

OPINION

Glad to be rid of shoot-to-kill policy

The Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that police may not shoot unarmed suspects fleeing crimes when there is no apparent threat to the police or others.

The Battalion Editorial Board is glad to see the old shoot-first-and-ask-questions-later policy thrown out. Shooting people simply for being in the wrong place at the wrong time is barbaric.

Not only did the shoot-to-kill policy bring about the deaths of non-violent and petty criminals — people who didn't pose a serious threat to society and who might have been rehabilitated had they been allowed to live long enough — but it also allowed the killing of innocent people mistaken for criminals.

In her dissenting opinion, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor said police need to have the right to shoot suspects in order to prevent their escape.

The new ruling is not a license to let criminals go free, it is for the protection of **everyone**. The ruling is consistent with the active policies of most metropolitan police departments and is consistent with good police work.

If some suspects escape, the police can catch them later. But at least they'll have a fighting chance to prove their innocence.

The Battalion Editorial Board

American leaders like to believe Soviet talk

WASHINGTON — Vice presidents are virtuoso at the art of funeral-attending and at Brezhnev's funeral George Bush, the former CIA director, had a 40-minute chat with the successor, Andropov, former head of the KGB. They talked, Bush said, "as spook to spook." That was an interesting thought: The CIA director and the head of the Soviet secret-police/psychiatric-hospital/slave-labor empire are in essentially the same craft.



George Will

Anyway, Bush brought back a hopeful surmise. Andropov, he said, has spent 15 years reading all Soviet intelligence reports and "anyone who has access to all the data must objectively know that if a country goes in peace, it has absolutely nothing whatsoever to fear from the U.S.A."

Swimming beneath the surface of that surmise, like a school of sluggish poke in brackish water, are some interesting implications. The Cold War is to a significant extent a misunderstanding to be cured by better "data." Soviet policy is defensive and reactive, driven by neurotic fear of U.S. motives. Therefore, U.S. foreign policy must be psychotherapy to get the Soviet Union thinking "objectively." As Bush's boss says, we must convince that we mean them no harm.

George Orwell said it requires not just intellect but imagination to to comprehend Soviet behavior. American leaders are most imaginative when concocting reasons for misapprehending Soviet motives. Comprehensions the enemy of cheerfulness, and cheerfulness is mandatory for leaders of democracy, especially when it is irrational.

American leaders will believe uncountable things to avoid believing the depressing truth, which is: The Soviet regime is intellectually deranged, morally bankrupt, politically corrupt and economically lunatic, and therefore is utterly dependent for whatever legitimacy it can claim, and whatever elan it can muster, on its role as liberator of everyone from everything but communism.

When Stalin died, Western leaders said, cheerfully: Fundamental change will soon be afoot because Stalin was the last old Bolshevik and, besides, his successor has given a speech praising "peaceful coexistence." Georgi Malenkov did that, in a speech saying war is bad. But he was not really the successor. He succumbed to a Stalinist attack from Khrushchev, who then became an anti-Stalinist regarding everything except government and culture.

Khrushchev, said Westerners cheerfully, is an earthy peasant, in touch with Soviet Everyman. Surely, therefore, he is more interested in raising living standards than in missiles. Two years after the Cuban missile crisis he was replaced by what Westerners thought was to be a troika — Podgorny, Brezhnev and Kosygin. Kosygin was cheerfully regarded as dominant, and as a worldly moderate, partly because he had an intellectual son-in-law.

The moderation of the new regime did not pan out, as Czechs, Poles, Ethiopians, Afghans, Yemenis, Vietnamese, Angolans and others can attest. But when Brezhnev fell, well there was Andropov who — be of good cheer — had been reading the data and therefore knew that the United States meant no harm.

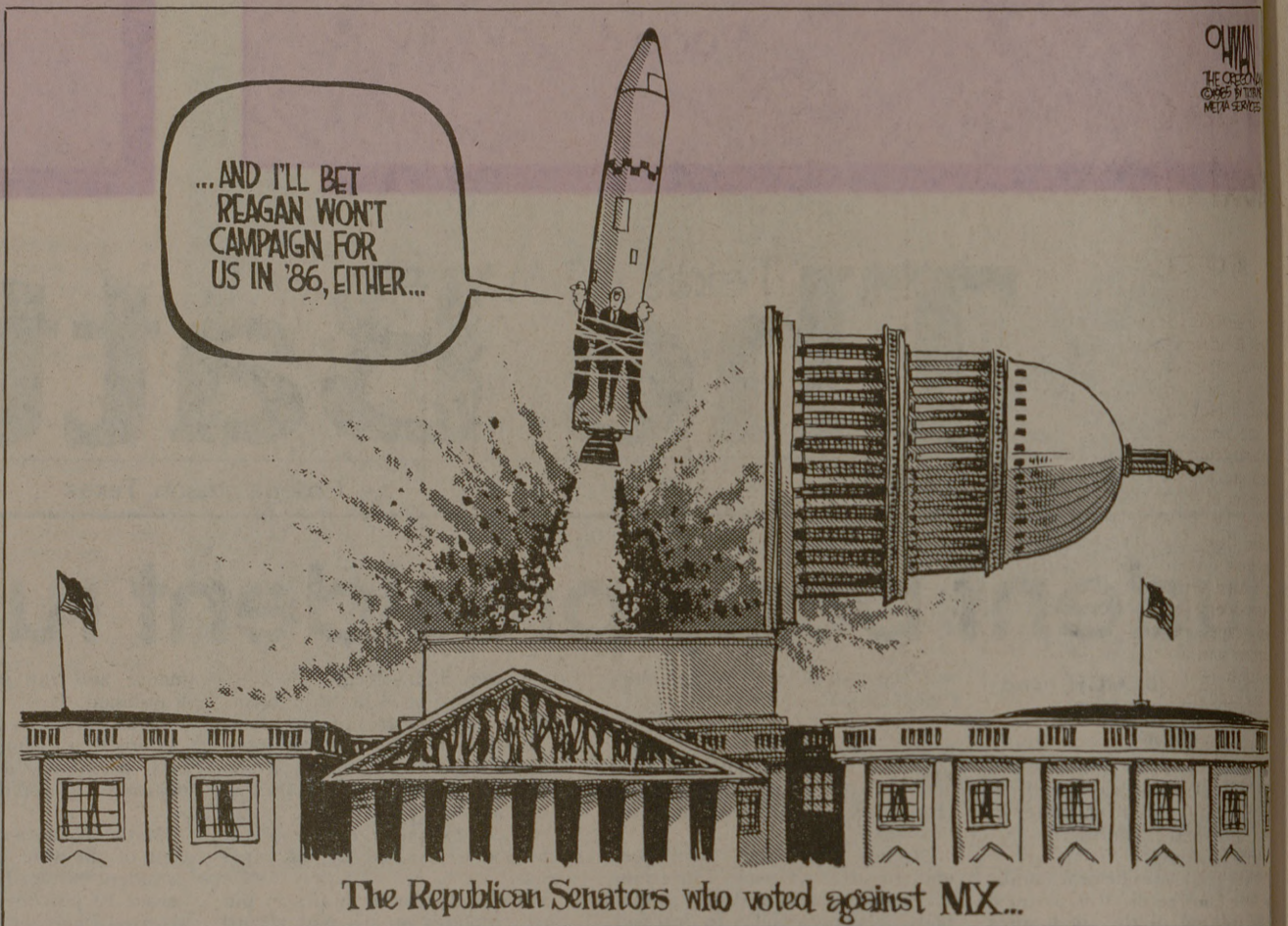
Today think tanks are hard at the task of pondering What It All Means — the fact the Grobachev is the first leader too young to have fought in the war with and then against the Nazis; the fact that he is a lawyer; the fact that he has failed upwards through agriculture. All — all! — that is known for sure is that he rocketed to the top of the Soviet elite during the slightly more than a decade (from the invasion of Czechoslovakia to the invasion of Afghanistan) when Soviet behavior was even more brutal than before.

After Stalin, the last Bolshevik, came Khrushchev the last leader to have profited mightily from Stalin's purges. Then came Brezhnev and Andropov and Chernenko, the last leaders who were — what? — brutalized or sensitized or something by the war. Now comes Grobachev, and from Western leaders comes the "new generation" theory: Be of good cheer, because the new generation is, well, younger, and, therefore . . . Besides, his wife has a well-turned ankle — a matched set, in fact.

I am not being sexist. I respect her for her mind, but ankles are geopolitical facts. They occasioned favorable comment during a tour of Britain. The tour was like a Broadway show previewing in New Haven to rave reviews. He and she cut graceful figures, she by having one, he by talking of contracts for British industry. He smiled a lot, at least until a Member of Parliament, perhaps remembering Lady Astor's question to Stalin (Where are you going to stop killing people?) asked about persecutions.

Gorbachev's charm slipped. He said: So's your old man. Actually, he said: What about Ireland and unemployment. This guy is apt to be around for a long time, and it is apt to seem like a long time.

George Will is a columnist for the Washington Post.



The Republican Senators who voted against MX...

Ohio bank scandal not all bad

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

The recent savings and loan scandal in Ohio has shaken the banking industry very badly. What happened was the Home State Savings Bank had invested its depositors' money in a Florida company that specialized in dealing in government securities. The company was shut down by the SEC after it couldn't account for millions of dollars of bonds it claimed to have on hand. When word got back to Ohio that Home State was stuck with bad paper, the good citizens of Cincinnati decided it might be prudent to take their money out of the bank while there was some still left.

Unfortunately everyone got the idea at the same time, and panic set in, not only for Home State customers, but also for other banking institutions in Ohio. The governor had no choice but to declare a long bank holiday to cool down all the people who were screaming for their savings.

I asked a former Ohio banker (not Home State) who also got burned how something like this could take place.

"We made a mistake. It could have happened to anybody."

"That's what the people of Ohio are afraid of," I said. "Why would a bank risk so much money with a small Florida securities company?"

"You should have seen their offices in Florida. Every dealer had a suite overlooking the ocean."

"You mean you invested your depositors' money in a firm because you were impressed with their offices?"

"Of course not. I didn't give them any funds until the officers took me for a ride on their 70-foot yacht. I'll say this, people in Florida really know how to live."

"Hold it," I said. "Bankers don't risk their customers' savings in a company just because it owns a yacht."

"It wasn't only the yacht. They also paid more interest than other firms in the bond business. The competition for deposits is fierce these days, and if we can offer just a quarter of a percent more to the public we can put the guy across the street out of business. People don't understand that we can't let their money sit in our vaults. If we offer them a higher rate of interest, then we have to get a higher rate of interest for ourselves. That's why we went to Florida. They were able to pay us more, and at the same time it was safe because they were backing our deposits with government securities. Is that a sure thing, or isn't it?"

"Probably, except many of the securities didn't exist."

"Now you're getting into technicalities."

"Why didn't you ask to see the bonds?"

"We did. Do you think we're from Missouri?"

"And what happened?"

"They showed them to us and then put them back in the safe."

"Didn't it occur to you that they might have been showing the same collateral to different customers over and over again?"

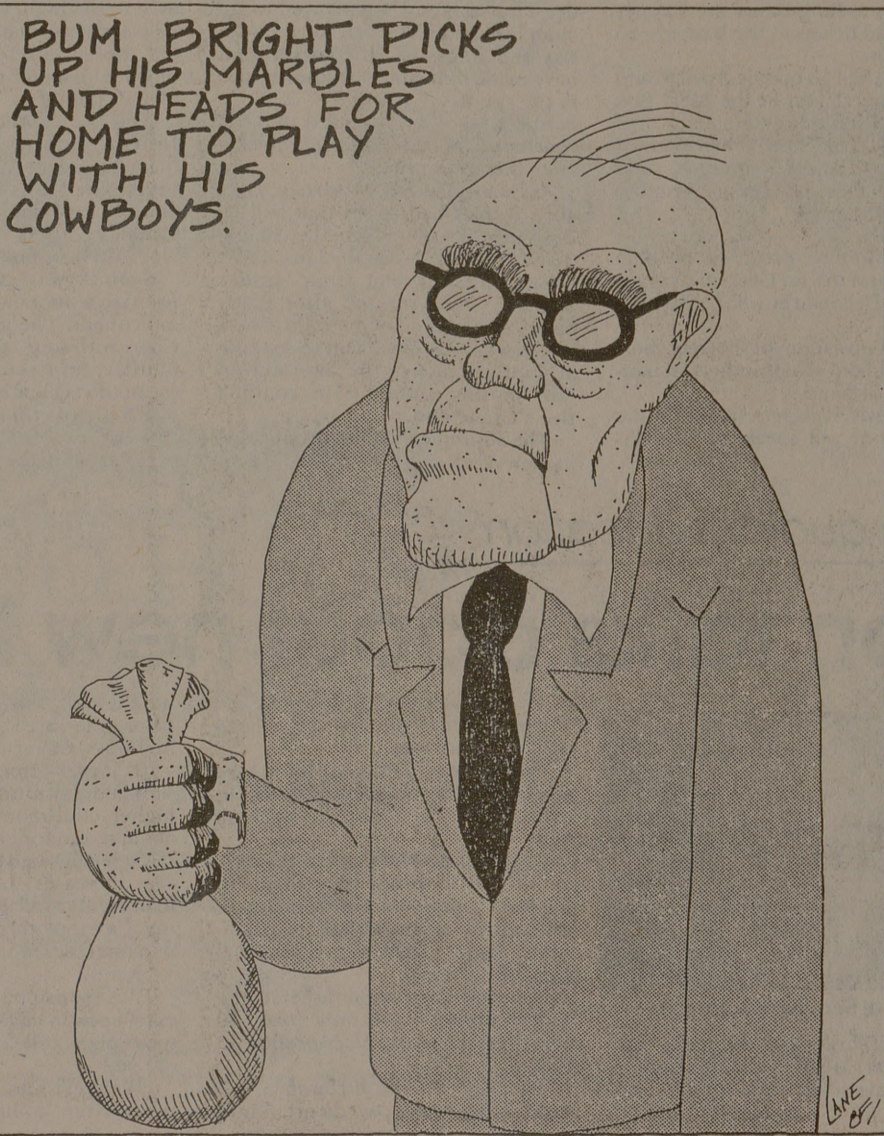
"Frankly it never crossed our mind. This one guy had a home you wouldn't believe, with a tennis court, Olympic size pool and race horses. Nobody like that unless their honest."

"In retrospect wouldn't your bank have been better off if you had taken the bonds back to Ohio instead of leaving them in Miami?"

"I couldn't have done that. If I had asked for the securities I would have hurt their feelings, and they would have told me to invest my money somewhere else."

"Perhaps that would have been the best thing that could have happened to you. At least you wouldn't have tossed all your depositors' money into the Old feneko swamp."

"Yeh, but at the same time I would never have gotten such a good interest rate for them either."



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