

New attacks violate Contra aid package

The festivities will continue regardless — both here and in Nicaragua.

Thursday marks Nicaragua Friendship Day in Eugene and 10 years of Sandinista rule in Managua. After overthrowing the vicious Somoza regime in 1979, the government of President Daniel Ortega has struggled to bring Nicaragua up.

And for most of those 10 years, that struggle has been opposed, for a number of stupid and cowardly reasons, by the United States. Today, there are indications that the Bush Administration is continuing Ronald Reagan's covert war against the country through the Contra rebel forces.

In a letter to Secretary of State James Baker, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) catalogs nine Contra attacks and assassinations since April 13. The actions have been verified by American observers, and they have reported horrifying tales. Apparently the Contra forces are refusing to engage Nicaraguan military units, concentrating instead on a campaign of terror against the civilian populace.

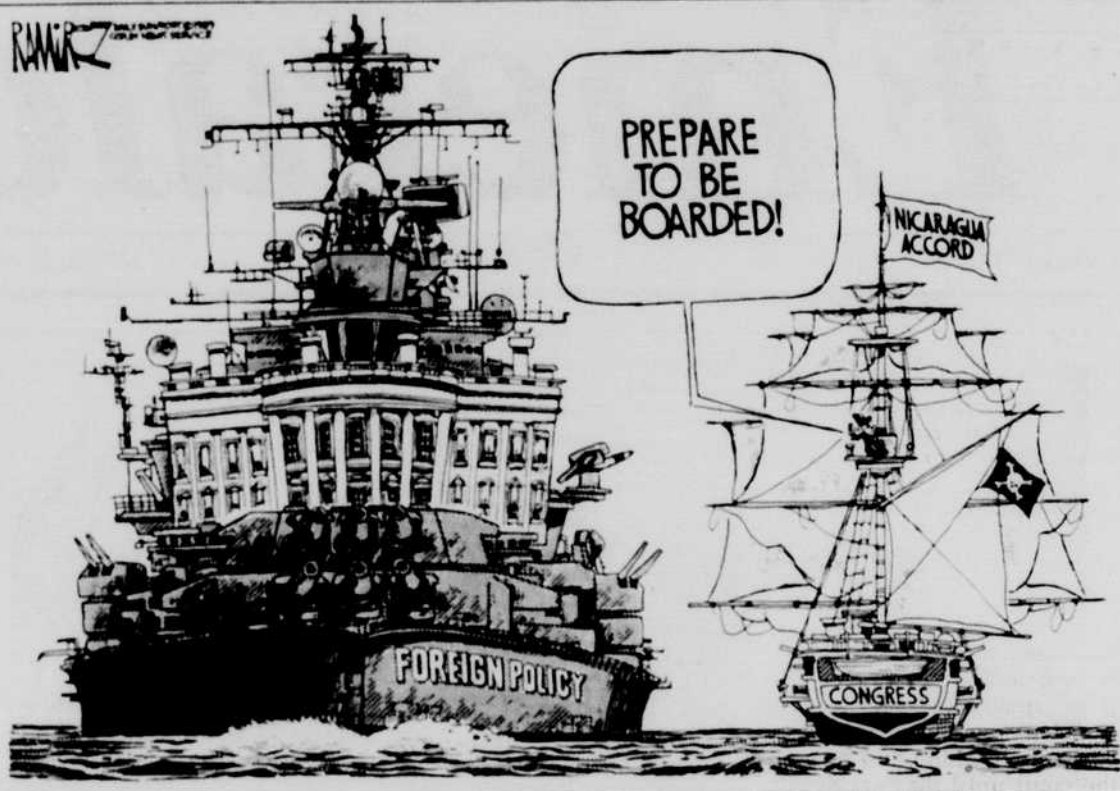
DeFazio is rightfully angry over these attacks, not only for the clear abuse of human rights that the United States is tacitly supporting, but also because the attacks violate the bipartisan \$49 million humanitarian aid package approved for the Contras last spring.

Under the terms of the congressional package, President Bush is supposed to halt aid to Contra forces engaged in offensive actions. Whether he will keep his word is questionable, but we call on him to do so.

If he does not, it is likely that his hand will be forced. DeFazio's call was joined by 80 other high-ranking legislators. When the Contra aid package comes up for renewal in November, it is likely that they will take a dim view of human rights violations such as are occurring now.

The backyard war of the Reagan-Bush administrations have done nothing for our country over the near-decade it has been waged, and it hasn't toppled the Sandinista government. The war is a drain on Nicaragua's resources, and it has set back their economy half a century, but the Nicaraguan people know the cause of this and the support for the Sandinistas hasn't flagged. At the same time, the covert war has definitely wasted our own military dollars (\$311 million have been used on the Contra guerrillas), and apparently sapped the thin moral fiber of this country's executive branch leaders.

Events such as Nicaragua Friendship Day demonstrate both the support of our citizens for their Latin American cousins, and the fact that our two countries can co-exist. Send an invitation to the party to George Bush.



Gorby overreacts to strains on country

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev is showing signs that he's becoming nervous with the perestroika he himself engineered. That's unfortunate; hopefully Gorbachev will calm down and let his country proceed on the path to openness.

On Friday, international wire services were reporting that Gorbachev called for a sweeping purge of the party ranks in response to the wildcat strikes and rampant nationalism that frightens his government's hard-liners. Later in the weekend, Gorbachev called for strikes in Soviet Georgia to end, and even dissident leader Boris Yeltsin asked that the citizens exercise restraint.

The strikes have caused many shortages in the country, and Gorbachev has been forced to start importing \$16 billion in consumer goods from abroad. That's a blow to his plans; earlier this year Gorbachev resisted calls to import saying the money would be better spent investing in the atrophied Soviet economy.

Despite this setback, the Soviet leadership shouldn't overreact. Even a bloodless purge (Gorbachev, in a typical Soviet euphemism, calls it a "renewal") would appear hypocritical and diametrically opposed to

the new openness Gorbachev has sought to create. In truth, the Soviet leader has used them in the past — he has always been an iron-fisted ruler within the party — but it would be a step back nonetheless.

First, it would be politically unwise for Gorbachev. The popular new maverick Soviet leaders are his best friends. The hard-line factions of the Red Army and the KGB have been attacked, even by Gorbachev himself, with enormous criticism the last few months. If any power is returned to them, they are likely to strike back in reprisals.

Also, purges and crackdowns would fuel resentment in a Soviet population that finds Gorbachev and his policies favorable. A Sunday Associated Press interview with Georgian strike leader Vyacheslav Akulov showed that the strikers love the opportunity glasnost has given them. More than that, it also showed that strikers are committed to working for progressive change within the Soviet system, not dismantling it outright in some sort of revolution.

That kind of support and commitment Gorbachev cannot do without if he is to turn his country around. Jitters and second thoughts aside, he is committed to his plan to open the Soviet Union.

Readers pick 'Calvin' in our comic survey

So much for democracy in action. The response to the Oregon Daily Emerald's reader comic survey can best be described as underwhelming.

We asked our readers which daily comic they would like to see replace Berke Breathed's *Bloom County* when it ends publication next month. Despite a paucity of responses, Bill Watterson's *Calvin and Hobbes* was the favorite.

Mike Peters' *Mother Goose and Grimm* came in second in the polling.

There were also two submissions of original comic strips. The editors found Gil Wright's *Average Jo* funny in a David Letterman kind of way, but decided its dry humor wouldn't appeal to the Emerald readership. The other submission came all the way from Berkeley, Calif.

Pro-commitment

Although opinion on abortion remains so divided, there are a few points that can be discussed without much argument.

First, we know pregnancy can precipitate a crisis; we diverge on the solution. The problem, in most cases, is abandonment, non-support or inconvenience of the mother.

On a related point, who can deny the modern goal of sexual activity is self-gratification, not communication? What was once the marriage act is now the relationship. A future committed to spouse or children isn't encouraged, but relationships are. Babies mark the end of many relationships; for other relationships they are a biological impossibility.

And who can deny the grave times we see today for women and children? The rise in domestic violence, rape, incest, molestation and abuse testify to this. Is such behavior the natural consequence of sex-on-demand?

Without question, abortion is

a distasteful solution. But would all admit abortion's price? As birth control, abortion divorces procreation completely from sexuality and encourages the self-gratifying relationship which feeds the carnage and abuse. As quality control, abortion reduces life itself to a problem, treatable by death. Death, the final solution, the social engineer, denies the resourcefulness of love.

The so-called problem of life in the womb isn't solved by annulment. We know the choice is life or death. Choosing life is an act of self-sacrifice. Choosing death is an act of despair. Love has always been a command, never a suggestion.

Christine Beltran
Eugene

Priorities

Why is so much energy and attention put into preventing laboratory use of animals and so little into the issue of child abuse — especially with the prevention of child abuse?

Do we deny it exists? Maybe

it is just too terrible to discuss and it is easier to work for other causes, but if all the energy and attention that has gone into preventing laboratory use of animals would go into preventing child abuse, something really useful to humanity could result.

Causes are great. Activists are to be congratulated, but it

saddens us to see the many letters concerned about spotted owls, laboratory animals and unborn fetuses while there is an absence of writers voicing concern about the living, but abused, children. It is time to question our priorities.

Mary Lou Mansfield
Frank Vignola
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Letters

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