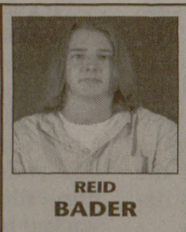


Unacceptable endangerment

Navy should stop bombing exercises on Vieques soon as possible

President George W. Bush has decided to halt U.S. Navy operations on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques in 2003. While Bush's decision to stop the practice bombing is the correct one, the Navy should stop the bombing now and leave the island before Bush's 2003 deadline.



REID BADER

Since the Navy began practice bombing on the island after World War II, residents and others against the bombing have protested.

But it was not until 1999, when a stray bomb killed a civilian security guard, that the issue was attracted worldwide attention.

Since this incident, the Navy ceased using live bombs. However, the use of dummy bombs did not end the protests. This year, more than 180 protesters were arrested for trespassing.

Protesters break into the naval bombing range, at the risk of being arrested, in hopes that they will be spotted and the bombing will be stopped for a short

period. For the most part, they have been successful.

Aid has come from highly visible protesters such as political activist the Rev. Al Sharpton, environmentalist Robert Kennedy Jr., union leader Dennis Rivera, Jacqueline Jackson, the wife of Jesse Jackson and actor Edward James Olmos.

Teacher and protester Rafael Feliciano said, "We did this to end the myth that the Navy is invincible. Despite their technological superiority, we beat them."

The Navy opposes Bush's decision to stop the bombing. Its reasons for staying are strong. There is no other place like Vieques in the Atlantic Ocean, where it can practice amphibious landings and aerial and sea bombardments simultaneously in an area unencumbered by commercial air and sea traffic.

It has also been questioned if the residents of Vieques really want the Navy to leave. A referendum that was to be conducted this November, through the cooperation of former President Clinton and former Puerto Rican Governor Pedro Rossello, would allow the residents to vote on whether the Navy would leave the island.

There are benefits to the Puerto Ricans if they vote for the Navy to stay — Clinton promised them \$90 million in foreign aid, as well as the continued economic stimulation a naval base on the island provides.

However, these benefits should not sway those islanders opposed to the bombings. First is the issue of the bombs themselves — about 10 percent of the bombs do not explode. Considering that the Navy has used the island for 60 years, the amount of live ammunition that might still be on the 900-acre bombing run is dangerous.

Robert Kennedy Jr. said, "The Navy has an obligation to clean up the reefs. They had the same obligation in Culebra, but anyone who dives there can see there are still bombs that were never disposed of."

Culebra is an island similar to Vieques that the Navy stopped bombing in 1975, but did not remove all unexploded bombs after leaving.

There are also health concerns related to the bombing.

Portuguese doctors conducted a study on the island, and the preliminary report shows high rates of vibroacoustic

disease, a thickening of the walls of the heart due from increased exposure to loud noises.

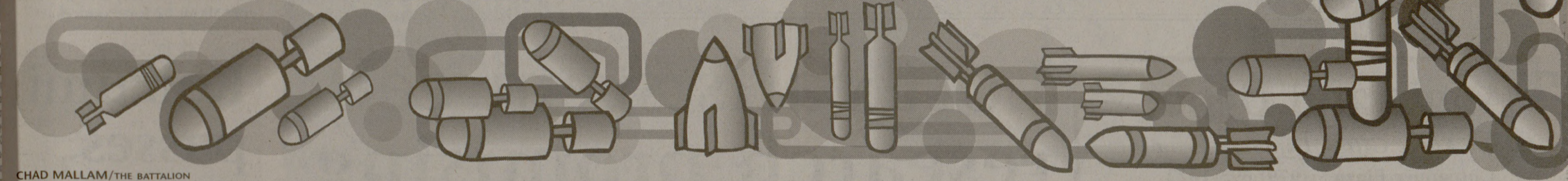
In *American Prospect*, Wendy Williams said, "Many suspect that the bombing is causing elevated rates of cancer on the island. This may be the case. Some of the compounds these weapons emit — RDX and TNT, for example — have been shown to cause cancer."

In response to these health allegations, the Navy has only offered to conduct studies to analyze their significance.

Former New York Governor Mario Cuomo said, "The president should make the decision his own logic compels: End the bombing and the exercises now."

President Bush's decision to have the Navy remove itself from the island is correct. Navy bombing practices have proven to be a public nuisance and in some cases are dangerous. In light of these facts, he should also take further initiative and have the Navy leave now — before any more damage is done to the island.

Reid Bader is a junior political science major.



CHAD MALLAM/THE BATTALION

The world of vitamins

A balanced diet is healthier than supplements

Late nights, bad cafeteria food and a lack of time or facilities to plan good, wholesome meals often lead college students into a nutritionally challenged existence. It seems that in exchange for a college degree, students are forced to resign themselves to a stressful, unhealthy lifestyle that often results in obesity-related illnesses, a weaker immune system or some other another undesirable fate.



JENNIFER LOZANO

However, being a consumer nation, health problems are often taken elsewhere. They are taken to the consumer marketplace, the awe-inspiring American health food store. Once in the health food store, consumers, college age or not, can become overwhelmed by the large array of vitamins, minerals, herbs and hormones that boast many health benefits they provide better than their competitors. In the end, the everyday consumer is forced to decide which dietary supplements are safe, beneficial and worth their money.

According to the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994, a dietary supplement is "any product (except tobacco) that contains at least one of the following: a vitamin, a mineral, an herb or botanical, an amino acid, a dietary substance for use to supplement the diet by increasing total dietary

should be regarded as drugs instead of supplements and are likely to cause more harm than good. Like other natural substances, even nutrients can be harmful at certain levels. Some known harmful nutrients when taken in excess are folic acid, iron, niacin, selenium and vitamins A, B6, C and D.

As for amino acids, herbs and other botanicals, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) admits to knowing very little about the ingredients and benefits these products claim to possess. This is why the FDA does not allow antioxidants such as vitamin C to be labeled or marketed with claims they can prevent disease.

In addition, many manufacturers fail to label their products correctly. For example, firms market the botanical white willow bark as an ingredient for children's use. White willow bark contains a substance that the body metabolizes into acetylsalicylic acid, which is the active ingredient in aspirin.

However, labels for these products do not carry the FDA warning that children and teenagers should not use these products if they have symptoms of chicken pox or influenza, because such use has been associated with Rye Syndrome, a rare but serious illness that can be fatal. In fact, many of these products have been labeled "aspirin free." This is just one example of how "natural" does not always mean "safe," and why the FDA should have more say in the regulation of over-the-counter dietary supplements.

The best way to obtain vitamins and minerals is from foods consumed as part of a balanced diet. If one's diet is deficient in nutrients, it may also lack components such as fiber that cannot be supplied by pills. If one still cannot find the time or energy to squeeze a reasonable amount of fruits and vegetables into a fast food meal plan, and concludes that a supplement is needed, stay away from those that claim to be unique or better than those of their competitors.

Since little scientific research has been done on the benefit of herbs, it may be best to stay away from them as well. According to Dr. Stephen Barrett of Quackwatch.com, the best supplement for the average adult is one whose label lists nothing above 100 percent of the daily value and is taken every other day. Since a supplement meeting the above description can be obtained for about five cents per pill, this method would cost the consumer less than one dollar per month. When it comes to dietary supplements, less is always more, avoid the hype and if you cannot pronounce it, it is probably not worth your money.

Jennifer Lozano is a sophomore English major.

Citizens have legal right to carry military firearms

In response to Jason Bennyhoff's June 21 column.

Jason Bennyhoff decries the "subculture of Americans dedicated to sniping and the use of ultra, high-powered, military firearms." He cannot fathom why anyone would want to engage in the completely legal sport of long-range target shooting.

The military issues .40-caliber and 9mm handguns. Does Bennyhoff suggest that all such handguns are "military firearms" too? A typical 30-06 hunting rifle is more powerful, round for round, than a military-issue M-16? Where does he draw the line?

The framers of the U.S. Constitution — men who, themselves, took up their personal "military" arms against a tyrannical government — intentionally reserved the individual's right to keep and bear arms, be they pellet guns or .50-caliber rifles. If Bennyhoff wants to live in a country where the government has made the people "safe" from firearms, he need only relocate to any number of the countries with strict gun control laws and their accompanying higher rates of violent crime.

Jon L. Gardner
Battalion reader

Ignoring Kyoto equal to ignoring global warming

In response to Mark Passwaters' June 21 column.

Mark Passwaters agrees with the Bush administration on not supporting Kyoto. This is his choice, however, there are very serious errors in his line of argument. He argues that Europeans

too have pollution problems like acid rain or smog in cities.

This is true, but is beside the point: Greenhouse warming is caused by a man-made increase in greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. This increase in carbon dioxide is mainly caused by the burning of fossil fuels since the industrial revolution (by power plants, cars, house heating). It accumulates in the atmosphere since it has a long lifetime.

Pollution problems like acid rain and urban smog also originate mainly from combustion, but are caused by different substances (like ozone, sulfate aerosols), and are much shorter lived. Municipal wastewater and testing of atomic bombs, while sad, have absolutely nothing to do with global warming.

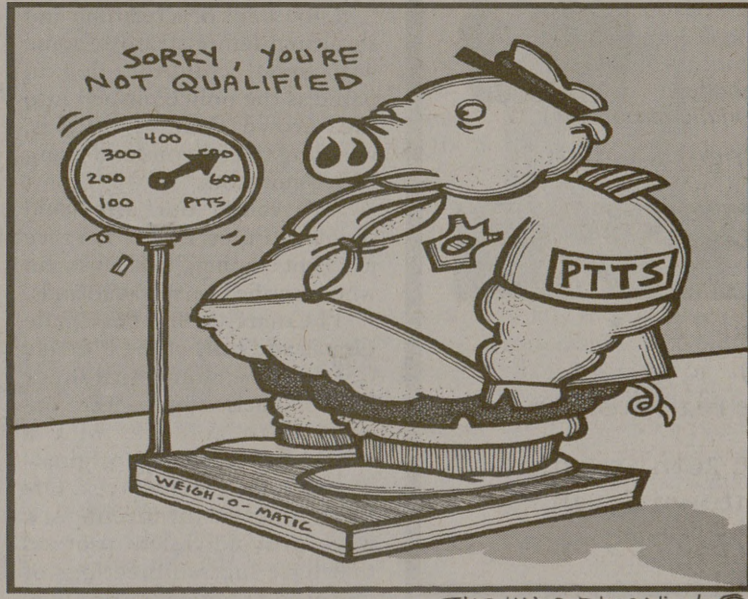
If you want to understand who is responsible for global warming, you have to look at the per capita carbon emission. Here, the United States is a worldwide leader, Europeans have much lower per-person carbon emissions (mostly because they rely more on public transportation, have smaller cars, insulate more and use air-conditioning less), developing nations have usually quite small per person carbon emission levels (since they usually do not have all the gadgets U.S. citizens do).

If you also consider that you should not only look at the present day emission levels, but at the integrated emissions over the industrial period, the United States is clearly on the forefront of causing global warming. Therefore it is the United States' responsibility to participate in efforts to reduce (avoid is impossible) global warming.

We have only one planet to live on, and are performing an irreversible (within human time-spans) experiment with it. People may not agree whether Kyoto is the best approach to deal with global warming, but ignoring or distorting the facts is not the right approach.

Dr. Gabriele Hegerl
Battalion reader

CARTOON OF THE DAY



THE UNCARToONIST ©

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