

Viewpoint

Act against SDI

By Scott Lewis

After reading last week's article on potential research on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) at UCLA, I want to raise several questions about the nature of this work and the university's role in supporting it.

SDI has been hailed as a solution to ending nuclear war by the Reagan Administration. The numerous arguments against pursuing this research include the necessity for the system to work perfectly (100 percent of incoming enemy missiles destroyed), the enormous financial undertaking it would entail (costing as much as a trillion dollars), and the highly theoretical nature of the project (no one knows if it can eventually be built).

The Union of Concerned Scientists has written extensively about the myriad technical difficulties such a project would present and the relatively simple ways such a system could be overcome. Many scientists see SDI as an effort that may lead to a new round in the arms race and make nuclear war more likely.

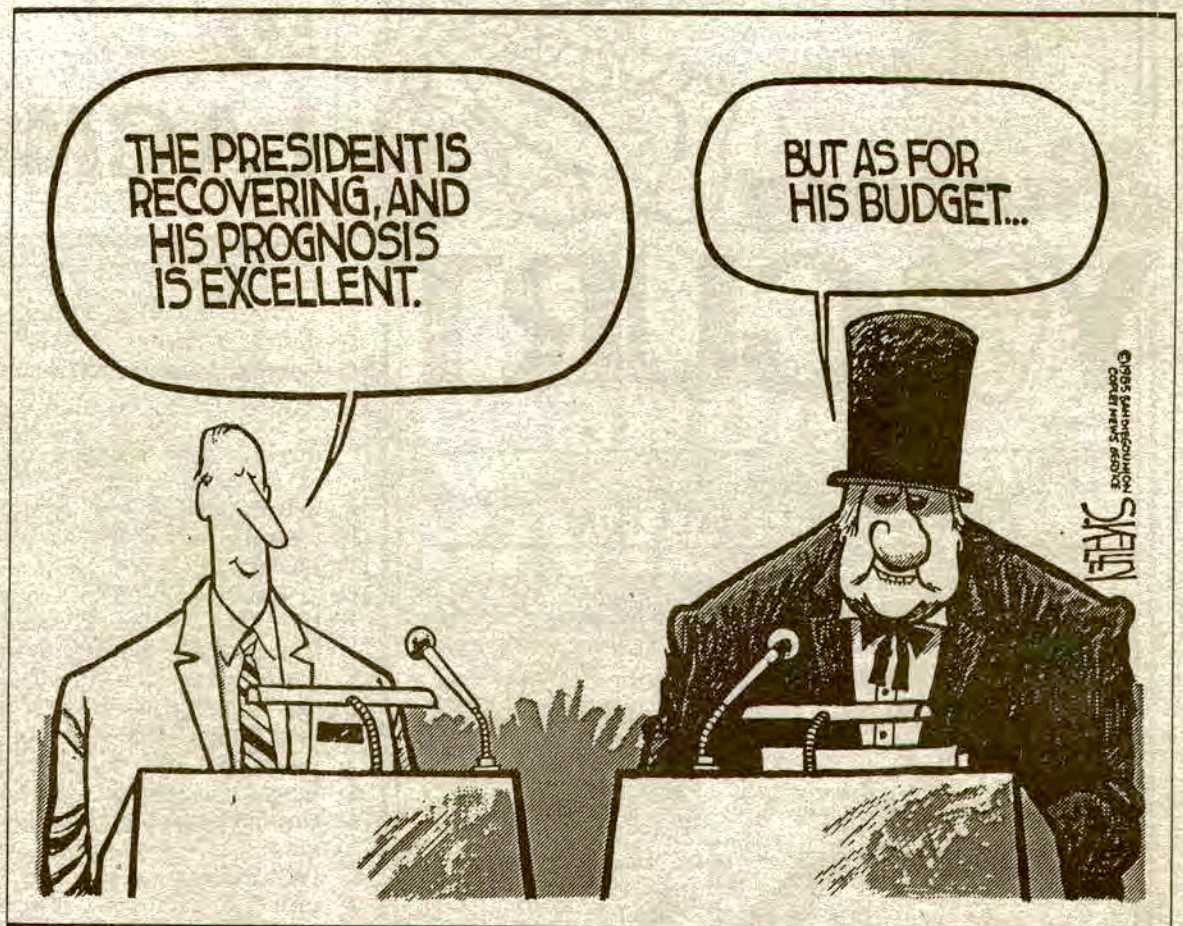
So what's in it for

UCLA? Big bucks for one thing. It's a pork barrel for defense contractors and researchers. I feel deeply concerned when contemplating the role of the university in jumping on the SDI bandwagon.

Does this mean that the university by promoting these contracts becomes an endorser of the SDI? Could it mean that at the university we pay more attention to the challenging (and profitable) prospects of tackling some very difficult engineering problems than the political and moral side effects this work produces? Does it mean that UCLA is unwittingly contributing to the escalation of the arms race?

The future of SDI will be critical in the near future. I hope that as a step toward curbing the arms race we will ban these weapons. Research on the SDI at UCLA may lead us to a more dangerous world. Do we want our university engaged in this type of work? If not, what shall we do about it?

Lewis is a graduate student.



What do you think?...

The Reagan Administration will ask Congress for at least \$53 million to pay for vehicles, technical equipment for police forces and training for special anti-terrorist units in four Central American countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica. Costa

Rica will also be the site for a regional police training institute. Congress ended the funding and training of foreign police in 1973 because of charges that it tied the United States to human rights abuses. Write a viewpoint letter expressing your opinion to the Bruin, 112 Kerckhoff Hall.

Viewpoint

Government seeking humanity: Elevator Etiquette

By Mitchell Bard

In the government's never ending quest to enrich our lives, studies are commissioned on a wide range of subjects by the various departments in the bureaucracy. These studies help rationalize their existence.

A recent study by the Department of Health and Human Services will certainly help when its budget comes up again for consideration. The study, Elevator Etiquette, was written by Claus T. Fobic, professor of psychology at Harvard's Graduate School of Behavioral Engineering.

Department spokesperson Wilma Ramirez told me the study is not

ready for public perusal yet, but my associate Rocco Breaknees was able to obtain a copy.

One of the revelations in the study was the finding that impatient people are more likely to watch the indicator of which floor the elevator is on than patient people.

These same people are also twelve times more likely to push the elevator button after it has already been pushed than their calmer counterparts. Obsessive-compulsives will push the button repeatedly.

Impatient people will also force their way into the elevator before people inside have a chance to exit,

but only neurotics will insist on standing directly in front of the doors before they open.

By contrast, the gregarious individual will stand in the center, push the buttons for everyone, and tell anyone who will listen why there is no thirteenth floor. People who do this in empty elevators are extremely dangerous (How do we know what someone does in an empty elevator?).

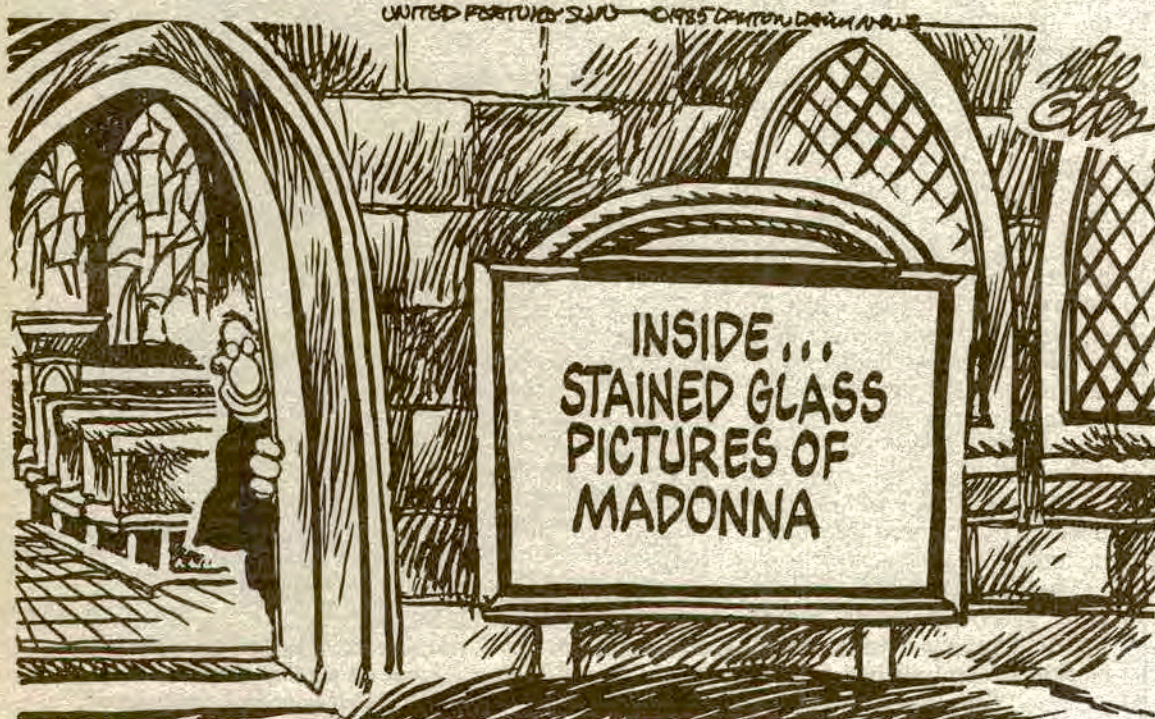
Another contrast was the behavior of sadists and masochists. The former rarely bathe and smoke cigars while the latter stick their arms in between the elevator doors

as they are about to close.

Sadists will also stand in the front of the elevator and refuse to move when others are trying to get out. Masochists will press the buttons for every floor and then forget to get off at their floor.

These are just a few of the insights into mental illness you can gain from the federal government. Next time maybe they can do a study of bureauphobics, people with a rational fear of bureaucrats. I for one would pay to see that.

Bard is a graduate student of political science and a published columnist.



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