

# Editorial

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## Imaginary treaty SALT II can't be broken

Last week headlines screamed that, with the deployment of the 131st B-52 bomber, the United States had "broken" the 1979 strategic arms limitation treaty (known better as SALT II). Congressmen and foreign officials alike bemoaned the event.

Yet, irrespective of what one believes about the merit of arms limitation attempts (the historical record on such attempts is not encouraging about the success of such agreements), the simple fact is that no treaty was broken.

The U.S. Constitution is quite clear. Article II, defining executive branch powers, reads that the president "shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate to make treaties, provide two thirds of the Senators present concur." It is only this way that, according to article VI, "treaties made . . . under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land. . ."

No treaty ever existed — the Senate never ratified SALT II — thus no treaty could be broken.

Elected officials should stand or fall on the policies they advocate. You can't blame politicians for doing what they said they would do.

President Reagan was always clear in his opposition to SALT II. He claimed that arms limitation talks simply institutionalized the arms race and thus were a poor proxy for real arms reductions. Reagan also made it quite

clear before his 1984 re-election that he had no intention of abiding by the terms of the unapproved treaty proposal.

The American people have gone into this post-SALT II posture, as it were, with both eyes open. It makes no sense then to berate the president for "breaking" a non-treaty he never agreed with.

Additionally, the reaction of America's Western European allies is most ironic coming so closely on the heels of their negative reactions to the Iceland summit's potential. It's obvious that they do not know what they want. But that's not new for modern Western European democracies.

The problem, in both Europe and America, is that the status quo is being maintained because of the lack of acceptable alternatives, but the status quo itself is unacceptable. The status quo arms control posture is fundamentally schizophrenic. We're in a never-never land where real arms reduction is opposed and so is the acceptance of treaties.

The West lacks a coherent vision on how to grapple with the Soviets. It's the worst of all possible worlds — anything would be better: a cogent arms reduction posture or a clear-minded pursuit of a forceful strategic arms system. Either policy would probably be safer than the current muddle-headedness evidenced by the continual sniping at the president for arms reductions proposals or arms increases.



## The bloom is off Ron's (p)rose Iranian affair marks the end of the permissive presidency

I was never keen on the description of the Reagan Years as a Teflon presidency. When historians go searching for a label to mark the first six years of this administration, they won't find it in cookware. It's in that other domestic art: parenting. The 1980s will go down as nothing less than the era of the Permissive presidency.

How often did Ronald Reagan warn us about the evils of the permissive society? No rules, no brakes, no discipline, anything goes. It turns out the man was absolutely right. Throughout his formative early years as President, Ronald Reagan was a hapless victim of a politically permissive upbringing.

Consider the words of no less an authority on child-raising than Dr. Spock. Unfairly accused of being pediatrician to a permissive generation, the doctor himself warns: "A child, like an adult, knows when she is getting away with too much naughtiness. . . . If she isn't corrected, she's likely to behave worse and worse. It's as if she were saying, 'How bad to I have to be before somebody stops me?'"

Does he/she have to be shipping arms to the Ayatollah?

Apparently, it took the Iranian arms deal to get the American people to finally say "no" to their favorite son. For the first time, the overwhelming majority of Americans in this week's Los Angeles Times poll said they didn't believe the President when he denied trading arms for hostages.

In the United States, people are supposed to be custodians of the ward called democracy. But they have been unwilling to hold the president they love accountable for his actions. Maybe there was a little law-bending here, a

bit of diplomatic lying there, gun-running in Nicaragua, disinformation in Libya, tale-telling over the KAL 007, disorder in Reykjavik. We allowed an escalating series of events to be treated as if they were well-meaning acts or "misspeaks." Merely a stage he was going through.

Many chose to trust Ron rather than the evidence or, certainly, the evidence-

take care of themselves without "a watchdog."

There is some personal value in this self-deception. These parents free themselves from the responsibility of overseeing the behavior of their kids. Their young are either emancipated or neglected; the parents are off the hook.

It's the same with permissive politics. The eagerness to totally trust the President, to ignore any early warning signs, any notices that get sent home, allows us to go about our lives without paying attention. We actively want to be able to leave our public wards on their own.

In all this, there is yet another P-word: powerlessness. The most permissive parents or citizens I know are people who don't believe in their ability to have an impact, to effect change when things or people go awry. They go through Parent Ineffectiveness Training.

But what happens when the misbehavior keeps escalating? Let me return to Dr. Spock: "Eventually (his) behavior becomes so provoking that the parents' patience snaps."

The President offered a rationale of the Iranian arms deal that was about as convincing as a teen-ager's tale of how the family car got banged up. The country's patience didn't snap, but it is more than a bit frayed.

How do you prevent this generation from falling back into our permissive ways. There's a new and trendier way for raising politicians these days. They call it "tough love."

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Ellen  
Goodman



bearers. Like a fond family, we melted each time he came striding open-faced and cheerful into the living-room television greeting us, "Good evening . . . you know my name." We were, to put it simply, overindulgent and relentlessly approving.

Of course, the more we allowed his dubious behavior, the more the boundaries were pushed. It's textbook stuff. What do the child psychologists call it? Testing. The final test came when the man who promised he would never deal with terrorists got caught dealing and he couldn't quite charm his way out of it.

From my vantage point, permissiveness — either in the body politic or in parenting — bears a strong resemblance to another P-word in the casebooks: passiveness. Parents who prematurely resign as family rulemakers often delude themselves with the idea that their offspring are old enough to

and culture? Secondly, could this need be met by our current structure? After the proposal to create a programming committee on the City Council passed, it then moved to the Executive Board of UPC. The proposal was then altered by the Executive Board because it was a new programming area. We wanted to enter this new field cautiously and pay careful attention to the reaction by the campus. This was the justification for proposing funding for one year and to evaluate its successes and failures at the end of the first year. We have used this approach before, in the case of the Asian American Committee on the American Minority Council.

The reality of the committee receiving funding is far in the future. The first step, after it has passed Executive Board, is the Nebraska Union Board. Currently this is its status. If it passes Union Board, UPC will begin to formulate this committee's budget on a program by program basis/and will submit it to the Committee for Fees Allocation (CFA). If it passes this committee, the request proceeds to ASUN, then to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and then the final decision will rest with the Chancellor. As you can see, this proposal has a long way to travel before it becomes an actual, functioning committee of UPC. If formed, the Gay/Lesbian Programming Committee will become the 31st committee on UPC, the 13th on the City Council and will join the ranks of over 300 members of UPC.

We have written this letter in the hopes of informing students about the actual content of the proposal and the basis for our decisions. UPC will strive to meet the needs of students in the future and we hope that students can now make an informed decision.

Mark Whitacre  
Executive Board Coordinator  
University Program Council

## Letter

### 'Drunk' Native American image is unfair

I'm writing a response to an article dealing with Indian substance abuse, (D.N., Nov. 17).

As a freshman here at UNL, I try to be aware of topics and events that are interesting and available. There are definitely some important resources here to learn from. I am also a Native American, which gives me an added interest since some of the common occurrences here are first-time experiences for me. I appreciate very much the people I've learned from in exchanging cross-cultural information, and I want to thank people who have good intentions of being aware of our Native American culture.

Right now I want to express how angry I feel, because it seems that the "cultural" exposure about Native Americans is always alcohol-related. In the one short year I've been here, there have been quite a few programs about and for Native American awareness, but the spotlight always seems to fall on the alcohol problem of our population.

The overtone of the article projected an image that is constantly accented. I regret that I didn't hear Grobsmith's seminar. I'm sure she had a great deal to report which did not appear in the article. Her statement "The Indians feel no shame in being drunk," is very

difficult for someone like myself to read. (How many reports are being done about the generations of Indian people that have been colonized and the mental and physical damage that has been done to us in that process over the decades?)

The problems of our people are deeply rooted and there are no easy answers. Many of the studies done by outsiders come to conclusions that hardly have any impact on the centuries of problems that have been cultivated since our transition from our society too this one.

Another quotation was, "More Indian youth use drugs and alcohol than American youth." This surprises me because I've always thought of myself (and still do) as American when I was a youth. This type of statement becomes overwhelmingly alienating and I'm so tired of it and related statements.

On campus, if you see an Indian you will probably find a respectable, sober, hard-working student similar to yourself. There are other events concerning Native American culture that you might want to be aware of. The public is welcome.

Laskot Harden  
freshman  
English

## Proposed gay committee explained

There has been much attention lately to the proposed addition of a Gay/Lesbian Programming Committee to the City Council of the University Program Council (UPC). The aim of this letter is to give some

### Guest Opinion

background information so informed decisions can be made by students.

Since gay/lesbian students are not an American ethnic minority, which is what constitutes the American Minority Council of UPC, the proposal came before the City Council. Two months ago, UPC-City Council began discussion on the written proposal submitted by members of the Gay/Lesbian Student Association (GLSA). The discussion that followed centered around two considerations: First, was there a need for programming to the UNL students about gay/lesbian issues

and culture? Secondly, could this need be met by our current structure?

After the proposal to create a programming committee on the City Council passed, it then moved to the Executive Board of UPC. The proposal was then altered by the Executive Board because it was a new programming area. We wanted to enter this new field cautiously and pay careful attention to the reaction by the campus. This was the justification for proposing funding for one year and to evaluate its successes and failures at the end of the first year. We have used this approach before, in the case of the Asian American Committee on the American Minority Council.

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