

Editorial

Positive goal rests on shaky premises

The U.S. Army is putting its forces to good use. It and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration officials are joining Bolivian police to strike drug abuse at its source. They are targeting cocaine labs in Bolivia, a major supplier of the world's cocaine.

Yet the exercise may not be appropriate in all cases. By deploying troops to fight drugs on foreign soil for the first time on a large scale, the administration turned a blind eye to two acts designed to protect the separation of powers.

The United States has blamed other countries for supplying Americans with drugs before. But rather than lambast the country, like it has done largely with Mexico, it is taking direct action to curb the drug flow.

And although destroying drug labs will not end drug abuse by itself, it can be an effective weapon. Simple logic concludes that if the drug is not available, people will not abuse it.

A reduced supply also could spark a price increase, which particularly could hinder its availability to young people.

The method also is more effective than trying to stem the flow at the borders, a measure that intercepts only a small fraction of the drugs smuggled into the United States.

Further, eradicating labs and discouraging construction of new ones is a long-term solution compared to other methods. Catching drugs at the smuggling and wholesale levels ensures that one batch of drugs will not be distributed. Destroying a lab ensures that several batches will not be produced in the first place.

The United States rightly halted foreign aid to Bolivia until it agreed to curb its cocaine production. And it has assumed an appropriate role in the venture: providing the means for Bolivian police to raid labs without interfering in Bolivian internal affairs.

But aside from all the good the operation may do, it may set a dangerous precedent.

First, the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 prohibits the use of the Armed Forces to enforce the law. Reagan sidestepped this issue by declaring drug trade a threat to national security.

Drug trade may very well threaten national security, but the ease with which Reagan cast off the law is disturbing. Exceptions to laws should be approved by Congress and granted on a case-by-case basis, not ignored by the president every time they prove to be inconvenient.

And, as some analysts have pointed out, it may mark acceptance of a broader definition of what a threat to national security is; a definition that could be manipulated by the administration to serve its purposes.

Also, the War Powers Act of 1973 mandates that Congress be directly involved whenever military forces are deployed into hostile situations. Congress was not consulted in this case.

Officials insist that the chances of U.S. troops becoming involved in a military confrontation are minimal, but the potential does exist. U.S. soldiers could be specifically targeted by hostile forces or caught in the crossfire of a skirmish between police and drug producers. The soldiers are equipped with weapons and have permission to use them if fired upon.

Granted, helping Bolivia root out drug labs is a far cry from the hostile situations probably envisioned by sponsors of the War Powers Act. But Congress should have been consulted on the deployment. It, not the president, should decide when the act is applicable.

We support the deployment of U.S. forces to Bolivia to fight drug trade. It could bring some relief to a rampant problem. At the same time, however, the end does not always justify the means.



CRACK PROBLEM #1



CRACK PROBLEM #2

Letters

Love for all

Today I passed so many people on my way to class — I saw so many faces; some solemn, some carefree, some sad and some happy; all of them people with their own ideas, thoughts and individual personalities.

I got to talk with a few of you. I wish I could talk to all of you — person to person — neither of us better than the other. Maybe someday I'll have the opportunity to hear you, maybe not. I ask you to listen to a thought through this impersonal letter. Again, not as one better than yourself, just person to person.

Jesus hung on the cross because He loves us, and knowing that has made all the difference in the lives of millions. These millions will even go so far as to tell you He saved them, and that He wants to touch your life with that same love also. They don't just believe in God — they're in love with God.

Who are YOU? What are your thoughts? What are your hopes? Where are you going? What is your past? Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life." His lifestyle and death expressed compassion and love for all humanity — that's us.

Richard Hewitt
Student

Court was right

How in the world can the

Emerald equate America's "freedom and liberty" with one's "right" to commit sodomy? Your editorial on July 3 attacking the Supreme Court's decision against homosexual acts really lacked logic.

Laws have always existed that limit the practices of "consenting adults." Laws against incest tell you who you can and cannot marry, and these are actually not based on genetic health but social attitudes instead. We also have laws against private drug use, suicide, bestiality and, yes, human sodomy. Such laws make very few Americans feel as if America is not a free nation.

The editorial really strolled into the territory of the bizarre by equating our ancestors' desire to come to America in search of freedom with license to engage in any and all types of sexual acts. Com'on now. Sodomy was illegal throughout the 13 colonies and then in every state of the nation until 1961. That didn't cause any discomfort among freedom-loving peoples that I'm aware of.

The Supreme Court only had history, precedent, the Constitution, public opinion and, yes, nature to back up its stand against homosexual acts. In conclusion, let us remember that without some standards which discourage perversion, a society cannot survive long.

Michael Cross
Graduate

Not just gays

A heterosexual couple journeys to Rhode Island for a conference. After a grueling day of meetings, they decide to relax with a little sex. While engaging in some mainstream oral sex at their motel, they are seen by someone who peers through a crack. The cops arrest the couple for violating the

sodomy laws.

They are prosecuted and found guilty. The sentence? A minimum of seven years in prison, a maximum of 20 years. For what? Making love with a spouse.

This isn't a joke. This is the law of the state of Rhode Island. Prison sentences for heterosexual couples who engage in "sodomy" are also the law in Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Only in Arkansas, Kansas, Montana, Nevada and Texas do anti-sodomy laws apply only to homosexuals.

The Supreme Court recently held that police may enter the bedroom of a private home and arrest gay people for breaking the sodomy laws. The court's rationale is equally applicable to the invasion of straight couples' bedrooms.

Those who consider the recent decision to be anti-homosexual miss the point. The Supreme Court has decided that the government can go into anyone's bedroom to control their sexual activity. Those of us who are gay don't want the cops in our bedrooms. Do the rest of you?

Alan Contreras
Graduate student

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, 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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