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EDITORIAL

## Deadly intent

Shootings prove gun-control necessary

Bullets cross all language barriers. Unfortunately, warnings don't. That's why a 16-year-old Japanese exchange student in Baton Rouge, La., was killed Saturday night when he failed to understand how "freeze" can be English for "don't move or I'll shoot."

Yoshihiro Hattori was going to a Halloween party when he walked to the wrong house by mistake. The neighbor apparently heard someone in his yard and shouted: "Freeze!"

Hattori, who was in America for only two months, kept walking. The neighbor shot Hattori to death with a .44-caliber pistol. Pick up any newspaper in any city in the United States.



David Badders/DN

Chances are, a story about a shooting will headline the front page. Last month in Texas a 17-year-old opened fire in an Amarillo high school hallway, wounding six students. Last year a student at the University of Iowa in Iowa City shot six people to death.

The exchange student's story seems almost commonplace to Americans. Just another young punk getting what he deserved, some people will think. But the story devastated many Japanese. Every national TV network in Japan covered the story in Monday evening broadcasts, explaining Americans' other meaning of "freeze."

Owning almost any weapon in Japan is illegal, be it a gun, sword or dagger. Japanese gangs fight with fists or kitchen knives. There is so little street crime in Japan that the language has no word for "mugging."

Imagine. A county where one can feel safe walking even in a rough neighborhood because weapons are illegal.

America cannot go that far. The Constitution guarantees Americans the right to keep and bear arms. But the interpretation of that guarantee needs to be reevaluated, and this country needs tougher gun control restrictions at all levels.

President Bush has come out against the Brady Bill, a measure that would require a background check and 5- or 7-day waiting period before owning a gun. Chalk up another reason to vote against Bush on Nov. 3.

Right here at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, graduate student Arthur McElroy of Bennet allegedly aimed a M-1 semiautomatic rifle at his fellow classmates in Ferguson Hall.

One can scarcely bear to imagine the horror of what would have happened if the gun would not have jammed. But that "what if" must be viewed as "what should not have been."

State Sen. Brad Ashford is working to introduce legislation that would make it harder to obtain an assault rifle. "There are rifles that are clearly designed to kill. They're not designed for hunting. They are types of weapons we should not have in our society, a free society surely," Ashford said.

Violence cannot be stopped. But every means must be exhausted in hopes of hindering it.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others. 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. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. 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.

DEBATE WORLD SERIES



SAM KEPFIELD

## Call for change just propaganda

Change — it has become the mantra of the Democrats and the Perotistas this year.

"Change—yeah, we need change," goes the familiar refrain. "Twelve years of Reagan-Bush, supply-side stuff hasn't worked, I'm afraid of getting laid off, I'm afraid for my kids' future, the deficit is terrible, and we need new people. Change—yeah, we need it real bad!"

Hold on a minute. "Change" is an utter fraud, a convenient smoke screen for the complete intellectual vapidity of the Democratic campaign.

How else can one explain the alarming signs that many Americans are prepared to vote for socialism (called "investing in America," and "putting people first"), rather than the conservative supply side that they overwhelmingly endorsed in 1980, 1984 and 1988?

It's the tangible result of the Democrat's propaganda machine — perhaps the most efficient since the one of Joseph Goebbels. And the media is buying into the Big Lie — lock, stock and barrel.

The economy is the most oft-cited reason for this change mania. But it's not that bad — unemployment is down, housing starts are up and worker productivity is up. But we don't hear that.

And if you're one of those people who think: "Oh, it just can't get any worse!" I'm here to tell you it can. Remember Jimmy Carter? Thirteen percent inflation? Twenty percent interest rates? Gas lines? I do. And I don't want to see them again.

The 1980s are, I suppose, a victim of their own success. We had continuous, booming growth from 1983 to 1990, unparalleled since the end of World War II. People began to expect more, because the '80s — and Ronald Reagan — gave them more.

Ask yourself this question: Are you, or your parents, better off now than you were 12 years ago? I'm

almost willing to bet that the answer is yes for two-thirds of you.

But it doesn't matter now. We may be about to embark, God forbid, on what Arkansas Democrat-Gazette columnist Paul Greenberg called a "Clintonized culture." It is a prospect of "genuine, authentic phoniness," he writes. "The past isn't even prelude. It isn't, period." It's a massive rewriting of history that would make George Orwell green with envy.

For example, we keep hearing about how the rich got huge tax breaks and the middle class got hit for more. Wrong.

According to the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Slick Willie's hometown rag, the top 1 percent of income earners paid \$100 billion in taxes in 1988, as compared to \$19 billion in 1980. This, despite the fact that the marginal tax rates were 70 percent in 1980, and only 29 percent in 1988. It makes sense — cut taxes, people make more money, they have more to invest, they make more money on top of that, and they have a larger tax base.

Supply-side economics worked! But the media won't tell you, and people don't want to believe it. For some reason, they hate people who do well for themselves.

Perhaps the best illustration of this came in Thursday night's debate. A man employed as a domestic mediator stood up and asked the candidates, "Since we are all symbolically your children, what will you do to personally guarantee our needs?"

I just about fell out of my seat. It was perhaps the stupidest question of the whole night — and there were plenty of stupid questions.

The correct response to this stupidity is: "What are you going to do to guarantee your own needs?" No president has the kind of power to personally guarantee the prosperity and happiness of every American, and I wouldn't want that guarantee. A president is not Big Daddy, and this kind of thinking leads to Big Brother. A president sets a tone, and passes policies that allow each American to ensure

his own needs are met.

It's called self-reliance, people. It's called the work ethic. It's what built this country from a wooded backwater to the superpower it is today.

Sure, a government could personally employ its people to ensure jobs, provide housing for all so none want, and provide other essential services like health care. In fact, some countries did, until recently. They were the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact nations.

This squalling about wanting government to meet our needs is a pathetic comment on the decline of the American character. It's what change is all about. Americans are whining about how bad it is, about how Bush doesn't care and doesn't "get it" — another overused chestnut this year.

They begin to sound like a crying child whose parents won't buy him a shiny new toy. They don't realize that to truly get ahead, you do for yourself, and you don't rely on government largesse.

But if Clinton and class-envy win out in November, kiss it goodbye, folks. Soak the rich, the middle class and the foreign corporations that bring jobs here, confiscate their profits to pay for all of Clinton's social engineering, and we'll think of today's economy as robust.

And the same people who cried the loudest about how miserable they were and how we needed change will be boo-hoing the loudest then. They wish for all the benefits, but not the will to pay for them.

America seems to have taken John Kennedy's words and twisted them around. We now ask not what we can do for our country, but what our country can do for us.

And we dare to call it change, or fairness. I call it what it is — a fraud. And I pray that you and every other American realizes it before you go into that voting booth on Nov. 3 and not after Jan. 20.

Keppfield is a graduate student in history, an alumnus of the UNL College of Law and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Toilet paper

I am writing as a Nejhardt resident who, for one, is not just a little bit tired of being greeted by the eyesore of freshly toilet-papered sorority houses first thing in the morning.

Because I assume that this is being done by members of a certain fraternity or fraternities, my question is this: Don't you guys have anything more productive to do? It seems to me

that the Greek system has enough image problems without this pre-pubescent vandalism — not to mention very environmentally incorrect littering.

For crying out loud, guys, I outgrew "T.P.-ing" houses about the same time my voice was starting to crack. Are you really so starved for entertainment?

Another thing I do not understand

is why the administration does not seem to take an interest in seeing that this is stopped.

I can't imagine it would take a police task force to figure out who the individuals responsible are, and I would guess that a few stiff lines would nicely dissuade such wasteful and unsightly nonsense.

T. Halsey Lincoln