

United States must provide assistance to Soviets

As Secretary of State James Baker meets with his Soviet counterpart — Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze — in Houston this week, the White House is pondering whether the United States should allow emergency food assistance to be sent to the Soviet Union.

We've all seen the recent news reports from Moscow showing long lines in food stores that often have nothing more to offer than empty shelves.

This year, however, the food shortage goes beyond being a nuisance and is beginning to erode what little support Mikhail Gorbachev has left.

Food is so scarce that the government has started rationing by providing a monthly allotment of basic foodstuffs that is meager even by Soviet standards.

Realizing the food shortage in the Soviet Union could cause political upheaval, nations of western Europe — most notably Germany — have started giving the Soviets food assistance. The situation has gained the attention of the International Red Cross, which itself has started providing aid to the Soviets.

While some argue food shipments are certain to rot in a warehouse due to the lack of an adequate distribution system, the Soviets believe differently.

Shevardnadze couldn't have been any clearer this week in his hints that they need America's

Patrick Nolan
Columnist

help. But so far, there has been no announcement by the Bush administration that we definitely will give the Soviets the assistance they desperately need.

Sure, there have been hints here and there, but so far, that's all anyone has seen from the Bush administration.

Many people are baffled by some of the objections to aiding the Soviets in their time of crisis.

While some myopic "Cold Warriors" might believe the only good news is bad news when the Soviets are concerned, the United States must realize any political unrest brought about by food shortage is not only likely to jeopardize Gorbachev's future, but the entire future of perestroika.

The Soviets can tolerate a constant shortage of razor blades and shoelaces by openly complaining about their flawed economic system, but *glasnost* and *perestroika* are sure to take a back seat if winter comes and there's nothing to eat.

Some Soviets even have expressed the attitude that while life might not have been that great under Brezhnev, at least

there was food on the table.

There is little doubt the new "World Order" everyone has been talking about is certain to suffer if the Soviets face internal rebellion.

If the Bush administration can't bring itself to offer U.S. aid in the name of helping their fellow man, how about justifying it as a *quid pro quo* for Soviet support in the Persian Gulf.

We can deal with the ethics of

trading food for international support later, but let's first get some assistance over to the Soviets who are looking to us for a hand.

And this talk about Bush's hands being tied due to laws preventing economic assistance to the Soviet Union is utter nonsense.

Let's remember, this is the same man who was vice

president to an administration that sold weapons to the Ayatollah.

So would the United States please jump on the international bandwagon and begin helping the Soviets?

After all, it is the Christmas season, the time of "Peace on Earth, good will toward men."

Patrick Nolan is a senior political science major.



Mail Call

Vote NO to LoTrak

EDITOR:

Vote NO to LoTrak. Why should Texas A&M University spend \$6 million on a two and a half mile ditch when the money could be much better spent. Let's use that money to increase the salaries of our underpaid staff and faculty.

Another way we could use these funds is to improve our University library. Then maybe our students wouldn't have to travel to Austin to use the library at t.u.

Jo Burley

Just stating the facts

EDITOR:

I would like to offer one of the reprisals that Matt McBurnett anticipated in his Dec. 6 column, which praised the "superior" intelligence of engineering degree candidates.

I too had an overabundance of engineering roommates while in undergraduate school at Texas A&M, and I do agree that most engineering students do expend more time in their studies than do most business and liberal arts students.

However, I would like to point out that engineering students have purposefully chosen a field which requires a larger quantity of time and discipline for completion.

Superior intelligence does not necessarily have any correlation with the amount of time spent on studies — although inferior intelligence might in some cases.

As an undergraduate student in the College of Education and as a graduate student in the College of Liberal Arts, I have spent countless hours helping my "more intelligent" engineering friends with papers, resumés and other vehicles of communication.

Yes, engineering students do — as a rule — have a better grasp of mathematics, physics and other technical fields. This is why they have chosen to become engineers.

However, where would most of these same engineers be without the liberal arts and business students assisting

them with some of the "less difficult" courses that require an aptitude for qualitative analysis and a basic ability to communicate?

Yes, the pursuit of an engineering degree typically requires a significant amount of time and discipline. However, I will reiterate that the expenditure of time does not signify ownership of a higher degree of intelligence.

"I am just stating the facts."

Cynthia L. Mitchell '85

Business classes not a blow-off

EDITOR:

I wonder how Matt McBurnett can justify his opinion that the College of Business here at A&M is such a blow-off. Matt, have you spent a semester as a business student?

I didn't think so! I am a business analysis major and can tell you that your judgment of BANA majors — and all other business majors — is totally wrong!

Maybe you should broaden your horizons a little and enroll in business analysis 447, finance 341, management 211, or any accounting course next semester. I guarantee that you will have a new respect for business majors.

Oh, and Matt, when you are done with all of your comprehensive finals, go over to the Chicken and have a beer. It might relieve some of the pain you are probably experiencing in your arm from all the patting yourself on the back you've been doing in the last four years.

Kristi Douglas '92

Intelligence, study time unrelated

EDITOR:

In his column, "Engineering Majors Study Hard For Success While Others Party," Matt McBurnett wrote: "I will write offensive things and not suffer reprisal" (this in reference to the fact that his column was printed on dead day).

What a fearless way to express yourself! In his first and what I feel to be most offensive statement, McBurnett

claims, "It takes more intelligence to graduate in engineering than it does in any other major."

However, further on, he directly contradicts himself by saying, "Rest assured that I know that I am no more intelligent than the next guy ... simply because I am in engineering." Well, which is it? Since McBurnett can't seem to answer the question, I will.

Although he tries to draw this conclusion, the fact is that a direct relationship between one's intelligence and the amount of time that one studies does not exist. McBurnett whines about this being the first semester that he has had an optional final. I've not had an optional final yet during my five semesters here, even being the journalism major that I am.

He also says engineering is so difficult because very few engineers get out in less than five years. Wake up!

As for dealing with non-English speaking faculty, what's this have to do with intelligence? Seems more like a problem of intelligibility to me.

McBurnett complains that engineering material is simply more difficult. More difficult than what? Difficult is a relative term, and highly, if not solely dependent on one's interests and aptitudes. Having never been exposed to engineering courses, I would expect to find the material difficult; however, I am sure that I or anyone else having the interest and drive to excel in engineering would do so.

Until Texas A&M requires those students wishing to major in engineering to pass higher entrance standards, McBurnett should keep printing his articles on dead day.

Rebecca Blum '92

Have an opinion? Express it!

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