

# America, Bush need your help

**GARY LONGSINE**

We desperately need a fundamental re-evaluation and reorganization of national security policy. We must stop, think and change. We must do it today.

We can no longer view national security strictly in terms of military threats from outside. We must consider the economy, the environment, the health of our people and the scourge of world poverty and hunger to be vital to the security and well-being of our nation.

President Bush would prefer that you view these issues as a dichotomy: domestic vs. security issues, or military vs. humanitarian. That way, he can blame Congress for inactivity on the very issues he ignores and can continue to play with foreign policy in his Cold War ways and golf on his domestic time.

Bush has had his chance to lead this country and the world into his new world order. So far he has done nothing new, except name it in speeches that now have a hollow ring. We must realize, because Bush won't, that the true threats to our nation's security come from problems that were ignored or created in the frenzy of the Cold War and greatly exacerbated by a decade of Ronald Reagan and Bush.

Absent presidential action, Congress cannot be expected to provide a coherent and visionary leadership. However, it should be expected to provide clear legislation in response to real problems. The new world order needs to begin at home. We can lead the world, but only if we lead ourselves first.

One big obstacle to our self-leadership is a practice the courts have adopted as a response to confusing legislation from Congress. We should put an immediate stop to the use of legislative history to interpret the wishy-wash laws passed by a timid and divided Congress.

Legislative history is the record of debate on a bill. Courts use it to determine the intent of Congress when the intent, apparently, is not discernible from the text of the law. The record often contains hundreds of pages of explanatory remarks dropped into the record. Much of it is never actually read in the debate.

The record is generally so extensive that virtually any interpretation of a legislative bill can be supported. This moves the courts to the center of policy making. I say move them back out. If Congress can't pass clear legislation on an issue, then it shouldn't pass any at all.

Bill GL-1: "The courts of this land



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shall not use the legislative record of Congress to interpret the laws of the land as passed by Congress. The text of the law shall be sufficient to determine its meaning. If the text has no meaning, then the law has no meaning. No guessing and no peeking allowed."

With that done, Congress should strive to pass clear legislation directed at our nation's very real problems.

It is not enough to say that we must stop spending hundreds of billions of dollars on our military when we have homeless people, children in poverty, more than \$2.5 trillion in the federal debt and death by stray bullets in our inner cities.

Bill GL-2: "Congress hereby directs the president to submit within one year a budget with military spending reduced by half. Furthermore, all procurement of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems shall cease immediately."

With the military monster under control, Congress can make some headway into salvaging the economy. It needs help. It sags under the tremendous weight of a variety of debt-related problems. The recent scrap over credit card interest rates points to one of the widely ignored aspects of these problems.

You, as a credit card-using consumer, are paying interest rates far in excess of the interest that would normally be associated with your lending risk. The tremendous profits milked

from credit card holders are being used to prop up ailing banks.

You are paying banks for making bad loans to developing nations. You are also paying for loans to wealthy developers, who made more money in one year in the 1980s than you will in the rest of your life. These developers built tremendous office complexes in cities such as Houston. Poking through the skylines of several major cities in the Southwest are giant office towers sitting empty or uncompleted.

Most of the developers paid themselves handsomely — and legally — for the entrepreneurial talent required to convince a banker that yet another empty tower in a Southwestern state would be a sound investment.

Billions of dollars of these and other bad loans are being written off by banks such as Citibank, Chase Manhattan and Chemical Bank. You probably have a credit card from one of these banks and you are probably paying from 17 to 20 percent interest.

A decade ago, a legal monopoly affectionately called Ma Bell was disbanded for doing exactly the same thing the major banks are doing now. Ma Bell was charging long-distance customers higher rates to subsidize the losses incurred in their service to local callers.

But that is just a drop in the bucket of economic problems. We need sweeping changes. Economic collapse, or even eternal stagnation, is a much greater threat to our security than Libya could ever hope to be.

Bill GL-3: "Congress directs the president to submit a budget with the deficit reduced by one-third. The president shall submit a balanced budget in 1993. Thereafter, all budgets, except in times of national emergency as declared by the president, approved by a two-thirds vote of both houses of Congress, and initialed in triplicate by God, shall be submitted as balanced."

If you want to help bring in the new world order, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope and a contribution of \$25 for the complete text of 25 simple legislative GL-bills that could help save our nation.

Our country needs your help. Suggested bills are welcome. Please keep them to 50 or fewer words. No words of more than three syllables. We're dealing with Congress, you know.

Longsine is a senior economics and international affairs major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

## 'Gag rule' inaccurate name for abortion counseling decision

In the editorial "'Gag rule' remains" (DN, Nov. 21), Eric Pfanner neglected to tell the whole story about this issue. Title X has recently been referred to as the "gag rule." This is not a gag rule. Keep reading, and I'll explain.

In a statement Nov. 5, President Bush said, "Patients and doctors can talk about absolutely anything they want." This includes abortion. The doctors can inform their patients of the costs, harms and effects or what would happen during the abortion, etc. They simply cannot refer the patients to an abortion clinic. Therefore, it is only non-medical personnel, clinic counselors, for example, who are affected by this ruling.

Pfanner said that counseling is not the same as advocacy, and I agree. What this ruling says is that physicians should be the ones to discuss abortion with patients, but they should not refer them to abortion clinics once they have already conceived. This is the reason family planning clinics, such as Planned Parenthood, are so upset with this ruling. They also wanted to allow their counselors to discuss the option of abortion with their patients.

The original intent of Title X, when it was implemented in 1970, was to

deal with the issue of preventative family planning, not to deal with the issue of abortion. Once a woman becomes pregnant, she no longer falls into the pre-conceptive category. Abortion is not preventative family planning. It is post-conceptive planning; not to mention that it is the ending of a human life.

The congressional conference report on Title X clearly states: "It is, and has been, the intent of both houses that funds authorized under this legislation be used only to support preventative family planning services." Section 1008 of Title X says, "None of the funds appropriated under this title shall be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning."

Pfanner's article mentioned that the failure to override this veto will lead to Bush's less-than-perfect record on social issues. I believe he is trying to reiterate what House Speaker Thomas Foley recently said. Foley feared that if the House voted with the president, it would imperil vital social programs offered by these clinics. But, in fact, none of the money would be taken away from these clinics if these clinic counselors were not allowed to discuss abortion. Bush has said he will sign the bill with every

dollar intact.

Another point I feel needs to be made here is that even though abortion is legal on demand, it does not mean that we, as citizens of the United States, have to subsidize it, or information about it, with our tax money.

As with the issue of food stamps, the government sets guidelines as to how people can use their food stamps. This is, as it should be, the same with the issue of abortion. The government is giving federal money to these family planning clinics and should be able to have a say in how this money is going to be used.

It would have been well-advised for Pfanner to become aware of the truths of Title X, and of Bush's remarks, before solely relying on Planned Parenthood forces and their pro-abortion rhetoric when writing his editorial.

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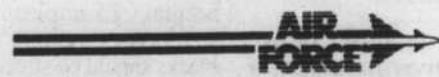
**Editor's note: In writing the Daily Nebraskan editorial on Bush's veto, Pfanner used articles by The Associated Press and The Washington Post as his sources.**

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