

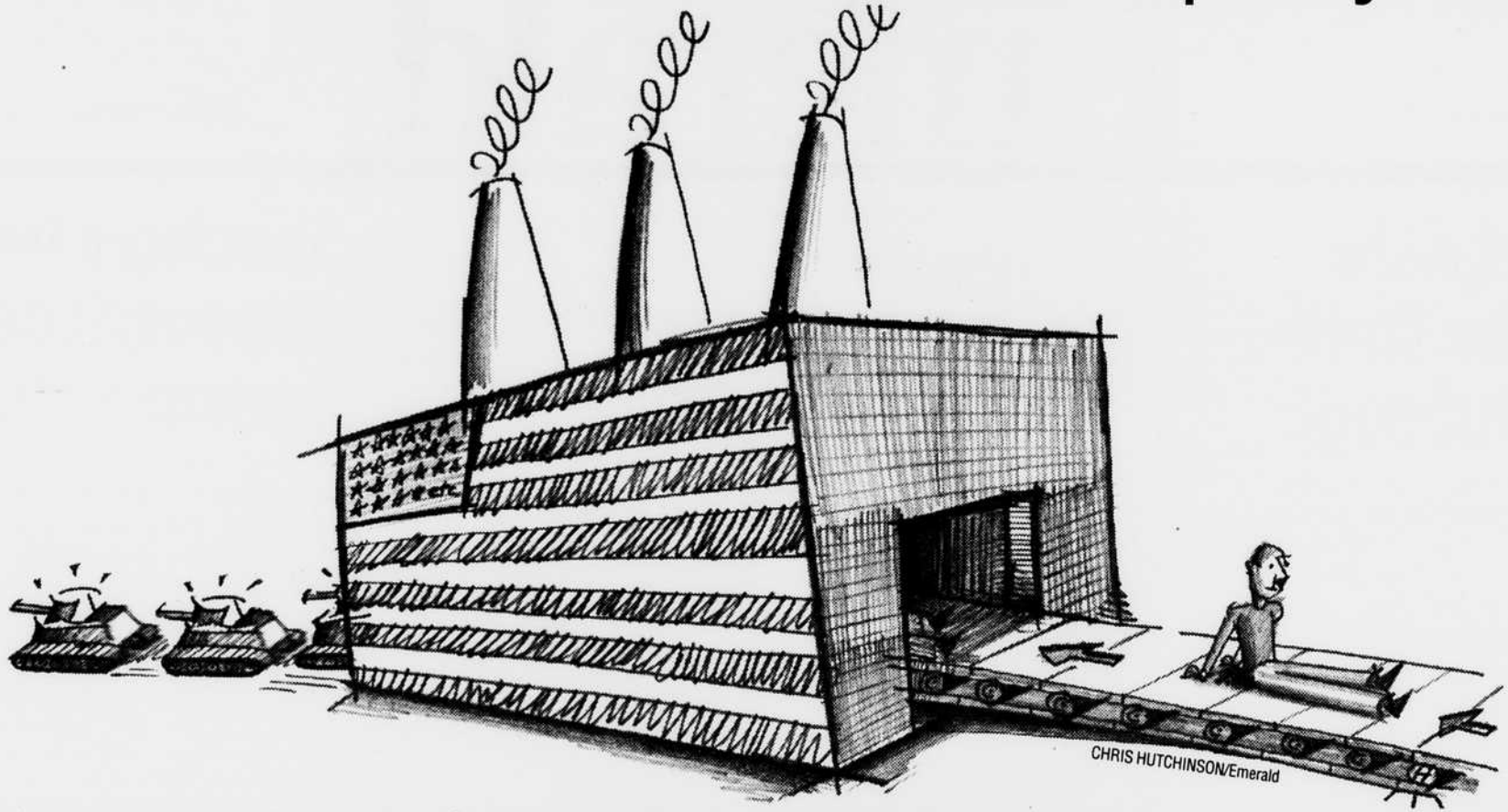
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PERSPECTIVES

Latin America's lesson: Make U.S. policy moral



The U.S. government's treatment of "our little region" reveals the sort of aggression for which Clinton has lambasted Iraq

The manner in which former Secretary of War Henry Stimson referred to Latin America is an illustration of how the U.S. government has traditionally viewed the area: "Our little region over here."

The implication, of course, is that the United States is in charge and responsible for the fate of the region. This credo is astonishing in its arrogance, and yet the latter part is plainly true.

The reason it is true has nothing to do with U.S. "hegemony" or "super-power status," and it certainly has nothing to do with our "peacemaking role," as policy-makers might like you to think.

It's true because some of the most hideous crimes of the 20th century have been run in Central America via Washington, paid for by your tax dollars. Before we try to bring peace and justice to other regions of the world, we might try to work for them here in "our little region."

These conclusions are mine, not necessarily Dan Goldrich's, but Goldrich's talk on Feb. 17 helps explain the historical background of the U.S.-backed atrocities.

OPINION



Jeff Shaw

His remarks come at an appropriate time to assess U.S. objectives and the morality of our foreign policy. More than ever, we are trying to expand our sphere of influence — the Iraq crisis being only the most visible example. It's fair to ask how we've done so far.

Goldrich, a political science professor, covered many nations and many years in his remarks. I have chosen for the sake of depth to concentrate on Nicaragua.

When the Sandinistas came to power in 1979, the efforts at land reform and public health initiatives were derided as "creeping socialism." Goldrich points out that fear of international communism combined with Jimmy Carter's brokerage of the Panama Canal treaty left Carter vulnerable politically. Reagan attacked him for "giving away the U.S. position in Latin America."

Of course, Reagan's version of events left out the government that came before the Sandinistas: President Anastasio Somoza and his murderous private army, the National Guard, were hated throughout Nicaragua. In contrast, the democratically elected Sandinistas had widespread popular support. "But does anybody in the United States know the history of Nicaragua, that the United States set up the Somozas in the first place?" Goldrich asked. "No, but who cares? [The Sandinistas] are there, and Jimmy Carter let them take over."

In short, the violent regime we had sustained so alienated the people that the Sandinistas couldn't help but look good to the Nicaraguans. But once Reagan rode the Red Scare wave (among others) into office, So-

moza's bloodthirsty legions were evacuated by the United States. We trained them in assassination, sabotage and kidnapping. Then we flew them back to wreak havoc.

We called them Contras. Our president said he was one of them, which meant he was a murderer, too. And God bless him, he was right.

He proved it when his CIA mined Nicaragua's harbors, killing innocent fishermen who presumably cared little for political affairs. Even overlooking the economic warfare the Reagan administration waged, the World Court still found it in violation of international law that forbids, as George Bush would say, "naked aggression."

Don't worry, Reagan fans. After 10 years of economic and military warfare, the Nicaraguans gave up. "The Nicaraguan people voted in [U.S.-backed candidate] Violetta Chamorro because they thought the United States would stop the war on them, and the U.S. did," as Goldrich put it. It probably didn't hurt that Panama had been invaded a month before — the Nicaraguans saw what awaited them if they voted wrong.

As far as American-backed atrocities in Latin America go, we could go back a long time and discuss a lot of examples — such as U.S. military support for El Salvador, ruled by stand-up guys such as Roberto D'Aubuisson (nicknamed "Blowtorch Bob," after his favorite instrument of torture), who once commented to a German visitor: "You Germans were very intelligent. You recognized that the Jews were re-

sponsible for the spread of communism and you began to kill them." The good news? D'Aubuisson is dead. The bad news? His government, with the help of billions of dollars in U.S. aid, slaughtered approximately 63,000 Salvadorans. His ARENA party still runs El Salvador — and still gets U.S. support.

The story is just about the same, no matter which country you look at. Two lessons leap out at us from these sad examples.

First, the United States has much to answer for in these nations. Goldrich notes that "people in the U.S. aren't accustomed to taking responsibility" for the governments we inflict on other countries. It's time to start.

"There are ways that almost anybody with any discretionary time could participate in promotion of human rights in Latin America if they contact an organization with people working on it," Goldrich said. He recommended local groups like CIS-CAP, the University's Colombia Support Network or local Amnesty International chapters.

The second lesson is simpler yet. Let's be vigilant and not deluded when our government acts to protect "national security interests." The lessons of history suggest the opposite happens, and not just in our little region.

Jeff Shaw is a columnist for the Emerald. His work appears on alternate Wednesdays. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Homosexuality is unnatural

Hannah Dillon's column titled "Dear Lon" could have been addressed "Dear Americans" since over two-thirds of this nation agrees with Lon Mabon and opposes homosexual marriage and adoption by homosexuals. Mabon is simply the focus of her hatred because he dared to publicly disagree with this perverse movement and organize opposition. The two most admired individuals of this decade agree with Lon, so she might as well have addressed her letter "Dear Colin Powell" or "Dear Mother Teresa." Powell said you have no constitutional right to engage in sodomy and to demand the state elevate it to protected status. Washington state agrees with him as they recently defeated, by a 60 to 40 percent margin, an initiative attempting protected status for homosexuals in the workplace. Dillon could also have

addressed her letter "Dear God," as the Old Testament unambiguously condemns homosexual behavior as wicked, sinning greatly against the Lord, an abomination and detestable. The emotion God feels is fierce, burning anger. The New Testament refers to homosexual behavior as vile affections, error, degrading passions, unnatural, indecent acts and states the homosexual will not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven and will suffer eternal punishment. Could God have homophobia or be a bigot? These terms are simply liberal propaganda used against the two-thirds of Americans that still dare to disagree with this absurd, perverse movement.

Homosexual behavior is unnatural/dysfunctional. It is using the wrong devices in the wrong locations. Not once in the history of humankind has it succeeded in producing offspring! There is no need for confusion over your sexuality. Look

straight down from your belly button and even a toddler can figure it out. Homosexual behavior is unhealthy and results in 1 to 2 percent of the population having 29 percent of Hepatitis A, and 30 percent of current 20-year-old homosexuals will be either HIV-positive or dead from AIDS within 10 years.

No homosexual is trapped. Jesus guarantees power over and freedom from the bondage of sin. You are what you are only if you love your sin more than you love God! Currently four national ex-homosexual networks are ministering to more than 10,000 former homosexuals. Not one who truly chooses God over sin will fail, because God will be in him. Sin aborts who we were intended to be.

Barry Williams
 Lane County Oregon Citizens Alliance

CORRECTION

The article "ASUO protests cuts in aid" (ODE, Feb. 20) should have said the ASUO wants legislators to support amendments that would negate funding cuts included in President Clinton's current budget draft. The Emerald regrets the error.