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## ■ In my opinion

# Unrealistic missile defense system

Next month "Doctor Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb," widely acclaimed as one of the greatest satirical films of all time, will be re-released in a 40th Anniversary Special Edition DVD. For those who haven't seen Stanley Kubrick's 1964 masterpiece, it's about the lighter side of nuclear destruction. By chance, the re-release coincides with the most ridiculous nuclear fiction of our day — President Bush's plan to begin deployment of a national missile defense.

The Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) is the modern incarnation of Reagan's "Star Wars" program, a shield designed to protect the United States from nuclear attacks. So far, the Washington Post reports President Bush dumped \$31 billion down this black hole. He's calling for an additional \$9 billion to \$10 billion a year if he's re-elected.

The administration has shunned requirements, goals and standard review processes. There is no way to measure BMDS's progress apart from tests conducted by the agency whose very existence depends on BMDS viability. The result is unrealistic test conditions involving incoming missiles equipped with global positioning systems. Even these highly scripted tests failed to prove BMDS's feasibility and were halted two years ago.

The project marches on, regardless. Senator Jack Reed (D-R.I.), member of the Armed Services Committee, criticizes the lack of oversight.

"We're in this hugely expensive race to build something, but we don't know how much it'll cost in the end or what it'll do," Reed said.

The few people in charge of internal review doubt BMDS will be competent. Thomas P. Christie, director of Operational Test and Evaluation at



JENNIFER MCBRIDE  
QUASHING DISSENT

the Department of Defense, estimates that the system may be only 20 percent effective. Expert physicists question developers' claims that the system will ever be able to distinguish a nuclear weapon from a decoy. Tests with even simple targets become exhibitions of pure pathos. Pentagon officials blame this not on design flaws but on issues dealing with the quality of specific, individual parts. Some of those "individual parts" aren't even available yet, and won't be in the near future.

If we're not even sure if BMDS is possible and it's clearly underdeveloped, why are we setting up to deploy it? Nobody seems to know. But the administration's gung-ho efforts to produce a public relations victory are putting Americans at risk.

Deployment before equipment is ready discourages further development. In the 1990s, the U.S. developed Theater High-Altitude Area Defense, a similar anti-missile system, but pressures to deploy early led to compromises in its design and testing. Ironically, early deployment delayed the project by years.

The same thing could happen to BMDS. Philip E. Coyle III, the Pentagon's chief weapons evaluator during the Clinton administration, worries deployment will lock the U.S. into fatally flawed technology while creating a false sense of security. "The design gets frozen in order to build something, so

development is stopped. ... You can't be building a house and changing the floor plan at the same time."

"They'd still be testing at Kitty Hawk, for God's sake, if you wanted perfection," Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declared in yet another example of why he shouldn't be let out of the White House without a leash. But the Pentagon isn't just deploying a flawed mechanism, it's deploying a fantasy — and U.S. taxpayers are expected to shoulder the burden of an administrative pipe dream.

The problem is, if billions of dollars later BMDS actually does protect us from nuclear launches, even optimistic officials estimate it can only stop 80 percent of all missiles. To compensate, other nations like China will have to develop more weapons in order to maintain the mutually-destructive status-quo. This could lead to the entire destabilization of South Asia, pushing the fragile India-Pakistan standoff nearer to the brink of destruction.

The continued pursuit of this chimerical daydream is destroying our relationships abroad, as they see the U.S. risking increased proliferation for no reason. With our military stretched thin, we are more dependent on allies than ever for our national security. Alienating them is less than wise.

BMDS technology is flawed, expensive and puts the world in more danger. Every good gambler can tell you there's a moment when you cut your losses.

Continuing to parade BMDS as a pre-election panacea for nuclear warfare is the greatest farce of all. Who knows? In 40 years, someone might make a movie about it.

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## ■ Editorial

# Parking alternatives follow same bumpy road

If there is one serious issue on this campus that gets no respect, it's parking. It is an issue that confronts the students, faculty and staff on a daily basis and is one that has, for the most part, fallen by the wayside as University planners have set their sights on more glamorous and high-profile projects.

Let's face it — the University has a serious problem with parking. The University sells two to three times as many parking permits as available spots, meaning students spend \$94 per term (a 3 percent increase from last year) not for a parking space, but rather for a license to hunt for one.

DPS Parking and Transportation Manager Rand Stamm told the Emerald in a Sept. 20 article that price increases are designed to "discourage students from driving."

Meanwhile, the University is trying to bully students into either living in their cramped dorms or moving just off-campus to areas that the city government now seems to want to strip of student tenants.

Well, it is working. The thought of having to drive to campus makes it hard to get up in the morning.

Many in the University community, especially those with off-campus jobs, have no choice but to drive. That can mean scheduling classes in two hour blocks to accommodate parking or desperately searching for the few free parking spots in the neighborhoods surrounding the campus.

We don't condone the notion that everyone should have their own personal parking space on campus either, but other options seem to be in danger of withering on the vine. The bus is generally a good alternative and we applaud the University for making good use of mass transit, but depending on where you live and where you need to go during the day the bus often won't take you there in a timely manner, if at all.

Biking to school, always a popular alternative form of transportation, now promises to become more of a hassle now that DPS is increasing enforcement of bike laws. Besides, the prospect of biking down any of the University's main streets (which are essentially the only approved bike routes) five minutes before class means weaving in and out of crowds of clueless pedestrians.

While we don't want to encourage students to drive alone to campus before looking at more environmentally friendly options, there are some cold hard facts to face: the University is growing. In 1997, the total fall enrollment head count was 17,207; today that figure is at 20,033.

There are no easy solutions, but more parking or smarter parking should definitely be part of the conversation. The University loves to make claims about how well it plans for the future, but even with all the brain power and innovation in this institution, we still cling to the simplest choices.

Parking lots around campus, such as the lot behind the Knight Law Library, just isolate the community from the University, setting us off from Eugene like a moat around a castle. University planners might consider skipping the vast vacant lots of blacktop currently employed as parking lots — when new buildings are constructed they should come with underground parking facilities.

Whatever the decision, the University needs to take a long hard look at the policies in place, because right now we are on a collision course with disaster.

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