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EDITORIALS

It's protest time again in county

So Contra Costa County is once again to host protesters from outside the county bent on taking a vacation from their lives, problems and issues in other areas.

A Bay Area peace group that claims 9,000 members plans a two-day demonstration at the Concord Naval Weapons Station, the first large protest there since 1983. Pledge of Resistance, the Oakland-based peace organization, has been planning the protest for six months and has invited 20-30 other peace groups to participate.

"We're hoping to get people to Concord from all over California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington," said a spokesman. Of course, their employers and families will understand their absences, knowing the importance of holding this mini-political-Woodstock gathering in Concord.

The event will even have an artistic flavor. A group of artists at the Emeryville mudflats is building a mock ammunition ship loaded with wooden bombs labeled "El Salvador" and "Nicaragua." About 40 artists have labored for two months to perfect the craft for the Contra Costa protests.

Most importantly for the success of the demonstrations, the protest leaders have picked June, when the weather will be nice.

Last November, Contra Costans voted 53 percent to 43 percent against a resolution calling for an end to any shipments of arms from the Concord Naval Weapons Station to Central America. More than 110,000 Contra Costa voters agreed that it wouldn't help peace or anything else to tie the hands of the United States, leaving the Soviets free to extend the Iron Curtain to Central America through their support for the Marxist Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

But who cares what the local folks think? It's time for a protest.

Join peace efforts 4/19/87

I am writing in response to your article of April 5 concerning the June 12 and 13 protest demonstration at the Concord Naval Weapons Station.

I will be among the hundreds of Contra Costa County residents participating. We welcome support from non-residents. Intervention and militarism as foreign policy affect everyone.

I believe that due to more information and education, the 43 percent voting for an end to any shipment of arms from the Concord Naval Weapons Station to Central America has increased considerably.

Our policy of foreign intervention, not only in Central America but around the world, is both illegal and immoral. The suffering it has caused in other countries is now being reflected here at home in the millions of homeless, hungry and jobless.

We need to cut the military budget to provide jobs, resources and technology for the private sector.

The Reagan administration has increased the military budget by 70 percent, while cutting the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal by 72 percent, 19 percent for pollution control, 41 percent for veterans education and training, 44 percent for energy conservation and so on.

In dollars, military spending jumped from some \$150 billion to about \$250 billion, as programs for seniors were cut nearly \$24 billion, unemployment insurance \$7.75 billion, food stamps \$6.9 billion, child nutrition \$5.1 billion and Medicaid \$3.9 billion.

Many jobs are, of course, now tied to the Pentagon purse strings. But peacetime conversion would substantially reduce unemployment.

Over 30,000 companies are engaged in military production today. Each day, the military signs 52,000 contracts — more than 15 million contracts a year.

I would like to end with this quote from Inga Thorsson, Prime Minister of Sweden, "The time has come to take into account that socio-economic tensions constitute a threat to international security." The United States needs to change its foreign policy in line with this concept. Then perhaps we will leave a world for our children to inherit.

Contra Costans, join me at the Concord Naval Weapons Station and begin a groundswell across America to create a sane and peaceful world. It can be done.

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