

U.S. covert aid props up 'phantom' dominos

"The Roman general was not a little astonished at finding within the sacred recesses of the Holy of Holies, neither an ass's head nor, indeed, images of any sort."
— Graetz, *History of the Jews*

To state a solution to Nicaragua's problems bluntly, "we" — the United States — are going to have to end our warring in that country.

editor's note debbie howlett

There is a lot of prattle that the problems in Nicaragua are both confusing and complex. They are neither. The problems that Nicaragua now deals with are only compounded by U.S. intervention.

In order for Nicaragua to find peace it must first find its own government, which it has in the *Frente de Sandinista Liberacion Nacional*, and the United States has to withdraw "covert" support of guerillas near the Honduran and Costa Rican borders.

If the Sandinistas have done what they can, why should, or rather, why does this burden still rest on the U.S.'s shoulders?

The United States would be as the Roman general — astonished — if only we would take time to look into the recesses of the Sandinista movement. Nicaragua's leftist

government is, as most of the people who've been there agree, helping the majority of Nicaragua's population and benefitting the majority of Nicaraguans.

Indeed the Sandinistas are neither saints, nor are they demons. They are the force behind improved health care, a literacy rate so much improved that it nearly parallels the United States' rate and a lower-class that now has enough food to feed themselves.

In essence, Nicaraguans have solved some major problems in Nicaragua.

U.S. foreign policy in Central America is wrong, it has solved nothing, and has only lengthened an unnecessary war. The U.S. says it has softened the negotiating position of the Sandinistas, but that "softening," if it is in fact true, is in the best interests of the United States, not Nicaragua. We are interested not in the well-being of the people of Nicaragua, but in protecting U.S. interests.

If the U.S. involvement were directed at Nicaraguans, rather than the Reagan administration's perception of what is correct, the United States would send economic and social aid in lieu of guns and bullets.

But the major argument for U.S. involvement in Nicaragua, as well as against ending aid to "contras" — the anti-Sandinista guerillas — is a ludicrous concept called the "Domino Theory." The United States operates under the assumption that one government like the Sandinistas, which the Reagan administration has labeled a communist branch of the Soviet Union, will topple other governments in Central America, forming a chain of dominos from Mex-

ico to South America.

The major premises in U.S. policy are that the Sandinistas are communist, which the Sandinistas vehemently deny, and that other Central American countries are run by the governments the people want in power.

The Sandinistas were aiding rebels in El Salvador by running shipments of guns to the guerillas. The Sandinistas say they have halted that practice, but the U.S. is still leery.

It is my contention that the United States does have legitimate interests in the governments empowered in Central America. The United States does need to be confident that the Soviet influence is not overtaking Central America — but only because a Soviet controlled Central America is essentially the same as a U.S. controlled Central America — a government not chosen by the people who will live with it.

The day after I returned from Nicaragua, I sat in a Portland restaurant reading the *Oregonian* over a cup of coffee. A Will Rogers quote jumped off of the editorial page.

We fought for our liberty when we wasn't ready for anything...now we think no one could possibly be as smart and as deserving as us.

Let those little nations go their own way, and run their country any way they want. Nobody don't have to take some other country to protect their own, but nations won't tell the truth; they always give one reason, and then have another.

Will is right. The U.S. should get out of Nicaragua.

letters

Stonewall

It is easy to agree that the Soviet leadership lies, stonewalls, and makes a general disaster of public relations. There may well be some important truths in their account of the downing of the KAL airliner, but how are we to know when they include probable truths with preposterous statements like not knowing it was an airliner?

The Korean government, military, and intelligence forces are fanatics capable of just about anything and they have similarly provoked the Soviet Union before and got away with it. I find it quite conceivable that when the Soviets did finally identify the plane minutes before it would be leaving their airspace, they thought it possibly a ruse (empty of passengers), and possibly not. The airline pilot refuses to land — which the Koreans have done before — or maybe the Soviets did not give enough time to see signals; the plane was shot down rather than let it get away with the intelligence information it almost certainly gathered.

The Soviet Union could give reams of reasons why they might make such a mistake. It is not just paranoia and clumsiness — much less an amorphous evil nature — the history and exigencies of the defense of the Soviet Union are different from our own. To oversimplify: the U.S. has the capability and willingness to provoke the Soviet Union in ways that the Soviets cannot. But as was pointed out by the professors, they don't want to admit any mistakes and prefer to stonewall. Essentially such stonewalling is for internal consumption.

Our esteemed Sovietologists bemoaned that Pres. Ronald Reagan did not make more use of this incident to further attack the Soviet Union. They are blinded by their (understandable) distaste of life in the Soviet Union and fool themselves into thinking that the U.S. can help the Soviet Union to its demise. The Soviet Union is not ready to crumble and the professors will probably readily admit that the Soviet people are not ready to be "liberated." Their wishes for more aggressive U.S.

policies are arrogant and very dangerous. Their regrets that Reagan "talked big but carried a small twig" caused them to miss the essentials: by making a big PR show and acting restrained, Reagan managed to get his troubled MX missiles pushed through with hardly a whimper.

Our Sovietologists reveal their true colors with a statement like, "You cannot declare war. We are paralyzed by sitting on nuclear weapons." Unfortunately Reagan also has close advisers with that attitude, such as Richard Pipes, who also happen to think that fighting and "winning" a nuclear war is conceivable.

What a thin thread we hang on that we have to count on Reagan for restraint. That thread is only his calculated sense of making an aggressive gain while appearing cautious. But it is "caution" only in relation to the delusions of reasonable and intelligent men who would chart a course of madness.

Ken Summers
graduate

Transients

It certainly seems to me that the Emerald's article on vagrancy was superficial almost to the point of being unthinking. If Eugene has a larger than average number of transients, as Mark Lindberg guesses, it is largely because Eugene has a worse than average economy. The task force discovered that about one-half of the Eugene transients had been Oregonians before becoming transients.

The Emerald article speaks of removing the cause of the pro-

blem, implying that if the well-off "well dressed" did not have to look at the poor and "shabbily dressed," the problem would be solved. By any rational reckoning, the transients are not the cause of the problem, but the effect of an economic system that can produce plenty of goods, and a Wall Street boom even though millions of U.S. citizens are out of work.

Many of yesterday's college students are today's transients. What will today's students be doing in five years? The whole situation deserves a much deeper study.

Larry Rude

letters policy

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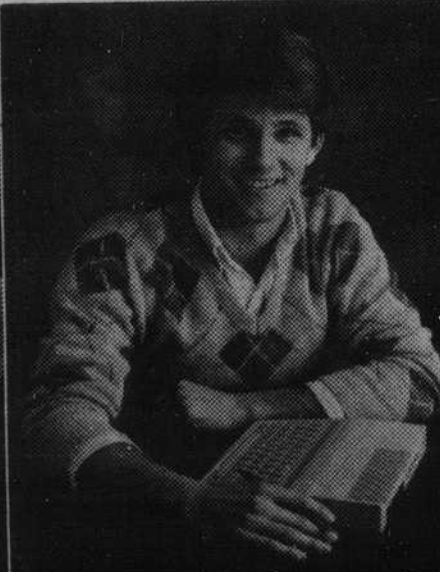
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