

Nicaragua makes a peace initiative

Once again Nicaragua has publicly challenged the Reagan administration. Not with any military build-up or threat to invade Honduras and Costa Rica. Instead, the Sandanistas have challenged Reagan with a more powerful weapon: diplomacy.

On Saturday, the Sandanistas officially stated that they will sign the 80 page document known as the Contadora peace plan, provided the United States respects the agreement. The stated purpose of the Contadora group (Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and Panama) has been to try and establish a political solution to the current crisis in Central America.

Among other things, the 21 points of the peace plan call for each of the five Central American nations to commit themselves to free and open elections, to eliminate all foreign military bases and training centers, to stop arms shipments to any groups of people seeking to destabilize governments, and to establish a military balance between nations in the region.

In the past, the Sandanistas have been reluctant to sign the Contadora plan without a promise from the United States that it cease hostilities against Nicaragua. Initially, Reagan claimed that he supported the Contadora process, arguing that Nicaragua's reluctance to sign the peace proposal was another example of the Sandanistas' refusal to help establish democracy and peace in the region.

By agreeing to sign the plan the Sandanistas have now turned the tables on the United States. If Reagan refuses to accept the Contadora peace plan, then he will be sending a clear message to the world that the United States is not, and never has been dedicated to a political solution to the growing violence in Central America.

Already the Reagan administration has responded to Nicaragua's support of the peace plan with criticism. According to State Department officials, even if Nicaragua signs the plan there is no guarantee that the Sandanistas will reduce their reliance on Soviet weapons and stop military support of the Salvadoran guerillas.

United States allies in the region (El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala) who once claimed to support the Contadora peace plan are now wavering in their commitment to sign the agreement. It appears that to the United States and its Central American allies, the Contadora peace plan was only of value as long as Nicaragua didn't agree to it.

Nicaragua's desire to cooperate with the Contadora nations has brought to light the hypocrisy of Reagan's policy in Central America. While mouthing slogans of diplomacy, the United States has been promoting one of the biggest military build-ups in Central American history.

Although Reagan claims that the Nicaraguans are the key military supporters of the Salvadoran rebels, three years of intensive surveillance by the United States have not yielded even one cache of arms en route from Nicaragua to El Salvador.

Reagan calls Nicaragua a "totalitarian dungeon." Yet no death squads operate in Nicaragua and no mutilated bodies are found beside dusty roads. By contrast, in El Salvador, a country which Reagan describes as "democratic," an average of 140 people were killed each month during 1983 by military and paramilitary units, according to the State Department's own records.

European leaders have announced their support for the Contadora peace process and many praise Nicaragua for its agreement to sign the plan. Meanwhile, the Reagan administration is busy with it's own Central American peace process: sending more military equipment to El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala.



letters

Better next time

As I walked toward my first class on Thursday morning, I began to wonder how the previous day's IFC elections would be reported by the Emerald. Most of my thoughts centered around trivial aspects, such as the size and choice of quotations.

What I found, however, was an article in which all but the first two paragraphs were devoted to allegations of "dirty politics" against four of the seven members. For a moment I thought I had accidentally picked up one of those trashy cash register tabloids instead of the Emerald.

If your reporter had bothered to question the individual members of the committee, she might have received a different, more accurate view of what actually transpired in the days before the chair/vice-chair elections.

First off, the article neglected to acknowledge that I spoke with both Apalategui and Lieberman individually for about an hour. During that time, I attempted to learn more about the two probable candidates for the committee chair. The dialogue of these conversations roamed over various topics from summer jobs to policies if elected to the chair, in hopes that I might be able to make a choice beneficial to the committee as a whole.

There were also allegations that we were somehow "pressured" into supporting Lieberman after this meeting. Not true! No vote selling took

place in the meeting between Lieberman, Jackson, Rowell, and myself, and further, my decision was never fully finalized until I marked my ballot.

I would hope that in the future your reporters would stick to the business at hand instead of printing allegations made by one committee member. If you decide to choose the latter course of action, I can only hope that you will have the decency to consult the people about whom you are writing, to ensure the validity of the allegations. I know it might take a little more time and energy to compile an accurate story, but "inquiring minds want to know!"

Lloyd Anthearn
IFC Member

Harsh reality

It's all so simple sometimes that it makes me sick to watch our politicians. Nobody I know would watch their neighbor starve as long as they had extra food. Ask yourself this, would you help your neighbor if it really came down to it?

If you say that you wouldn't than you might as well jump off a bridge because when it comes down to it you're of no use to your own kind. As a matter of fact, I'll drive you to the nearest bridge, but I'll take the long way because everyone, even you, has a purpose for living.

We must realize that all the other countries in the world are our neighbors. Would you give your neighbor a gun to take something from someone else down the street? I wouldn't and I don't think you would either. Would you aim a gun at your neighbor and threaten him day and night? This is what our politicians do. Is this the kind of neighborhood you want to live in?

As neighbors we have gotten so bad that we can't even share the neighborhood that we live in. When will our world

leaders, the heads of this neighborhood, have the strength and wisdom to go out in the streets and shake hands. When will they learn how to get along with each other? They must if our neighborhood and the people in it are going to survive.

Walt Zabel
Livermore, Ca.

Poor taste

One cannot but agree with Miss Dahlin's letter in the Emerald (Sept. 27) concerning sororities celebrating things we judge to be in poor taste. Why, just the other day I was walking up 13th street towards the Honor's College, when I spied two females festooning what seemed to be a miniature mesa on the lawn of a sorority.

The women were adorned in brown fur and wearing coyote-head masks, and their house was decorated with boulders and false cliffs. It looked like a macabre staging of a southwest econiche, complete with fauna.

I asked one of the XX chromosomals if they were deliberately festooning with an Anasazi, Hohkam or Gallina black-on-white theme. They responded that they were celebrating the Road Runner.

I am sanctimonious and so should anyone be who enjoys feeling superior. The Road Runner is an appalling part of the world's cartoon industry. It is an affront to thousands of endangered species and conservationists to stage mock black and white paint-tunnel sketches around a theme of sadism and lycanthropy. The Road Runner is a violence festooned cartoon.

The Road Runner theme is, in itself, really gross. But how wonderful it is to find people over whom one can feel preeminence.

Matthew Ruane
Graduate, Anthropology

letters policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed and signed, and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, style or content.

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