

editorial opinion

An open door

It's there!
It's there!

The light at the end of the tunnel. A narrow ray of bright light coming through a very heavy door — a door which seems to have opened just a bit. And this time, that tiny ray made it all the way to Fayette Campus in Uniontown — to the University Board of Trustees meeting.

The door: a reluctant University administration, unwilling to take meaningful action on the issue of University divestment in companies doing business in South Africa.

The narrow ray of light: student opinion.

At their meeting last weekend, the members of the Board of Trustees voted not to make a hasty decision on the issue of divestment — a decision guided only by the information prepared by the administration. Instead, the trustees decided to postpone their decision for seven months until student opinion could be gauged.

In a show of genuine student advocacy, the board voted to listen to students on this student-initiated issue rather than just to make a hasty decision. And while the trustees should be commended for their decision, this one victory does not mean students have won the war and will now have a say in the workings of the University.

Several pitfalls lurk in the shadows ahead.

The first pitfall is a deep one. From past conditioning, University students are used to being told about decisions on issues affecting them — after the decision has been made.

Apathy is the most dangerous trap students could fall into.

No doubt, student and University agencies will make every effort to poll student opinion and compile a report for the trustees that will give them some balanced information on the issues relating to divestment, but only if students respond.

Undergraduate Student Government President David Rosenblatt delivered a thoughtful message to the trustees, but its effectiveness hangs in the balance of student response.

If students do not jump at their chance to be heard, that chance may not come again.

Another USG president may stand up at a University Board of Trustees meeting one day and call for more student input on some crucial issue. When the speaker finishes, a sleepy trustee could dismiss the argument with one simple sentence: "The last time we asked them, they didn't answer."

The divestment issue could be the avenue by which University policy-makers can be opened up to more student input... but only if students take it.

The second pitfall students face from the trustees' decision to wait centers around the divestment issue itself. Clearly, the University administration is not a whole-hearted supporter of divestment. It could mean the loss of some revenue — a thought which does not warm many souls in Old Main.

This student victory could easily turn into a defaulted win for the administration if the seven-month waiting period suggested by the trustees is used to sweep the divestment issue under the rug.

A lot can be forgotten in the hustle and bustle of fall semester, and the administration must hope the fervor over divestment will be one of the things which does.

This booby trap will only spring shut if students allow administrators to take out their whisk brooms and sweep the issue out of sight.

Again, there must be immediate student participation and response.

As a rule, students are not asked for input on major issues that directly affect them. For example, student opinion was not polled when the trustees voted to raise tuition, nor were they consulted regarding the surcharge levied on upper-level engineering and earth and mineral science students. The trustees only heard the administration's version.

But the door was cracked open a bit when the trustees asked what students think about divestment.

This decision to wait for student input has a dual meaning for students. Not only is it an opportunity for them to voice their opinions on the issue of divestment, but it is a chance to send a message to the trustees that students do care about the future of the University and want an active role in shaping it.

Students can send a statement to the trustees that their opinions are worth listening to — that they are concerned about more than that next exam or who's having a party this weekend.

But the opportunity is a fleeting one. Blow it now and we may not get a second chance. Using this opportunity to speak out on the divestment issue may lead to more student input on other issues relevant to student welfare.

It's there!
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The opportunity for student input is there. Although individuals may argue whether University divestment is the right step for Penn State to take, students must unite and speak out — no matter what their opinion is. If students don't unite now, the light at the end of the tunnel will disappear as the door is slammed shut.



NO MORE TEARS

The Collegian

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Gail L. Johnson
Business Manager

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Reagan's illness spurs public concern for cancer

By MALCOLM RITTER
AP Science Writer

NEW YORK — People worried about colon cancer in the wake of President Reagan's illness have been calling hot lines and doctor's offices across the country for information and appointments.

"All of a sudden, everybody and his brother has decided to have a checkup," said Jack Carter, president of Furguson Hospital in Grand Rapids, Mich., which specializes in colon and rectal diseases. "We can't get the phone to stop ringing."

Dr. Gordon Klatt, colon and rectal surgeon in Tacoma, Wash., said area specialists have gotten up to 20 additional calls daily from people who want to be screened for cancer.

"People are a little bit worried now," said Dr. William Friend of the Colon-Rectal Clinic in Seattle. "I hope that we will be seeing people who would have come in much later otherwise."

Dr. John Rosin, a Baltimore colon-rectal surgeon, is one of several doctors who said many calls have come "from patients who had polyps in the past who didn't come in

for followups (examinations) even though they got reminder cards ... Now they want it done yesterday."

A history of polyps increases a person's risk for cancer of the colon or rectum, known as colorectal cancer, which is expected to kill 59,900 Americans this year. Some 138,000 cases are expected to be diagnosed this year, according to the American Cancer Society.

The cure rate rises dramatically if the cancer is caught and treated early — before the symptoms of bleeding from the rectum, visible blood in the stool and bowel irregularity appear.

For people over age 40 without symptoms, the cancer society recommends an annual exploration of the rectum by a physician using a finger. For people over 50, it suggests an annual test of the stool for hidden blood and periodic "proctoscopic" examinations of the rectum and lower colon by a physician looking through a flexible tube.

If results of such testing hint at trouble, the entire colon can be examined with a colonoscope, also a flexible tube, or a barium enema, a special X-ray procedure.

A kit to test the stool for hidden

blood at home costs from \$5 to \$11 in drugstores, but some local cancer societies offer them in free or low-cost screening programs. A proct exam costs from \$50 to \$125, according to a survey by The Associated Press. A barium enema can run from \$75 to \$300, while a colonoscopy exam — which can also remove polyps — generally costs from about \$300 to about \$700, but it can exceed \$1,000.

Colonoscopy "is not an inexpensive procedure," said Dr. Donald Ostrow, chief of gastroenterology at Northwestern University Medical Center in Chicago.

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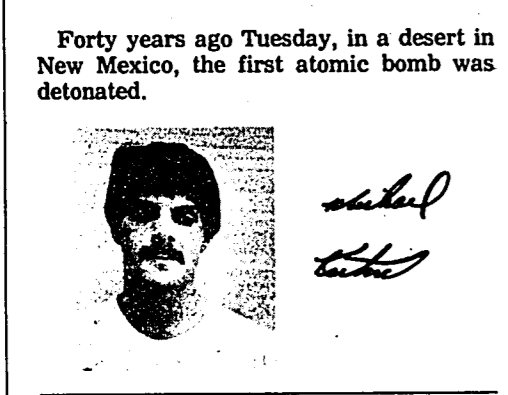
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Defense spending:

When it's our turn to decide how to spend U.S. dollars, will we have the know-how to do it?



Forty years ago Tuesday, in a desert in New Mexico, the first atomic bomb was detonated.

At the Los Alamos National Laboratory, J. Robert Oppenheimer and several hundred other scientists and technicians worked for two years to develop the weapon that would end World War II.

In a recent interview with *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Robert Duffield, one of the key scientists that worked at Los Alamos between 1945 and 1949, said the reason he got involved in the project was because he believed the atom bomb would be so powerful a deterrent to war that all other nations in the world would not dare risk the lives of so many people for a war.

Unfortunately, history has shown that deterrents to war have not always turned out to be as effective as they were supposed to be. For example, the fighter plane was supposed to be the ultimate weapon when it was developed; so was the submarine.

So what's the new deterrent? That the United States and the Soviet Union have the capability to blow up the world five times over? I guess three or four times wasn't enough.

Some of the people who favor research into newer and more "efficient" methods of war are the same people who tell us they

have seen the "other side." They've seen their buddies killed in action and tiny villages destroyed in minutes. And they tell us that the only way to avoid war is to build an arsenal big enough and strong enough that no army would dare attack it.

I don't agree with this mode of thinking. There has never been a single weapon that was a complete deterrent to war.

But the idea of deterrence seems to be popular because Congress continues to appropriate monies for arms. One reason people may support arms build up is because most of the U.S. populous has lived through a war.

A man in his 60s today was probably in World War II. Veteran's from the Korean War are in their 40s to 50s, and thousands of men and women in their 30s still carry the scars of Vietnam.

And so our defense policies and strategies are developed and maintained by people who remember what it meant to keep the enemy out of their territory.

I spent my sophomore year living on a farm with nine other people, one of whom was in the Korean War. Everytime I complained about how cold my room was John would jump in with, "You think you're cold? You should have been in Korea during the war." Then he would tell me about ways he and his army buddies tried to keep warm. He told me once they set an army jeep on fire and warmed themselves by the flames. When the marines invaded Grenada and rescued the American medical students there, John was prouder than anyone else I knew. These were his boys; maybe he knew some of their fathers. I think he wished he could have been right with them when they landed in Grenada.

John has a conviction about communism and the fight against it that someone who

has never been "there" can't understand. He is all for an arsenal of MX's, ICBM's, and Trident subs because he believes we may need them someday.

But what if we don't need them? What if several decades go by and all those people like John who thought we would need them are all dead? What will America's defense policies be like in 30 years when the people who will be forming our foreign policies have a stockpile of weapons with which to blow up the world but have never seen the effects of them or been in a war themselves?

I don't fully understand why we need 20 more MX's and a fleet of 600 ships. Maybe if I had been in a war, I would understand. But at what point will we say enough?

I support a strong national defense, but how long will we continue to ignore domestic issues like social security and medical assistance and urban renewal?

In 30 years, when the generation that grew up after the hippies and flower children are the decision makers in Congress, the issue of increased defense spending may have to be pushed aside, because in 2015, the baby boomers are going to be retiring and waiting for social security checks, and if the system is in the red now, what's it going to be like when a great portion of the population is expecting checks?

If we want to be able to deal with some of these issues, we will have to change our attitudes about how much money we are going to allot for our national defense and also how we will be spending the money.

Our generation has two important defense issues to be concerned with: a defense department that in a few decades may have no wartime experience, and domestic terrorism.

In regard to the first issue, I'm not calling

for a war every ten years to keep our hands wet. But in a situation where experience can mean the difference between life and death, classroom lectures just won't cut the mustard.

Two scenarios may occur if this situation becomes a reality. One would be that our leaders would become trigger happy, what with having all these great weapons laying around and none of them being used. Then we would probably have a world war and get to see the world blown up five times.

The second scenario would be that no more monies would be given to defense spending and more attention would be given to domestic issues.

The second idea may seem appealing but it is not the best, either. One reason the economy has done so well under the Reagan administration is the increase in defense spending. The high interest rates and unemployment of the Carter administration showed us what can happen to an economy when defense spending dwindles.

A balance between defense spending and spending on domestic needs is needed. And the balance doesn't mean 50 percent of the budget for defense and 50 percent for domestic. Balance means maintaining steady but moderate increases for defense while domestic spending is dealt with as necessary.

I know, you've heard it before. You say I'm starting to sound like one of them. What is meant by steady but moderate increases? I'll do something no politician would: I'll give numbers. My idea of steady but moderate increases means an increase of two to three percent above the inflation rate each year.

Included in defense spending would be appropriations for defense against the second issue, domestic terrorism.

Experts in the field of international terrorism believe that the next attack on the United States and its people will happen within our own borders.

The Iranian situation showed us how vulnerable our embassies are and how little we understand about the philosophy of Shiite terrorism. In the past four years, U.S. military officers and newspaper correspondents have been kidnapped and killed by terrorists.

The most recent incident in Beirut exemplified how little we have learned.

The FBI has files on 18 organizations residing in the United States with links to international terrorism.

The Delta Force we heard so much about during the Beirut crisis was formed several years ago to deal with possible terrorist incidents during the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles last year.

More money should be appropriated to train soldiers for a domestic threat. Terrorists could pick any number of locations and create a situation that would leave us with no option but to give in to their demands. A bus load of elementary school children, a public water supply, our international airports could all be targets for terrorism.

Attitudes about our national defense change every few years. Spend more money. Spend less money. Either way we are entering a new age. This time we will be the decision makers and the issues of weapons stockpiling and protecting ourselves within our own borders will be the primary concern.

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