

Up in smoke

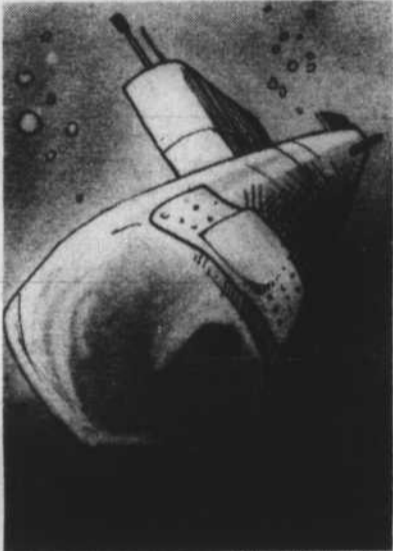
Peace dividend nothing more than pipe dream

Hopes that eased superpower tensions would lead to a budgetary "peace dividend" from reduced defense department expenditures have turned out to be little more than a pipe dream this year.

When Defense Secretary Dick Cheney in January proposed a defense cut of just \$10 billion (of a nearly \$300 billion budget) for the next fiscal year, members of Congress were quick to come up with their own plans to increase the size of defense department cuts.

But now it looks as if all those politicians were just blowing smoke.

When it came right down to it, politicians had too much trouble accepting specific defense department cuts. Jobs were at stake — not only within the armed services themselves but also through defense department contractors and small business in communities where bases would be closed. In a time of economic uncertainty, such cuts could have led to larger problems.



Brian Shellito/DN

Perhaps most importantly, the cuts also could have cost politicians their jobs. In an election year already plagued by economic woes, voters would be more unhappy to see any cuts come to projects in their areas.

So, instead of doing the proper, painful deed of

cutting defense spending, senators and representatives decided to back off.

Now they are showing willingness to accept Cheney's budget almost intact. The same senators who balked at Cheney's proposal when it first was announced now are advocating pushing back more dramatic cuts at least for a year.

Of course it's essential to scrutinize all decisions that could harm the economy, but even Pentagon officials admit exaggerations in early reports that up to 300,000 troops would be laid off if cuts were made.

And when talk of other cuts came up, the strongest support for preserving the B-2 Stealth bomber came from California, where the B-2 assembly plant is. Twenty more bombers now are scheduled for production.

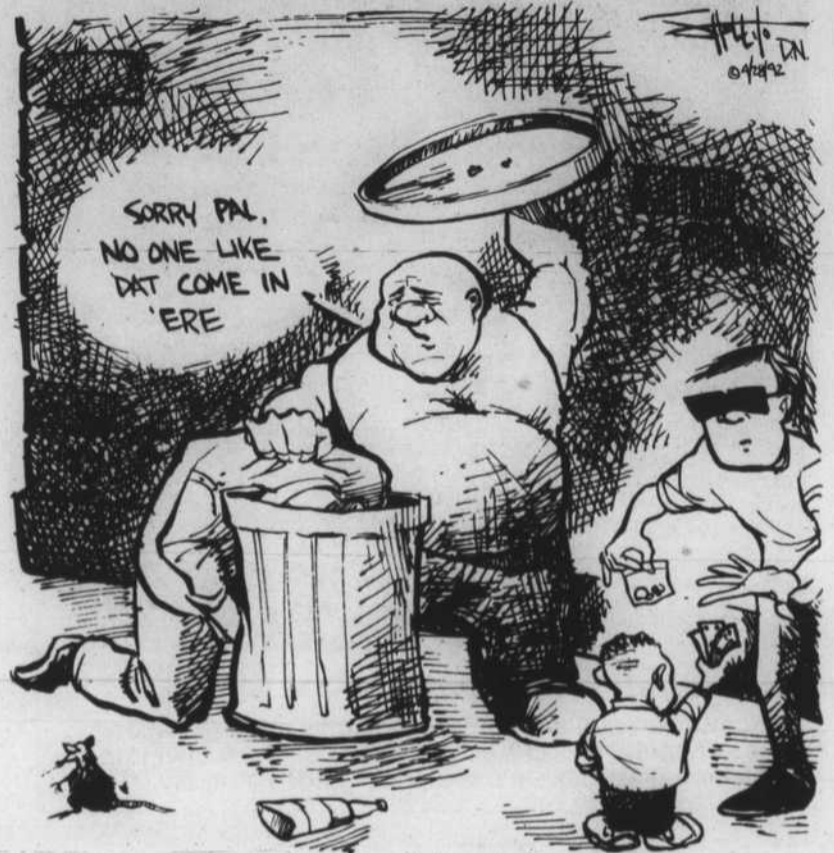
After complaints from New England that plans to stop production of the Seawolf attack submarine could cause thousands of lost jobs, a House subcommittee restored \$2 billion to the program.

The Stealth is designed specifically to avoid Soviet radar. The Seawolf is designed specifically to attack Soviet submarines.

When cuts first were proposed in both of these areas earlier in the year, members of Congress weren't too concerned about the manufacturing plants shutting down. It was painfully apparent that national defense no longer depended on the technology these weapons could provide.

But, apparently, the end of the Cold War matters little in an election year when the jobs of members of Congress are at stake.

PARDON ME SIR BUT I
THOUGHT I SAW SOME
KIDS RUN IN HERE WITH
SOME OBSCENE, SMUT
FILLED MUSIC.



BRIAN ALLEN

Make room for 3rd party

"So, Allen, how are you going to vote this year, Republican or Democrat?" I recently was asked.

Naturally, my mind still is somewhat open on that issue, but the answer probably is neither. I really don't think much of either party, and this year the front-runners from both major parties — draft-dodging Bill and read-my-lips George — leave even more than a little to be desired.

It's looking as though I am going to have to vote the way I almost did for the last presidential election and give my support to a third-party candidate, namely the Andre Marrou-Nancy Lord combination from the Libertarian party.

Actually, I don't even like our party system. The founding fathers of this country didn't have any party system in mind when they set up our form of government. It's simply not needed. All our two-party system does is limit the candidates to those whose ideals and beliefs fit nicely into either the standardized Republican or Democratic party ideals.

Sure, candidates are allowed a certain degree of latitude when it comes to their policies, but you can bet that if those policies don't fall pretty close to the party line, that particular candidate will find a lack of support from the parent party.

This leaves those individuals like me, whose views don't fall in line with either the Democrats' or Republicans' ideals, sort of left out, unless there happens to be a third party that holds the same views.

Luckily, in my case there is. The Libertarian party is the nation's third-largest and fastest-growing political party. While its 200,000 registered voters don't provide much of a threat to either the Republicans or Democrats, that many votes easily could tip the balance of power between the two major parties.

Thus, while it probably will be quite a while before the Libertarian party actually gets a candidate elected to a major position, it does send a message to the two major parties that not everyone is happy with their policies. This could force them to alter their positions slightly on some issues and to try to limit the defections to the Libertarian party that now are taking place.

Basically, the Libertarian party was founded on and continues to believe in the Jeffersonian idea of "That government which governs best is that which governs least." Libertarians believe that government should be greatly limited and should provide only for national defense and the



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protection of citizens from crime.

Libertarians believe that governmental power over citizens' lives has gotten entirely out of control, and the basic freedoms this country was founded on rapidly are being eroded.

I think most people today definitely can sympathize with these ideas. The government already tells us we must wear helmets each time we ride a motorcycle, we must register our personal firearms, we must prove our age before we buy certain music and we must wear seat belts in most states.

Governmental control of my life seems to be getting unmistakably tighter, the deficit keeps getting larger and my taxes keep rising. The Democrats and Republicans seem quite content to let this sad state of affairs continue. The Libertarians are the only ones who seem interested in my plight and the plight of this country.

One major plank in the Libertarians' platform is a drive to eliminate personal income taxes and subsequently abolish the Internal Revenue Service. The streamlined, bare-bones government envisioned by the Libertarians would not require nearly the operating funds that our current bloated, bureaucratic behemoth demands. The greatly reduced funding required by the Libertarian government would easily be generated by sales taxes, import taxes, etc.

Libertarians don't believe the United States should play the role of police force to the world. They, and I, fail to see any sense in spending billions of dollars to ensure the defense of such economic powerhouses as Japan and Germany, who clearly are

more than capable of financing their own defense forces.

Why, after all, should we continue at our own expense to ensure the national safety of Japan, thereby freeing its economy of this burden and helping it increase its trade imbalance over us?

Another plank of the Libertarian party is fierce support of the Constitution, particularly the Bill of Rights. It, and I, believe the freedoms of speech and free press are being tested by various moral majority types (such as Omaha for Decency and the 2 Live Crew issue) who have as their goals the censorship of anything they personally don't agree with or enjoy seeing, reading or hearing.

The Libertarian party, and I, also believe that the Second Amendment basically is being ignored on the local, state and federal level, and the rights of citizens to ensure their own safety through the ownership of firearms should be protected more widely.

Perhaps one of the most controversial ideas shared by the Libertarian party and myself is the belief in legalized drugs. In a 1991 article of the National Review, Libertarian presidential candidate Marrou said, "Drugs are lifeless substances; guns are inanimate objects. They cannot be evil. The only thing that can be evil is a human being."

"According to (former Surgeon General) Everett Koop, 71 percent of drug-related deaths in America are caused by tobacco. What do Democrats and Republicans do about tobacco? They subsidize it.

"Twenty-eight percent of drug-related deaths are caused by alcohol. Bush is spending billions to get rid of 1 percent of the drug problem."

These figures make the war on drugs seem kind of a foolish waste of money to me — just one of many black holes the current bloated system seems content to keep pouring funds down.

In short, the Democrats and Republicans do not represent my ideals or the ideals of a large percentage of the population. They have shown over and over their incompetence at running this country and their desire to control the day-to-day lives of its citizens.

Voters are offered little choice outside these parties, but that is changing. So if you don't like the way the two major parties are running things, and if you don't like either Clinton or Bush, remember you have another choice.

Think Libertarian.

Allen is a senior mechanical engineering major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted.

Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion is left to the editor's discretion.

Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned.

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 not be granted.

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

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