

## All protester files should be purged

On Oct. 27, the American public got a small piece of freedom back.

In a letter to Rep. Don Edwards, D-Calif., chairman of the House judiciary subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights, FBI Director William Sessions revealed his organization was purging its files of protesters of U.S. Central American policy.

The controversial investigation looked into people involved with the Coalition in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador between 1983 and 1985. CISPES had sued the Federal Bureau of Investigation to gain release of the records.

Sessions has conceded the FBI overstepped its legal bounds when it gathered information on thousands of protesters. Mighty generous of him to say that, considering it wasn't his bureau at the time. William Webster, now head of the CIA, was director back then.

CISPES administrators and legal counsel are hailing Sessions' decision as a major step toward ending domestic surveillance. Now that the files are destined to the National Archives and Records Administration, people who protest are breathing a little easier.

We just have one little question: Why were the files created in the first place?

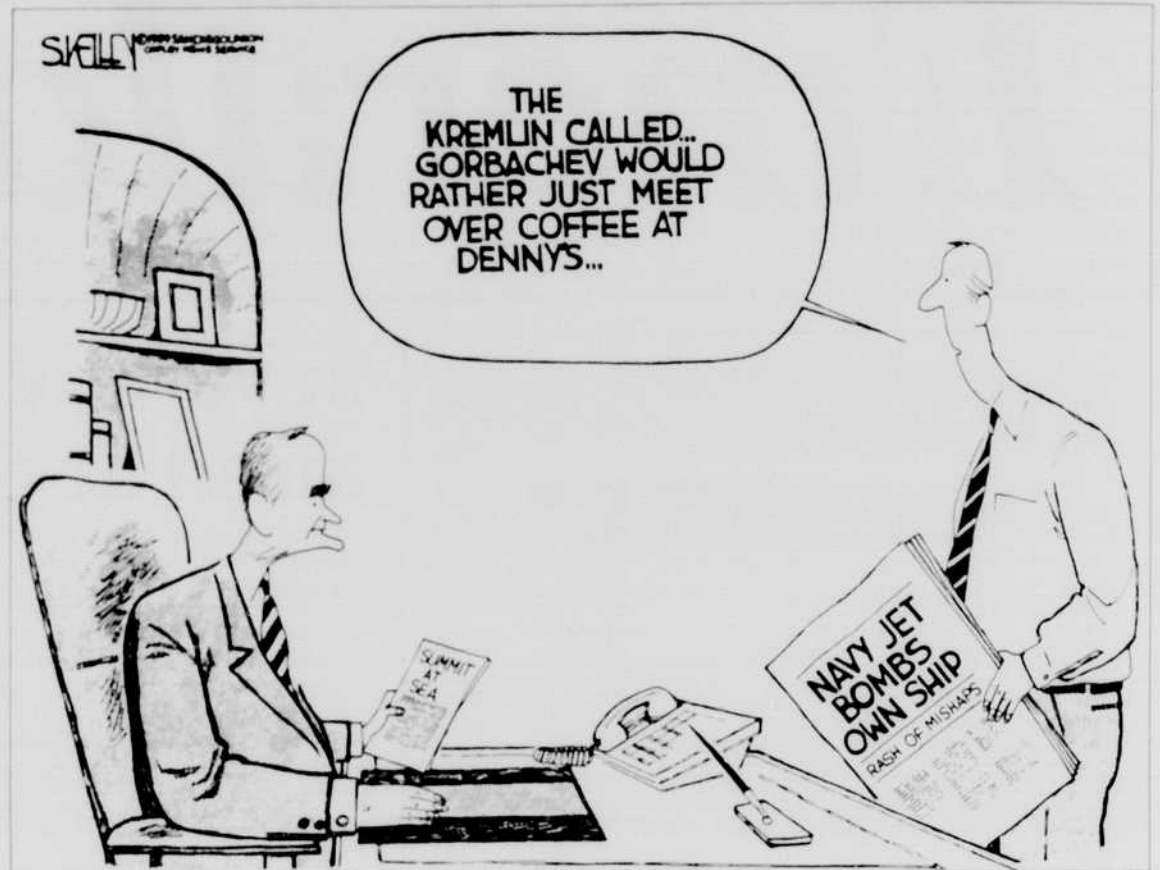
Last time we looked, peaceful protest and the right to disagree were still guaranteed under the Constitution. Breaking the law is one thing, but protesting peacefully is another. Having the FBI create a file on you because you dislike some of the government's policies smacks of Big Brother and fascist mentalities.

It's been a long time since J. Edgar Hoover was head of the FBI, but his stigma remains. Hoover's abuses of personal rights are well-documented. Every director since then has fought to get out of that shadow and establish the bureau as a legitimate organization. We assume Sessions' latest move is just one more step in the process.

The FBI should get rid of all its files on non-violent protesters. We understand the FBI is responsible for "domestic security," but we fail to see how a person disagreeing with Central American intervention automatically labels them as a national security threat. People who disagree with this country's foreign policy are hardly advocating the overthrow of the government.

Also, an independent civilian organization should verify the FBI has truly gotten rid of the files. The organization that compiled the files in the first place cannot be its own watchdog.

That Sessions made this step, albeit a small one, is good. But his job is by no means complete. He needs to continue to clean up his organization.



## Softer Iran may mean improved relations

This past Saturday marked the 10th anniversary of the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Iran. Militant students, angry at America's support of the deposed Shah, stormed the embassy gates. For 444 days, 42 embassy personnel and diplomats were held hostage.

The hard-line, fundamentalist leader of the country, Ayatollah Khomeini, is dead. And the Iran of 10 years ago is substantially different from the one that exists today. A long, bloody war with Iraq and Khomeini's death have done much to move Iran toward the political center, although the country still has a great distance to cover before it reaches moderation.

An example of the country's political shift was illustrated Saturday, when Iranian radicals staged a celebration to celebrate the seizure of the embassy. They hoped to stir up anti-American sentiment. Instead, hardly anyone showed up.

Iran is softening toward the rest of the world. Iran's new president, Hashemi Rafsanjani, is a moderate, perhaps too moderate for some factions in the Iranian Parliament. Rafsanjani hopes to move his country out of its isolationist stance and improve relations with the Western world.

Improved relations between the United

States and Iran hinge on several factors. One is the return of frozen Iranian funds from American banks. When radicals seized the embassy in 1979, President Carter seized Iranian deposits totaling millions of dollars.

The funds have never been returned. Rafsanjani, his country ravaged by war, would like to get the money back, but the United States demands reparation in the return of American hostages in Lebanon.

U.S. officials believe Iran has some control over the Lebanese terrorists holding Americans hostage. Iranian officials insist they don't. The irony is the United States finally has an Iran willing to cooperate, but possibly no longer having the needed political ties.

Rafsanjani walks a tightrope similar to Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev. He wants to bring his country forward and improve its economy, but if he moves too fast, he risks losing the slim control he has.

As the shouts of "Death to America" fade in Iran, we hope both countries can resume normal diplomatic relations. The United States, by releasing the frozen funds, can only help themselves. Rafsanjani would look favorably on an America helping to rebuild his country's economy.

## Letters

### No insight

What is the objective when writing a newspaper article?

When writing an article, it occurs to us that it should contain pertinent facts combined with interpretation of those facts, and how all this relates to the reader. These articles should make us think long after we finish it.

The article we are referring to is the cover story regarding earthquakes (ODE, Oct. 30). When casually reading this article, we were more inclined to laugh out loud at how obvious the statements made were, than to ponder their significance.

A simple quote illustrating what might happen if a quake similar to the recent Bay Area were to happen in Eugene, was made by geology professor Harve Waff, who said, "I have a very strong suspicion that many buildings, particularly the oldest buildings, would be at high risk if there was such an earthquake."

Not to be outdone, a later

quote by architecture school associate dean George Hodge on the resiliency of the PLC to understand such a quake, states, "And if there were collapses (in the PLC) ... there could be a lot of damage."

While these articles are by no means journalistically incorrect, they failed to provide significantly meaningful knowledge to challenge us. What kind of insight does it require to state that if a ten-story were to "collapse," there might be substantial damage?

This letter seeks to petition the journalists of the *Emerald* and other publications to challenge our intellect rather than our sense of humor.

William Weber  
Student  
Scott McGee  
Pre-Journalism

### Assault on peace

At the recent meeting of Central American leaders in Costa Rica, President Daniel Ortega

stated Nicaragua was being forced to lift its ceasefire with the Honduran backed Contra rebels.

The American media and the hypocrites in the White House and Congress soon condemned this decision as "an assault on peace," when if anything, it was a cry of frustration.

Since its inception 19 months ago, the ceasefire has been looked upon with contempt by the American-backed "freedom fighters." They have continually violated this accord, attacking their favorite civilian targets: schools, agricultural cooperatives, buses and hospitals.

Ultimately, the victims of these attacks owe their thanks to one body of people: the U.S. Congress. Congress' \$48 million "non-lethal" aid package has enabled the Contra army to sustain itself as a fighting force, providing everything from army boots to transport vehicles.

So come now, who's really conducting an "assault on

peace?" While on the one hand, the United States is enabling the Contras to continue their war unabated, it is denying Nicaragua the right to defend itself against their heinous attacks.

When Ortega proposed that congressional funds be applied to a United Nations disbanding effort as an alternative, his request was flatly denied. This in the face of a fast approaching Dec. 5 deadline for disbandment.

If anybody, it is the United States to blame for the renewal of conflict; not Daniel Ortega, not the Sandinistas and not the people of Nicaragua.

Christian Gunther  
Eugene

### Disagrees

Disagreeing will be too mild an expression when I react to Anthony Cracolie's letter (ODE, Nov. 1). He passionately opposes abortion, even if it is a re-

sult of a rape case.

Not only has a woman experienced the worst degrading offense possible, but according to Cracolie she must carry and give birth to the baby she fought so hard not to have.

The baby of a rape victim has all chances and possibilities to live a happy life with family and joy like us others. He or she will be welcomed like all other babies, but my point is: it must be the mother's choice to carry it or not. And if she chooses not to do so, the nation should help to finance the operation.

Personal economy should not decide this case. A poor rape victim without financial resources that wants to forget the terrible happening should get all the help she wants, and not be abandoned, and forced to accept a child that was forcefully placed on her.

Forget your ultra-conservative attitude Cracolie, and give instead a helping hand!

Fred Oyen  
Eugene

Tuesday, November 7, 1989