

Editorial

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Progress? Arms offer gives hope

Last year's November summit between President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev just might mark a significant warming in the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The positive reception that Reagan gave the most recent Soviet arms reduction proposal last week might be a significant step forward in U.S./Soviet relations. In the past, when one side forwarded a proposal, only acrimony greeted the proposal on the other side.

Significance surrounds Reagan's response because the Soviet proposal, as well as the response, came on the threshold of a new round of arms control talks in Geneva. The offer and the response cannot help but set a conducive atmosphere for peace during the talks.

Reagan said that "it's just about the first time anyone ever proposed actually eliminating nuclear weapons." Reagan has always maintained that the goal of arms talks should be to reduce the number of current armaments, rather than simply attempt to control the future growth of weapons.

Past arms control talks have set minimum levels of growth that each side felt compelled to reach in order to avoid giving the enemy any quarter during the next round of talks. An arms reduction proposal prevents this problem.

Additionally, an arms control process (in contrast to an arms reduction process) causes a dangerous intensification of strategic technology. Destablizing cruise missiles, as well as other military "advancements" might be the woeful legacy of arms talks not set in a context of real arms reductions.

Even Reagan's ambiguity on what specifically pleased him about the Soviet proposal bodes well for an improved chance of world peace. It demonstrates that Reagan generally has a more trusting attitude toward the Soviets than in the pre-summit "evil empire," period.

Additionally, the problem of verification, always a popular thumping boy for the conservative critics of Soviet offers, was placed in a positive context by Presidential Spokesman Larry Speakes. Rather than denunciation, Speakes called the proposal "worthy of further study" including "constructive steps" in the area of verification. Speakes even saw a glimmer of hope for Soviet acceptance of an on-site inspection proposal — a major stumbling block in agreements from the Soviet side.

All in all, freedom from the threat of nuclear war seems to have taken at least a small step forward last week. One small step, after a long and dramatic pause. We now hope that the world won't hold its breath for so long while waiting for the next step.

Drug Tests NCAA ruling good for athletics

The National Collegiate Athletic Association's latest drug-testing rule might seem paternalistic to some, but it will be worthwhile if it deters college athletes from abusing drugs.

The drug testing was approved nearly unanimously by U.S. colleges at last week's annual NCAA convention in New Orleans, La. UNL Chancellor Martin Massengale, who attended the convention, cast NU's vote in support of the tests.

Although UNL and many other schools already test for drug use, the new rule encourages other schools to implement similar tests. After all, few schools would want players to fail a drug test on the eve of an NCAA championship.

But more importantly, the tests will protect college athletes. Drugs such as anabolic steroids add strength and bulk, but they can cause cancer, impotence and kidney problems. In fact, doctors say the full effect of these drugs

won't be known for several years.

The tests also will ensure that teams are evenly matched. All players can use weight-training programs to push their bodies to the natural limit. But once they use drugs to go beyond natural limits, they have an unfair advantage.

Paying for the tests should not be a problem for athletes or colleges. Half of the estimated \$200 per test will come from bowl game and championship profits. The remainder will come from the NCAA.

Strict penalties will make the new rule enforceable. If athletes test positive, they will be suspended from competition for 90 days. If athletes test positive a second time, they lose a year of eligibility.

The drug test rules will infringe on athletes' freedom of choice.

But the tests will protect college athletes' health and ensure fair competition among colleges.



More heroes are needed in war against unborn life

My sister saw her baby's first pictures recently. They showed a beautiful baby boy, little G.B., sucking his thumb. Little G.B. is due to be born Feb. 1. The pictures were the result of an ultrasound test.

At 38, my sister is older having her first child than my mother was when she had her last of seven children. Both she and one of my other sisters, who is pregnant but not due for several months, are looking forward to being parents. But in a practical sense, they're already parents.



Randy Donner

For some time now, both have been nurturing their children, showing a mother's love and caring for the child formed and growing within their bodies. Like other pregnant women and expectant fathers, they talk excitedly of the baby, an excitement that gradually changes to a sublime joy.

We can all share that joy, for a new life is God's way of telling us that life in our world should continue. And life does continue, even in the midst of a war — war against human life in the United States and the world.

Like other wars, this war has produced heroes and victims. The majority of the victims, all silent, are the millions of babies killed in the United States since abortion became fully legal and unrestricted on Jan. 22, 1973. In an odd sense, these voiceless victims are the luckier victims. Their pain, the pain of being ripped apart limb

by limb or burned to death within a mother's womb, is over.

The other victims, those whose pain continues, are the women who have had abortions and now regret it. Women such as the members of the group Women Exploited By Abortion talk of the continuing pain of knowledge — knowledge that they took an innocent life.

I cannot know the helpless feeling of an unwanted pregnancy, so I can't pretend to understand what goes through a woman's mind when she contemplates death for her unborn child. I also cannot know the pressures felt from outside sources. I'm sure there are pressures from both those who ask a woman to carry her baby to term and give it the chance at life it deserves, and pressures from those who try to rationalize death for the child as a logical, moral choice.

The women who choose life for their babies are the heroes of this war. Of course they're not given a medal, but they receive so much more. Not only have they defended a voiceless minority, but they can know that they have brought to the world a new creation, wholly unique in all history. The most acclaimed artist of all time could do no better.

The other heroes of this war are the people who are working to inform the public of the actual details and the casualties of abortion. They are the protesters, the marchers, the letter writers — the right-to-lifers. They voice the civil rights battle for the voiceless unborn.

These heroes are people like the members of the Pro-Life Nonviolent Action Group, some of whom are so committed to the cause that they have spent time in jail for their activities but

still continue to organize and participate in sit-in demonstrations at abortion clinics.

Then there are the day-to-day heroes. They wear the tiny feet pin on their lapels, a silent reminder of the plight of the unborn. Daily they educate others by telling them the facts of life. Facts such as a baby's heart begins to beat 18 to 21 days after conception, and at 10 weeks, a baby's entire body is formed, including fingerprints and toe prints.

They also can tell the disturbing facts of death. In 15 U.S. cities, there are as many babies killed through abortion as there are live births. Washington, D.C. is one city in which there are fewer live births than abortions. A country that speaks for human rights worldwide ignores them in its capital city. Education in these facts of life and death of the unborn is the key to bringing an end to this war against life.

But until the war ends, compassion is needed. We need to feel and show compassion to those who may be considering abortion. Let them know that someone cares, not only for the baby, but for the baby's mother as well. Let them know that there is help available — counseling, shelter, material necessities and understanding. We also need to show compassion to women who have had abortions and have come to the full realization of their act. Finally, we need to develop compassion for the unborn and hope for the day when we see overturned the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision, handed down 13 years ago Wednesday, the decision through which the crime of murder suddenly became a right.

Donner is a senior journalism major and a Daily Nebraskan associate night news editor.

Column 'buy' bad business

My hostile takeover of George Will's column, rumored in advance, nevertheless caught much of the opinion industry totally by surprise — not to mention Will himself. He spied me standing in the gloom of the study we all know so well from the Newsweek ads, put down his China coffee cup and asked, "What the hell are you doing here?" I told him that I had taken over his column.



Richard Cohen

The new column will be called WillCo and, combined, it will appear in 508 newspapers — 444 of them once Will's alone. Although for the moment deeply in debt (leveraged), the new column is thought by industry observers to have an excellent chance of success.

This hostile takeover was no different than any other. My problem was that I had some excess cash and relatively few debts (just a mortgage, home-improvement loan, Visa and MasterCard). I knew that I was a ripe candidate for a hostile takeover myself, maybe from the rumored Bill Buckley or, worse yet, Evans and Novak. I thought about poison pills or adding more debt to my balance sheet, but

decided instead to construct a golden parachute for myself. It guaranteed me a payment of \$33 million and a new bike for my son.

I decided to strike first. Going to the credit union, I asked for a \$300 million loan to take over the George Will column. My plan was to go for the entire ball of wax — the newspaper column, the Newsweek column, the ABC commentaries and the speeches. I would sell off everything but the newspaper columns and use the receipts from the sales to retire the debt. Then I would pay off Will's golden parachute (\$1.2 billion) by floating junk bonds on the Euromarket to Eurotrash who live in the United States to escape terrorists they do business with abroad.

Everything worked as I planned. I sold the Newsweek column and the ABC commentaries to John Chancellor, who became the commentator on both ABC and NBC. Rolling in dough and with my stock rising, I looked around for even more ways to increase my wealth and my power. I could have written more columns, done some magazine articles, written a book or become a magazine essayist, but I decided to buy Evans and Novak instead.

Once again, I struck without warning. With \$200 million in borrowed money, I got the column, the seminars, the speeches, the newsletter, Bob Novak's appearances on "Meet the Press," "The McLaughlin Group," "Crossfire"

and in the upcoming anti-communist epic set in Africa, "Novak of the Apes." I sold off everything but the movie, which no one would buy, took a loss on that (\$312), but substantially reduced my debt.

Now my column was appearing in 1,546 newspapers. I was seen on television 23 times a week. I wrote for Time, Newsweek and Cosmopolitan and limited myself to 14 speeches a week, for a minimum fee of whatever I could get. Still, the debt was staggering. It was costing me \$3.4 million a week just to service the debt. On my Visa statement, where it said "minimum payment" they demanded \$876,000. The credit union wanted to put someone on my board of directors and I kept getting a weekly bill of \$2 million from the investment banker, Felix Rohatyn, whom I've never met, and a \$235,000 bill from his accountant. I paid them all.

The end came without warning. One by one, newspapers canceled my column. My cash flow suffered. So did my sleep. I offered to sell George Will to Bill Buckley but Buckley, having bought William Safire, Ellen Goodman and Carl Rowan, was tapped out. I tried Sylvia Porter, but she wouldn't accept my collect calls and, finally, I called my mother and asked for her advice.

This is how I became an orthodontist. © 1986, Washington Post Writers Group
Cohen writes an editorial column for the Washington Post.