

Break ties with dirty El Salvador regime

The recent guerrilla offensive in El Salvador has moved the long civil war in that tiny country to a prominent position at the top of the front page. But headlines are transient — before the dramatic news of hotel seizures and death squad massacres fades and is forgotten by the American public, it is time for this country to reassess its commitment to the brutal regime of Alfredo Cristiani.

The United States pumps \$1.5 million a day to prop up this country of 6 million people. This level of support has gone on, not unnoticed but certainly unheralded, all through the Reagan decade. The question must be asked: What has this level of commitment brought us? What have we gotten for our money?

Well, since 1980, 70,000 civilians have been killed in El Salvador, and until we withdraw its support of the right-wing government responsible for these killings, we must bear some responsibility in those killings. We've bought a lot of bloodshed with our dollars.

The money sent to Cristiani, and Duarte before him, was supposed to keep Marxist influence limited to Nicaragua and away from Texas, the vulnerable soft underbelly of the United States. But the rebel offensive puts the lie to any so-called success the U.S.-backed counterinsurgency campaign could claim. There's also reason to believe U.S. support has only lengthened, not shortened, the unrest. In negotiating a possible peace plan for the region, the leftists claim to only want military reforms and the prosecution of government officials responsible for the civilian massacre. As the war drags on, continued atrocities will only strengthen the leftists' resolve and determination. We've bought a lot of insecurity with our dollars.

So why does this country continue to send the money to El Salvador?

It's not enough that the Bush Administration is concerned over last week's slaughter of six Jesuit priests involved with peace talks. Cristiani and his death squads have committed similar atrocities daily.

It's not enough that Cristiani was elected in a popular vote. Any leader who jails and kills his country's dissident citizens is an outlaw leader unworthy of our support, no matter how he or she got into power.

It's not even enough that the rebels are Marxists (gasp!) in this hemisphere. Drop the old Cold War rhetoric. We're in a new age where it's been shown that capitalist governments and communist governments can peacefully co-exist.

There is absolutely no valid reason for the United States to continue to prop up this dirty little regime.



Changing colors still leaves plates ugly

Oregon's new license plates and Tammy Faye Bakker have a few things in common: ugly, gaudy colors and constant makeovers.

On Friday, the state's Motor Vehicles Division began selling the newest in a long line of "new and improved" license plates. Originally issued in 1988, the new plates feature a tree in the center, framed by wooded hills and sky in the background.

The biggest problems have been with the colors. Even Nancy Westman, the Portland graphic artist who designed the plates, was disappointed with the colors that were used for the picture.

On the plate that was first issued, the tree was "golden." However, what some saw as golden others saw as brown — and those who saw brown saw that the tree looked dead.

Another hideous part of the plate was the orange sky, which looked as though it was filled with smoke. Coupled with the dead tree and the hazy blue hills in the background, the plates were basically a picture postcard of a forest fire. Welcome to Oregon.

So the colors were changed. Shortly after the plates were issued, the tree went

from crispy, golden brown to green — a sickening shade of lime green. The color of the sky went from peach to blue, a good change. Also pleasant was the hills' shift from blue to a majestic shade of purple.

But even with the improvements, just how necessary are decorative, picturesque license plates?

It must be remembered that the intended purpose of a license plate is identification of the car to which it is attached. This means numbers and letters. Not cowboys on bucking broncos. Not panoramic sunsets. And absolutely not day-glo trees and a dirty sky.

The State shouldn't get involved with aesthetic attachments to personal objects, because aesthetics is a matter of personal taste. You're not going to make everybody happy, and it's a waste of time and tax dollars to try here.

Fortunately, drivers still have the option of the basic blue and yellow tags. They were ordinary, but they did their job. Letters and numbers didn't blend in with the background, and no one had to gripe about sickening colors.

Letters

Less qualified

The remarks made by Tim Hughes concerning the hiring practices of the CIA (*ODE*, Nov. 15) contain misleading information. Hughes claims he was denied an interview with the CIA because he is gay. However, a closer examination of the application and interview process shows that Hughes' claim is questionable.

The story fails to mention some important details. Hughes' major, philosophy, was not included in the list of majors for recruitment. In accordance with Career Planning and Placement Center policy, Hughes would have the option to place his bid card in the "related majors" category which commands the lowest priority for an interview.

The information requested on the bid card includes name, major, citizenship status and self-reported GPA. The CIA application requires personal information, but contains no questions addressing sexual orientation. It appears Hughes was denied an interview because he was less qualified

than the other applicants, not because of his sexual preference.

In claiming discrimination when none exists, Hughes trivializes the claims of others who face the social evil of prejudice and does a great disservice to all disenfranchised people.

David Knight
Mathematics

No pity

For 16 months the workers of Morgan/Nicolai have chosen to forego their income. Sixteen months at \$9.09 an hour comes to around \$24,000 — money that should have been used to feed their families and pay their utility bills.

At this point if the workers were to get their \$11.64 an hour back, it would take over five years to make up for their losses. Obviously, many of these workers didn't take math in school.

Morgan/Nicolai lost money for three of the last five years. It's not as if the company is bleeding Springfield with its

greedy profits.

It is unfortunate that so many (but not all) unions fail to understand a company can't lose money and continue to operate. People of Nicolai might want to consider what happened to Easter Airlines.

Rodney Layton
Eugene

Thankful

I applaud the Incidental Fee Committee for its decision to allocate much-needed funds to the child care subsidy program. By taking this action, committee members have shown that they value the student-parent population on this campus, so many of whom could not be here were it not for this kind of assistance.

The IFC obviously feels that providing financial help for child care does more than help a small group of parents and their children, but adds to the prosperity of society as a whole. IFC believes that the children who will soon enough be running this country have a

right to quality day care settings that help them achieve their highest potential and become productive citizens.

As a parent and a student, I am thankful that the IFC is making this investment in everyone's future.

Kristen Brandt
Eugene

Dump DeFazio?

When U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio was elected to Congress a few years ago, Eugene-Springfield's large progressive community was justifiably happy. We had apparently sent someone into the midst of that executive committee of the ruling class known as the U.S. Government who would defend the average working citizen and struggle within the beast to promote human rights in Latin America.

Now, three years later, we hear that DeFazio has been heartily promoting further cuts in the capital gains tax aimed at throwing salt on the wounds of the majority of our population

by further padding the wallets of the ultra-rich.

More recently (*ODE*, Nov. 15), we are hearing that Latin America activists are "not getting any follow-up" from DeFazio's office at the very hour of the Salvadoran people's greatest struggle, that DeFazio wishes to "choose his battles," and the liberation of an oppressed people is not one of his choices.

In light of DeFazio's increasing tendency to act in complicity with the obscenities promoted by the U.S. capitalist class, the time is at hand for a reassessment of the left community's relationship to "our" representative.

For too long now, we have lent our support and our already overstretched resources to "progressive" candidates in an unqualified way. If DeFazio continues to place his political hide above the principles of justice and decency, then he is betraying those of us who elected him for his "progressivism" and we should consider withdrawing our support for him.

Michael Dawson
GTF, sociology