

letters

and China is the United States.

Unfortunately there is much crookedness and corruption in our government and military. These things should be corrected as much as possible. Nevertheless our government is quite enlightened compared to some other governments.

In spite of their faults, our government and military are the only two things that keep us from domination by Russia or China. If the Russians or the Chinese ever get over here, I am afraid that Orear will find that the students, radical groups, peace groups, and the establishment will all be in the same boat.

It is unfortunate that some groups bear so much hostility to the American military. This seems to me to be the height of folly. It is like a well developed athlete having resentment over his muscles.

R. M. CRANDALL
Charleston, West Virginia

THE AUTHOR COMMENTS: I agree with Albers that universities and scientists should contribute to national security, but in their own way. The universities can protect our society from within by providing a traditional haven for all shades of criticism and by opposing the forces that are tending to destroy us from within. It is not traditional for universities to be controlled by the "military establishment" in any way, or to be designing weapons, or to be training humans how to kill humans.

I just do not see how DOD-sponsored basic research in the university gives the university influence over military policy. It is difficult to control the military from the bottom up (except by mutiny or revolution). This is why our founding fathers intended that the military be controlled by civilians from the top down. Certainly a qualified civilian such as Herb York, Hans Bethe, George Rathjens, W. Panofsky or M. Goldberger as Secretary of Defense along with a qualified man as Commander-in-Chief could control the military.

I agree with Albers that the word "establishment" is overworked. But I do not agree that the membership of the American Physical Society controls the Council, and I would like to illustrate this with an example. A few months after the Democratic Convention the APS Council undercut the efforts of other professional societies by voting unanimously to hold our annual meeting in Chicago. Later, in a referendum of the membership, close to half of those who voted expressed a lack of confidence in the Council's decision. A truly representative Council would have been split over the Chicago decision.

How many of the Council are under 40? How many live and talk with students on a daily basis?

In his letter, Crandall takes exception to three of the dozen objectionable actions by the US military that I had listed. Nowhere did I compare the morality and legality of US actions to those of North or South Vietnam or any other government. Certainly if our country is to remain worth defending, we must not start using the same illegal and immoral tactics of those whom we oppose.

What disturbs me the most about Crandall's letter is the implication that by fighting the "Communists" in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, we are preventing them from "getting over here." A logical conclusion to this kind of reasoning is that it would be more effective to destroy these "cruel and brutal groups bent on world imperialism" at their source (which Crandall tells us is Russia and China). Why then waste our lives and money killing Vietnamese peasants, when we could instead be killing Russians and Chinese?

JAY OREAR
Cornell University

Air pollution at meetings

I recently attended the January and March meetings of the American Physical Society, and at every session I attended I had to change my seat at least once because of someone's smoking a cigar or pipe. I would like to make a small but real contribution to solving the air-pollution problem by asking the local committees that arrange these meetings to set aside special seating areas only for smokers, as in movie theaters.

I have checked with others and find that my irritation is not just a person idiosyncrasy but one felt by a real fraction of the membership.

Given the sometimes crowded conditions at well attended meetings, I believe it to be downright rude for a man to smoke a cigar when he is actually rubbing elbows with two people on either side of him in a lecture room or banquet hall. Here is a small but clear and present pollution problem, and an achievable proposal in environmental control that the APS (and other learned societies) can readily act on.

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