

OPINION PAGES

Our VIEW

One way out of Kosovo

Ground troops may be America's only option

It's hard not to flinch a little bit when President Clinton, still flushed from an impeachment trial and sex scandal, speaks to the country about "American values."

Nevertheless, this is what he cited as the reason for U.S.-led NATO involvement in Kosovo. He explained that our country cannot stand by while a tyrant such as Milosevic committed genocidal atrocities in the Balkans. And, according to several polls, most Americans agreed with their president.

And despite what the White House expected, it explains why, according to a Newsweek poll, 58 percent of Americans support sending in ground troops to finish what NATO started. It also leaves one questioning Clinton's commitment to the ousting of Milosevic and the end of the Serb aggression that has emptied most of the war-torn province.

When Clinton got Americans involved in the centuries-old Balkan powder keg, he needed to be prepared to win the war against the bitter Serb nation. His announcement last weekend that ground troops would not be used against Yugoslav forces has caused many a pundit and official to question Clinton's dedication to "American values."

Nobody wants this to be a second Vietnam, and nobody (except perhaps Clinton) considers Milosevic a neo-Hitler. But since we are involved, and we have committed ourselves, we must finish the war, even if it requires the use of ground troops.

Sen. John McCain, a Vietnam vet and P.O.W., has been among the most vocal for total U.S. dedication in the Balkans. Putting aside his personal distaste for war and nightmarish experiences as a North Vietnamese prisoner, he believes the only way to stop Milosevic is to commit troops even at the risk of civilian lives and NATO soldiers.

"This administration has been trying to avoid war while waging one," McCain wrote in Time magazine.

Getting involved in Kosovo was a gamble by any standard, and one that many presidents wouldn't have taken. But since we are in now, as McCain says, the only option is to win. If the United States truly has a global responsibility as a guardian of human rights, and NATO is going to act as a benevolent billy-club, then it must fulfill those obligations to the fullest or risk being perceived as weak and noncommittal to the rest of the world.

But that is not the greatest reason for ground troops; after all, the U.S. has certainly suffered international embarrassment before. While NATO quibbles over details, more than 300,000 Kosovars have become forced refugees by Milosevic's Serbian army. Concentration camps have been reported deep inside the region and everyone is wondering where the Albanian men have gone. It may not be a Holocaust, but it is a horror, and NATO cannot stop the nightmare until it wakes up to its responsibilities.

Lupo's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Underappreciation obvious

If I ever had any doubts the University of Nebraska cared very little for its employees, they are long gone after yesterday's parking meeting at the Nebraska East Union.

Dark-suited, power-tie-wearing representatives from Parking and Transit Systems showed several slides indicating where parking will be lost from expansion and where new parking will be located. Apparently, no one consulted any non-suit-wearing university employees when they constructed this plan, because after they are finished, only deans and directors will be able to afford the parking.

Not only will their plans push employees into the residential area south of East Campus even more than they currently are, but they have very little in the way of contingencies for the new problems they are creating — like residential parking bans, which are an inevitability.

Parking spaces, restricted or not, will double in price over the next 3-4 years. The staff-restricted spot that I pay \$31 per month for will be almost \$100 per month within 4 years. Regular lot permits will go up as well — to \$50 per month, as will perimeter parking.

All this while salaries remain stagnated. This was an issue the Parking and Transit folks were unwilling to entertain, laying the blame at the feet of the legislature. They also blame the City of Lincoln for many of the problems.

They tried comparing the University of Nebraska to other universities they claimed were in "our peer group" — mainly Big 8/Big 10/Big 12 schools. What they failed to mention is that salaries for University of Nebraska employees are far below those same schools. It's apples and oranges. Even if I assume I'll get the maximum 3 percent raise for the next five years, I'll need all that money and more to pay for parking, so the benefit to me is nil. I cannot imagine how this will affect support staff making less than \$18,000 a year.

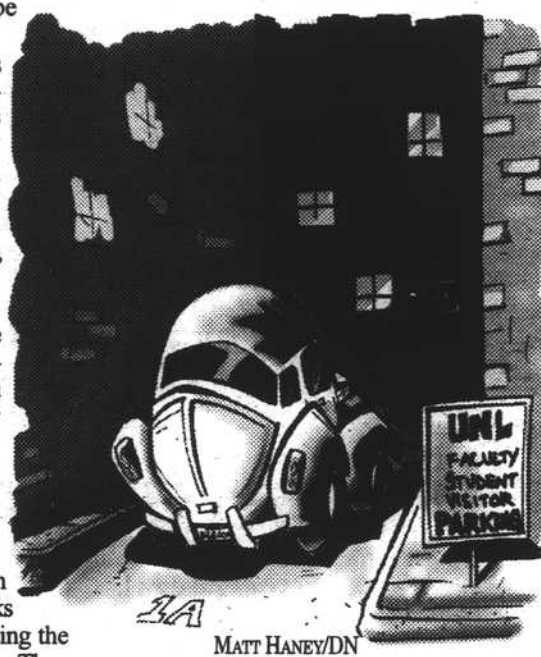
We were encouraged to call or write our state legislators and state senators, which is the response people in "public service" often give when they have no intelligent answers, but I am not that stupid, and neither were the other employees who packed the meeting room to the hilt yesterday.

Therefore, I encourage all university employees to call Chancellor Moeser. Call as many times a day as you can to make yourself heard. Also call the Board of Regents. Annoy the hell out of them all and force them to stop ignoring their employees.

It seems every day there is another

reason to stop working for this university and take my skills to a more appreciative environment. Hundreds of others feel that way, too. Parking is just the latest slap in the face. So what happens when all the good, hard-working people leave? I guess the University of Nebraska is hell-bent on finding out — and they will find out.

Jason Fredregill
film/video director/producer
East Campus



There is an alternative

The rules determine how the game is played or to put it another way, pre-conditions limit choices. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the City of Lincoln are about to embark on an interwoven project that will commit huge amounts of money to a perceived need.

Yes, there is a potential for flooding on the eastern margin of the campus. A second box (culvert) would alleviate that danger at a cost far less than an open drainage way with all the ramifications for the taking of land and maintenance.

Yes, there is traffic on campus. I would suggest that some creative thinking and recognizing existing topography would lead to pedestrian overpasses, tunnels, etc. at a cost far less than a four-lane bypass and a huge "green" mall on which to run buses.

The specification of a bypass and drainage way has led to the current discussion about loss of parking space and the stated options.

Still, let's examine the ramifications of a bypass and drainage way, which is the current mind-set of the university. The costs are truly staggering. The bypass and open drainage way is estimated at \$210 million. Replacement of

parking is estimated at \$50 million. The cost of the mall extending along east Vine Street is likely between \$50-100 million when you consider the replacement of buildings, etc. There is even talk of having to build a building to the west of the Beadle Center to house delicate equipment that would be affected by road vibration from the bypass. The proponents' reply to the cost questions seem to come easy. The federal government will assume much of the cost of the bypass and floodway. The parking lot users will pay for the new garages and enhanced surface transportation.

I beg to differ. The total costs for all of the project will easily approach a half a billion dollars. There will be lost opportunities if this much money is committed to the overall project. As a reality check, the university community was just informed that UNL may have a \$2.7 million shortfall because the legislature may not appropriate funds needed for the "unfunded mandates." How can we be so poor in one area and so rich in another?

From the more focused viewpoint of an employee of UNL, I have several additional observations. The proposed parking garages will likely become the lot of choice for on-campus residents because of their locations. The commuter will truly have only a hunting permit, with better chances of bagging an endangered species.

There is a choice location for a major parking garage that would also enhance the campus environment. There is a huge area represented by the mall east of the stadium where a multi-story underground garage could be built.

Access from Vine Street and 14th Street could be at the subsurface level, so that intersection would have minimal traffic. I am aware that a steam line runs across the middle, but somehow I don't view that as an insurmountable problem.

I also fail to see how this garage would be less safe than the other parking garages, as has been suggested in the past. This type of a garage coupled with pedestrian overpasses/tunnels would cost far less than the proposed projects. Even if it cost the same, the location and opportunities would outweigh the other options.

If the needs are truly there, this option should be considered. At the minimum other options (box, pedestrian overpasses, etc.) should be considered first before proceeding under the current mind-set.

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