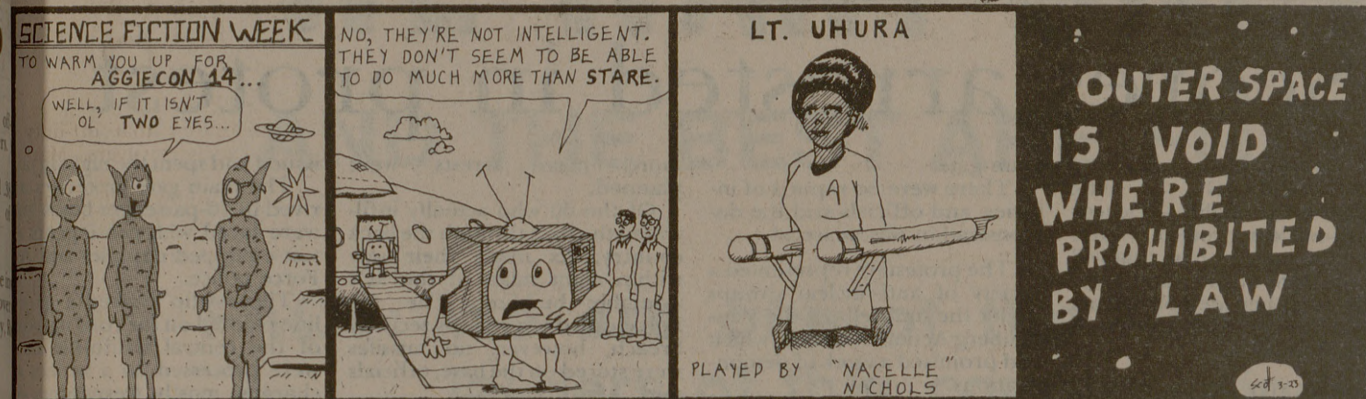


Warped

by Scott McCullar



U.S. top war arms seller

United Press International WASHINGTON — The United States is the major arms supplier for 20 of the world's 45 warring nations, while the United States arms 13 of them, a private study says.

The study also showed 4 million soldiers are directly engaged in combat.

From 1 million to 5 million people have been killed in these wars to date, the study said. About 500,000 foreign combat troops are involved in eight of the conflicts.

The 24-page "World at War" study of conflicts over the past three years was released by the Center for Defense Information, a private research group critical of U.S. defense, nuclear and arms policy.

"The most striking aspect is the degree to which conflict violence and international tensions have increased in nearly every

region of the world," it said. Of the approximately 40 major and minor armed conflicts in the world, the study located 10 in the Middle East Persian Gulf area, 10 in Africa, 10 in Asia, seven in Latin America and three in Europe.

"In many ways, the United States and the Soviet Union are carrying out their battle in these wars," said retired Adm. Gene LaRoque, the center's director.

The United States arms and trains one side, the Soviets do the other, and many of the conflicts could lead to a direct U.S.-Soviet confrontation.

"Any shooting war between the two would in all likelihood quickly involve the use of nuclear weapons because of the extent to which conventional forces on both sides have been nuclearized. It is high time we got out of these wars," he said.

New EPA director has 'impossible' job

United Press International WASHINGTON — William Ruckelshaus is receiving a chorus of praise as President Reagan's choice to head the Environmental Protection Agency, but many environmentalists and lawmakers believe he may be taking on an impossible job.

President Reagan nominated Ruckelshaus Monday, saying he is giving him the power to clean house at the troubled agency. Reagan also said he is authorizing a review of EPA personnel and resources to ensure the EPA has the means it needs to perform its vital function.

Ruckelshaus said Reagan has given him the flexibility to determine the problems and find solutions.

EPA sources said Ruckelshaus scheduled a meeting with the agency's senior staff Tuesday, shortly before he planned to make a speech to career employees.

In other action today, Rep. James Florio, D-N.J., scheduled a meeting of his House subcommittee looking into EPA. Among witnesses scheduled to appear were EPA regional administrators Peter Bibko of Philadelphia and Steven Durham of Denver.

In a speech last month, Durham challenged state officials or members of Congress to give him a list of even one person who has died from improper handling of toxic wastes. Bibko was temporarily suspended from his EPA job for, among other things, making personal telephone calls on government lines.

Ruckelshaus was nominated

to succeed Anne Burford, who resigned under charges of mismanagement and conflict of interest accusations and a citation for contempt of Congress.

Ruckelshaus was a key player in the Watergate scandal's "Saturday Night Massacre" and resigned as deputy attorney general in 1973 rather than carry out President Nixon's orders to fire special prosecutor Archibald Cox.

His performance in getting EPA started and in standing up to Nixon won him unanimous praise Monday from Congress and environmentalists.

"The real question is, will this represent a change in administration policy?" said Wilderness Society President Gaylord Nelson. "The Reagan administration has been pursuing a policy of destroying the effectiveness of EPA and they've succeeded."

U.S. will back election talks

United Press International WASHINGTON — Secretary of State George Shultz said today the United States will support talks on ground rules for an election with the guerrillas in El Salvador, but not negotiations "that short circuit the democratic process."

Shultz, in testimony before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee, led the administration push for \$177 million in emergency aid for El Salvador, despite growing Senate support for a far more limited package.

A bipartisan Senate plan for a reduced aid package would give El Salvador \$50 million in emergency military assistance

this year, instead of the \$110 million President Reagan is seeking.

The administration announced last week that it also will ask for another \$67 million in economic assistance.

Shultz said the United States would be willing to help "in measures which would guarantee the personal security of candidates and their supporters" and to ensure fairness in the elections, now scheduled for December.

But, he said, "We will not support negotiations that short circuit the democratic process and carve up power behind the people's back."

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