

Surprise in Panama may lead to others

Like most Americans, we were surprised by the Bush Administration's decision to invade Panama and remove strongman leader Manuel Noriega by force last Dec. 20. And, probably like most Eugeniens (being the good liberal folks they are), we were initially cynical about this latest exercise of U.S. military machoism.

But this is the first chance we've had to let our opinion be known on the invasion, and the benefit of three weeks of hindsight has tempered — somewhat — our initial misgivings about Operation Just Cause (though that stupid, jingoistic title still smacks of outdated Manifest Destiny imperialism to our minds).

This tempering is due to the fact that, while we were surprised by the invasion, we've been more surprised by events that have unfolded since then. At first, we subscribed, unabashedly, to our favorite conspiracy theories: The Bush Administration didn't really want to bring Noriega to justice. As a former CIA head, Bush would never risk exposing publicly embarrassing intelligence ties that put Noriega in power and fueled the drug economy. Despite the tough posturing, the administration would cut a deal with Noriega.

And at first, it all looked that way. Noriega's "declaration of war" was too easy an opportunity for the United States. The deaths of American military personnel by Panamanian thugs seemed too convenient.

And then the invasion itself. Some 20,000 troops rolled in, but apparently before sending in a team of 20 Rangers to locate the target dictator, Noriega disappeared, but showed up at a papal nuncio that had been left unguarded, despite the nuncio's past history of free refuge (a recent history, too — the opposition candidates that won Panama's elections last May were sheltered there from Noriega's Dignity Battalions).

It looked like Noriega would get shipped off to a third country, out of Panama but safely out of Bush's hair. It all seemed too convenient, too arranged.

Then the surprising thing happened. Bush held to his tough talk of capturing Noriega and bringing him to the United States. The administration appears ready to withstand a long, embarrassing trial. Wait a minute! The Bush Administration doing what it said it would? Our very worst fear happened, in that our other fears didn't. The worst case scenario didn't materialize.

Of course, things aren't finished yet. The Bush Administration still may settle for a plea bargain deal with Noriega. And let's be careful to reassess crafty ol' George just yet. The nuncio bishop's recently released diary shows Bush was willing to send Noriega to a wealthy exile in the Dominican Republic, but the dictator ironically refused, fearing Panamanian assassins.

The invasion stands as an uncharacteristically bold move by Bush, who must have agonized over sending troops out just before Christmas. If Noriega had gotten away, or if more soldiers had come home in body bags, the political damage would have been immense. Instead, Bush is riding an all-time popularity curve high.

Still, the apparent turn of events from the script we expected makes us hesitant to comment until things are settled. Was the invasion worth it? Was it a victory in the larger "War on Drugs"? Was it a blow for regional self-determination? Our gut reaction is to "just say no" in answer, but history will have the final say.

These items we are decided on: We hope the Bush Administration isn't so emboldened by the apparent success of Operation Just Cause to consider American military intervention in this hemisphere as a good alternative to diplomacy. The outrage of the Organization of American States demonstrates the damage to American interests in the region.

Administration officials say they have not revived the Monroe Doctrine and that they won't use the excuse of rigged elections in Nicaragua to invade there. But Bush has ordered the Navy to begin a campaign of drug interdiction off the coast of Columbia to that country's dismay, and to ours.

We don't want a new "Bush Doctrine." To that end, we call for the quick withdrawal of U.S. troops from Panama. Their military mission is complete.

Unfortunately, U.S. involvement in Panama is probably just beginning. After the military action, we now have the expensive task of rebuilding Panama. So much for the independence of the new Panamanian government, which is trying hard not to appear as a gringo puppet, as Noriega used to be. Things look to be on the up-and-up, but we still wonder what strings are being pulled elsewhere.



Letters

Save your bike

While University students bicker with OPS and EPD over the excessive issue of citations, a much larger problem is not getting its share of attention.

Thousands of dollars worth of bicycles and bike parts are stolen from the University campus each week. Surprisingly enough, a lot of these thefts have occurred in broad daylight.

It is infeasible for public safety and police officers to watch every bike rack constantly for signs of theft, so it's time that students, administration and public safety work together to solve the problem.

There are many students that rely on bicycles as their main form of transportation. But since the number of bike thefts has increased, more students are afraid to ride to campus and are walking, riding the bus, etc. These students should not have to live with the fear that their bikes might be stolen if they lock up on campus.

Many students would be willing to pay money (say \$5 a term) to be able to lock their bikes in a safe area. If 300 people were interested, that would give the University \$1500 a term to maintain a supervised "bike garage" where students could lock their bikes with an assurance that they would be safe. Thieves would be discouraged, and these students who live in fear could ride to campus once again.

This plan is only one idea, and I encourage people with ideas of their own to come forward. But for now, protect your investment at all times. The bike you save may be your own.

Adam Smith
Eugene

Ban them

This letter constitutes a call for a boycott of the band called the Cherry Poppin' Daddies, and any club who hires them or allows them to play on the premises.

The name of the group insin-

uates the approval of, an encouragement of, at the very least, an acceptance of the frequent and horrifying truth that is the rape of young girls by their fathers.

The band caused an uproar last year with its choice of name, capitulated to public pressure and changed it. They're back this year, and apparently haven't learned that we won't stand for it.

Did they think we wouldn't notice? Sorry, it's an issue, a problem, that hasn't been solved.

It's time to stop this sexual violence against women and children. No, you wouldn't rape anyone, so show your outrage at those who do by staying away when these boys play.

Apparently, they want notoriety. Fine. Let's just not give them any more money for their lack of respect, lack of understanding and lack of memory.

Kate MacQueen
Eugene

Coercion

The proposed mandatory ASUO health insurance requirement for the 1990-91 academic year is an outrage. It smacks of "central planning" of the very sort that has bankrupted economies of communist nations — the inefficiencies and inequities of which hundreds of thousands of people in Eastern Europe are daily rising up against in a chorus of protest.

The student bureaucrats in the ASUO either presume to know what's best for all students or they realize that forcing students to purchase a product they neither want nor need is wrong and unfair, but justify it with the rationale that some students will benefit even if others are penalized.

In the wake of rising costs and eroding benefits in the ASUO plan, many students have shopped around, compared available health plans and purchased other coverage. These students decided the ASUO plan was inferior to their alternatives.

Many younger students are

covered through their family health insurance plans. I understand the ASUO could offer a better plan if all students were forced to purchase it, but if these lower rates are achievable only by coercion, it simply isn't fair. The benefits are uncertain, and not worth the sacrifice of our individual freedom of choice.

If the ASUO could formulate a plan that could stand on its merits, students would buy it without coercion. But the track record is not encouraging. Perhaps the honest answer to the current quagmire is simply that the ASUO should not be in the health insurance business at all.

Peter Mark
Computer Science

No martyrs

In response to the letter "Darn" (ODE, Dec. 8), I must ask: Did not Hitler, Capone and a host of others die for a cause ... their cause? Since when does dying for a cause make you someone great?

Also, if anyone would like to read one of those "Unmasking Planned Parenthood" papers, see me. They came complete with references to Margaret Sanger's own writings, which are supposed to be in the Knight Library.

Bob Weigel
Lab Tech

Research

I would like to publicly note a mistake which was made in the latest issue of The Student Insurgent.

Although I agree wholeheartedly with the viewpoints expressed in the article on Students for Choice and Reproductive Freedom, I feel that it is necessary to point out that I am not the author of the article. Some of the ideas are mine, but I did not write the article: I merely researched it.

Rene DeCair
Pre-Journalism