

Editorial

Peace now possible in Central America

Latin American nations appear prepared to reject a U.S. policy that allegedly promotes stability in Central America. U.S. policy in this respect has failed.

Last week, leaders of five Central American nations issued a statement in support of reviving the stalled Contadora peace process. Contadora began three years ago under the leadership of Mexico, Venezuela, Columbia and Panama. Its intent was to achieve a negotiated settlement to Central American fighting, and in general, to work toward a demilitarization of the region.

The original Contadora group repeated its support of the Contadora process last week. The newly elected President of Honduras announced his nation's willingness to sign the treaty Saturday. Guatemala's recently sworn in president, Marco Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo, has aggressively used his office to promote the Contadora effort. To his credit, he has announced that his government will not denounce Nicaragua, but instead will work with every Central American country to produce a working peace for the entire area.

Much of the impetus for the revival of Contadora seems to have come from the Nicaraguan government. Despite its reservations with certain provisions, Nicaragua participated in last week's negotiations and signed the statement supporting resumption of the Contadora talks.

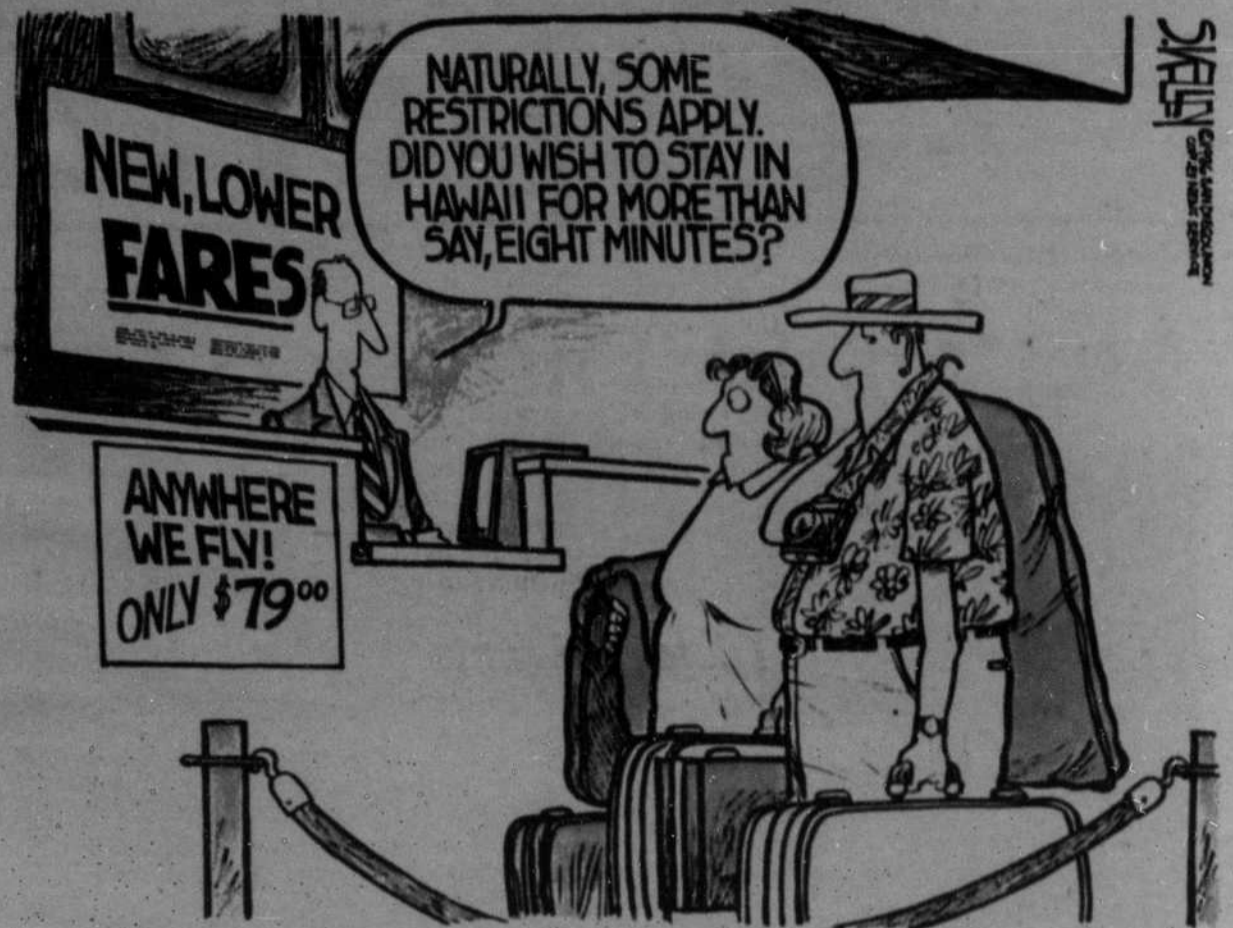
While the Reagan administration has voiced reserved support for a revival of Contadora, it remains adamant about the continued funding of the anti-government rebels — known as Contras — fighting to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. High ranking U.S. officials claim that by aiding the rebels, Nicaragua will be pressured into signing the peace treaty.

But this form of doublespeak is merely a cover for the Reagan administration's real goal — the overthrow of the Sandinista government. It was Nicaragua that announced its willingness to sign the Contadora treaty in September 1984. After demanding that the Sandinistas prove their commitment to peace and political pluralism by signing the treaty, the Reagan regime quickly backed off. Suddenly the treaty was flawed, and the administration called Nicaragua's support of Contadora a devious act. Thus U.S. allies in the region were pressured to withdraw their support of the treaty.

Since, efforts to promote the accord have made little headway. Meanwhile, the fighting in Nicaragua and El Salvador has continued to take a heavy toll on those impoverished nations. And in both cases, the Reagan administration, with the support of Congress, is promoting violence as a method of achieving peace. Obviously this cannot be. The administration should seek a new, less-militarized route to its stated aims.

It is doubtful whether the United States will accept any treaty that tolerates the existence of the current Nicaraguan government. The ideological hangups of the Reaganites demand that a nation such as Nicaragua, which refuses to align itself with Washington, be immediately labeled subversive and pro-Soviet. In this case, it also means that attempts to overthrow the Sandinistas are in keeping with Reagan's contempt for international law.

If the United States is serious about achieving peace and stability in Central America, it will have an additional opportunity in the form of Contadora. But most indications suggest the Reagan administration has its own agenda, one that will emphasize force over accommodation. Owing to the enormous power of Washington, the losers in this senseless game will continue to be the people of Central America.



Commentary

Abortion should remain legal

Jan. 22, 1973 is a day to be remembered by all people. For some it was a sad story, and for others it was a triumphant victory. This was the day the Supreme Court handed down its decision regarding the Roe vs. Wade case that stated "all women have a right to control their own bodies as well as a means of safe and legal abortion."

This decision is alive and well today despite the constant pressure to have it repealed by Right-To-Life groups. Right-To-Life is active in seeking that federal funding for abortion be eliminated and, ultimately, that abortion be eliminated as well.

As a matter of fact, Right-To-Life has taken it upon itself to go to any means of assuring that women do not have access to facilities that provide abortions. The terrorist tactics of the pro-life movement, those who bomb family-planning clinics, harass women and present the distorted film "Silent Scream" as an accurate portrayal of abortion, have served, if anything positive, to ignite, activate and strengthen the pro-choice

movement.

The time has come again when women must fight to keep control over their own bodies, because if the pro-life movement is successful, women who believe they have the right to determine whether to bear a

proclaim that ketchup is a vegetable.

Abortion has always been commonplace, regardless of legality, and it will continue. We cannot allow ourselves to regress to the times when per-

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child will commit a felony — that is, they will seek illegal abortions.

Abortion is one of the most personal decisions to be made and should never have become a political issue in the first place. After all, a woman's right to control her own body is a woman's right to control her own life. But what seems to be the most confusing aspect of the pro-life movement is its vehemence in granting a fetus, which is not viable outside its mother's womb, full citizenship.

How can a group called pro-life say it is so concerned about life, when by imposing its religious/moral beliefs on everyone else, it will decide who can have an abortion under which circumstances (if there are any)? Furthermore, who is going to care for all these children? Certainly not the Reagan administration. We've watched him cut social programs practically in half and

forated uteri were common scenes in hospitals; when women were butchered at the hands of an unsanitary "doctor."

In reality, many women will die as a result of unsanitary and/or illegal abortions. According to pro-life theory, in reality, it is better a woman die than abort a fetus.

Pro-choice does not necessarily advocate abortion. We advocate choice — the choice of whether to continue or terminate a pregnancy — to have control over our own bodies. Women must maintain the control we won in 1973. It's only natural that as long as women bear and are responsible for caring for children, that they be the ones to control that part of their lives.

By Laura Romano

Laura Romano is the director of the Women's Resource and Referral Service.

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Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, 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 or style. Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.

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