

# Opinion

## Playing games

The almost unanimous approval of harsh sanctions against South Africa by the U.S. House of Representatives was too good to be true. The bill was designed to be a strong statement to Pretoria that the United States will not support government-sanctioned racism. Instead, House Republicans turned it into a political powerplay to ensure that sanctions of any kind are never passed.

"This whole bill is dead," said Rep. Mark Siljander, R-Mich. "Sanctions are dead."

The bill, proposed by Ronald Dellums, D-Calif., would end all U.S. business operations in South Africa, prohibit importing and exporting operations (except for strategic minerals), permanently ban the importation of Krugerrand gold coins and withdraw landing privileges for South African aircraft.

If approved by the Senate and signed by the president, the measure would order all U.S. companies out of South Africa within 180 days.

House Democrats were on the verge of passing less aggressive sanctions, for fear the call for total and immediate disinvestment would not gain the necessary support. But the Republicans, most of whom support either more moderate sanctions or the Reagan charade of "constructive engagement" had other ideas.

The passage of this extreme bill means a compromise with the Senate, after it passes its own sanction bill, will be nearly impossible.

The United States has dragged its feet on the disinvestment issue long enough. The mosquito-bite-sized sanctions imposed by President Reagan last September do not have the teeth needed to encourage the South African government to dismantle its system of apartheid.

The Republicans, however, seem more concerned with playing political games than with actually dealing with the apartheid issue. They have made a mockery of the earnest attempts of their colleagues who truly are concerned with ending the government-sanctioned racial oppression in South Africa.

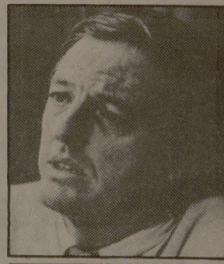
The Battalion Editorial Board



## ABM treaty needs scrutinizing

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a three-part series on the ABM treaty.

The Soviet Union was suddenly speaking, in Geneva, about how maybe we ought to just renew the ABM



William F. Buckley Jr.

treaty for maybe 10, 15, 20 years. Defense secretary Casper Weinberger's reaction was: No; this is an ambush. But other voices have been heard, urging us to go ahead, and perhaps to use the forward momentum to ax all those new missile systems.

The president, meanwhile, had of course announced that he would no longer feel bound by the terms of SALT II, and the reaction to this was as expected from the disarmament lobby. But the feeling is that the events of 1972 (SALT I and ABM) and 1979 (SALT II) are in flux. It is time to re-evaluate the ABM treaty, because the context of what happened bears critically on good judgment in the days ahead.

During the period between the Soviets' first atomic bomb (1949) and 1972, the United States was concerned with protecting itself from a nuclear enemy fusillade. The system went under the name of safeguard, and contemplated complex radar stations, fighter planes and missiles. Gradually, this evolved into what was called an anti-ballistic missile program.

But by 1972, several factors came together to persuade the Nixon administration to move in a different direction. One of these was the huge expense of

developing the safeguard program, given the technology of the day. The second factor was the Vietnam War: Congress was being fractious with respect to anything that had to do with the military. Yet another was the spirit of detente. Nixon had just opened the door to China, and now he was traveling to Moscow to sign a treaty designed to cut drastically the inventory of nuclear weapons — indeed, one sometimes forgets that SALT stands for exactly that: Strategic Arms Limitation (Treaty). There was a rosy glow in Washington-Moscow, and there were those who believed that true strategic disarmament was finally under way.

Accordingly, Nixon signed not only SALT I, which spoke of limits in the number of launchers, but also the ABM treaty, which (as modified in 1974) limited to single site the use of no more than 100 interceptor missiles.

What then happened, over the next dozen years, was that the Soviet Union continued to spend prodigious sums of money to reduce its exposure to nuclear weapons. More than 50 percent of its expenses on strategic weapons (which are huge) was spent on what one might call defense-oriented activity. Over the years, the Soviet Union has deployed 12,000 surface-to-air missile (SAM) launchers at more than 1,200 sites. It has in place 10,000 air defense radars and more than 1,200 interceptor aircraft dedicated to the strategic air defense mission. Greater Moscow is heavily defended by anti-ballistic missiles, civil defense is in high gear, and command headquarters are protected deeply. The Soviet Union has become a mighty defensive fortress.

Meanwhile, the United States more or less gave up any thought of defense. Civil defense died completely. We allowed, through obsolescence and attri-

tion, the virtual dissipation of our strategic air defense system, to quote Defense Department official Norman Brown, "was made to harden our ICBM command and control facilities. We have no SAM strategic air defense warning radar, a mere 300 aircraft assigned to defensive purposes. What had begun as a common commitment to mutual assured vulnerability had evolved to Soviet Union not by any means unpregnable, but headed in that direction at great speed, while in the United States we were lying on the ground naked as a newborn babe, who never held in his hand a fearful light rod in case he was disturbed.

Then, in July of 1983, our satellite revealed what was happening at Krasnoyarsk, in Siberia. There the Soviet Union has built a phased-array radar facility, 470 miles from its nearest border but oriented toward a border 2,000 miles away. The nature of the facility being built there was obviously — futably — designed not to warn of an impending attack, but to intercept and track by guiding missiles to them down. A very good idea, one that it was in clear and explicit violation of the ABM treaty, which limited installations of that character to purely use — i.e., purely for the purpose of detecting incoming enemy nuclear warheads.

Krasnoyarsk was spotted by us four months after Reagan announced his Strategic Defense Initiative. We seek to insinuate that Krasnoyarsk's response to Reagan's announcement that we would seek a space shield that does not wash. Krasnoyarsk, like the other projects aimed at defense, began years earlier. We had spent project well along toward completion. What to do about the ABM treaty. (Please stay tuned.)

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## Crosswalks aren't just for the blind

Motorists on the Texas A&M campus have more to gripe about than the campus police, although the police are everybody's favorite scapegoats. Personally, I'm bothered by another pesky animal.



Michelle Powe

The pedestrian.

Not your average, look-both-ways-before-you-cross-the-street pedestrian. I'm talking about Texas A&M pedestrians — kamikaze street-crossers who throw themselves without fear in front of moving vehicles, causing unsuspecting motorists to put years on their tires (and lives) slamming on the brakes.

It's common at most colleges and universities for pedestrians to have the right-of-way on campus streets. That's fine, as long as the privilege is used with a little common sense and courtesy. But pedestrians on this campus use neither.

If you've ever been caught in your car on campus between classes, you know what I'm talking about. You might as

well turn off the car and pull out a good book, because you're not going anywhere. It seems it's too much to ask, say every two or three hundred students or so, for the wave of bodies to pause and let one car pass. But no. Instead you idle for 20 minutes until the masses have gotten to class.

Then you can proceed. Carefully. The coast never is clear entirely because there are always a few stragglers lurking in the shadows, waiting to step in front of oncoming vehicles.

If they would act alarmed — these daredevils on foot — and jump back in fear, I would be more understanding. I might even stop for them. Instead, they glance, unconcerned, at the car and keep walking. It's maddening.

It's also dangerous — for them. Are these people being brainwashed at Fish Camp to ignore motor vehicles? Surely the parents of these students taught them at some point to watch out for cars. Where did those lessons of yesterday go?

What sort of rationale directs a person to willfully step in front of 2,000 pounds of steel-on-wheels? Are these people confident that the motorists they challenge always will be compassionate or concerned about manslaughter charges? They shouldn't expect such protection once they set feckless feet off campus; they're fair game out there.

I do my best while driving on campus to watch for Aggies wandering aimlessly into the streets, but I can't be held responsible for the safety of Aggie pedestrians any longer. Someone has to re-teach Aggies how to look both ways before crossing, before they are thrust into society and toward their own inevitable doom.

Although it is difficult to prove, there is strong evidence that Aggies have the highest mortality rate in auto-pedestrian accidents of any college graduates in the nation. I believe it.

Even if administrators, health and public safety officials continue to ignore this problem, it won't go away. Even if we motorists continue to outdo ourselves protecting these pampered pedestrians, motorists outside of Aggie-land will not.

So remember pedestrians, but the crosswalks aren't so candy-coated in the real world.

Michelle Powe is a senior journalism major and editor for The Battalion.

## Mail Call

EDITOR:

Mark Ude seems to think that perhaps AIDS should be allowed to run its course and rid society of homosexuality once and for all. It's easy to see how ridiculous that scenario is. About 10 percent of the population is homosexual, and that number is thought by many to be cross-cultural and constant over time.

If all of the practicing male homosexuals were eradicated, they would simply be replaced in a few years by a generation which is now learning to read and write. Maybe even Ude's future children will be among them.

AIDS simply is not a practical way of exterminating a significant portion of our population (gas chambers would work a little better).

There is no doubt that promiscuity has contributed greatly to the spread of AIDS, but promiscuity is not a gay phenomenon. I think heterosexual men would be promiscuous if women stopped saying no. I don't promote promiscuity. In fact, if AIDS has had any positive effects it has opened the eyes of many gay men to the joys of monogamy.

Ude didn't mention the other half of the gay community: women. It should be noted that gay women are often less promiscuous than heterosexuals, and as such run less risk of contracting AIDS.

I don't understand why Ude opposes gay marriages, since they are in essence monogamous, and would help

slow the spread of AIDS. But then, Ude wants us dead.

Kevin McLeod Baily  
Vice President, Gay Student Services

EDITOR:

Mark Ude's Wednesday column makes his incredible uncompassionate bigotry obvious. The AIDS virus runs rampant in Africa where it first began to infect humans, did not begin in the gay community in the United States. Mark's theory that AIDS is God's way to take vengeance on homosexuals, does it then follow that God is taking vengeance on black people in underdeveloped countries guess if they all died we wouldn't have to worry about famine relief, would we?

Also, Ude's proposal that AIDS be allowed to run its course and that the United States not spend money to research treatments so as to kill off the homosexuals, an undesirable element of American Society, is an idea that is strangely reminiscent of Adolph Hitler's attempts at the elimination of undesirable races. Besides, AIDS is a potential threat to everyone.

I think it a good idea if Ude would "reconsider living these United States." Adolph Hitler types are the most undesirable of all types of people.

Gregory Graybill  
Department of Biochemistry

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