

Editorial

Humanitarian aid Contra-dicts itself

The Nicaraguan Contras are up to their old — and dirty — tricks again.

Wearing combat boots supplied by the United States, the Contras attacked a village in northern Nicaragua last week and kidnapped an American volunteer for the Witness for Peace organization.

The volunteer, Richard Boren of Elkin, N.C., who was documenting Contra human rights abuses, was seized along with 12 others when the Contras attacked the village of Man-cotal in Jinotega province.

Kidnapping — and even murdering — Americans in Nicaragua is nothing new for the Contras, as recently exemplified by the October 1987 kidnapping of Paul Fisher, another Witness for Peace volunteer, and the April 1987 murder of Benjamin Linder, a native of Portland who was also doing volunteer work.

Fisher was later released by the Contras unharmed; one can only hope that the Contras will do the same with Boren. A Contra spokesman in Washington said Friday that Boren, along with the other 12 people who were kidnapped, would be released soon. Now it's up to the State Department to press for their immediate release. But with Assistant Secretary of State Elliot Abrams at the helm of U.S. Central American policy, the State Department probably will do nothing to expedite Boren's release.

In addition to kidnapping American non-combatants, the Contras have also been killing innocent women and children in the course of raids on farm cooperatives and villages. Destabilizing Nicaragua's economy is part of the Contra strategy, and attacking farm cooperatives where children reside is one way they execute that strategy.

About the same time Boren was being kidnapped, the House of Representatives narrowly defeated a Democratic plan to provide \$30.8 million in humanitarian aid to the Nicaraguan rebels, who have been inaccurately dubbed freedom fighters by the Reagan administration.

The House vote was 216-208, with conservative Republicans siding with liberal Democrats to defeat the plan. The conservatives want more military aid while many liberals favor no aid at all. Congressional members, however, are likely to develop another humanitarian aid plan that might have a better chance of passing.

In Nicaragua, meanwhile, President Daniel Ortega dismissed the mediator role of Miguel Cardinal Obando y Bravo and invited the Contras to direct, high-level talks inside Nicaragua — a move that goes a step beyond the provisions of the Central American Peace Plan, which state that "Governments will initiate a dialogue with all *unarmed* internal political opposition..."

If the United States seeks to facilitate peace in Nicaragua, then it too should stick to the Central American Peace Plan, which specifically forbids extra-regional governments to aid "irregular or insurrectionist movements."

Rather than support the Contras with either humanitarian or lethal aid, Congress should support the peace process in Central America by denying further aid to the Contras.

Besides, if the U.S. Contras were to receive more humanitarian aid, they would use the aid to commit more human rights abuses — and that's the sour irony that lingers behind the term "humanitarian."

SKELLY
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DALLAS NEWS SERVICE



Letters

Apology due

I was the director of the annual University indoor soccer tournament. One of the six teams participating withdrew from the tournament the night before they were supposed to play. By chance, I had the telephone number of another team that was interested in playing.

Saturday, Feb. 13, as this new team approached the tournament, Tarek El-Ebrashi got involved and an agreement was reached that he would play with them. He was not previously a member of this team.

After three games, the team captain paid me the entrance fee and informed me that his team was going to pull out of the tournament. I changed the schedule to allow for the two unplayed games. Then Mr. El-Ebrashi arrived with a group of his friends expecting to play in the two canceled games.

I explained to him that the replacement team had withdrawn and that I couldn't allow a different team to finish. My reasoning was this: First, it would be unfair to the other teams in the tournament; second, the teams were already

informed of the schedule changes; and third, Tarek and his friends paid me no money.

Mr. El-Ebrashi was irate. No amount of reasoning would calm him. When I placed a reassuring hand on his shoulder, it was met with a threatening, "Don't touch me!" At this point he stated that I was a racist, and this was the most racist tournament or college campus he had ever seen.

I am still waiting for an apology.

Duane Johnson
Goalkeeper

Kathy Hibdon
Art

Strong and wise

I'm writing in response to a letter that appeared in the Feb. 19 edition of the Emerald. In this letter, Lisa Coyne made the comment that, prior to the legalization of abortion, "untold numbers" of women were suffering by having to resort to the back alley.

Without diminishing the great tragedy that is inherent in that fact, I feel it must be pointed out that, because of legalized abortion, we have very telling numbers available proclaiming the deaths of our fellow human beings to the tune of 1.5 million per year in the United States alone. Clearly, each side of this coin cannot be considered a solution to the problem of unplanned pregnancy.

Women have been delivered the message that they are strong, intelligent and capable of handling stressful situations with every bit of the dexterity of their male counterparts. However, given the circumstances of an unplanned pregnancy, the message quite

suddenly becomes distorted. Stamina and resourcefulness become frailty and desperation.

This schizophrenic phenomenon is something that needs to be dealt with. The original, more positive version of the message must be upheld. The woman involved in a crisis pregnancy needs to be engulfed in an atmosphere that reinforces her strength, intelligence and ability to love and nurture as opposed to one that emphasizes panic and destruction.

Comic complaint

Okay, I can't sit back and take this any more. It's time to speak out. Are we trying to compete with the Dollar Saver? Is the Emerald being run by business majors? Marketing majors? I thought the force behind this paper was supposed to be journalism. I've got no complaint about the paper paying its way, but the last few weeks have been too much. It's hard enough searching through all the ads to find what little text there is, but when two of the three most appreciated parts of the paper are left out, something is wrong!

In the last few weeks, The Far Side has appeared in the Emerald less than 50 percent of the time, and Doonesbury occasionally has disappeared as well.

What is going on here? What do you have to say for yourselves?

Nelson Sherry
Biology

Editor's note: See commentary on Page 3.

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Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.