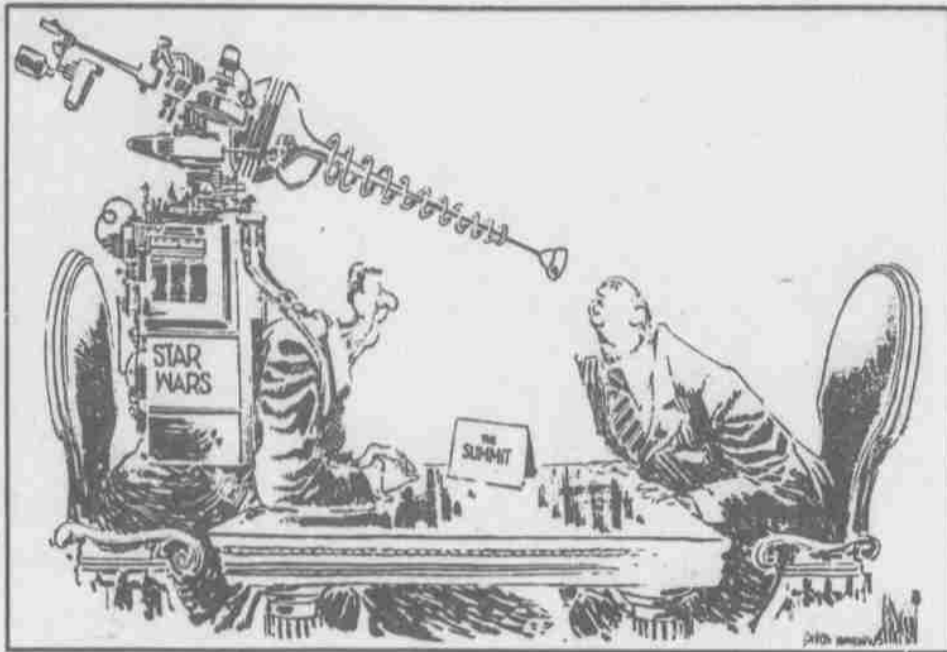


# Opinion

## Coloring's not just for kids Ads paint picture of a workable Star Wars plan

Until I saw the commercial, I had no idea that "Star Wars" was so simple that even a kindergartener could understand it. I thought you needed physics when all you really needed was Crayolas. The regular box of Crayolas, not even the giant size.

The 30-second television spot, brought to me courtesy of the Coalition for the Strategic Defense Initiative, changed all that. It opened with Crayola figures of Mom, Dad, child and Spot. (I think it was Spot, though it might have been a small brown horse without a name — hard to tell.)



**Ellen Goodman**

While the school piano tinkled in the background, a little girl narrated her wonderful tale of 10 Crayolas in search of national security. "I asked my daddy what this 'Star Wars' stuff is all about," she began. "He said right now we can't protect ourselves from nuclear weapons and that's why the president wants to build the Peace Shield."

The girl concluded, "Then nobody could win a war and if nobody could win a war there's no reason to start one."

Frankly, I always liked coloring, not

to mention story hour at school. This tale had just enough truth in it to be especially appealing. Creating a "Peace Shield" isn't really much harder, after all, then drawing a gigantic white line around the sun. The real sun. Instead of financing the Pentagon's efforts at "Star Wars," I think we should commission the artist Christo to wrap the United States the way he wrapped that island in Florida. It would be cheaper.

In fairness, the Reagan administration needs all the "Star Wars" ads it can muster. The public doesn't share the president's consuming commitment. We remain convinced that any new U.S. weapons program will be inevitably matched by the Soviets in a

never-ending arms race. In the latest ABC-Washington Post poll, 74 percent of us would trade the fantasy of SDI for a substantial reduction in nuclear arms.

With a summit around the corner, we can count on a beefed-up advertising campaign to sell Reagan's "Star Wars." Perhaps a few more spiffy "tests" from the defense department, certainly a spate of these 30-second sagas from the Coalition. We're off to Never-Never Land. Clap if you believe in white Crayola Peace Shields.

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Goodman is a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the Boston Globe.

## Basic science research essential

During the last few weeks, we have witnessed abundant discussions about the mission of the university and the benefits it brings to the community, the state and the nation.

### Guest opinion

Although several people already emphasized the importance of research to the quality of a university, my own experience is that it is relatively difficult for the average taxpayer to appreciate the research done in the so-called basic sciences. To most people, this kind of research represents only the satisfaction of esoteric curiosity of a selected few in their "ivory towers." It is a common belief that any publicly supported research should have immediate and tangible results.

But, since we are benefitting right now from the research already done that we did not pay for, is it not our duty to the coming generations to support the basic research which will produce the applications of tomorrow?

It is true that most basic science researchers are mainly motivated by their wanting to understand, describe and quantify how nature works, without having a particular application in mind. On the other hand, a question often

asked me is what will be an immediate application of my research. In this article, I want to show that, in many cases, the unpredicted applications we all benefit from, came along after the findings of indirect basic science research.

My first example are James Clark Maxwell's equations, which describe the nature and properties of electromagnetic radiation. Maxwell never dreamed of radio, TV or radar, but it is his mid 19th century curiosity about uniting electricity and magnetism that paved the road to our present day communications revolution.

Two other examples can be given from the 20th century. In the early '50s, a great deal of research, both theoretical and experimental, was done to study the quantum theory of the electronic structure of solids. The researchers only wanted to be able to understand and predict the behavior of electrical, thermal and optical properties of the solids. As we all know now, that gained insight led to the invention of the transistor, which in turn was a starting point for integrated circuits, microprocessors, etc.

Transistors are the building blocks of all of the electronic devices we use, from video and stereo hardware to computers. Similarly, lasers, long before being used by eye surgeons or CD player manufacturers, were the intel-

lectual curiosity of a physicist. Today, in scientific meetings we hear about the possibility of producing energy by muon catalyzed fusion, the seeds of which were sown by the research efforts of people who just wanted to understand the structure of matter.

The space considerations preclude me of giving more examples. All of the above were taken from physics, a topic I am more familiar with, but I am sure that the contribution of good basic research to our technology and comfort of living can be extended to other disciplines.

Finally, we should also keep in mind that, historically, there is strong correlation between the economic development of a region and its commitment to basic science; because the presence of a pool of better-educated and creative people is needed to transform the newly discovered laws of nature into innumerable business opportunities to the entrepreneurs and helps to convert them into profits.

It is crucial for an advanced society to understand and appreciate the value of basic sciences, and support them on national, regional, local and individual levels. In this increasingly complex world, its own survival might depend on it.

Orhan Yenen  
graduate physics

## Reality shows in the president's words

COHEN from Page 4

Contrast the current Reagan with the current issue of Commentary magazine, where 29 mostly neoconservative intellectuals were asked if the United States had met its major challenges in the last four decades. (Hint: The correct neoconservative line is "no.") "What we have not done . . . is face up to the fact that communism is an either/or proposition," writes Midge Decter, a Heritage Foundation trustee. She goes on to say that, "In the long run either communism in some variant or Western-style democracy in some variant must prevail. It is a case of 'them or us.'"

Someday someone will notice that the conservatives and neoconser-

vatives were able to accomplish in the first five years of the Reagan administration what it took liberalism 50 years to achieve — a bankruptcy of ideas. But the Commentary article is evidence that the neoconservatives have gone beyond that. They are now the archetypal American "communists" of our time — intellectually rigid and frozen in the debates of the Cold War era about the nature of communism and the U.S.S.R.

The president, by contrast, is moving past that and into the real world. He has gone from the lecture to the lab and found the old theories totally besides the point. Call Russia evil if you wish, but, by all means, call it to the bargaining table.

So now Reagan has begun to talk

like all presidents have talked when it comes to the Soviets. Reality informs his vocabulary. This does not mean that he (or the liberals he once claimed to abhor) has forgotten the Gulag, Scharansky and Sarkharov, Afghanistan and all the rest or, even, that these subjects will not be raised, as they should be, time and again. It means only that once again, reality has mugged ideology.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union have words for freedom. But if, to paraphrase Janis Joplin, *svoboda's* just another name for nothing left to lose, then neither country has a word for that.

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Cohen writes an editorial column for the Washington Post.

### Letters

Brief letters are preferred, and longer letters may be edited. Writer's address and phone number are needed for verification.

#### Wrong parking permit better than none

I am writing in response to a parking ticket I received last week for parking in an "unauthorized area."

Arriving in Lincoln at 12:30 a.m., there were no spaces available in Area 3, so I parked across the street in Area 20. I did count one row of Area 3 parkers and found 15 cars with no permit.

I planned to move my car in the morning after those people had left, but on that particular day the officers were out early. (Too bad they weren't out late at night).

I fail to see the reasoning behind giving a ticket to someone parked with a wrong permit before giving someone else a ticket with no permit at all.

Incidentally, I made another count on Saturday and found an amazing amount of non-permit parkers, and not one of them got tickets.

Maybe, if we all throw away our permits and save our \$40, we won't get any tickets either.

Andre Dory  
freshman  
undeclared

#### Honor more meaningful than gifts

Sometimes I wonder if some people at the university have nothing better to do than write letters complaining about insignificant things.

Joseph Healey's letter (Daily Nebraskan, Oct. 31) concerning the stereotypical sexist notions of homecoming gifts might fall into that category.

Healey writes that the homecoming queen receiving roses while the king receives an autographed football shows sexism. Maybe it does.

But when your mother has a birthday do you give her a chain saw or a football? Do you give your father on his birthday some perfume or roses? If you do, I apologize for writing this letter and I am ready to concede.

Homecoming is a long time tradition

at the university. I could not say how long roses have been given to the queen and an autographed football to the king. But does it matter what is given?

I would bet if you ask this year's king or queen, or any past king or queen, they would say that it is the honor of being selected that is important, not the gifts received.

Dan Bentzinger  
junior  
mechanical engineering  
assistant chairman of 1985 UNL  
Homecoming Committee

**Editor's note: The letter Healey signed also was signed by Marc Seger and Teri Sperry. The names were left off because of space constrictions.**

#### NSSA not an effective voice for UNL

With the recent NU budget cuts, it's time for UNL students to have an effective and representative voice in the Legislature. The Nebraska State Student Association is not an effective or representative voice for UNL students.

Currently, more than \$20,000 in UNL student fees are contributed to NSSA. This money could be better spent lobbying directly for UNL since we are competing with state colleges for appropriations. The structure of NSSA allows lobbying only for the association as a whole — not the individual institutions.

UNL students would be better represented with a part-time, profes-

sional lobbyist and paid work study assistants. This would create effective representation and employment for UNL students. ASUN should carefully re-evaluate our membership to NSSA and not hesitate to get out of something that isn't working.

Kyle Hansen  
junior  
business  
Sandy Heng  
junior  
journalism  
Andy Jacobitz  
sophomore  
agriculture

#### Lied money should go back to NU

With all the talk of budget cuts and faculty reductions, why has there been no discussion of de-authorizing the \$5 million allocated by the Legislature for the Lied Center?

Most attempts at justifying the Lied Center's cost go like this: "Since this is the biggest gift ever given NU, then we can't turn it down." Would this logic apply if NU was hit by an epidemic of small pox? "We can't vaccinate now, this is the biggest plague to hit NU ever!"

Another justification is "We're getting a \$20 million center for only \$10 million, half price." Would that logic hold if someone offered to pay half the cost of moving toxic waste onto campus for long-term storage?

In fact, the \$10 million is not a gift. Where is it? In the bank earning interest? No, a gift does not have to be matched with strings attached.

You don't say "Merry Christmas, mom! Here are some new hotpads. I know you told me you needed a new museum to preserve priceless artifacts

from centuries past, but I thought the hotpads more shiek? These hotpads can only be used for removing French cuisine from the oven on special occasions. If you try to use them for something we eat everyday, I will take them back. In fact, you will actually get the hotpads only after you've put my initials on them and reimburse me for half the cost."

Many things on campus are sub-par now — the list is virtually endless. And now, the mediocre is being cut, not improved.

Let's go back and ask them if we could do something else with the money. That \$20 million would be a boost if used to build a new museum, expand the library or Nebraska Union, build an ultra-modern computer facility and eliminate parking problems. We could name three or four buildings after Lied and still have enough left over to buy a used car.

Tim Howard  
graduate  
political science

#### Training table will be crowded when Love closes

In reference to Steve Spurgeon's letter (DN, Nov. 1) he stated that athletes were worth more than they receive. I would like to ask how much more do you expect?

I, like others at UNL, am a student athlete. We work out on our own and do not expect special incentives for our work. These special incentives include things such as: a \$1 million eating facility, advisers to help us in rarely-attended classes and special study

areas.

The impending budget cuts should have an effect on us all, not excluding a selected few who want more. One of the proposed cuts is aimed at reducing Love Library's open hours. So just remember, when my study area is closed, I'll be over at your special study area.

Kurt Krugerud  
senior  
Teachers College/psychology

#### Setting it Straight

The students who presented a Lied Center promotional video tape to Daily Nebraskan staffs were from the Student Foundation, not the Student

Alumni Association, as reported in Chris Welsh's column (Daily Nebraskan, Nov. 4).