

opinion/editorial

Chase restrictions needed

Legislative hearings were held recently concerning Nebraska State Patrol high-speed chases. The hearings were spurred in part by an incident in which a patrolman died.

That particular chase resulted from the suspect's failure to pay a \$13 gasoline bill.

Suggestions were made at the hearing, ranging from a test track where patrolmen could practice their high-speed driving ability to patterning Nebraska's law after a Colorado statute under which only felony suspects would be pursued.

Nebraska's patrol chief, however, said a line could not be drawn concerning when a patrolman should chase a vehicle, endangering the lives of innocent drivers and their passengers. Patrolmen, he said, are trained to judge when such a risky move is necessary, and should not be restricted in doing their jobs.

We disagree. Chases at 100-plus mph are not worth lives of patrolmen or possibly innocent people when \$13 is at stake. Nor can we imagine many instances in which a misdemeanor violation is threatening enough to public safety to risk several lives.

More ridiculous than the idea of running down misdemeanor suspects is the thought of spending tax

dollars to build an area where such dangerous tactics can be practiced. Building a patrolman's confidence in his ability to drive safely on a practice range might encourage him or her to engage in more such chases in traffic.

In many cases, the vehicle can be identified by license plate, and, if a misdemeanor is suspected, the chase should end once such identification is made. "Starsky and Hutch" tactics like shooting at tires should be left to television unless the suspected crime is severe enough to force apprehension of the individual as soon as possible.

Other editorials have said as much. Now, the Legislature should consider the testimony presented at its hearings, balance those opinions with common sense and restrict the situations in which officers abandon safety to arrest a suspect.

A point that needs to be made is that those chased are only suspects—it would be a genuine crime if the patrol or another law enforcement agency chased an otherwise innocent frightened youth to his death.

Very seldom can the Legislature pass a law that won't cost money to implement that is in the public interest. We hope this opportunity is not missed.

NAACP starts economic campaign

WASHINGTON—The NAACP leadership, sensing a slowdown and even some slippage in black America's quest for equality, is about to launch a full-scale economic campaign that goes far beyond its traditional civil rights activism.

william raspberry

Margaret Bush Wilson, the associations' national president, said in a recent interview that the NAACP is proud of its role in helping black Americans reach its present "plateau"—relative economic security for the black middle class—but said it has been frustrated in its efforts to produce the same sort of progress for low-income blacks.

Last February, she asked Washington economist Herrington Bryce to prepare a set of recommendations, "cast in a broad policy framework," of ways to deal with the problems that remain.

Bryce has completed his assignment and Wilson says the organization will shortly

begin to devise specific programs to implement his recommendations.

It may be the toughest job the organization has faced in its 71-year history.

In many ways, the 1960s, with their marches and jailings, their cattle prods and head-splittings, were the easy days. The objectives were clear and limited: a civil rights law, a court decision or adoption of a particular program.

Policies and programs

"Now," says Bryce, "we have come to the conclusion—which is a significant departure for the NAACP, indeed a significant departure for a lot of people—that black economic problems can no longer be resolved by specific laws and programs but rather we have to begin to deal with a series of policies and programs that go across the board.

"The problem, for instance, is no longer confined to job training, but we have to be able to deal with the way crime and the criminal-justice system impact on the unemployment problem; with the way the military impacts on unemployment; with poverty and unemployment; with business, with education, with residential mobility and their impact on unemployment."

"We don't deny discrimination; that would be very foolish because, of course, it exists," Bryce said. "What we are saying is that we ourselves have to assume a degree of responsibility."

The responsibility the NAACP proposes to undertake includes programs to improve career counseling for young blacks, efforts to help black servicemen learn military skills that are applicable to civilian life and encouraging blacks to acquire technical and secretarial skills so as to be prepared for technological change.

Young people

While a major part of the NAACP's new thrust will be on getting young people to prepare for jobs in those sectors of the economy that are likely to experience the greatest growth in the coming years, there is also a new awareness of the effect on blacks of government policies that ostensibly have nothing to do with race.

"What frightens me now is that it is the kind of thing that will require a great deal of oversight, which, as of now, we really don't have the capacity to do.

"But it's clear to me that we're simply going to have to learn to do it. Not all of our problems can be blamed on white folks."

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Foreign policy should seek common interests

Many Americans have a distorted view of world politics. This world-view can be traced back to the vanity of our founding fathers. Its continuation in the context of the modern world is not only hypocritical, but also extremely dangerous. This conception of international relations emphasizes differences between states—differences that cannot be resolved short of destruction of one of the conflicting states.

The traditional American world-view is rooted in the moral arrogance of the New World founders. Theirs was to be a different kind of political system: a democracy, inherently superior to the immoral autocracies of Europe.

mark rupert

In the international arena, power politics was shunned by the new society. Power was seen as the instrument of evil statesmen who did not have to contend with the moderating forces of democratic popular will. The monarchies of Europe were seen as intrinsically wicked.

America assumed a policy of non-alignment in her early years in order to preserve her international chastity through avoidance of the tainted politics of the Old World.

According to the American national myth, she involved herself in global politics only when provoked by wicked acts of states less chaste than she. Once provoked, our moral self-concept made it difficult for us to compromise with the evil transgressor.

Our moral arrogance dictated American foreign policy. We had to destroy the source of evil and remake the offending state in our own image of pristine goodness.

Moral arrogance

John Spanier has argued that this moral arrogance is the basis of an absolutist foreign policy in which diplomacy and force become divorced. Peaceful diplomacy is seen as the norm of international relations, war an aberration introduced by evil states or statesmen.

War is not, then, a continuation of diplomacy (in the sense of Karl von Clausewitz) but rather its antithesis. War is justified only to destroy evil and enable a return to peaceful diplomacy.

Under this doctrine the United States would go to war, not to attain limited objectives in national interest, but to annihilate a foreign devil. American foreign policy would swing from peaceful diplomacy to holy war.

Such arrogance is manifested in the Monroe Doctrine, in Wilson's Fourteen Points, in Truman's Containment and in Ronald Reagan's conception of the "city on the hill." It is an American tradition and it is a dangerous distortion of the inter-national milieu.

For as America has grown, she has become more entangled in the politics of an interdependent world. Isolationism is, of necessity, no longer a governing doctrine of U.S. foreign policy. Yet holy crusades of democratic righteousness have not yet been recognized in popular culture as the perilous self-delusions which they are.

The perversion of our world-view results from the incomplete framework of analysis we apply to the international relations. There are three levels of analysis which we may use. Our doctrine of self-righteousness emphasizes two levels at the expense of a third, and herein lies our error.

The first level of analysis is the individual level, and it deals with those individual characteristics which may have an impact on foreign policy.

The second level is the nation-state. At this level, characteristics of particular states which influence their policies are examined. We are too well acquainted with these levels of analysis, as they have often been allowed to dominate our foreign policy decision-making process.

Witness our destruction of the Kaiser, and our policy of the Containment of Soviet Communism, to name only two examples of our efforts to combat perceived evil men and nations. We often refuse to recognize that there are other more powerful factors influencing the foreign policy of every state.

Governing truth

These factors are found at the third level of analysis: the international system. The governing truth of the international system is that it is composed of sovereign states.

Each state is ultimately responsible for its own welfare and security. Each uses the means at its disposal to pursue its national interests. Paramount among these is the preservation of each state's sovereignty—its continued survival as an independent national entity.

With the advent of weapons the mass destruction international system members have been forced to recognize the contingent nature of their existence. Total war is increasingly an unacceptable means of pursuing national interests, for total war can now lead to nuclear Armageddon. This is a nuclear age fact of life and applies to all states, by virtue of their existence in the shadow of The Bomb.

Our analysis at the state system level tells us that manichean dualisms of absolute good and evil are inappropriate bases for foreign policy in the nuclear era. We must recognize that all states have certain interests in common, and seek a rational foreign policy of compromise and peaceful coexistence based on that realization. Holy war is out of style. It remains only for American popular culture to recognize this fact, and to exercise a moderating influence on our foreign policy.

letters to the editor

The article in your paper entitled "Student Proclaims Nixon The Only Real Choice" deserves harsh rebuttal. It presents a student who seems apathetic, foolish and politically naive.

The article presents a student with an attitude that is flagrant and thoughtless. But this is not the true picture. I know, I am that student.

For a journalism major (and a serious one), I have never read an article in any paper of any caliber that contradicts itself like this one does. When this paper asked to interview me, I thought that to stress my purpose would be taken seriously. Unfortunately, they have placed my seriousness in the wrong area. The focus is entirely off-target.

I stressed over and over to the "reporter"—Maureen Costello—that Nixon was used only as an attention-getter—I cannot, however, deny that my personal belief is that he was a significant foreign policy president and a very capable man. He took whatever means he had at his disposal—yes, unfortunately, he was a crook, and he let us down.

To say that I "rationalized Nixon's actions" is absurd. I cannot. And in reference to "saying a man will do anything he must to pursue what he believes is right" is in the least sixth-grade idealism that just doesn't hold water in today's politics.

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