Editorial

Obligations come before benefits

It seems somewhat funny that some people think they don't have to follow the laws established by the U.S. government, yet still they think they should be eligible for the benefits offered by that same government.

But recent controversy over a Department of Education regulation has shown there are some college students who feel just that way.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled this summer that, at least temporarily, the government can require students to sign a statement disclosing their draft registration status before being given any type of federal aid.

The students who oppose the disclosure law are, of course, the same ones who oppose draft registration and the draft itself. Being unprepared, they reason, somehow prevents war.

That is nothing but twisted logic. There is a good purpose to having young men registered for the draft. It provides a pool of names from which to draw in an emergency. It does not increase the chances of conflict.

But the issue at hand is not whether draft registration is right or wrong. There already is a law which provides for registration and it has been upheld by the courts.

The real issue here is whether students who do not follow the law still should be entitled to the benefits offered by the federal government.

Fortunately, the issue will be a minor one here. Nebraska has one of the highest registration compliance rates in the nation so UNL students probably won't be hesitant to comply with the disclosure law.

In fact, according to an article in the Aug. 31 edition of The Chronicle of Higher Education, colleges around the country are finding surprisingly little opposition to the new law.

We hope this is a sign of how young adults view their obligations to society. We also hope it is a trend that continues.

Today's generation needs to realize that in order to reap the benefits of society, it must fulfill some obligations.

Those who chose not to fulfill their obligations should be denied the privileges they now receive. And that's what financial aid is — a privilege, not a right.

Those who oppose draft registration have every right to attempt to get the law changed, but they are obligated to follow the law until a change is made. If they do not, they should suffer the consequences.

Letter Policy

The Daily Nebraskan encourages brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Readers are also welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not run, is left to the editor's discretion.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

Reagan's missile plans: It's off to the races

Christopher Burbach

Should the Reagan administration follow through on its plan to deploy 572 Pershing II and cruise missiles in Western Europe, the Soviets undoubtedly will respond in kind, after which the United States will respond in kind, and it's off to the races again (not that they ever stopped).

Not only will that deployment escalate the arms race, it will heat to a fever pitch the already intense anti-American sentiment in Western Europe. West Germans in particular view the proposed missiles as an uninvited and unwelcome military occupation of their country which imperils, rather than enhances, their national security. They're right.

In spite of the obvious pitfalls of the proposed deployment, President Reagan and the Pentagon's dogged support for it and their apparent determination to carry it out at any cost may yet produce positive results.

Perhaps the Soviet government will succumb to the threat of an escalation of the arms race. Perhaps Soviet President Yuri Andropov and company will realize the danger of raising the stakes in Western Europe and make concessions in order to avert the planned December deployment.

The rather primitive negotiation lever of threat is one that is hardly tried and true in East-West relations; though tried too often, it has rarely succeeded. Indeed, threats and response to them have been a major impetus in the arms race. However, the current United States threat may well be working.

Last Friday, Andropov offered to "liquidate" all Soviet medium-range missiles, including the modern SS-20's, which would be removed from Western Europe under a previous Soviet offer.

The previous offer, contingent on United States abandonment of the planned Pershing II deployment, proposed the reduction of the Soviet medium-range arsenal trained on Western Europe to an equal level with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's arsenal in Britain and France.

By offering to destroy the missiles he would remove, and to include SS-20's, Andropov demonstrated flexibility in order to quell U.S. negotiators' fears that the Soviets simply would transfer missiles to Asia and destroy only their older weapons.

Continued on Page 5

Abstractions obscure truths

Krishna Madan

Writing an editorial column usually prompts one to think of certain subjects worth propagandizing. What is seldom discussed is the influence the language itself exerts in molding the minds of both the writer and the reader.

Basically, language is the way in which we commnicate our sensations, experiences, feelings and ideas. Good language is that which leaves in the mind of the listener a very close approximation of what is in the mind of the speaker.

It is quite easy to achieve this approximation when one speaks of specific, concrete objects. For example, the phrase 'Francois Mitterand is standing under the Eiffel Tower' leaves little room for ambiguity.

Problems arise, however, when abstraction is introduced into the language. The phrase 'I am standing under the tree' can be confusing. The listener may not know whether a birch or an oak tree is being referred to. Even though the word 'tree' represents a concrete object, it is nevertheless an abstraction — a composite idea of all the trees that one has seen or read about.

Evidently, the more one uses abstraction, the more it will be possible to confuse the listener. Indeed, abstraction is often deliberately used with this purpose in mind.

One can see this process at work in the current debate on Central America. The abstraction "communism" is repeated daily by officials in the administration. However, what is the specific meaning of communism?

For most people in the United States, communism conjures up the image of the Russian domination of Eastern Europe and Afghanistan. As such, repugnance and resistance to a communism that has this meaning is certainly commendable.

However, it is easy for the administration to exploit this well-founded repugnance by describing as Communist many governments and movements with which it disagrees. The abstraction "communist" thus deliberately misleads the U.S. public because it creates an image that varies considerably from the reality.

The reality — as conveyed to us by those U.S. citizens who have actually visited Nicaragua — is that the society there has very little in common with that of Eastern Europe.

If this is true, we are justified in being extremely skeptical of what our officials say. We should also be skeptical of what news reporters and columnists have to say. Even journalists tend to unquestioningly use the words — and thus the ideological framework — of important officials.

It takes a lot of effort to be alert, but the public should nevertheless not take for granted the assumptions and worldview upon which journalists often build their stories.

As students, we can carry this questioning attitude into our classrooms. Although our professors do not deliberately intend to deceive us, most of them present a mixture of truths, half-truths and falsehoods.

This is especially true in the social sciences and arts. Here, the 'facts' presented by a professor often become half-truths and outright lies because of the context or theory within which these 'facts' are presented.

Daily Nebraskan

EDITOR Larry Sparks
GENERAL MANAGER [illegible]
PRODUCTION MANAGER Kitty Pollicky
ADVERTISING MANAGER Tracy L. Beavers
ASSISTANT
ADVERTISING MANAGER Kelly Grossenbaw
MANAGING EDITOR [illegible]
NEWS EDITOR [illegible]
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITORS Terry L. Hyland
[illegible]
LAYOUT EDITOR [illegible]
NIGHT NEWS EDITOR Chris Wabsch
ASSISTANT
NIGHT NEWS EDITOR [illegible]
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR Mike Frost
SPORTS EDITOR Ward W. Triplett III
ART DIRECTOR Lorri Mauger
PHOTO CHIEF [illegible]
ASSISTANT PHOTO CHIEF Craig Andrews
PUBLICATIONS
BOARD CHAIRPERSON [illegible], 472-5215
PROFESSIONAL ADVISER [illegible], 472-7301
COPY EDITORS [illegible]

The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-060) is published by the UNL Publications Board Monday through Friday in the fall and spring semesters and Tuesdays and Fridays in the summer sessions, except during vacations. Subscriptions: $20/semester, $30/two semesters, $35/year.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

Second class postage paid at Lincoln, Neb.
ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1983 DAILY NEBRASKAN