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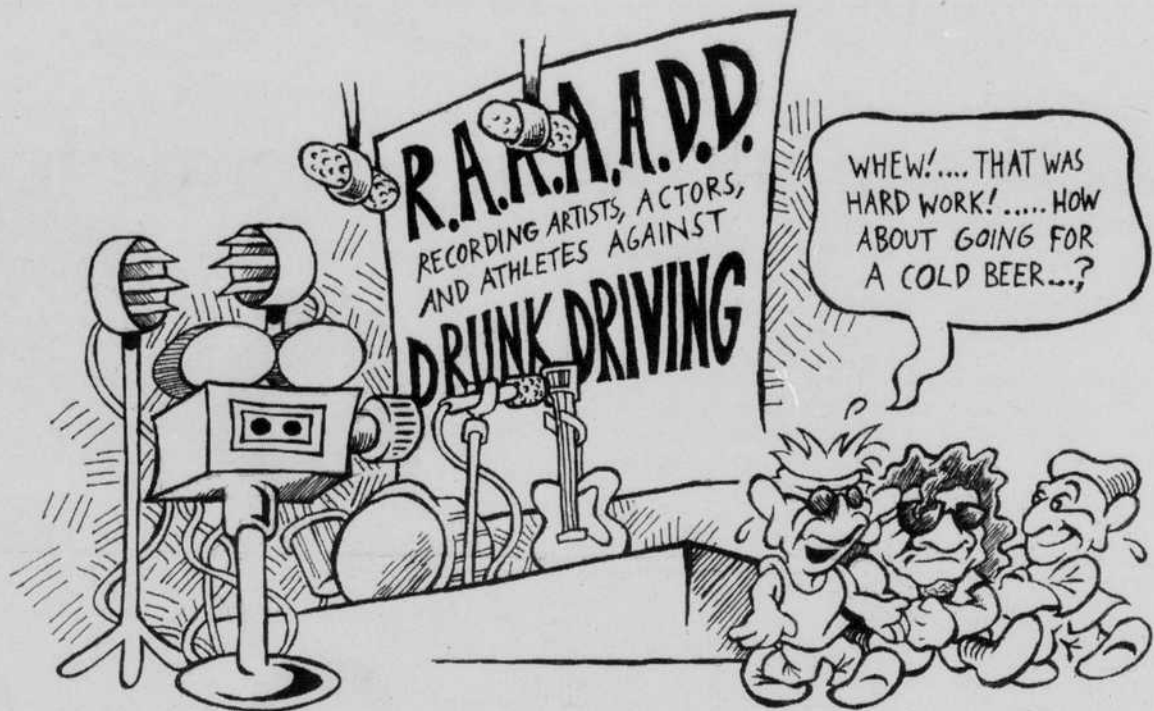
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FURTWANGLER

BRET FURTWANGLER | GRAPHIC ARTIST

■ In my opinion

Democrats, bolt from Bolton

Democrats have made a huge mistake in their pursuit of a political symbol over common sense. George Bush has selected John Bolton for the post of United Nations ambassador, and Democrats seem determined to pick a fight, wasting valuable political capital on a near non-issue. Democrats need to focus on fights they can win, or at least fights that are politically advantageous. On a more personal level, I'd like to see Democrats engage in fights that are right.

Is John Bolton the best person for the job? Probably not. Is he the man that President Bush selected? Yes. The bottom line is that the main job of the U.N. ambassador is to be the voice of the president's policy. It's important to note the difference between creating policy and talking about it. How often do you hear the news media breaking stories about the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations? The fact is that the position of ambassador is no kingpin in a presidential bungalow but a cog in the smallest of possible rotating wheels.

The Democrats have three major objections to Bolton as ambassador: his qualifications, his previous actions working in U.S. intelligence and his political opinions about the United Nations. The first and second protests are easily dismissed. First, his qualifications are about as important as his haircut. If President Bush has confidence in him, why should Congress protest? If it blocks Bush's choice, there is no guarantee that the president won't choose someone even less qualified.

Second, Bolton has been accused of trying to fire aides who didn't present



JENNIFER MCBRIDE
QUASHING DISSENT

intelligence he agreed with. The best solution seems to be to get him out of the U.S. intelligence system. Because Congress doesn't have the power to fire him, it might as well grease the track that will slide him down the hill from important decision-maker to meaningless bureaucrat.

But the third and most troubling path of pursuit against Bolton are attacks by Democrats on his past comments. Bolton's opinions are not that inflammatory. They may even be justified. In one speech that Sen. Barbara Boxer criticized, Bolton said, "There is no being out there called the 'United Nations.' There is simply a group of member governments who, if they have the political will, every once in a while ... protect international security. ... I think it would be a real mistake to count on the United Nations as if it's some disembodied entity out there capable of functioning on its own."

His sentiments are entirely correct. When members of the Security Council can veto any kind of resolution they dislike, when Syria is a pivotal guardian of human rights, when member governments can sign onto essential treaties with reservations and wriggle through loopholes, I agree that the United Nations has

never been ineffective. Too often liberals see the United Nations as a representation of everything good in the world. People should be more skeptical, especially in the wake of oil-for-food scandals and accusations that U.N. workers frequently double as pimps.

Of course the United Nations has a lot of positive attributes. The bottom line, however, is that the United Nations failed to act in stopping genocide in Rwanda, Sudan and Kosovo. Bolton is right in his assumption that if the United States withdraws from the United Nations, it will collapse like a house of cards. Without the United States, the United Nations would be unmasked as another powerless anachronism.

The problem is that focusing attention on Bolton is distracting from discussions of other nominees. I'd rather see voters focused on the nomination of Dr. Lester Crawford to the position of U.S. Food and Drug Administration commissioner. Crawford has presided over the push of questionable medication into the mouths of consumers, and he refuses to certify that he will release the "morning-after pill" into public consumption. Crawford is timid before the wrath of religious conservatives at a moment when so many senators are deep in the pockets of pharmaceutical companies. Now is not the time to entrust public health to another of President Bush's cowardly lapdogs.

In other words, Democrats need to bolt from Bolton and concentrate on more important issues.

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INBOX

How to be director of an air-quality organization

Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority is seeking a new director and recently went over the qualifications needed by applicants. I would like to extend some suggestions in case the new director wants to keep his job. First, realize that you must not

defend the citizens who complain of asthma, brown skies, breathing problems, polluted water from air emissions or dangerous toxins. Listen carefully to instructions from the polluting industry and make sure permits are few and never challenged by LRAPA. Ignore all those rules and regulations produced in the state south of us; they would

never pass here. Allow pollution to increase in our valley, approve every new industry or polluter who wants to build here and then assure the public that everything is safe and under control.

Job security is always part of the picture.

Ruth Duemler
Eugene

■ Editorial

Extending smoking restriction detrimental

University officials are working to extend campus smoking policies to match a recent citywide ordinance. Eugene City Council passed the new ordinance Feb. 28. The law extended the city smoking ban to 25 feet from the doors of publicly owned buildings, and it does not apply to University buildings.

Officials are wasting their time with this policy. For one, we doubt the University is going to start equipping the Department of Public Safety with tape measurers to ensure that an additional 15 feet (the current standard at the University is 10 feet) separates a smoker from a building. We have seen signs on doors to buildings such as the Lillis Business Complex stating that smoking is not allowed within 50 feet. On a daily basis, smokers practically lean against these signs and light up. There is no system in place for enforcing these rules, and until there is, don't squander time making more of them.

Paula Staight, director of health education at the University Health Center, said she would like to see smoking banned on campus, similar to the policies in place at most K-12 schools. The vast majority of students on this campus are adults, at least legally speaking. College students should not be subject to the same rules as children.

Let's pretend the ban is now in effect.

Problem No. 1: People smoke to reduce stress. Many college students (people with heavy class loads, multiple jobs, bills, etc.) rely on a quick cigarette during a 10-minute break to calm down, collect their thoughts and prepare for their next class. If smoking were outlawed on campus, it would result in a higher stress level among students and professors.

Problem No. 2: Rather than forfeit smoking during school hours, many would choose to walk to the edge of campus to get their fix and then rush to class. We're not sure professors would appreciate an increase in the number of late students.

Problem No. 3: Smokers' freedom is already under attack in bars, restaurants and every other indoor space. Many smokers understand that smoking indoors poses a threat to other people's health. However, this cannot be said for the outdoors. To extend smoking laws to large outdoor areas would be an infringement on personal choice and civil liberties, with little payoff.

We would never encourage this unhealthy habit, but we plead with the University administration to leave smokers the outdoors on this campus. Setting empty rules with little enforcement that infringe on student rights is bad policy and a waste of time. In the words of graduate teaching fellow Terese Reynolds ("25 feet," ODE, April 6), "This is the only place we have left."

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