



## Impotence

When the ASUN Senate stumbles into action tonight, that august body once again will be doing the same thing: its laundry. In fact, each time the senate has met this semester, it has concentrated on taking care of its own business, untangling and inching through its bureaucratic chores.

True, last spring the senate discussed the student lawyer proposal, and some senators worked toward its implementation. But a review of the 10 meetings since the new administration took office reveals that that is about all it has done.

The group has spent the rest of its time discussing its own budget, tusseling with the Council on Student Life over appointments to the Publications Committee, fighting over how much money to give the Student Bar Assn. and straightening out its own rules of procedure.

This year's record seems to indicate that ASUN has become nothing more than a giant bank from whose reserves other student organizations can make withdrawals. Its second function appears to be appointing persons to committees.

There are those who will say, "Look at the stands the organization has taken." True, it has taken some stands. Last spring it supported then-UNL law student John Robinson in his victorious race for the City Council. It also passed resolutions on football tickets and alcohol on campus.

But passing resolutions means nothing. The resolutions have been just the sound and fury of a group edging closer to impotence.

So what is ASUN to do to regain the importance it once held? Perhaps a good place to start would be the establishment of a new program which could aid students. The last such program established by ASUN was the Program for Active Commitment to Education (PACE). It was the brainchild of student government leaders and has aided scores of students through scholarship funds it provides.

To establish such programs will take more than the few hours a week or less many senators are devoting to ASUN. It will require scouting around for new ideas and much frustrating work. But that is why the current administration was elected. Senators and executives must do more than just manage the day to day business of the student government.

Michael (O.J.) Nelson

## 'Deficiency deviants' fail to hurt defense budget

Isolationists, pacifists, priority changers, one-world government advocates and all weaken-America groups received a stunning setback the past two weeks as the U.S. Senate adopted a new defense budget that will assure this country adequate protection from foreign aggression.

This is only a half victory for America, however, as the \$20.9 billion weapons procurement, research and development bill (HR 9286) now must go to a joint Senate-House conference committee to iron out differences in the measures passed by the two chambers.

Soviet Union already has launched three Trident-type submarines capable of firing long-range nuclear missiles at the U.S. from ocean sanctuaries.

In the words of Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash), "If by our indecision and vacillation in the Congress, we signal the Soviets we are willing to give them meaningful numerical disparities in strategic forces—if...we convey the impression we are not alert to the...consequences of such discrepancies, then there will be no chance that genuine arms limitation agreements and the stability that will flow from them can be achieved."

The only major victory for the Pentagon critics came when the Senate voted 48-36, on an amendment by Sens. Mike Mansfield (D-Mont) and Hubert Humphrey (D-Minn), to reduce by 23 per cent the 471,000 land-based U.S. troops stationed overseas.

This congressional interference with our troop levels abroad is imprudent, to say the least. America must have flexibility in this matter, as talks with the Russians on mutual and balanced force reductions in Europe open Oct. 30. What incentive will the Kremlin have to negotiate seriously when it simply can sit back and watch the U.S. cut levels on a unilateral basis?

Apart from that one flaw, the defense bill is full of beneficial provisions, among them:

—Reduction in the number of personal servants and houseboys allowed to admirals and generals.

—Bar reconstruction aid to North Vietnam until all U.S. troops missing in action are accounted for.

—Bar settlement of India's \$3 billion debt to the U.S. at less than the full amount.

—Authorization of \$50 million to help communities shift to civilian industry when military installations are closed.

It is important to note that the Pentagon is asking for \$1.3 billion less than it did last year. While in current billions the figure may seem like a high sum, the defense budget measured in constant dollars is down by almost one-third since 1968. When the Nixon administration took office, more than 9 per cent of our gross national product (GNP) went to defense. The level now is less than 6 per cent and dropping. In terms of GNP percentage, the USSR spends twice as much on defense as we do.

Just because Soviet-American relations have improved considerably over the past few years does not mean necessarily that the USSR has undergone a fundamental alteration in its totalitarian ideology and objectives. At home, repression of dialogue and dissent continues at a pitch unequalled since the darkest days of Stalinism.

Looking beyond its borders, Russia continues to implement the fastest growing military establishment and research and development program of any country on the globe.

A current analysis by the highly regarded Institute for Strategic Studies reveals the USSR is rushing to build the maximum number of everything and anything allowable under the first SALT agreement. They already have overtaken the U.S. in strategic missile launchers, long-range missiles and nuclear submarines.

Any but the most elementary reductions in the defense budget would be at the cost of American national security. It certainly is far wiser to spend enough now to insure the safety of the United States than to scrimp in the name of thrift and economy and be sorry later.

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The Nixon administration found it necessary to engage in exhaustive lobbying efforts to protect its requested defense budget, which, except for a few notable exceptions, managed to escape the ax of the deficiency deviants. For fiscal year 1974, the administration sought \$22 billion. On July 31, the House of Representatives trimmed the bill to \$20.5 billion. Last week the Senate approved a \$20.9 billion budget.

Especially crucial was the 47-49 vote by which the Senate rightly rejected an amendment by Sen. Thomas McIntyre (D-NH) that would have slowed the construction schedule of the new Trident submarine. A delay would have been dangerous, as the

