

Opinion

A cloudy response

In 1985 the Soviet Union announced a self-imposed, unilateral test ban on nuclear weapons. Since then the Kremlin repeatedly has asked the United States to follow with a similar action. The Soviets announced they would continue their moratorium as long as the United States did not conduct any nuclear tests.

Saturday the United States responded with a mushroom cloud.

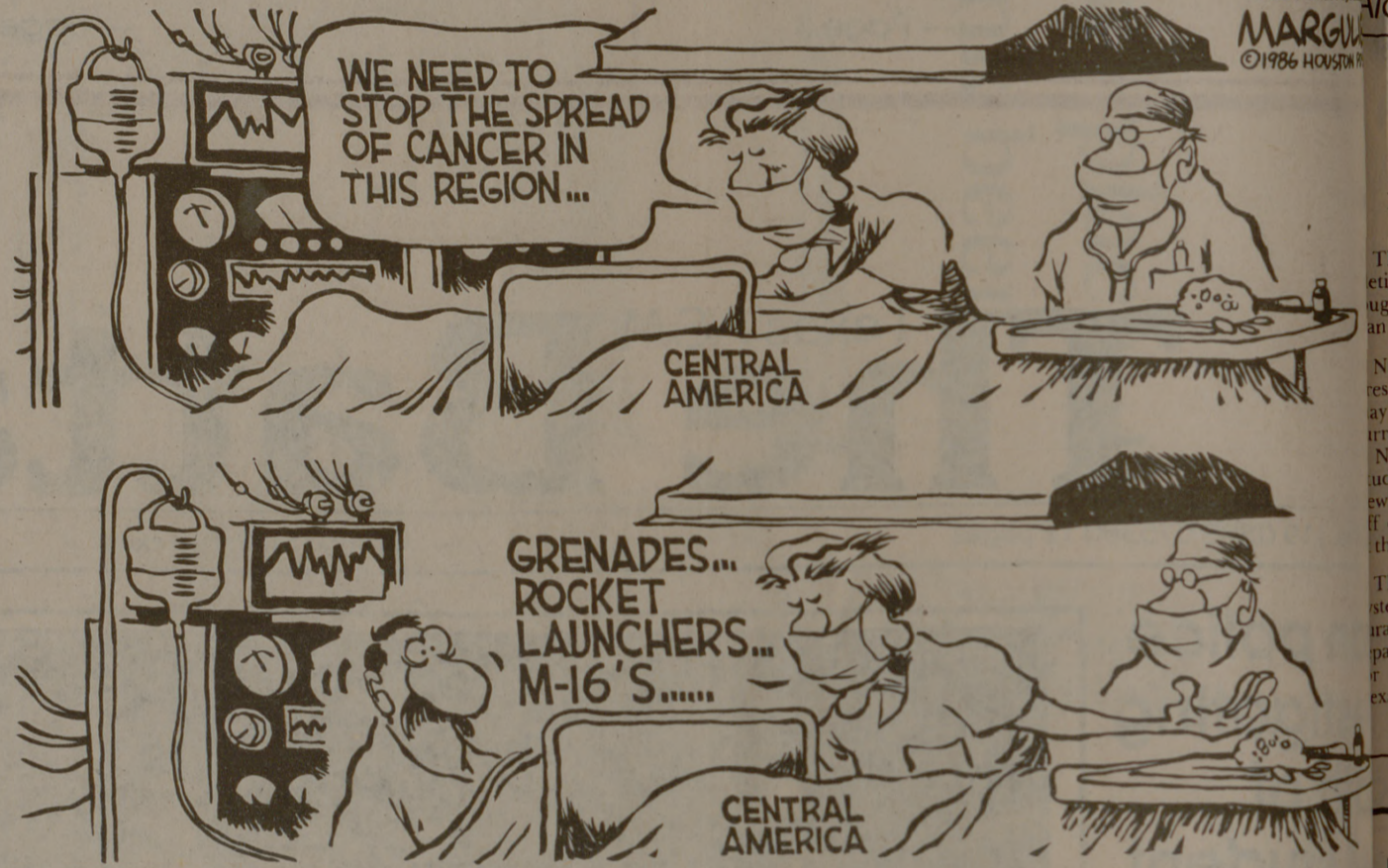
The State Department maintains that no type of test ban would further our goals of peace and stability. So Saturday, in the name of peace and stability, a nuclear bomb — affectionately named Glencoe — was detonated 2,000 feet beneath the Nevada desert.

The United States repeatedly has complained that the Soviets cannot be trusted to ban nuclear testing without "effective verification." Yet a week after the most recent Soviet effort to work toward nuclear disarmament and global peace, the United States effectively announced to the world that it won't even consider a test ban.

Nuclear disarmament won't be achieved if neither side cooperates. The Soviets have made the first move. Now it is up to the United States to show its concern.

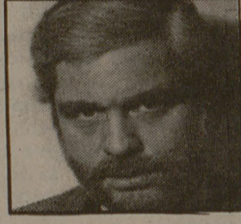
Mushroom clouds aren't a good indicator that peace is our first priority.

The Battalion Editorial Board



The death of a salesman in the Philippines

Biff! Listen Biff. You're my son and I know what you think of me. I know I'm a washed-up salesman, going off in the world on a smile and a shoe shine, polishing the apples of customers, groveling for sales and — alas and alack — getting none. But once, Biff, once I was a terrific success. Yesiree, Biff. I sold shoes to Imelda Marcos.



Richard Cohen

Marcos. What are you selling? she asked. Shoes, I said. She said she'd take 400.

Biff! Biff! I couldn't believe my ears. I whipped out the old order book, made sure I had my carbons in the right place, took out the old pencil, wetted the end of it and wrote it all up. Yesiree — 400 pairs of number 72 black pumps, size 6½. Would the lady like anything else? Yes, she said. She ordered 400 insoles, 400 shoe trees, 400 little plastic bags for the shoes and \$813 in Dr. Scholl's foot powder, which was another of my lines.

I could hardly write fast enough. My hand was shaking. I flipped the order pages on my book, smearing carbon on my fingers and later on my face. Imelda just smiled at me. I tried to calculate the commission. Oh, the days we could spend together at Ebbets Field, Biff. I would take you and your brother, Happy, and your mother out of that house near the El where Arthur Miller

had put us. I was going to buy a condominium with a fancy British name — the Buckingham or something. Imagine me, Willie Loman, in a condominium!

I could not believe my good luck. Of course, I told nobody about Mrs. Marcos and the way she was spending money. When a Philippines aid bill came up before Congress, I just looked the other way. I was not alone, of course. Real-estate agents all over the world knew. The fanciest jewelers called on the Marcos family. Mstislav Rostropovich played his little cello for them. George Hamilton sang for them and furriers sold Imelda hundreds of fur coats. What becomes a legend? I'll tell you. A hundred-and-fifty fur coats in the tropics. That's a legend.

Biff, you remember that toast Vice President George Bush made to Ferdinand Marcos? I was in the palace at the time. I used to stay in the salesman's quarters. All of us were there. Gus from

Cartier's, Phil from Tiffany's, Ernie from Rolls Royce, Jay from Gucci, Sal from Kron chocolates and Irv from Sotheby Park Bernet. Most of the time we used to play poker, but that night we went to see Bush. What a toast! That stuff about admiring Ferdinand's democratic ways. I thought Ernie would die laughing. Only Jay didn't laugh. Those creeps from Gucci. No sense of humor. He kept saying it was a disgrace.

Anyway, Biff, there was no way we would say anything. The money was rolling in. Anytime the good old U.S. of A. sent the Philippines aid, I would show up at the palace with my order book. Just last year, we offered them a \$900 million package over five years — economic and military aid, you understand. Bingo, I was at the palace. Anything you need, Imelda? I tell you Biff, that line of patter works.

Biff, she gave me a weak smile and then started calling out the order. I'll take 600 pairs of slingbacks and 800

pairs of pumps. Throw in 312 and 912 sandals. Do you sell pants? she asked. I had to say no. Too bad, said. I need 4,000 pair. Are you the man? No again. Paintings? Office buildings? Townhouses? Estates? No, and no. Just shoes, lady. Just shoes.

And then, Biff, just like that, over. Some lady named Cora Aquino, a size 7 probably, took over the Philippines. One look at her and could tell — no sales there. One of us salesmen snuck out of the Philippines and headed home. It was Biff. We had had our ride. Another year or two, another American foreign aid package, and we would have been out of Brooklyn. No more elevated rumbling right outside the window, Biff, Biff...

For the Philippines, it was the end of democracy. But for good old Willie Loman, it was the death of a salesman. **Richard Cohen is a columnist for the Washington Post Writers Group.**

Mail Call

First-hand freedom

EDITOR:

I am so happy to be able to write this before this year's Muster. I am writing from the Philippines and I'm very caught up in the moment.

You know by now, there's been a revolution. One of the greatest revolutions in history, and I lived it.

I was watching part of the PBS Vietnam series on a friend's Beta-max. After it finished and I was preparing to go home, when I heard the news. Defense Minister Enrile and 'Acting' Chief of Staff Ramos have resigned and are asking for support in Camp Aguinaldo. They came by the tens of thousands and they stayed. They were only waiting for this moment to arrive. It seemed impossible, but the hour had finally come. Whether we Aggies know about it or allow our egos to accept, the Filipinos fought bravely and valiantly in the hills against the Japanese during World War II waiting for the Americans to return as they had promised. This time they fought for themselves and it was the most valiant of all. They had no Ghandi to lead them, nor Martin Luther King. They knew of them but what they knew most of all was what freedom was going to be like. Real live freedom. They turned back the tanks. And isn't it great how the tanks turned back.

I think we were taught about our forefathers and having grown up during the age of the Vietnam War. I have had to weigh time and time again human rights and freedom, courage, what morality and right is. What is practical, realistic and what is pure truth. I've had a good background, but never in my life have I really sensed what freedom, courage and truth can mean. I am so proud to be of the human race. I never understood better what my old heroes Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and Martin Luther King were talking about. I just beheld the most courageous and beautiful revolution and I feel free, a full human being thanks to my Filipino brethren. They always looked up to we Americans in spite of ourselves. Now Filipinos know things most of us will be lucky to learn.

Aggies in the Philippines will fittingly have Muster this year on Corregidor. This time we'll have a better sense of the real thing from 1942.

Larry Farmer
Class of 1970
Texas Aggie Band

Blacks should wait their turn

EDITOR:

While strolling across campus yesterday, I passed two students fervently discussing the issue of apartheid in South Africa and the corresponding need for U.S. companies to divest themselves of all holdings in that troubled country. Although I never have had very strong feelings on this whole apartheid thing, it did bother me that both of these people assumed that divestment was an obvious and irrefutably good policy. In this assumption, I feel they were sadly mistaken.

First, realize that to force U.S. companies to divest, as many of the radical anti-apartheid groups (Students Against Apartheid, etc.) want to do, would be depriving U.S. companies, made up of U.S. citizens, of their unalienable right to invest their money where they see fit. Companies invest in South Africa not to bankroll apartheid, but to get the maximum profit. Yet, by wanting to force divestment on American business, these anti-apartheid radicals seem to attach more importance to the civil rights of black South Africans than the civil rights of taxpaying U.S. citizens.

Of course, the whole reason for divestment (that will it force the South African government into dismantling apartheid) is also fatally flawed. South Africa and its leaders are moving towards effective change, but change, as any reasonable man knows, takes time. Letting South African blacks vote right now would merely plunge the entire nation into chaos and destroy the legacies of white African rule; like a high standard of living, a low hunger rate and access to modern technology.

Besides, as Dr. Horace Greely, a reknown anthropologist has said, "No black race has ever invented the wheel, or even a system of writing on its own." South African blacks owe the white minority a huge cultural debt and should at least have the courtesy to wait for the abolition of apartheid with a bit more patience and good will.

Carl Krieger

Silver Taps for the Twelfth Man?

EDITOR:

In case anyone was interested (and I sincerely doubt that), our own Aggies played in the championship game of the SWC tournament Mar. 9. Yeah, it was only a few hours away in Dallas and there were a whole bunch of seats which could have been taken for about the price of a home football game.

Charean Williams best summed up the fate of the Aggies in the Mar. 10 Battalion. The indictment read, "... A&M had the least fans there." The Aggies may have been runners-up in the tournament, but we finished DEAD LAST in the area which one college handbook rates us tops — SPIRIT!!!

As anyone who happened to watch could tell, we were outdone by a school which didn't advance past the first round. In fact, one Razorbacker came up to me the day before the game and told me how much she loved seeing our band when we came up to Little Rock! (As in Little Rock, Ark. — about a 320 mile trip!) And I have no doubt that she was in attendance at OUR championship game the next day. And she probably rooted for Tech along with the rest of the Arkansas fans. Who could blame them? Those Tech fans were fired up! They kept showing up in increasing numbers after every win. I know that I'd get more excited about a school that supported its team than a bunch of deadheads.

We obviously didn't give a damn whether or not our boys showed beyond a shadow of a doubt that they are the class of the SWC. Sure, the Ags didn't play their best game, but they played well enough to win. Every time they made a run the fan support just

wasn't there. They needed to know we were behind them and it didn't happen.

Maybe we need to hold Silver Taps for the Twelfth Man. At least owe the team an apology! As proud as we all are of the fact we helped the Ags win the Cotton Bowl, we ought to be ashamed of the fact that we failed to support the basketball team when they needed it! Maybe in the future the Ags will get off tail like they are supposed to and show everyone else the Twelfth Man comes from College Station.

Dale R. Crockett '87

Isn't five minutes enough?

EDITOR:

I am writing to you while my studies are being rudely interrupted for the fourth time this week. I do not object to the informing the rest of us, who could not attend an athletic event, about another Aggie victory, but it has been over 15 minutes since the bell tower began pounding away. What is wrong with five minutes? I feel that would be a sufficient amount of time to get the point across.

Paul Sedita

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to retain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the author's telephone number of the writer.

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(USPS 045 360)
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