How do we, as men and as a society, combine these contradictions into acceptability? I'm not sure, but I know that we do and that holding ourselves accountable is how we can start to help prevent rape.

We can do this by not participating in sexist language and saying something against it when we hear it around us, especially with our friends. We can stop supporting the pornography industry and not buy into women as objects. Men do hold the power to prevent rape; the question is whether we are going to accept this responsibility and when. The sooner men take stock of their privileges and how they play into the rape culture we live in, the sooner we can start working against it and start helping the women we love (our mothers, sisters, girlfriends, wives...) not have to face the fear of this sickening plague.

Robert Wasson
 ASUO Multicultural Advocate