

# Editorial

Daily  
**Nebraskan**

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Bob Asmussen, Editor, 472.1766  
James Rogers, Editorial Page Editor  
Kent Endacott, News Editor  
Jeff Korbellek, Associate News Editor  
Jeff Apel, Sports Editor  
Charles Lieurance, Arts & Entertainment Editor

## Saudi arms sale Presidential veto justified

The recent political confrontation between the President and Congress on the Saudi Arabian arms proposal overshadowed the significant geopolitical issues involved. The Saudi's originally requested \$1.1 billion worth of arms. This was subsequently reduced to \$354 million worth of missiles, then further trimmed to \$265 million after the Stinger anti-aircraft missiles were dropped due to Congressional opposition.

Even this small arms package drew significant opposition. Both the House and Senate passed a resolution disapproving the sale. The President then vetoed the resolution and set the stage for last week's veto override attempt in the Senate.

A two-thirds vote, or a total of 67 votes, was needed to override Reagan's veto. The vote fell one short and the attempt failed, 66-34.

Nebraska Senator J. James Exon was one of the senators that changed his vote and supported the president on the veto override attempt. His justification went beyond the narrower Mideast issues involved. He argued that "Today we have the leader of the free world laying his prestige on the line. That makes it a considerably different situation (from last month's vote)."

Irrespective of the prestige issue, the arms sale was and is highly controversial. Nonetheless, on balance, the move should be supported and the Senate was right to refuse to override Reagan's veto.

## The D.N. needs you

### Summer editor welcomes reader input

Edgads, not another "Welcome to the Daily Nebraskan" editorial.

Every year a new editor begins the semester or summer session with an editorial that introduces the staff, talks about goals and promises to listen to the opinions of the reader. The editorial usually reads like a politician's speech, filled with unfulfillable campaign promises.

But, there are some promises that this regime can make and feel fairly secure about. We promise to listen to our readers, we promise to have a good staff and we promise to have several goals.

Putting out a daily newspaper which is published only twice a week presents an interesting challenge to the staff of the Daily Nebraskan. The dilemmas are many. First, there's the question of what kind of news we are looking for. Do we fill the Tuesday and Friday papers with Monday's and Thursday's news or do we sum up the days prior to Monday and Thursday?

What we'll try to do is provide our readers with the most current and important news. At times we may sacrifice timeliness because of the importance of a story.

The arguments against the sale are significant and deserve to be taken seriously. Simply the spectre of sending more arms into the tinderbox of the Mideast was thought by many to justify halting the sale. The domestic volatility of the area given the rising tides of Moslem extremism could result in Saudi owned weapons ultimately being used against U.S. interests. This happened in Iran where a vehemently anti-American government inherited billions of dollars of U.S. arms.

Additionally, even though Saudi Arabia is considered a "moderate" Arab state it still pursues a tough line against Israel; the only real democracy in the Mideast and a close ally of the U.S.

Even given these considerations, however, Reagan's argument on the importance of aiding moderate Arab states is compelling. Before the vote Reagan accurately said that "American influence in the region is absolutely vital to world peace, and to exercise that influence we must retain the trust of the moderate Arab nations."

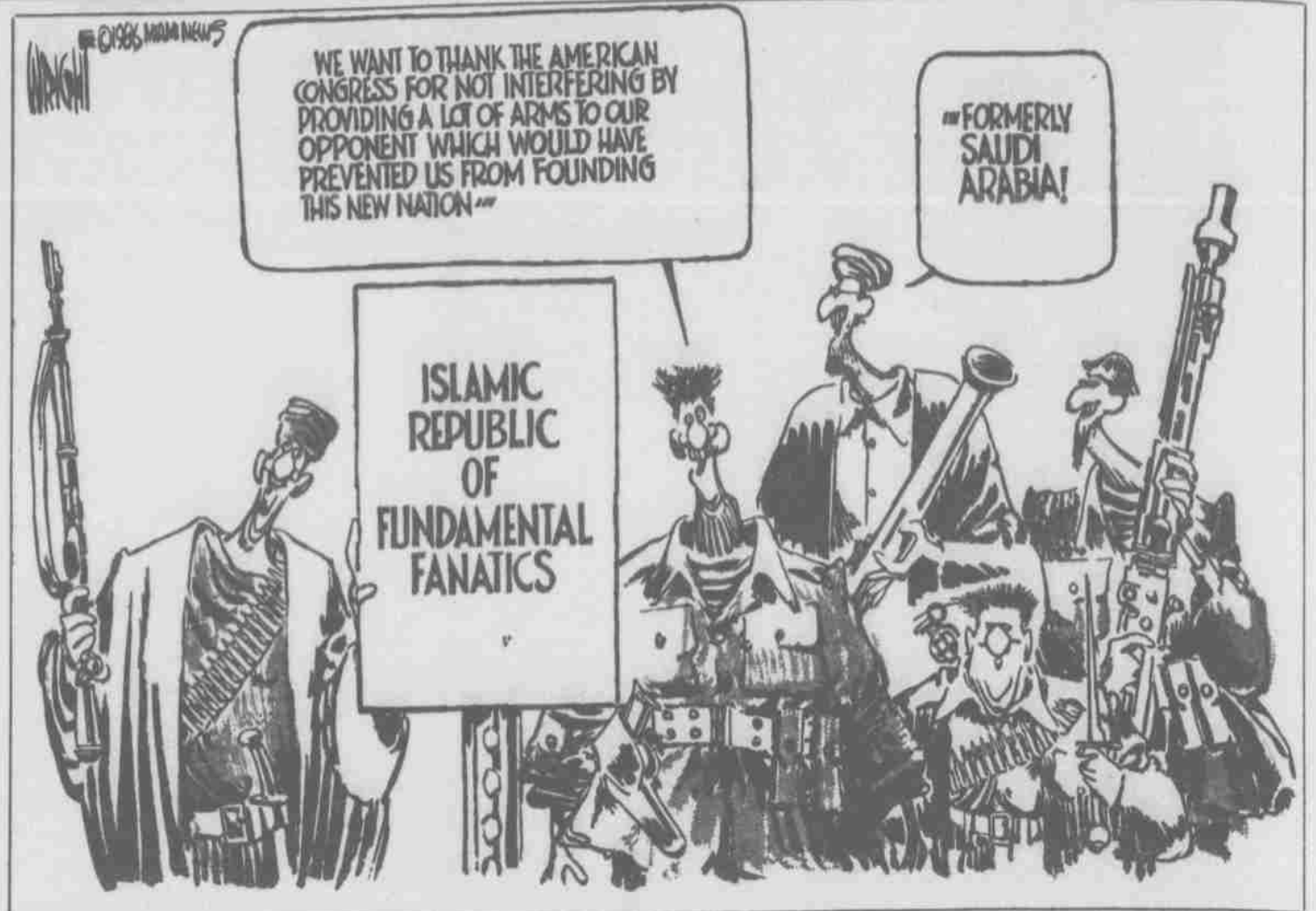
The move is admittedly a gamble, but the option of not playing the game simply doesn't exist. If U.S. arms are not sold, these nations will simply purchase them elsewhere, resulting in the same or greater level of armaments in the area while American influence is lessened. Reagan's move was justified and is one good move, among others, aimed at insuring long-term peace in the Mideast.

Secondly, how will we survive the summer without a daily ration of "Bloom County"? Because "Bloom County" is a daily comic strip and the Daily Nebraskan is a twice-a-week newspaper, "Bloom County" will hibernate this summer.

Thirdly, is anyone out there? The Daily Nebraskan wants input from its readers. There are three ways readers can do this. They can write us letters that we usually print on the editorial page. Readers can also call the editor's office or come to the Daily Nebraskan office.

The Daily Nebraskan's main purpose is to serve its primary readers, the students of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Because the reader is our purpose for existence, we want, and need, both positive and negative input from the reader.

Summer is a time when many people take vacations, go on picnics and go swimming. But, while all that fun stuff is going on outside, rest assured that the Daily Nebraskan staff will be hard at work in its basement office with five windows. We don't get out much, so if something exciting is going on, let us know about it.



## Restricting liability limits justice

### Limits on access and liability disregard true costs of services

"And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist...if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed."

"If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten...of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution."

"If fire break out...he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution." Exodus 21:18-19; 22:5-6.

The liability crisis has captured the national limelight. During April and May, every major network news program featured horror stories about "excessive" awards and the massive increases in liability insurance premiums that is claimed to result from the "crisis." The stories typically featured some service — either public or private — which was forced to end after large premium increases.

The significantly increased coverage has had an impact on public opinion.

In a recently released Harris poll large majorities of Americans indicated that they thought it much too easy for people to file lawsuits and that the settlements were generally too high. Policies proposed to respond to the "crisis" include restricted access to the court system for those who believe they have been compensably injured, and "caps" on the amount of awards that can legally be given in successful

suits. The wisdom of these proposals are fundamentally suspect.

First, there is the problem of the public's perception as to whose ox is getting gored. The public's attitude toward the liability crises is not unlike the public's response to the budget crisis. Everybody wants budget cuts when discussion is limited to a general, abstract level. But once you begin talking about specifics the cuts should always be made "somewhere else."



Jim Rogers

When simply looking at aggregate numbers it's easy to say that too many suits are filed and that awards are too high. But who doesn't get to go to court, and who doesn't get the cash? When specifics are introduced wholesale access and liability limitations are unable to distinguish between frivolous and meritorious claims with sufficient precision to avoid substantial injustice.

Additionally, we have to remember that, by and large, the same people that grant these large awards are the same people answering the surveys. Members of the public sometime discover that \$1 million for a baby's brain damage or a father's vegetated condition maybe isn't so excessive.

Secondly, the proper function of the American system of liability in allocating costs in a correctly working free market system cannot be ignored. If

people are injured but not adequately compensated they alone must bear the cost of their injury. But if someone else was at fault for that injury, to refuse adequate compensation is to render an injustice.

If recovery is allowed, say, against the business that was at fault, then the firm's higher prices due to increased insurance premiums is not a social evil to be avoided, but simply reflects the true costs of doing business in that market. Either consumers will pay the increased prices or decide that they no longer need the product given that its true costs are greater than they desire to pay.

Thus, for example, if a swimming pool finds that its prices are too high to maintain sufficient demand for the service when it must pay premiums that reflect its true costs of operations, we shouldn't cry when it is closed down. To suggest that liability should be limited in order to keep the pool open is to suggest that the public at large should be granted a subsidy at the cost of the few individuals who would be wrongly injured, and unable to seek or attain just compensation.

I do not suggest that the current liability system works in a fashion even moderately close to optimality. Nonetheless, there are remedies other than capping awards and/or restricting court access that more adequately address the heart of the crisis. Access reduction and award limitation only result in injustice — our personal budgets, as it were, are balanced on the backs of the crippled and mutilated.

Rogers is a law and economics graduate student.

## Castro's vanity prevents jamming of U.S.-broadcast Radio Marti

On a cool morning recently, Jay Mallin was coolly telling a reporter that the radio station for which Mallin works as news director cannot be — heaven forbid! — "blamed" for successful escapes from Cuba.

Granted, Radio Marti's weather reports, broadcast from Washington and transmitted from Florida, are more detailed than reports broadcast by Cuban government radio. Marti's long-term forecasts and information on tides are closely listened to, especially by persons — often of military draft age — who are considering dangerous floats to freedom on inner-tube rafts.

Granted, also, such people are especially apt to listen to Marti, the U.S. government Spanish-language station now beginning its second year of broadcasting to Cuba. But Marti is prevented by its strict charter, as well as the wisdom of its administrators, from incitements.

Mallin tolerates no name-calling.

Castro is referred to as the leader. Mallin has had Castro on his mind for many years.

Born in 1927 in New York into an American family with two generations of roots in Cuba, he was working for Time magazine during the revolution.



George Will

During Castro's victory march to Havana in January, 1959, the lead car carried Castro, the second car his security people, the third car the Time-Life contingent.

Ernesto Betancourt, Marti's director, supported the revolution in the 1950s and represented Castro's movement in Washington in 1957-58. He

left Cuba in 1960, when Castro's anti-democratic intentions became clear.

Marti's impact is measured anecdotally, but by lots of anecdotes. There are interviews with travelers from Cuba, surveys of emigrants from Cuba (often arriving through third countries), correspondence from Cuba to relatives here. Mail to and from Cuba is measured in tons. Thirty-thousand telephone calls are attempted daily from Miami and 6,000 get through.

Castro does not attempt maximum jamming of Marti, partly because of the cost. Cuba is a mendicant nation, selling its young men as soldiers in exchange for Soviet subsidies. Jamming is expensive. The Soviet Union spends about \$490 million a year to jam U.S. non-English broadcasts to the Soviet Union. Such U.S. transmissions cost just \$26 million. All Soviet jamming involves 15,000 technicians at

See WILL on 5