

Paying your dues

United States' inability to pay U.N. debt bad policy

Like a very large number of Americans, I find many of the things our government does objectionable, and that's just the stuff I know about.

I am now, following the example of Congress, considering refusing to pay my taxes until I have assurance my money won't finance the activities I object to.

Something tells me this stand on principle won't please Congress, even though it is based on its own double standard:

Just as U.S. citizens pay income taxes, the United States must pay its dues to the United Nations.

The United Nations does not run on money from bake sales and lemonade stands. It relies on dues from member countries. More than half the money owed in legal dues is overdue debt from the United States.

The United States may not be thrown out of the United Nations based on the dues it owes, but it is in danger of missing out on membership in key administrative committees.

As a major player in international politics, the United States should be careful of stepping on the toes of an organization it had the primary role in forming.

Officially, the U.N. Charter defines four purposes: to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among states, to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations.

This charter was developed after World War II when broad international cooperation was identified as a need in order to create a world of

peace and prosperity.

The United States has been active in the United Nations from its formation. The name "United Nations" was coined by our own President Franklin Roosevelt.

Five of the six major arms of the

United Nations — the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Secretariat — are based at U.N. headquarters in New York.

The United States maintains a strong leadership role in nearly every way but one. Congress refuses to pay U.N. dues because of objections to the U.N.'s population control program, particularly abortion.

When Congress did send a bill to the White House to pay the dues — dependent on the condition that none of the

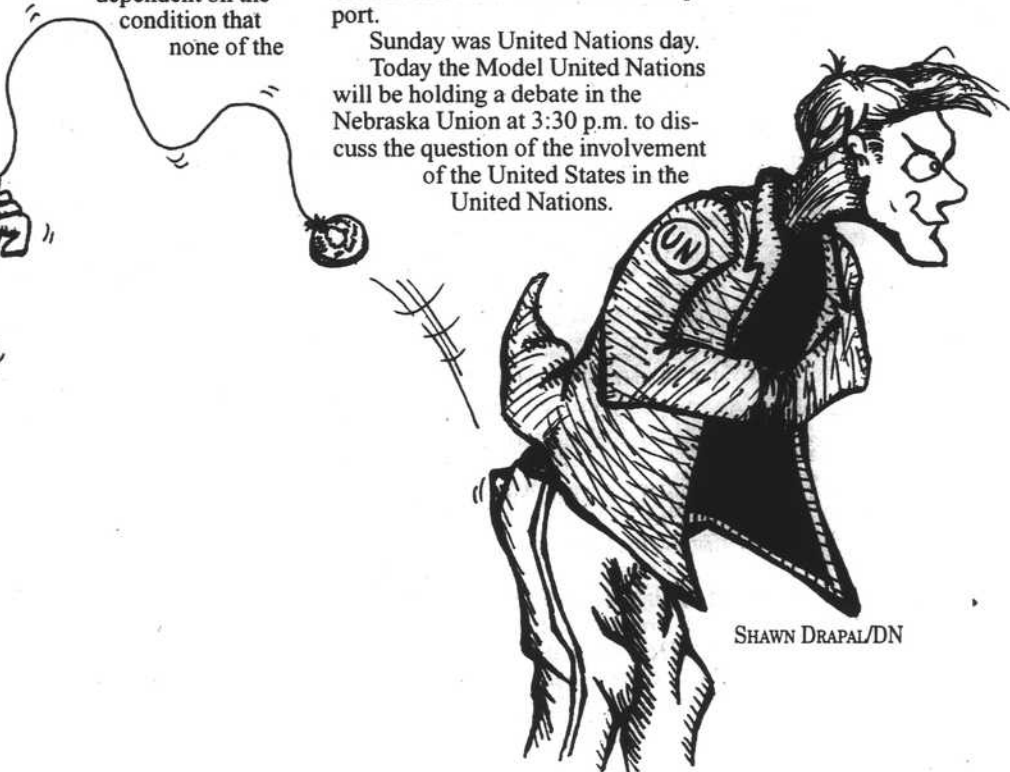
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money was used for "objectionable" programs — it was vetoed by President Clinton.

Issues such as these make one wonder why the United States stays involved in the United Nations if the conflicts of interest are so great as to hold back such a vital source of support.

Sunday was United Nations day. Today the Model United Nations will be holding a debate in the Nebraska Union at 3:30 p.m. to discuss the question of the involvement of the United States in the United Nations.

With so many different sides to this complex issue, the debate is sure to be a lively one. I hope to go and see a few punches thrown or even throw a few myself (verbally speaking), that is if the IRS's SWAT team hasn't found me yet.



Melissa Beran is a sophomore English and international studies major and a Daily Nebraskan guest columnist.

Bruised egos

Rally's message about violence awareness, not male-bashing



This past Wednesday I attended the Take Back the Night rally at the Union Plaza. I was there with the rest of ASUN, because we had voted a couple of weeks previous to co-sponsor the rally in the interest of violence awareness and prevention.

The women on the steps presented frightening statistics on violence, and President Andy Schuerman got up there and said some words. After everyone had their say, the march to the Capitol began.

I didn't get to go on the march because we had to go back inside to finish our meeting. I really, really would have liked to, though.

I can't tell you how moved I was by the words spoken that night. I was elated to see that so many people, male and female, had gathered there in front of the fountain. I was proud that ASUN had decided to support this event.

But my elation didn't last very long.

Once we resumed our public meeting, it became apparent that some people had been offended by the rally. They thought that it was one big anti-man fest. They thought that it concentrated too much on rape and violence against women.

In other words, some people didn't get it.

They didn't get it because it was-

n't a man-hater rally. It was an awareness rally.

The rally exists to make people aware that there are men who feel it is their right to act violently toward women.

There are men who think they can rape women because they have a God-given power over them. There are men who think it's OK to beat their wives when their dinner isn't ready soon enough.

This is not acceptable, and our worldwide human race needs to figure out that it's not.

Yes, most of the rally's message was concentrated in ending violence against women. This is, traditionally, what Take Back the Night rallies have always been about.

If the offended had been listening, though, they would have heard that there is violence in same-sex relationships, and violence in the name of heterosexuality is still being waged against gays.

They would have heard that violence against a person of any race, of any religion, of any sex, is wrong.

If they had taken the time to see past what they took as a personal slam, then they might have gotten it.

But they didn't. Instead of being shocked by the gruesome statistics, they were insulted. And instead of being inspired to help rid the world of these deplorable acts, they were selfishly caught up in something that wasn't even happening.

I have a feeling that there were women in that crowd who'd been abused or raped, and I'll bet that they weren't offended.

I'll bet that they were grateful that someone was taking a stand for them.

Someone must defend and give a

real voice to so many who cannot defend themselves.

These women's voices have been translated into a public outcry here only once this semester. If there was a rally every time a woman endured violence, we'd hear about it every 20 seconds.

What was revealed at Take Back the Night isn't an insult to men. It's an insult to women all over the world.

I am insulted and offended that a member of my sex is raped every two minutes.

I am offended that I have close friends who've been raped.

I am offended that the first thing I was told at New Student Enrollment was to never, ever walk anywhere alone at night.

I am offended that my mom had to send a can of pepper spray with me to college my freshman year.

I am offended that I've parked illegally, just so I wouldn't have to walk alone through a far-off "rape lot" in the middle of the night.

I am offended that I, and every woman I know, live each day with the fear or the reality of rape.

Now, I'd appreciate if those offended by the rally could explain to me one more time what it was that bothered them so much.

"Someone must defend and give a real voice to so many who cannot defend themselves.
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I'm not too sure they have a whole lot to be insulted by.

Next time you hear about or read a statistic concerning violence against women, see it for the atrocity that it is. Don't cry that some-

one isn't being fair to you. There are others out there who deserve your sympathy more.

It's time to put yourself in the shoes of every abused woman and walk around for awhile. Maybe then the pain you feel won't be because of a bruised ego but because of a wounded heart.



Erin Reitz is a senior theater performance major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.