

Daily Nebraskan

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U.S. heel-dragging

World leadership starts on home soil

A prominent position in world affairs requires leading the world in action against crises, initiating progressive change and standing up to reality.

The 20th century has been called "The American Century," because the United States pursued those goals and consolidated world opinion in support.

But as the century draws to a close, the U.S. is in danger of losing that position. While the United States clings to its leadership against world crises with its military, it fails to stand up to reality on another issue — the environment.

U.S. heel-dragging on steps to combat global warming has led European countries to form their own consensus for action, The Associated Press reported.

Unfortunately, the United States probably will block any move at a U.N. conference this week to set targets on reducing emissions of carbon dioxide, one of the gases that contributes to the greenhouse effect.

Of the 100 nations meeting at the Second World Climate Conference in Geneva this week, only four — Egypt, Saudi Arabia, perhaps the Soviet Union, and the United States — are likely to oppose any target reductions.

Some of those countries' motivations are clear. Saudi Arabia, with its oil wealth, stands to lose money, because most carbon dioxide emissions result from the burning of fossil fuels. The Soviet Union, with an economy in ruins, could have difficulty installing major industrial changes.

But the United States only could gain by reducing its dependence on foreign oil, cleaning up its air and helping to reduce the threat of global warming.

The climate conference is a follow-up to a 1988 conference that authorized three teams of experts to investigate global warming.

The panels predicted that temperatures could rise by about 5 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the 21st century, causing oceans to rise and deserts to grow.

In response, European countries have begun setting targets for reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. Germany plans to reduce emissions by 25 percent over the next few decades.

But U.S. policy refuses to acknowledge facts that the rest of the world accepts as obvious.

President Bush has said in the past that more research is needed to determine whether global warming exists and if it poses a threat.

Bush's balking on the issue doesn't make sense. Even if global warming turns out to be a great big hoax, developing cleaner and more efficient technology can't hurt the United States.

It might even help assure us a leading role in "The World Century" — the 21st.

— Eric Pfanner
for the Daily Nebraskan

Abortion advocate uses the language of illusion

Hoo-boy! The all too common pro-abortion advocate has risen again, attempting to convince the world that the murder of innocent children is a life-saving, wonderful thing. "Pro-choice" means a woman has the right to control her own body, does it? That sounds all fine and good, but when one examines the actual facts and thinks about them logically, one should realize that the very words you use, Mr. Keeler (letter to the editor, DN, Oct. 24) are really just part of the entire pro-abortion language of illusion.

"Every woman has the right to control her own body" sounds sensible, except when it is used to defend abortion, because common sense and modern science both recognize that in pregnancy, there are two bodies and two lives.

Woman, by dictionary definition, means "female human being." Since sex is determined at conception, and over half of those aborted are "female human beings," then, obviously, not every woman has the right to control her own body.

Rights of individuals, because of the interrelation of all life, are limited when they infringe on the rights of others. Apart from abortion, where else may a woman, in pursuit of a

career, diploma, lifestyle or personal interest, have the legal right to kill an innocent, defenseless human being?

Control, which involves responsibility and restraint should be exercised before exposing one's body to the possibility of pregnancy. Abortion seeks to replace self-control by demanding, instead, the right to control the body of someone else.

To sum up: Abortion stops a beating heart. Abortion kills. If two people make the "choice" (note the word "choice") to act irresponsibly and have sex without using some means of birth control, they should show some guts and accept the responsibility for their actions, instead of acting like cowards and abandoning their duty to care for the life that was created. Just having sex at all could be considered irresponsible, since the only 100-percent effective means of contraception is abstinence. Can you say abstinence?

How is that for a "clarification letter," Mr. Keeler? I believe you are the one who needs to think before you write. Perhaps "re-education" is what is necessary for you. Don't get angry; those were your words.

Andrew Meyer
"The silly junior"
pre-med



Legal actions go beyond racism

Public figures' arrests based on criminal acts, not skin color

The never-ending saga of Washington Mayor Marion Barry is a daytime soap opera writer's dream.

But in terms of racial relations in the nation's capital, it's becoming a nightmare.

In January, Barry was arrested on drug charges. Several months later, the American public was treated to evening news broadcasts of the videotape of Barry allegedly smoking crack cocaine in a hotel room with a prostitute.

Barry, whose term as mayor expires in January, was charged with 10 counts of drug possession, one count of conspiracy to possess drugs and three counts of perjury. Of course, Barry denied all charges.

On Friday, though, Barry was sentenced to six months in prison, fined \$5,000 and given one-year's probation for his August conviction of misdemeanor cocaine possession.

Few would disagree that Barry broke the law — several laws, really — and should be brought to justice. After all, he spoke out against drugs to Washington youth, and eventually gave them a real-life definition of hypocrisy.

Unfortunately, Barry happens to be black — the only reason, some argue, that he is being put through this ordeal.

It gives the word "dope" a whole new meaning.

Yes, Barry is black. He also is a lying drug user, which is irrelevant to his skin color. Being a criminal and the mayor of the nation's capital is a poor combination.

But still, people would rather rally around a figure they think is being unjustly treated than see a problem for what it really is. In this case, the problem is that one of our leaders broke the law. His skin color is beside the point.

There probably are those who are happy to see him suffer this misfortune. If the reason for their excitement is Barry's race, then there's an obvious problem. If, however, they just want to see a criminal pay the price, well... what can you say?

Author and playwright Ishmael Reed, who is black, said this last summer of the Barry caper: "The media coverage of Mayor Barry is yet another example of black men being singled out for behavior or actions

that are common in society. "... what we're saying is, 'Let's give as much coverage to whites who commit crimes.' This simply doesn't happen."

Oh, really? Tell that to Richard Nixon, Revs. Jim Bakker and Jerry Falwell, Col. Oliver North and Jimmy Hoffa, if you can find him.

If it's incriminating videotape



Chuck Green

you're looking for, pull out the old clips of automobile designer John DeLorean buying cocaine from FBI agents in 1982, or Rob Lowe frolicking with a teen-age girl in an Atlanta hotel room.

Remember Abscam in 1980? Six lawmakers — all white — were shown on every television network's evening news broadcast accepting bribes from FBI agents posing as Arab oil millionaires.

Abscam received 10 times the publicity Barry has gotten, as did most of the other aforementioned examples. Though racism is a problem in dire need of a solution, it also can be used as an excuse. Or a shield, as in Barry's case.

Barry was convicted because he is black? Nope. He was convicted because he broke the law.

The accusations are nothing new. Finger-pointing and crying "racism" have captured headlines for a long time. Sadly, in many cases the accusations are true.

But in many cases, they're not.

To be sure, any form of bigotry is intolerable. It's wrong, and people who judge others by their skin color need lots of educating.

Racism is a problem that tears at the fabric of our society like a rat gnawing its way out of a trap. But using racism as an excuse for a problem is like feeding the rat cheese.

All too often, racism is thought of as being synonymous with whites. All too often, it is.

But not always.

Ever hear of the rap group Public Enemy? Its members, who are black, perform in military garb, supposedly

mobilizing against a "worldwide conspiracy" to exterminate the black race. It says so on the jacket cover of the group's LP, "Fear of a Black Planet."

A worldwide conspiracy to rid the planet of blacks? If that's the case, why does almost every nation on Earth abhor South Africa's apartheid policy?

Believing that all white people are anti-black is a bit of a sweeping generalization, isn't it?

What would happen if a popular "white" band like U2 or R.E.M. wrote songs about how all the problems that face white America are caused by blacks? That would go over like a rat in the bathtub.

That kind of one-sided blame overflows like a toilet into almost every facet of life.

There are black politicians who make racist comments against whites. Blacks in New York City boycotted and protested and shouted racial insults at Korean store owners last summer. Black comedians Eddie Murphy and Richard Pryor have made careers out of immortalizing white stereotypes.

But little is ever said about it. If anything is, it is immediately construed by some as racism.

It's a two-way street. Racism is a travesty, but to dispose of only half of it — the half that spews from the mouths of some ignorant whites — doesn't solve anything.

It's like putting out a fire in your basement, but leaving the upstairs bedrooms in flames. Unless the whole inferno is extinguished, we'll only get burned again and again.

Throughout the world, from Belfast to Johannesburg, from Los Angeles to New York, from survivalist camps in the Northwest to Ku Klux Klan rallies in the South, children are being raised and indoctrinated in a shroud of hate directed at those who are a little bit different.

If this attitude would be exterminated, people might wake up and realize how much we all really need each other. Then we could start solving problems and stop creating new ones.

Just ask Marion Barry — in six months.

Green is a senior news-editorial major, and is a Daily Nebraskan night news editor, sportswriter and columnist.

letter

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