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Streetwise

Students have different views on situation in the Philippines

By Linda Hahn

Of the Emerald

Last week President Reagan sent Sen. Paul Laxalt, R-Nev., to warn Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos that the Marcos regime is in danger of being overthrown. The message conveyed a warning to the Marcos administration that their concern over financial gain and domestic politics were taking precedence over combating the fight against insurgency. Due to U.S. military and business interests in the Philippines, the Reagan administration hopes to avoid a coup by communists.

Unrest in the Philippines due to extremes in the distribution of wealth, human rights violations and the imposition of martial law and corruption in government has led to a familiar debate concerning U.S. involvement in a conflict.

If the United States becomes involved, would we have another Vietnam? And if the United States doesn't, would we have another Iran?

Campus responses ranged from feelings of confusion to isolationism.

Ed Bryan, a linguistics major, doubts he would support another involvement like Vietnam. However, he felt he was "caught between a rock and a hard place."

"On one hand, autonomy is important. On the other hand, aren't we all neighbors? In other words, I'm waffling," he said. Philip Beck, a Eugene resident, said there were times the United States should become involved, but this is not one of them.

"I feel we involve ourselves in too many (of) other people's problems," he said. "There are some situations when we should be involved — like South Africa. But we shouldn't be involved in Nicaragua and I don't want another Vietnam. I don't want another war, that's why."

Another careful response came from Tim Risch, a business major who said he didn't think he was very well informed about the issue.

"I think we should be involved in helping other people in other countries, but I don't feel I'm informed about the Philippines."

On the other hand, Barnard Turner, a graduate student in comparative literature, had a lot to say. Turner is a British citizen who lives in Berlin, West Germany.

He thinks there was more bark than bite to Reagan's



Philip Beck

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Barnard Turner

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Barbara Bernstein

message.

"Knowing the President for what he is, a political posturer, this recalls another posture to appease liberal sentiment rather than to have an actual effect. Is he going to take out business investments in the Philippines? No, he's not. He may say he is, but he's not."

Although Turner thinks Reagan advisors are "somewhat suspect" and the people in the Philippines know more about what is happening in their own country, the Philippines have to face facts.

"They have a right to self-determination, but they have to deal with reality," he said.

Barbara Bernstein, a history major, said that she didn't think the United States would entangle itself in the Philippines due to the unsavory outcome of previous involvements. But she did see a connection between the United States' involvement in the Philippines and Grenada.

"It's weird, we were so gung-ho in Grenada. I hoped we

wouldn't (opt for military solutions) before, but gosh, who knows?" she said.

"You know, I visited the Philippines last summer. Just for five days, on my way home from Japan," where she had been a student. Bernstein said the experience was "real strange" because it held such vivid contrast to the life she had led in Japan.

"I was only in Manila, but I've never seen such extremes of poverty and wealth in my life," she said. There are impenetrable walls that keep the two classes from each other.

"The wealthy people live in compounds, for security reasons," she said. "When you walk outside you can't even get near them. They're divided from each other. They don't make contact."

"If I were the president, I suppose I'd have to support Marcos...but he's such an idiot. Something's going to happen there, but I don't know what," she said.

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