



A. Case for conservation

Keeping peace saves the environment

By ALENE N. CASE

There are, as they say, two sides to every coin. A couple of months ago I wrote a column in which I asked readers to consider the consequences of environmental degradation. The point was that deforestation, pollution, soil erosion and the scarcity of resources (such as water) could all lead to violent conflict. But, what about the other side of that coin? Cannot warfare also lead to environmental degradation?

As the Iraqis left Kuwait, they set fire to more than 600 oil wells. The smoke from those fires caused black snow as far away as the Himalayan mountains. More than 100,000 tons of carbon dioxide was released into the atmosphere before the experts could extinguish the flames. There are still huge lakes of spilled oil filling depressions in the sand of Kuwait. This incident was a modern example of an ancient device of warfare - the rape and plunder of the land.

Last year, there were more than 50 wars of various sizes being waged around the world. In 1991, there were 16 wars that were large enough to kill at least 1,000 people during the year. We have seen the results of some of these conflicts in the starvation of people in Ethiopia and Somalia. As bombs deforest the beautiful slopes around Sarajevo, we wonder whether time can restore the scenery that we remember from the Olympics. Or will these mountains be scarred twenty years from now in the same way that the jungles of Vietnam are scarred by our defoliants of twenty years ago?

Perhaps the United Nations could greatly increase its peace-making effectiveness by requiring all combatants to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment for approval prior to any armed conflict. Think about it for a moment and you will realize that fewer wars could be fought if environmental as well as humanitarian restraints were legally in place.

In fact, our government is now

paying a very high price for allowing military activities to be conducted outside the purview of our environmental laws. The US military generates between 400,000 and 500,000 tons of toxic wastes annually - that is more than is produced by the top five US chemical companies combined! In 1990 waste cleanup sites numbered 17,482 on 1,855 military bases within the United States. Some of these dumps are so toxic that they have been designated "national sacrifice zones" that will remain contaminated because it would be too costly to try to clean them up. If we have this big a problem, just imagine what a mess the former Soviet Union must have left behind in the former Warsaw Pact countries!

In addition, military activity generates approximately 10% of all the carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. It may be responsible for as much as two thirds of the destruction of the ozone layer - partly from release of large quantities of CFCs and partly as a result of high flying supersonic aircraft.

It is certainly not necessary to be engaged in active warfare in order to damage the environment. Preparing for war can be damaging in a wide variety of ways. But, this is not a new conclusion. In 1953 one of our country's greatest generals, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, proclaimed that "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in a final sense, a theft from those who are hungry and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children."

Let us examine more closely. During the Cold War, as many as half of America's scientists were working on defense-related projects. Is it any wonder that we still have inefficient cars and solar cells? Many "developing" nations spend twice as much on the military as they spend on health care

or education. In fact, world military spending per soldier totals \$36,000; world educational expenditures per student total only \$11,000. As I have asked previously, where are our priorities?

According to the Cousteau Society, it would very likely require \$774 billion to reverse global environmental degradation over the next ten years. That sounds like an awful lot of money until one realizes that the world spends more than that each year on military enterprises. If the USA saved the money that it would need to build 9 Trident submarines, it could instead provide fresh water and adequate sanitary facilities for half of the world's population. I think that would increase our country's security more than the submarines would. And, what would happen if we used the money we saved from not building two B-2 Stealth bombers to provide vaccinations for all the children in the Third World? The list could go on and on.

In order to accomplish this change in spending patterns, we must have an excellent strategic plan. Closing military bases and laying off engineers in defense industries will not help to solve our problems. We need to convert these installations and industries into useful establishments. Perhaps it is not possible to find a peaceful use for a nuclear missile, but it is certainly possible to change from manufacturing tanks to building mass transit systems. Obsolete naval ships could be remodeled into research vessels. Radar installations could be updated to be used in pollution monitoring. Military bases can be converted into hospitals or educational facilities. And we should be involving the workers in decision-making about the future instead of putting them on the unemployment line on into a re-training facility when we all know that no jobs will be available after the training is complete.

Let us, then, let our elected representatives know that we want real change. We can then provide a better future for the Earth and all of its inhabitants. Peace.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - April 7, 1933 PLANS FINALIZED FOR EASTER EGG HUNT

Plans for the annual Easter Egg Hunt of Dallas Rotary Club will be held next Saturday at Fernbrook Park are nearing completion and it is expected the affair will be one of the most successful ever conducted by the local service club.

For the first time in its history Dallas Borough High School athletic association closes its fiscal year showing a profit and with much of the indebtedness of previous years wiped clean from its books.

Lehman Grange will sponsor a gala and colorful 14 act Circus at Lehman High School tonight as a climax to a day's activities which will begin with a meeting of Pomona Granges of Upper Luzerne and Lower Wyoming counties this afternoon. A prize of 50 lbs. of flour will be awarded to the largest family present.

You could get - New potatoes, 5 lbs., 17¢; sugar, 10 lbs. 41¢; corn, 2 cans, 19¢; Palmolive soap, 5 cakes, 25¢.

peals to their patriotism and to their community spirit Monday at Dallas Township High School and turned down the suggestion of County Agent James Hutchison to grow tomatoes for defense as their first step in establishing canning contracts here.

Now playing at Shaver Theatre, "China Girl" starring Gene Tierney and George Montgomery.

40 Years Ago - April 3, 1953 MINERS BANK BUYS OUT DALLAS BANK

Announcement was made yesterday that purchase of the First National Bank of Dallas by the Miners National Bank of Wilkes-Barre has been approved by the directors of both institutions. The announcement was not a complete surprise for the purchase has been under consideration since April 1951.

Blood Donor Day at College Misericordia netted 138 pints collected by a staff of 29. College students from freshmen to seniors contributed with parental permission. Fourteen Sisters also donated.

Alfred Bronson, chairman of Committee of Entries for Sweet Valley Annual Memorial Day Parade, urges that all entries be reported as early as possible. Churches, lodges, school bands, business floats and fire companies, horsemen and comics are welcome. Antique car owners are specially urged to enter.

You could get - Legs O'Lamb, 59¢ lb.; smoked hams, full shank half, 59¢ lb.; fresh baked peach pies, 39¢ ea.; bread, 2 lg. loaves 27¢; oranges, 35¢ doz.

30 Years Ago - April 4, 1963 CONTRACT FOR NEW HIGHWAY AWARDED

A brand new "Time 'n Temp" clock will be installed on the front of Miners National Bank, Dallas in the middle of May. In addition to filling the need for an outdoor clock in the center of Dallas, the clock will have the inevitable consequence of stimulating business in the vicinity.

Low bidder for the proposed new Dallas-Luzerne highway, H.J.

50 Years Ago - April 2, 1943 FARMERS SAY NO TOMATOES FOR WAR

A whirlwind one-week scrap drive to raise funds for the American Red Cross will be launched Monday morning by students of Dallas Borough Schools. At the same time a special drive for tin cans will be conducted by 6th grade students. Similar drives during the month of April are being conducted by Lehman Township, Lake and Kingston Township schools.

Jane Lohman, Trucksville, first and only woman postmaster is leaving the postal service. Mrs. Lohman has served alternately at postmaster and assistant postmaster in Trucksville for the past 18 years and is turning the keys of the little office to Gwyn Evans, of Chase, newly-appointed postmaster.

For the second time in as many years farmers and truck growers in the Back Mt. rejected all ap-

peals to their patriotism and to their community spirit Monday at Dallas Township High School and turned down the suggestion of County Agent James Hutchison to grow tomatoes for defense as their first step in establishing canning contracts here.

Anniversary - Mr. and Mrs. William Davis, 52 years.

20 Years Ago - April 5, 1973 POST EARNS AWARDS FOR FLOOD COVERAGE

Greenstreet News Co., which publishes The Dallas Post, the Abington Journal and the Mountaintop Eagle, was cited recently by the Professional News Media Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania for dedication and selflessness during the flood emergency last June. Greenstreet News published several special editions, during and after the flood emergency.

A twin engine jet seaplane made several illegal landings on Harveys Lake Saturday. Residents reported sightings of the plane earlier in the week as well. The state will deal with the illegality of the landing itself. Spokesmen of both Pennsylvania Fish Commission in Sweet Valley and at the main office in Harrisburg report that a landing on Harveys Lake is definitely illegal.

A plan to finance Lake-Lehman, new elementary school by issuing general obligation bonds won the unanimous support of the district's school directors at a special meeting of the board, March 27. The plan which came highly recommended by Pennsylvania Economy League makes use of the Local Government Unit Debt Act (Act #185) passed last June.

Dave Longmore, senior at Dallas High School and wrestling coach Jim Bamrick, have been named recipients of the George Hooper and Fred Hennebaul wrestling awards.



Looking for some snow?

This week's old photo must have an interesting story. Skis, but rocks not snow. So tell us who are they and what are they doing?

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