

CIA bill good start, but more necessary

Covert intelligence operations carried out by the Central Intelligence Agency may become a little less covert because the U.S. House on Wednesday approved an intelligence bill that includes reforms.

Many of the reforms on the new bill, which is reported to allocate close to \$30 billion to the CIA, are in response to the Iran/Contra scandal that took place more than 4 years ago.

The efforts was stalled somewhat when George Bush vetoed a similar bill last year. The new bill that just passed the House is a compromise that Bush is expected to sign into law.

One section of the bill would apply oversight requirements to any government agency involved in a covert operation overseas, not just the CIA. Ollie and the folks of Iran/Contra justified their operation because they were outside of the CIA, and therefore exempt from the law.

Another requirement of the bill mandates a signed presidential "finding" stating the goals and methods of any operation be done in advance of any covert operation.

The bill also tries to close loose ends in the current laws by redefining some of the vague wording. The law requiring notification of Congress in a "timely fashion" has been more specifically defined as within a few days rather than being left open to interpretation of the president.

The new bill also puts into law a ban on using covert actions to influence domestic U.S. politics, public opinion or the media. Covert actions are defined by the bill as acts "to influence political, economic or military conditions abroad so that the role of the U.S. government is not intended to be apparent or acknowledged publicly."

While this new bill is step in the right direction — trying to make presidents more accountable for the actions of their intelligence agencies — it simply does not go far enough. The Congress tried to pass a tougher intelligence-limiting bill last year but it didn't get past the president.

However, the CIA remains an agency out of control and above the law. Until there are better means of monitoring the agency's activities, new bills and laws will be easily sidestepped by the spooks of Langley.

The Congress should set up a full-time investigative body to report on what the CIA is up to. An agency that has twice the budget of NASA will not be deterred by a few new laws passed by pencil pushers in Washington unless those laws can be enforced.



COMMENTARY

Casual sex cheapens intimacy

By Matt MacArthur

Imagine turning on the TV and finding that almost every show was about people who were constantly eating, talking about food or wishing about food. Imagine that every movie in the theaters showed characters frequently pausing to pork out, if not downright obsessed with the idea. Imagine that nearly every advertisement used visual suggestions of food to get you to buy a product. Sound crazy? The reality is not too far away from this scenario. Just substitute "food" with "sex."

The obsession our society has with sex is outrageous. Believe me, I am not one of those people who thinks sexual relationships are "bad" or "evil." I think they are of profound significance to humans. But to me, the importance of it means it must be safely guarded. Besides the fact that such single-mindedness is a discredit to our intelligence, I resent the fact that something which will become very important to me and the person I share it with is cheapened and made light of in the world around me.

If it were just a matter of my offended sensibilities, I wouldn't bother complaining. But the widespread false impressions caused by the cheapening of sex are much more damaging. Sex carries high emotional, physical and psychological price tags. How many people are now shouldering a burden that they were not

prepared for, because they were either ignorant, blind or just defiant of the costs of sex? Many admit that despite the momentary gratification, they are left with a residue of confusion and emptiness.

Who would assume a mortgage on a house when they knew they couldn't make payments? Sexual commitment requires similar preparation. Both partners should be ready — not just one, or neither. It is unthinkable that some among us would pressure another person to have sex with them against their better judgment. How selfish! Our bodies are not toys and sex is not a game. The effects are too significant and enduring to treat it as such. For me, marriage is the perfect institution to foster the preparation, commitment and trust that I want to go along with my sexual relationship.

Media have also desensitized us to the fact that sex is a mechanism to procreate. There is no such thing as "free" sex. There are contraceptives, yea, but if they are the answer then why are there so many abortions and unwanted children? I know many young people who are angry because they know they were the product of lust — not love or even common decency. They are an inconvenience. This knowledge leads to low self-esteem, drugs and other forms of self-degradation.

The privileged high schooler who goes "too far" with a convincing boyfriend is no less tortured by the decision she has to

make. She is not emotionally or financially ready for a child, the thought of abortion justifiably horrifies her and she finds out that her "grown up" boyfriend is really a gutless liar when he treats the matter as a joke, or, worse, she never hears from him again. How much abuse, rape, pornography, single-parenthood and a host of other problems will we try to patch up legislatively before we attack the problem at its root?

I think three things must happen: 1) Let's take away the Victorian stigma attached with sex. It is too big of a problem to be sniggering at under the table. Talk about it honestly and frankly. Don't romance away the responsibilities that go along with the pleasure. 2) More people should not be afraid to save sex for a time when both partners are ready. 3) Advertisers, TV and movie studios, book and magazine editors, etc., need to get the message that we are tired of being degraded and manipulated. Don't let a perceived popular opinion further ruin our society.

All of us at the University have a great potential to affect society for good. Let's be leaders, not followers. Maybe when we learn to control our inner selfishness, our outward behavior toward others will improve, too. Outward peace will never happen without individual self-control.

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Oregon Daily Emerald
P.O. BOX 3159, EUGENE, OREGON 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

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