

opinion/editorial

Suggestions to reduce crime won't materialize

Once presidents assume office it's customary for them to assign commissions or task forces to study relevant issues of American society.

This helps define the issues the president must address as well as advise him on what course of action to take to solve the problems.

And as part of President Reagan's efforts to mount a war on crime, the administration's Task Force on Violent Crime has recently issued its suggestions to make America safe again.

The task force was co-chaired by former Attorney General Griffin Bell and Illinois Gov. Jim Thompson. Among the 60 recommendations in the 192-page report are some sincere efforts to protect people from being victimized by crime and some simplistic solutions that threaten civil liberties.

The most understandable goal, yet most unattainable, is the request for the government to finance the building of more prisons. Under the proposal, the government would pay 75 percent of the costs — about \$2 billion over four years to relieve the problem of overcrowded prisons.

But an administration that chooses to cut spending despite what it may do to the poor and

elderly in our society, will no doubt reject a plan to make life softer for criminals.

The recommendations that worry civil libertarians the most are the proposals for bail reform and the lessening of the exclusionary rule.

The task force said judges should have the ability to deny bail to a person based on the person's "dangerousness" and not just on whether the person is likely to flee before the trial date.

Advocates say this would result in uniform sentencing from state to state but critics say determining who is dangerous is an arbitrary task better left undone.

By far the most appalling goal is the weakening of the exclusionary rule, which prohibits illegally obtained evidence from being used in court.

The task force would allow the evidence to be presented in court only if the police said they were acting "in good faith." The task force reasons that people have hid behind legal technicalities that have helped them get off.

Trouncing over the Fourth Amendment is not an advisable way to fight crime. Being hard on criminals is good, but limiting the average citizen's constitutional rights is clearly not a step in the right direction.



The task force would also tighten loopholes allowing the importing of parts to be used in the construction of handguns or "Saturday Night Specials."

They would require a waiting period to check firearm applicants for criminal records which is only sensible and probably why Reagan will reject it.

But Reagan is likely to oppose

any attempts to strengthen the 1968 Gun Control Act as he always has.

Overall, building more prisons won't stop crime. They will just fill up with prisoners. Making federal policies on crime, which are normally left to the states, seem to go against the Reagan philosophy of getting the government off the backs of people.

'Minority' label changes person to minor symbol

If I hear another label thrown at me, making me some kind of non-person, I think I'll scream.

As a student attending the university, I find that I am no longer an individual, but a symbol. I have become a "minority."

Minor: Lesser in size, extent or importance.

doreen charles

I find that not only have I been given a label designating me as somehow less important, but that everything I do is also of lesser importance.

As a "minority" student, I'm entitled to "minority" counseling, I can take "minority" classes, and belong to "minority" organizations.

Upon investigating the University Program Council's allocation of student fees, I find that I am only entitled to a minor percentage of fees for programming.

These few pennies are somehow to be divided up between other designated "minority" groups, so that everybody has enough for their minor programs. (Too bad I can't reduce my non-resident tuition to a more minor fee.)

Defense dollars aid missile Monopoly

It's easy enough to argue about the social programs that have been axed by the Reagan administration. You know how you feel about Neighborhood Legal Services, school lunches and CETA jobs.

william raspberry

It's not much harder to form an opinion on the president's tax program. Either you are for helping the rich, confident that the benefits will trickle down, or you're not.

It's the defense expenditures that defy rational discussion. The same Reagan people who have slashed all kinds of programs, from student aid to food stamps, want to spend \$1.5 trillion for defense over the next five years. But there is no way for a layman to look at those

Being designated this inferior status, I am expected to somehow accept the majority's definition of me, and am expected to act accordingly. Not only do professors assume that I must have come from a poor ghetto community, but that I probably received inferior schooling and can't speak intelligible English.

Being tall and slender, I'm also probably an athlete. How else can "minorities" get through college, if not by athletic scholarships or financial aid for the poverty-stricken?

Nevertheless, being a minor person, I find that I am somehow supposed to be an expert on minorityness. People continue to tell me about openings for "minority" reporters, the need for more "minority" news. What the heck is minority news? I was under the mistaken impression that all people's lives were of equal importance.

I continually find myself in situations in which I'm expected to represent the "minority" point of view on issues. Has any white person in class ever stood up and said, "Well, speaking in behalf of the white race..." Yet, a professor thinks nothing of turning to me and saying, "Well, what do blacks think about this issue?"

Not only have I been reduced to a symbol, I find that I also have been desexualized. In discussions of issues such as Affirmative Action or discrimination, references to "women and minorities" keep coming up.

The implication is that a person is either one or the

brain-numbing figures and reach any useful conclusion. You can be for Head Start, or against Head Start, or provisionally for Head Start, depending on whether you think the program is useful, affordable, and an appropriate concern for the federal government.

The pattern doesn't work for matters of defense. No rational American can be against national defense, not even provisionally. No cost is too high to pay if the alternative is nuclear annihilation.

The troublesome thing about defense budgets — and not just Reagan's — is that no one can be sure what the money goes for, or whether the expenditures buy anything worth their cost.

It's easy to say yes to the notion that we ought to be stronger than the Soviets; it's hard to know whether MX missiles or B-1 bombers make sense. You cannot judge defense outlays the way you judge proposals for, say, guaranteed annual income.

You cannot speak intelligently of giving the military

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