

# COMMENTARY

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Friday, April 12, 2002

## Yesteryear's Editorial It's nothing short of an act of war

The mining of harbors in Nicaragua is — frankly speaking — an act of war. The United States' part in the mining is — without a doubt — the action of a belligerent aggressor.

There really are no two ways about it. The Central Intelligence Agency's involvement with the mining of Nicaraguan harbors is a reprehensible action on par with Iraq and the Soviet Union's use of chemical warfare.

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However, the Senate, by a 6 to 1 margin, approved a resolution Tuesday calling for the end to CIA funding of the mining operation. That may pull the CIA up short.

According to reports, the CIA decision to mine Nicaraguan harbors was approved on the recommen-

dation of Robert McFarlane, White House national security adviser, the Pentagon and President Ronald Reagan. Apparently, the only member of the Reagan administration who had "misgivings" about the mining was Secretary of State George Schultz.

The Reagan administration has refused to accept the jurisdiction of the World Court to express an opinion on the United States involvement in Central America. It seems that the Reagan administration would prefer to use the opinion of the World Court only when it serves their end and does not criticize their actions.

But there is some dissent inside the White House over the administration's decision to circumvent the World Court's opinion. Fred Fielding, White House counsel, and James Baker, White House chief of staff, questioned the administration action regarding the World Court.

Senator Edward Kennedy and the Democratic (and some Republican) members of the Congress are loudly criticizing this latest aberration in Reagan's Central American policy.

Kennedy told the media that it "is time to call a halt to the secret war in Nicaragua. If the rubber-stamp Republican Senate will not halt it, I am very hopeful the House of Representatives will."

Seven Democrats in the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere wrote a letter to Schultz asking for an end to the U.S. role in the mining and for a reversal of the administration's position on the World Court.

The reason behind the Reagan administration's refusal to accept any comment from the World Court on its Central American policy is obvious. The Reagan administration is escalating its secret war in Nicaragua. But that war is no longer secret and U.S. involvement in Central America is increasingly coming under the censure it deserves.

This editorial is courtesy of the April 12, 1984, edition of the Emerald.

### Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries Policy

Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

### CORRECTION

The editorial "Campus news offers good, bad, offensive," (ODE, April 11) should have recognized the Office of Student Life as the sponsor of Thursday's campus safety forum. The Emerald regrets the error.

## Mideast issue about more than just land

GUEST COMMENTARY

John  
Melville

I would like to thank the Emerald for presenting two balanced views on the current crisis on the Middle East ("Where do we stand?" ODE, April 5). However, I found that both editorials missed a key point.

The current crisis, in my opinion, has more to do with religion and freedom than issues regarding land. The Palestinians and Arabs in Israel are in essence an oppressed people who want the right to be free. Remember these words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," and that among these inalienable rights are "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The Palestinian people are and have suffered tremendously under the Israeli occupation and are treated as second class citizens (or less). As an American, I believe the words "these rights are inalienable" to mean that all people — not just Americans, not just Euro-

peans, not just the Israelis — have the right to live without fear in a free society.

Israel is a religious state; many hard-line Zionists believe they have a "God"-given right to be in Israel, that the Jewish temple should be re-erected and that Jerusalem should become the new capital of Israel. On the other side, Palestine is, in essence, also a religious state, and the Dome of the Rock (one of the most holy sites in Islamic tradition) is built on what was the old Jewish temple. Jerusalem has also been the Palestinian capital for hundreds of years.

Let's not forget the Christians either. East Jerusalem and Bethlehem are incredibly

important religious sites for Christians. Hence, religion and freedom are a key issue to this conflict. The United States and the United Nations need to take a stand and separate the two parties, give the Palestinians their state and enforce the peace.

However, there needs to be a consequence for both sides, since they can't settle their own problems. Jerusalem should become a U.N. protectorate — a place that is safe and free for people of all faiths. Since Jerusalem is key to what both parties want, it should be taken off the table and made a non-issue.

Like two four-year-olds fighting on the playground, one of the key punishments is to take away their toys and get them out of the sand box. Both Israel and Palestine should be treated as such.

John Melville is a research associate at the University's Institute of Neuroscience.

Peter Utsey Emerald



## Pledge helps students make conscious choices

GUEST COMMENTARY

Leona  
Kassel

I was outraged by the Emerald's editorial entitled "University shouldn't hop on the pledge bandwagon" (April 9, ODE). I found poorly informed allegations against the graduation pledge alliance stating that it is unnecessary and inappropriately aligns the University with certain political agendas.

In light of the Emerald's claim that a pledge for social and environmental responsibility is "unnecessary," take a moment and consider a few of the sobering facts we face as global citizens. An estimated two to eight wildlife species go extinct every hour. At least 2.7 million people die prematurely each year from air pollution. Communities with a single hazardous waste facility have twice as many people of color as do communities without such a facility. During 1999, in the United States, 19 million adults and 12 million children went hungry.

In the face of such disturbing environmental and social realities, it seems absurd to suggest that encouraging others to consider how their jobs impact society and the environment is "unnecessary." Although college students should be committed to overcoming such environmental and social horrors, many currently fail to consider the impact their job choice will

have upon the global community.

Furthermore, people often feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of troublesome situations riddling modern society. The graduation pledge of social and environmental responsibility encourages graduating college students to manifest their social and environmental ideals in a proactive fashion by incorporating a sense of morality into their careers.

The significance of the graduation pledge is not reducible to simply signing a wallet card, as the editorial suggested. Rather, the card serves as a reminder of a commitment some graduates will choose to make, to utilize their knowledge to contribute to a better world for all.

In response to the Emerald's suggestion that the pledge unnecessarily aligns the University with certain political agendas, I ask how is the phrase "political agenda" intended? If a "political agenda" is encouraging others to think and be compassionate, then the accusation is correct. What agenda is not politi-

cal? And why should making conscious choices be apolitical? Living in a democracy, we are granted the right to participate in political processes and freedom of speech, whether it is in the grocery store or at graduation.

Graduation is not solely a time to reminisce about all the hard work graduates did while at the University. Commencement is a time to look forward, to think about how we will apply our education in the future. By allowing a group of students to encourage their peers to take responsibility for the impact of their job choice, the University is fostering a diversity of ideas and allowing for the freedom of expression that this country, and the institution of higher learning, was founded upon.

Regardless of whether we, as college students, acknowledge the current state of affairs, we live in a world teeming with environmental degradation and human suffering. The graduation pledge encourages us to act as global citizens by making conscious choices and applying what we've learned. After all, isn't this what college is about?

Leona Kassel is a philosophy and environmental science major.