

Cambodia aid should be cut

Rep. Paul McCloskey's approach to the question of U.S. military aid for Cambodia sounds uncomfortably like the men-viewed-as-statistics thinking so prominent among this nation's military leaders during the late '60s.

"It's just a question of how do we get the fewest Cambodians killed and get out of there as quickly as we can," McCloskey said last week.

To hear one of the nation's leading doves talk about getting Cambodians killed as if it were a necessary evil, too trifling to be emotional about, is shocking. To hear him recommending continued U.S. aid is equally shocking. But, in this case, it is perhaps necessary for a time.

The Lon Nol government, without a doubt, is in trouble. The Khmer Rouge have gnawed at the country's heartland until now they are within miles of the capital, Phnom Penh. In that city, fuel is in short supply, rockets are striking almost daily and the food supply is so low that rice is being flown in by the United States.

Without continued U.S. aid, proponents say, Cambodia would fall to the Communists in a matter of weeks, perhaps days. And if that happens, they say with visions of dominoes dancing in their heads, can Vietnam and the rest of Indochina be far behind?

President Ford has recommended \$222 million in extra aid for Cambodia. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, no doubt fearing that a Congress which cuts off aid to Cambodia would

just as easily do the same to Israel, has vocally supported that.

"Are we to deliberately abandon a small country in the midst of its life and death struggle ... a small Asian nation totally dependent on us?" Ford asked House Speaker Carl Albert in a message last week.

The answer, of course, is that we should not deliberately abandon anyone unless the price of continued involvement outweighs that of leaving. In the long run, that is the case. Spending millions of dollars each year to prop up a government that may never be able to stand on its own makes as much sense as paying Kissinger by the mile.

But, in the short run, letting Cambodians starve to death because we are unwilling to extend emergency food aid is as honorable as sending Americans to die in a war they have no business being in.

Congress should approve emergency food aid for Cambodia, either the \$75 million requested or more if needed. As for military aid, we have to stop sometime. Halting military aid now may mean the immediate fall of Cambodia. Stopping aid later will, unfortunately, probably mean the same thing.

If Congress decides not to continue military aid to Cambodia, the U.S. will not, as some say, be abandoning its friends. It will be regaining its senses.

Wes Albers



"The Communists are at the door again. Can you send more chairs, tables, etc. . ."

State, nation losers in attacks on Sierra Club

While in North Platte over the weekend, I was amazed at the bitterness that the Sierra Club's opposition to a proposed coal-fired power generating plant at Sutherland has aroused.

While there has been stark division between the proposal's supporters and those opposing it, the division has become even more bitter in recent weeks due to increasingly strong attacks on the Sierra Club by Nebraska Public Power and area businessmen-developers.

These attacks have been attempting to give the public a warped image of the Sierra Club—as a roadblock to progress.

This attempt to sway public sympathies away from the Sierra Club is similar to actions directed against the Sierra Club and other environmental groups by business-industrial groups in other areas of the country.

Anyone who reads a magazine or newspaper or watches TV knows that American Electric Power, Exxon, Mobil, Conoco and many other companies do extensive advertising on environmental issues. Much of this advertising is designed to leave the impression that these companies are doing everything possible to protect the environment and that those who criticize them on environmental issues are undermining economic progress.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. No environmental group is opposed completely to economic or industrial expansion. Everyone, including environmentalists, uses electrical power and other industrial products. What they do oppose is the

blind, short-sighted "progress" that has been responsible for the unnecessary destruction of priceless and irreplaceable ecosystems and the general environmental deterioration we are all aware of today.

rick johnson

rhymes and reasons

Without the strong, vocal opposition of environmental groups to such things as Sutherland's Gerald Gentleman power plant and the Alaskan pipeline, it is doubtful that many of the environmental protection measures that have been undertaken would have been.

It is sad that environmental groups must always be cast in the role of spoiler—in opposition to something. But since positive contributions in the planning stages often are not solicited or ignored, there is usually no other alternative but opposition to a poorly planned project once it is begun.

Because environmentalists are severely handicapped by limited budgets and small staffs, it is impossible for opposition to be raised against each project that is proposed which ignores environmental considerations. Thus, only those projects which blatantly disregard environmental considerations can be directly opposed.

In view of this fact it becomes essential for

environmental groups to play an important role in the development of national environmental policy.

But once again, a lack of money and staff places these groups at a disadvantage when competing against industry. The massive resources at the disposal of industry to finance staff work and lobbying seriously undermines the ability of less fortunate environmental groups to counter these large scale efforts.

John Quarles, deputy administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, has said that much environmental legislation is killed "not because of superior logic, but because of superior resources".

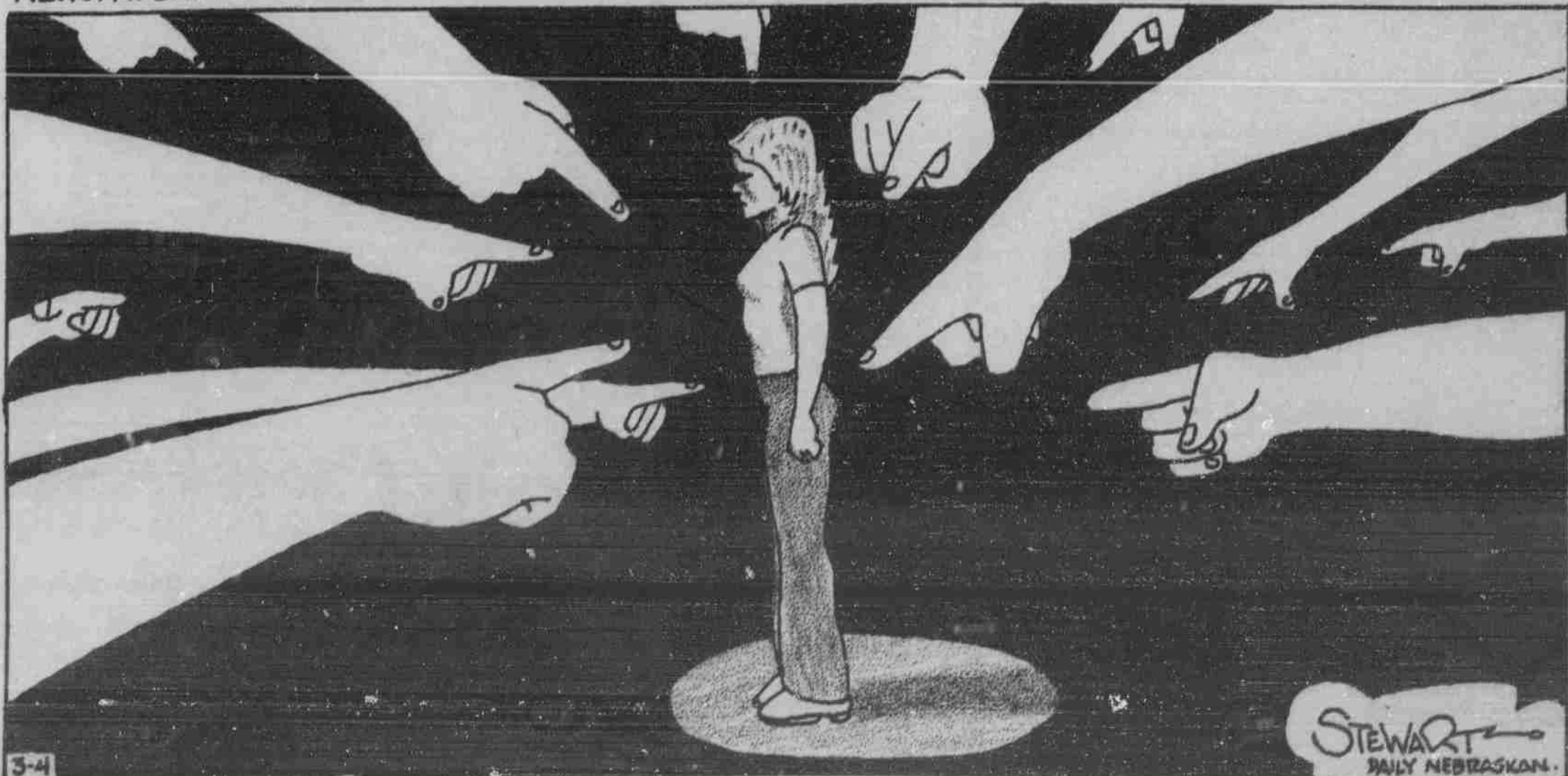
Even in the face of these handicaps, however, much of the initiative for new environmental legislation has come from these groups.

It seems essential, if the momentum gained over the past few years in positive environmental action is to be maintained, that strong and effective advocates of environmental protection, such as the Sierra Club, continue their work on environmental issues.

To establish and maintain the proper environmental balance on both specific projects and broad policy issues, strong environmental groups are necessary—if environmental concerns are to receive fair and adequate consideration when they are in conflict with industry's goals.

We who are dependent upon clean air and water and enjoy the natural beauty of our state and nation, will be the losers if business-industrial groups are successful in their aim to destroy public support for the Sierra Club and other environmental groups.

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