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PERSPECTIVES

Sticks, stones and bombs

Is NATO the big bully of the world's schoolyard?

I was sitting on the front porch the other day, enjoying the comforting warmth of a savory cup of tea and watching the kindergarten kids across the street frolic in the sun during their lunchtime break. A sight of nostalgic and yearning beauty, young children having fun and making the most out of their infantile existence before the pimply and tormented days of puberty arrive or the sad and brutal reality of adulthood kicks in.

It's usually pretty inspiring to watch them gleefully rollicking about, and it's always with a broken heart and misty eyes that I see them disappear back inside the pink building when their midday break is through. Ah, children.

Opinion



Vince Medeiros

But anyway, as I was saying, the other day, sitting on the porch and drinking tea, I noticed a bit of a ruck breaking out between two of the kiddies in the yard. One, a big, burly, strong boy, the other, a rickety, spindly, little junior. The two furiously scrambling in the plot, not unlike many trash Hollywood flicks we see on TV these days — bats, chains, knives, kung fu and all the usual gangster paraphernalia.

Well, not really. The big boy was so much bigger than the small one that the little guy had no chance other than running and trying to escape the anger of his voluminous opponent.

And so he did. Ran. Ran, ran, ran. But he is no Prefontaine and was not wearing Nikes. So it took the big one only a couple of his lengthy broad steps to capture the wee kid, grab him by the shirt, hoist him up and chuck the boy on the dirt as if he were dealing with a bag of potatoes from Safeway. That simple, I swear. He landed near a group of girls, but no collateral damage this time.

Instants later I saw the mud-covered little lad stand up and start floundering away, and I thought to myself: "Well, suppose that's it. The strike against the small boy is over," not forgetting to thank the Lord above for his providentially divine assistance in ending the row.

Yeah, right. Suddenly, a bevy of young-yet-already-avid-for-blood spectators started gathering around the two. I could hear them saying that the little one was evil and often mistreated other classmates. So they began chanting a war tune and cheering the big kid on, instigating him to launch further attacks.

And so he did. Without hesitation, the big kid starts his campaign, lunges at the helpless child and mercilessly slugs him, projecting him as if he were an air raid bomb straight to the ground. The victim, groggy and stumbling, tries his best to get up, but the weather is still good so the big guy takes advantage and lands another powerful right to the kiddie's swollen eye, sending him directly back to the mat.

I notice a few trying to intervene, apparently saying that the use of force in the schoolyard is banned unless explicitly authorized by the school's security council. I hear them yell that the big kid is violating the other kid's sovereignty, or something along those lines.

Also, that the small kid's hands are probably as dirty as those of some of the big one's friends.

All in vain. Apparently the little rogue will stop at nothing to se-

cure his domination over the schoolyard. So the massacre goes on.

He then jumps on the defenseless junior and starts a cruel and bloody festival of right hooks in the mouth accompanied by a flurry of left fists to the kidney. With the victim still moaning and sobbing in the mud, the aggressor stands up and side-foots him in the head, then crouches and gives him another cruel smack on the bleeding nose.

The fight ends when the aggressor mounts on junior and flings a left-right-left combo, brutally knocking the victim out. Horrible, cowardly, murderous aggression, the one I witnessed in the kindergarten yard across the street from my house.

Just like NATO's attacks against Yugoslavia.

Vince Medeiros is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.



Giovanni Salimena/Emerald

Letters to the Editor

Bring back OSPiRG

Today I read a flier encouraging students to oppose funding for OSPiRG in the upcoming student election. It urged students not to fund OSPiRG because much of the money that goes to OSPiRG is spent off campus; however, it is OSPiRG's off-campus work tackling pressing social problems that is one of the strongest reasons to re-establish OSPiRG on this campus.

Toxic chemicals are dumped into our waterways, sprayed on the food we eat and poured into the air we breathe — despite the evidence of their adverse effects on people and other living things. OSPiRG directly addresses these issues and its efforts often take place off campus. I will cite one example of OSPiRG's work. When Eugene citizens passed the most comprehensive toxic right-to-know law in the nation, there was an effort to overturn this law at the state level. OSPiRG's professional staff in Salem played a critical role in stopping the attack on Eugene's law. That effort needed a professional staff with a reach that extended beyond the boundaries of the campus.

The cost of OSPiRG is less than \$3 a term for students. It is your choice. You get the

opportunity to vote on re-establishing OSPiRG. I urge you to vote yes for OSPiRG — it's a bargain.

Bob O'Brien
Professor, Sociology

Neon still kills

Last term, a group of students got together to battle the evils of neon paper. This group called themselves "Neon Kills," named after an advertising project that had been accepted as a real campaign to educate the campus about the toxins that neon paper contains. This campaign has been very effective in doing two distinct things. It has made students realize that neon paper goes into the low-grade bins located around campus and has also caused various student organizations to pledge against their use of this toxic paper.

I feel that this campaign has been very effective. However, there is still a lot of neon paper being pinned up on boards throughout the campus. It is realistic that the "Neon Kills" group has not reached 100 percent of the student body, but I just want to make the neon users who do not know about the dan-

gers of dioxin (a byproduct of chlorine bleach and dye used in coloring papers) realize that neon paper will always be a problem as long as it is getting produced. Dioxin is big contributor to cancer and it contaminates the recycling process. So next time you want to put up a flier or a sign, remember that neon paper is a killer.

Simon Baumgart
Journalism

Catholics insulted

On Monday, April 12, the Emerald published a column by Jason George about the serious topic of child pornography and how much is too far. The column was excellent and brought up many important points. However, the decision was made to publish an editorial cartoon that depicts a boy in the confessional with a priest who looks crazed. This is offensive to myself and many other Catholic students at the University. Turning the sacrament of reconciliation into something for comedy and derision is inappropriate.

This is not the first time that the Emerald

has decided to publicly insult Catholics and other members of religions that practice confession. On Jan. 13, there was another editorial cartoon that depicted a priest talking on a phone while in the confessional, telling the details of a confession. Needless to say, suggesting that priest would violate the seal of the confessional is extremely offending.

In the future, the Emerald editors should refrain from treating solemn religious rights as proper topics for satire.

John Holmstrom
Religious studies

LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Letters must be limited to 250 words. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar, style and libel. Letters may be dropped off at EMU Suite 300.