

OPINION

DOUBLE STANDARD

Hypocritical diplomacy trades consistent treatment of communist countries for cash

On June 3, U.S. President Bill Clinton requested a renewal of China's most-favored nation (MFN) trade status. This status, Clinton said in an Associated Press article, "does not convey any special privilege. It is simply ordinary, natural fair treatment of virtually every nation on earth."

Except, of course, for Cuba. Cuba, a communist nation, has been embargoed for nearly 30 years because they are supposedly a threat to our national security. The Helms-Burton Act of 1996 has actually tightened measures against this island nation. In light of this, the United States should not extend the MFN to China, which poses a much greater threat to national security.

This obvious inconsistency in policy must not be allowed to continue. The U.S. embargo of Cuba is reminiscent of the Cold War, when trade sanctions were seen as a necessary step in the attainment of communism.

Russia had plans to build a nuclear base on Cuba, which is just 80 miles from the U.S. coast. Had the U.S. not intervened, this awful threat would have become a reality. But Cuba's military threat today is not as menacing as a wounded duck. China, on the other hand, has one of the largest standing armies in the world and is building up its military even more with each passing day. With the stolen U.S. nuclear weapons technology, China is a very real threat to Americans and the world. The United



JEFF BECKER



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States refuses to condemn the Chinese espionage or their militarization. Instead it offers them the MFN status, effectively showing China that they can get away with bullying Americans. America must show that it will not be bullied. Cuba was embargoed in part due to the security risk of trading with a communist nation. In China, the United States was willing to take that risk for the sake of monetary gain. This risk has

turned into a breach of national security. As published in the Cox Report, several U.S. companies willingly sold sensitive information that compromised many U.S. military secrets. These companies' presence in China is due to the MFN, and even though they acted illegally, their mere contacts with the Chinese have proven to be more than just risks. The United States wants to make a statement against communism with its

embargo of Cuba. However, it cannot on one hand say how bad communism is by embargoing Cuba and on the other hand have favored trade relations with China, which is also communist. All the United States is doing is preying on a weaker nation by making Cuba a scapegoat for communism. The United States wants to be idealistic in its reproach of communism, but it will not take a stand enough to refuse the

monetary gain of trading with China. America claims to be a champion of human rights, but neither its relations with China nor its relations with Cuba support that. The United States spends billions of dollars to protect the human rights of people in Kosovo, but shakes hands with people in China who are guilty of some of the worst human rights violations this century. The Tiananmen Square massacre, to name one. U.S. officials cannot claim to tell China that they should not be doing those things one day, and the next, sit down with them in a business partnership. Furthermore, the U.S. embargo of Cuba is responsible in part for the wretched living conditions of Cubans. America has helped to intensify years of Cuban recession by denying them the "natural fair treatment offered to virtually every nation on earth."

The situations surrounding these two nations are very similar. One must ask why the United States has such blatant inconsistency in its foreign economic policy. The answer is the United States has sacrificed its integrity for the sake of money. The United States can easily afford to take out its qualms with communism on Cuba, with little economic loss. However, when it comes to China, the economic opportunity is just too great to worry about a little idealistic kink like trading with a communist nation. The United States has become the champion of the Chinese cause while taking out its fears of communism on Cuba, the weaker nation.

Jeff Becker is a sophomore computer engineering major.

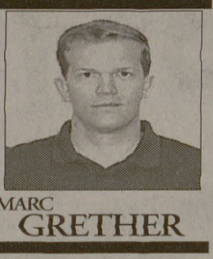
Dangers of overpopulation exaggerated by theorists

Thomas Malthus was a man ahead of his time. He began a revolution, a worldwide craze. His 1798 book *An Essay on the Principle of Population* made computing about overpopulation fashionable. Nowadays, groups such as Zero Population Growth and the United Nations Population Fund and individuals like Al Gore, Ted Turner and Paul Ehrlich try on his work.

What exactly did he say to make such a link over? Malthus claimed food production could not keep pace with population growth. Thank goodness Malthus was wrong. Not only has population growth not over-run food production, but the reverse has actually happened. Humans have mastered the art of agriculture and now have a higher rate of food produced per person than ever in history. This has led to amazing results here in the United States. Today in the United States only 2.3 percent of the population have to work growing food. The United States exports more than 40 metric tons of wheat one each year. This country lived up to Malthus' prediction of population growth, but it is more than made up for in food production.

Yet in spite of humans' proven ability to adapt their surroundings to suit themselves, some still claim overpopulation is the problem. As a case in point, Paul Ehrlich continues to be an influential figure in the debate on overpopulation. Following Malthus' lead, in his 1968 book *The Population Bomb* Ehrlich wrote about the apocalyptic problems sure to face humankind cause of overpopulation. Excerpts from the prologue include the following prophetic statement: "The battle to end all of humanity is over. In the 1970's the world will undergo famines [and] nothing can prevent a substantial increase in the world death rate." He also predicted the population will be reduced through "die-backs" until it reaches a sustainable 1.5 billion people in 2100. According to Ehrlich, "a minimum of ten million people, most of them children, will starve to death during each year of the 1970s."

Thankfully, as Malthus did, Ehrlich missed the mark. The phenomenal growth of food production has actually helped to slow deaths

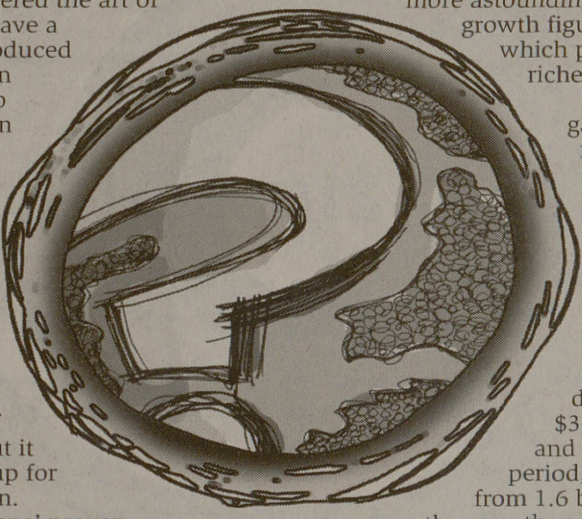


MARC GRETHER

due to famine and malnutrition. Furthermore, according to research by Indian economist and Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen, famines are the product of bad politics, not bad family planning. Sen argues in his 1981 book *Poverty and Famines* that famines are a result human disasters, not natural disasters, and are caused mainly by bad food distribution. This poor food distribution is almost always a result of intentional policies by governments to keep food out of the hands of certain people. For example, both Sudan's current famine and Ethiopia's in the mid-1980s were caused by governmental actions designed to kill off undesirable elements of the population. Famines are not caused by large populations, they are caused by bad governments. Furthermore, human population growth has not caused people to become poorer. Over the last 100 years, the world witnessed a population growth of over 4 billion people. But more astounding than this drastic growth figure is the rate at which people have become richer.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the average gross domestic product in 32 countries ranging from Bangladesh and China to the United States more than quadrupled, in 1980 dollars, from \$841 to \$3,678 between 1900 and 1987. In the same period, the population grew from 1.6 billion to 5 billion, little more than tripling. This means on average the people in these countries have gotten richer faster than their populations have grown. Of course, this does not mean poverty and hunger no longer exist. Many countries are extremely poor, and some, such as Sudan, are currently experiencing famine. But these problems are not caused simply by a large population. Even among the opulence here in America, there are poor and hungry. Rather, these problems are extremely complex, typically caused by some mixture of bad governmental policy and worse luck. Humans have not overtaxed the world's available resources nor are they likely to have reached their potential in food production efficiency. In other words, there is no overpopulation. So do not believe the hype. Be wary of those who claim this pressing problem requires immediate action. Their agendas may be as misguided as their predictions.

Marc Grether is a mathematics graduate student.



No nukes allowed!

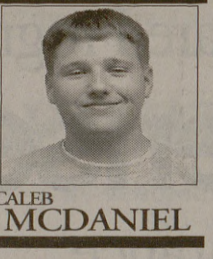
World leaders must work to abolish nuclear arms

Most Americans would probably be surprised to know Jiang Zemin, president of the People's Republic of China, is actually against the possession and development of nuclear weapons. Recent political and media coverage of the Cox Report's provocative findings have virtually demonized the Chinese state, creating widespread suspicions about China's nuclear intentions. In the midst of this deafening clamor, however, an article by Zemin in favor of nuclear disarmament appeared in the most recent issue of *Civilization* magazine. According to Zemin, "nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament remain important tasks for the international community — and call for unremitting joint efforts by all."

The United States, blinded by its wounded pride, might be tempted to dismiss Zemin's proposal as disingenuous. But to disagree with the morally imperative need to abolish nuclear weapons would be disastrous. American nuclear policy has long been laced with inconsistency and must be completely revised. Such a course of action will require courage, but to continue to condone the existence of nuclear weaponry would require inexcusable cowardice.

In fairness, the United States has made grossly pretentious attempts to call for nuclear nonproliferation in the past. Recently, American airstrikes took place in Iraq while Clinton administration officials publically denounced Saddam Hussein's development of "weapons of mass destruction."

Most recently, of course, revelations of leaks at nuclear labs in the United States have prompted a new round of hand-wringing about the dangers of nuclear war. But as long as the United States continues to possess and perfect its nuclear arsenal, its browbeating condemnation of other nuclear states is grotesquely hypocritical. As Zemin rightly realizes, "To reduce the armaments of others while keeping one's own intact, to reduce the obsolete while developing the state of the art, to sacrifice the security of others for one's own, and to require other countries to scrupulously abide by treaties while giving oneself freedom of action by placing domestic



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laws above international law — all these acts apply double standards." As long such nuclear development continues on American soil, the United States is foolish to feign surprise when other countries seek out nuclear secrets themselves. America cannot lead the charge against weapons of mass destruction on a moral high horse when its own nuclear weapons are the very things that motivate proliferation elsewhere. This intuitive truth is echoed in the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, a program dispatched by the Australian government. According to the Commission, "The possession of nuclear weapons by any state is a constant stimulus to other states to acquire them." The United States, then, cannot hope to obtain nuclear weapons while keeping other nations from acquiring them. Understanding this, some Americans may turn to positive defenses of the build-up of nuclear technology.

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Many mistakenly believe the deterrent force of nukes can provide security and stability. This belief is a hopeless and misguided fantasy. The nuclear calculus of build-up and intimidation that undergirds such a belief is simply absurd. Enough nuclear firepower currently exists to completely destroy human civilization several times over — as if one history-ending apocalypse would not do the job. In a military engagement where nuclear weapons are involved, no one wins. He who is incinerated with the most warheads is still incinerated.

Because of this sober fact, the United States and other nuclear powers may rationalize that their nuclear stockpiles are meant only as deterrents, not as actual combat weapons. There are two reasons why this side-step is also untenable. First, as the Canberra Commission wisely notes, "the proposition that nuclear weapons can be retained in perpetuity and never used — accidentally or by decision — defies credibility." The nuclear balance is so precarious that only one mishap could automatically trigger an atomic exchange. Taking such a risk would be silly.

To consistently refuse to risk ground warfare while nonchalantly risking accidental nuclear decimation is foolish. Health officials vehemently warn against the risks of sexual promiscuity, but military officials barely blink at the risks of nuclear permissiveness. Apparently, modern society seems content to know that there is no such thing as safe sex before marriage, but when it comes to nuclear weapons more dangerous than any sexually transmitted disease, the world lacks the wisdom to make abstinence its military policy. Secondly, defending nuclear weapons in the name of deterrence is empirically unfounded. Ever since the nuclear card was first thrown in Hiroshima, it has down a poor job of preventing military conflicts. The United States' nuclear predominance failed to act as a deterrent in Korea, Vietnam or the Persian Gulf. Even now, the terrible concentration of nuclear power on the Asian subcontinent has not dissuaded India and Pakistan from butting heads. Nuclear weapons simply do not deter. Nuclear states have very seldom made serious threats to use them, and their mere existence has not been historically preemptive. Nuclear weapons are simply indefensible strategically and ethically. They are massively destructive and hardly deterrent. They must be abolished. Such an abolition must be incremental, but this does not mean it must take place slowly. As the Canberra Commission urges, "immediate and determined efforts need to be made to rid the world of nuclear weapons and the threat they pose to it." Initially, the United States must join with other nuclear states in substantial reductions of their nuclear capabilities. The last step to complete elimination of nuclear weapons will be the slowest. Before nuclear states completely dismantle their nukes, an extensive plan to verify disarmament will be needed to ensure that no country illegally keeps its arsenal. But even if such a verification plan cannot be made foolproof, no alternative to abolition can outweigh the international instability caused by the continued possession of nuclear weapons. The proper reaction to the Cox Report is not to tighten security at nuclear labs. It is to shut them down.

Caleb McDaniel is a junior history major.