

opinion

Push, shove

Just how far can the United States be pushed? In World War II, the Japanese found out how far the U.S. could be pushed and it cost them dearly. Today, we find ourselves in somewhat of another push and shove situation.

It seems that every time we pick up a newspaper, turn on the television set, or switch on the radio we learn of some new attack on American citizens and property in some part of the world, the most recent being the senseless attack on a bus carrying U.S. Navy personnel in the commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is almost a part of the U.S.!

But the real problems seem to be located in the Middle East with the capture of the U.S. Embassy in Iran and the taking of American hostages acting as a virtual ignition switch setting off the spontaneous parallel attacks on U.S. embassies in Pakistan and Libya.

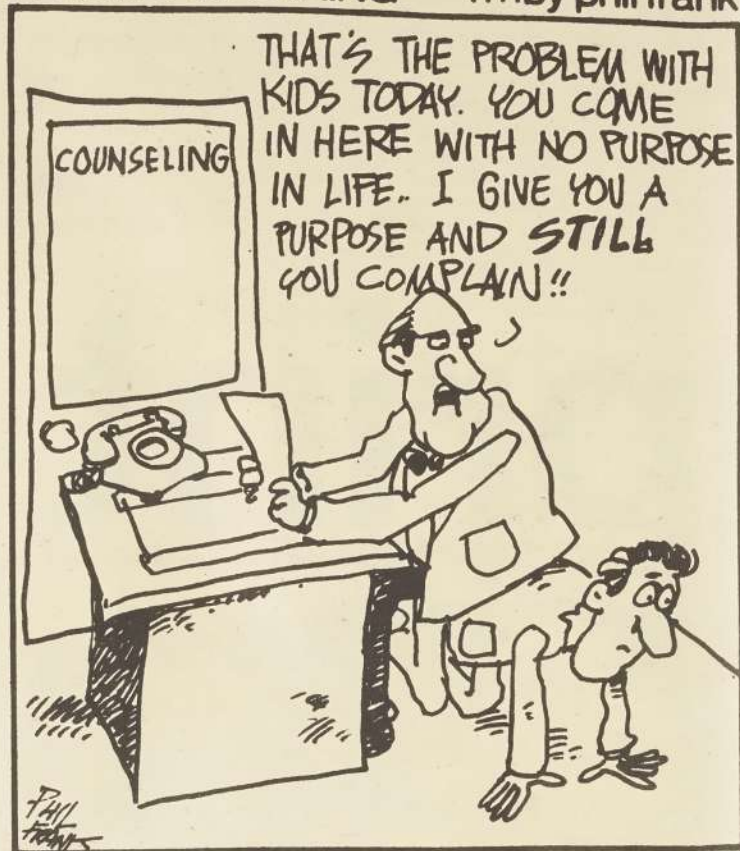
Although the Vietnam War left a very bitter taste in the mouths of many Americans, it is still necessary for the United States to present itself as a world power, which mandates military strength. It is not clear whether the recent rash of aggressive movements against the U.S. are aimed at testing the strength of the nation both militarily and diplomatically, but whatever the intention of these radicals, they must not be appeased.

The situation in Iran has gained the attention of the world and most of the world has come out on the side of the U.S. Therefore, what have the Iranians to gain? The United Nations has denounced the actions of the Iranians and declared their acts totally against international law. Even the Soviet Union is calling for the release of the American hostages. But, merely calling for their release does relatively little good. There must be some other way, and if push does indeed come to shove, military muscles must be shown. The attacks in Pakistan, Libya and Puerto Rico must also be painted into the scene. Do these revolutionaries feel that the U.S. is or has become weak and the time has come for a new world power to arise? I don't think that they have taken a very realistic look at the situation.

Historically, the U.S. has shown the ability to win wars, although the Vietnam War may be debated to some extent. It just takes quite a bit to infuriate the American people to an extent where they are willing to sacrifice life in order to protect American ideologies and the land of the United States itself.

But at what point this transition from shouting match to actual fist-a-cuffs takes place is vague. At whatever point this is, it may prove devastating to the country or countries aligned against the U.S. For, as a famous Japanese general said after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, "We have awoken a sleeping giant." We hope the U.S. will not have to be awakened and forced to demonstrate the powers within. If diplomatic measures fail to solve the present crisis, it may be inevitable.

FRANKLY SPEAKING ...by phil frank



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