

Raising the stakes against Nicaragua

In the political poker game between the United States and Nicaragua, President Ronald Reagan raised the stakes last week. Beginning on Tuesday, all trade between the United States and Nicaragua will cease. Amid cries of "the communists are coming," Reagan has slapped a trade embargo upon a nation that is already struggling to feed its people and stabilize its economy.

The rationale behind this trade embargo is to stop the "aggressive tactics" of Nicaragua and to prevent further "military ties to Cuba and the Soviet Union." The irony of this logic is astounding. The same week that the Sandinista government sent 100 Cuban advisors back to Havana, Reagan claims that military ties to Cuba are increasing. Then, in order to get the Sandinistas to depend less upon Soviet military and economic assistance, the president declares a U.S. trade embargo against Nicaragua.

Every American should be alarmed at the declaration of this trade embargo. The fact that our Western European allies, along with Canada, have criticized the embargo should tell us something: America is becoming increasingly isolated in the eyes of the international community due to its ongoing attempts to destabilize Nicaragua.

What will this embargo achieve? First off, it will hit Nicaragua's private business sector the hardest. Despite administration claims that Nicaragua is a communist-totalitarian state, 60 per cent of the economy remains in the hands of private businessmen who operate on free market principles. Secondly, the embargo will force Nicaragua to pursue more economic aid from Eastern bloc nations, including the Soviet Union. Currently, Nicaragua's trade with socialist countries is 30 percent of the nation's total. It is likely that this figure will go up as the U.S. trade embargo continues.

Politically, the embargo will also have serious effects. But rather than having negative consequences for Nicaragua, it is likely that political opinion will continue against the United States. Latin American nations such as Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil have already voiced disapproval of the embargo. Summit leaders in Europe broke into heavy disagreement over Reagan's anti-Sandinista policy, and leaders of nations in the non-aligned movement have voiced criticism of the economic boycott of Nicaragua.

Reagan has succeeded in bringing tensions in Central America to an all time high. Rather than following a policy of diplomacy to resolve conflict in the region, Reagan has pursued a policy that aims at having the Sandinista government crumble under United States economic and military pressure. Talk of sending U.S. troops into the battlefield against the Sandinistas is becoming more common place. A current study approved by Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. John Wickham, is designed to assess the feasibility of United States military actions in Central America. Also, according to State Department officials, the United States must be prepared under the Rio Pact of 1947 to dispatch military forces to the region "if the security of the Western Hemisphere is threatened..."

Reagan seems set on nothing less than an all-out war against the Sandinistas. He appears willing to fight that war with American troops if Congress again refuses to fund the counter-revolutionaries (contras) now battling the Sandinistas from inside Honduran and Costa Rican territory. On the tenth anniversary of America's pullout from Vietnam, the U.S. government is preparing to rush once again into the "heart of darkness." Only public opinion can prevent that from happening.



letters

Gutless

I submitted my article about Gordon Liddy to the Commentator after having it judged too controversial by the "Off the Record" editor.

I often do not agree with the politics of the Commentator, however their relative honesty in stating their views and their willingness to print a controversial article has favorably impressed me when I think of the gutless compromise shown by the Davis appointee who thinks impartiality means censorship of views that are not bland or in other ways not balanced.

It is pathetic that a conservative publication is the only publication which would publish my article in full when the article had no particular political bias, I am rather fed up with such self-serving timidity.

Progressive politics cannot flourish in such an atmosphere where idiots confuse censorship with avoiding public bigotry.

I hope that the new administration shows some guts and allows full discussion of the issues to take place.

I am tired of being B.S.'d by officials who think that being fair-minded means suppressing controversial standpoints.

Such an attitude makes a mockery of progressive politics in general.

Andrew Beckwith
Graduate, Physics

Pettiness

The petty and thinly veiled personal attack by several IFC members on Ryne Jackson probably should not be dignified with a response, however I feel

obligated to stand up for Ryne and her work as a dedicated student leader.

I've watched Ryne put in long, hard hours as an IFC member.

I'd like to remind IFC members that Ryne was one of the few who gave up part of her summer vacation to begin work on the IFC's task.

She has stood up for student programs she believes in and for the SPA platform she ran under last year.

Furthermore, she has treated program directors with respect, rather than in the condescending manner exhibited by some of the other IFC members during budget hearings.

During the last couple of weeks Ryne has allegedly missed too many meetings as a result of an ASUO presidential race and preparation for law school finals.

To use these events as an excuse to eliminate the voice of an IFC member with an often divergent viewpoint reflects, at the very least, a serious lack of professionalism on the part of our elected student representatives.

I regret seeing the ASUO Constitution Court used for vindictive reasons and hope that IFC members find it within themselves to simply finish their task for the year and not to be motivated by the "times when we hated the other members."

Roy Catalani
Law

Ode to the ODE

I applaud the Emerald for its astute observations and support of Ryne Jackson.

As an ASUO comptroller I have worked extensively with Ryne and have found her to be conscientious, competent, courteous and hard working.

Her efforts to keep abreast of her programs' budget needs, correct errors and assist program directors have been commendable.

Her term of office expires in only 30 days, and she has finals beginning next week; I am surprised and disappointed by this attack on Ryne.

Valerie Singer
ASUO Comptroller

Distasteful

I urge all those people who pass through the Fishbowl and

even those gutsy enough to spend time snacking, chatting or just people watching to vote in support of a ban against smoking in the Fishbowl.

Not only is the smoke hazardous to our health and distasteful to our palate but it's not healthy to our foliage friends — the plants.

Those poor plants should not be exposed to the odiferous fumes which are constantly wafting in this designated dining area.

Please folks let's be considerate to our floral friends.

Betty O'Brien
Anthropology

Yellow peril

If you've been enjoying the emerging blossoms and leaves around campus, you may also have noticed many of our trees (especially around Deady Hall) ringed by decidedly un-spring-like yellow grass.

A call to the Physical Plant verified that this was the result of a pesticide called Roundup. Roundup's use is the result of the need to have the grounds look tidy (a result of Administrative and Alumni demands) and a scarcity of funds (a chemical poison is cheaper than using a weedeater).

Roundup's use was approved by the EPA upon test results that have since been shown to be fraudulent (the testing company was indicted by the U.S. Justice Dept). New studies conducted have not been released to the public, and what evidence there is (from independent sources) suggests that Roundup can cause genetic damage in plants and human lymph cells.

Until better evidence is provided, it would be wise for the University to review the spraying policy and consider, for safety's sake, letting the grass grow a little around the trees or allotting the funds for a groundskeeper to use a weedeater (note the Eugene School District's decision to end chemical spraying).

Until then, people might be well advised to avoid relaxing beneath these yellow-ringed trees.

Kim Isaacson
Fine Arts

Monday, May 6, 1985

oregon daily
emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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