

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Next X-mas, peace on earth?

Last week we celebrated the birth of the Prince of Peace. Though nearly two centuries have passed since his birth in the tiny Palestinian town of Bethlehem, the world is still at war.

Those who celebrate the birth of Christ must remember that he came to earth "to break the fetters and set men free." Yet we all—through our tax dollars and our complacency—support policies that keep men and women enslaved.

Abroad they are enslaved by oppressive regimes supported by the U.S. and at home they are bound by the chains of poverty.

Let us make every effort to insure that our nation's policies are changed so that next Christmas peace will reign on earth and the only wars waged will be against poverty, disease and ignorance.

## Prevent infant deaths

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported this month that 15 million children are dying each year in developing countries—mostly of common childhood diseases that are no longer a threat to the industrialized world.

Prevention of at least half of the deaths and improvement of many more lives could be made possible by simple means—widespread immunization against major childhood diseases, the use of growth charts to detect hidden malnutrition, promotion of breast-feeding, and use of oral rehydration salts to fight problems associated with diarrhea.

Case histories demonstrate that these efforts are effective:

• In the Philippines, infant deaths in one hospital dropped 95 percent after a campaign to promote breast-feeding.

• In Egypt, deaths resulting from diarrhea were cut in half in one village following a three-year campaign to use oral rehydration therapy.

• In Cuba, polio has been eliminated by the use of mass immunization.

• In Malawi, measles, the main cause of child death, was greatly reduced by immunization.

All of these methods are simple and relatively cheap. All require parent and community participation. The UNICEF report advocates empowering parents—and especially mothers—to prevent the death of their children through education and providing necessary supplies.

The money to save millions of children's lives can be made available. The determining factor is the political commitment to divert some of the money being spent on the military buildup to saving children's lives.

## Middle East conflict:

# U.S. no longer "peacekeepers"

by John Blank

A year ago in the Middle East there was a mood of cautious optimism; today, that mood has turned to one of fear, discouragement, and frustration at U.S. policies in the region, according to Ron Young, Middle East staff person for the American Friends Service Committee, who recently visited Portland.

Mr. Young, who lives half of the time in Jordan and spends the rest of his time traveling throughout the Middle East talking to diplomats and officials on all sides of the conflicts there, as well as peace activists and ordinary citizens, told the *Observer* that a year ago many people felt that the Reagan initiative provided some hope for peace, or at least the possibility of serious negotiations; but today, the same people are disappointed over the U.S. failure to pursue that initiative, and instead to rely on an increased U.S. military role and encouragement of Israeli militarism.

Most forces in the Middle East oppose this posture, according to Young. For example, Young said, Jordan, as well as the Labor Opposition in Israel, have been very critical of the U.S.-Israeli military alliance; and even Israel's National Religious Party is worried that Israel is tying itself too strongly to U.S. global interests.

### Lebanon

Around September—with the de-

cision to shell Druse forces in the village of Souk al-Garb—the U.S. role in Lebanon clearly changed, Young said, from "peacekeeping" to warring. Young feels that this U.S. militarist posture will be a disaster for Lebanon.

Without a U.S. decision to leave Lebanon, Young said, Lebanese president Gemayal will not be able to achieve a unified Lebanon and an end to the civil war there. As long as Gemayal thinks he can rely on a U.S. presence, he will not pursue power-sharing reforms that have been offered by the opposition, the civil war will continue, and Lebanon will be destroyed. The Phalange-Gemayal's party—believes that the U.S. will continue to support them, because they are Christian—but the price, Young reiterated, will be Lebanon's destruction.

The power-sharing reforms currently being sought by the opposition are more moderate than the demands made previously, in the 1976 civil war. The reforms include: Gemayal's remaining as president; a Maronite (Christian) presence in the cabinet; an expanded cabinet (its present composition is six Christian/five Moslem and Druse); more equal apportionment of lower government posts.

The Moslem and Druse forces have moderated their demands, said Young, because they view renewed civil war as horrible. Lebanese in general do not want their

country divided and torn.

The U.S. has been unrealistic, said Young, in thinking that Gemayal would accept reforms without being pressured.

### Syria's role

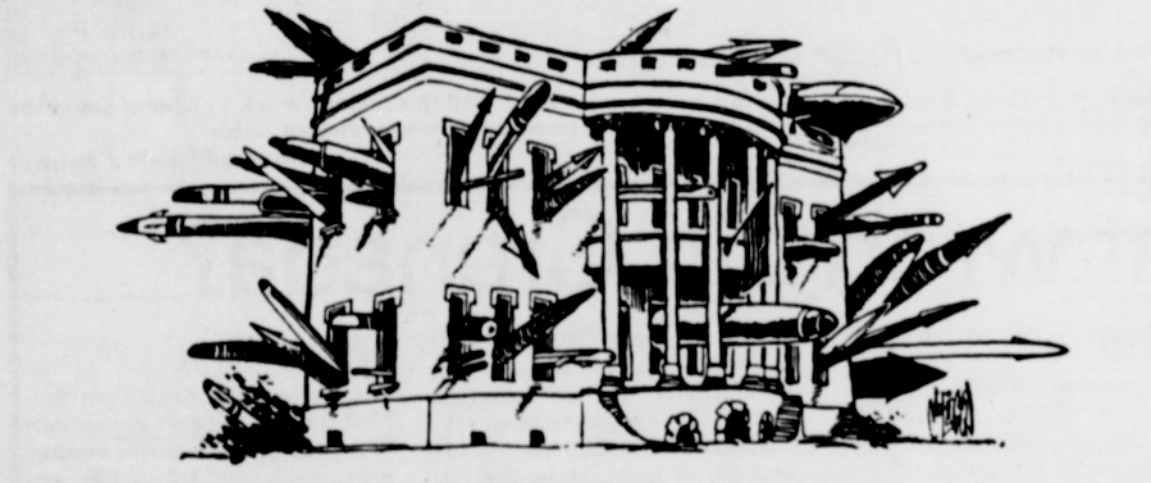
Syria's interest in the conflict, Young explained, is not to occupy Lebanon, but rather to be recognized as playing a preeminent role in any negotiated settlement. The Syrians see the U.S. as trying to make the Jordanian-Israeli and the Lebanon-Israeli relationships independent of Syria.

In Lebanon, Syria's goal is for Lebanon to continue to exist as part of the Arab world. Their main objective is not to control Lebanon, but rather that it not be drawn out of the Arab world and turned into a U.S.- or Israeli-surrogate in the region.

### Balanced withdrawal

Young feels that the key to peace in Lebanon would be a balanced, timed U.S. withdrawal, and the replacement of U.S. troops by a truly neutral international presence (not one led by the U.S. or Western Europe).

Young pointed out that the Soviet Union actually benefits from a continued U.S. military presence, because Syria needs to turn more and more to the Russia for arms, thus making the Soviet Union more influential in the region, rather than less.



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## Washington Hot Line

by Congressman Ron Wyden

### Medicare: Drastic measures needed

Over the past several months, I have written about some of the steps I believe must be taken to cut out waste in the Medicare system.

Among the changes I have suggested are those which would eliminate wasteful practices in the way we pay for pacemakers, lab fees and foot care—and save us some \$2 billion (over the next five years) in the process.

I am as committed as ever to these changes, and will be working hard when Congress reconvenes in January to see that they are enacted.

But even when they are, they will represent only a small part of the much bigger task that lies before us—totally revamping the Medicare system to stave off financial disaster and lay a base for providing the kind of health care services that senior citizens need at a price they can afford.

The implications if we do not achieve this goal are clear: If there are no changes in policy, no breaks

put on the health care cost whirlwind, Medicare's hospital insurance trust fund will be depleted by the end of the decade. By 1995, there would be a \$250 billion deficit, and, by 2005, a staggering \$1 trillion deficit.

In addition to endangering the Medicare system, skyrocketing health care costs are increasing the already serious financial problems of the elderly and jeopardizing their ability to obtain vitally important health care.

The comprehensive changes that must be made in the Medicare system will affect us all profoundly—we all will have to make tough choices.

That is why I have asked a group of Oregonians noted for their knowledge and experience in health care and in the special issues affecting our senior citizens to work together on a special Medicare Advisory Panel.

The panel will include doctors,

nurses, hospital administrators and nursing home representatives as well as representatives of labor, business and consumer groups; in short, a full range of health care experts.

I did not organize this panel because I believe there are quick or easy answers to the Medicare problem. We are not going to be able to sit down over a pleasant lunch and, by dessert, solve the major health care problem of the decade.

I brought this distinguished panel together because I believe that we have no time to waste fretting. We must tackle the problem immediately and begin the search for solutions that will protect our senior citizens from the nightmare which illness is becoming for them.

With that goal in mind, I would also appreciate hearing your opinions on this vitally important subject. You can write me at 1406 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515.

## Letters to the Editor

**Police thank citizens for move downtown**

To the editor:

Over the weekend of January 6, 1984, the Portland Police Bureau will be moving to the new Justice Services Building at 1111 S.W. 2nd.

We wish to thank all of the citizens of Portland who have made this move possible by providing such a fine work site. We would also like to remind everyone that effective January 9, 1984, we will have new, non-emergency phone numbers, all of which are in the new telephone book.

Remember, however, that for an emergency and/or police service, dial 911.

Portland Police Dept.

**One prisoner's memory**

To the editor:

**ROCKY BUTTE JAIL:  
A MEMORY**

Fragmented People,  
adrift in a derelict sea—  
They circle in confusion  
like windmilling rain  
with tense, scattered moods  
seeking solace  
from mind-storms  
of hard falling pain.

Anxious glances  
watch the clock ticking on.  
Time stands still,  
sullen and indifferent.  
So, into the eye  
of a spinning cyclone  
an idle fury  
seethes with rage and frustration.

The crisis of impatience creates endless pacing; an interminable waiting takes its toll. Sanity is threatened, as the veneer lifts from realism and reality and weakness goes on display.

Artificial poses crumble, as counterfeit models fall from pedestals made only of clay. Those holding silence amid synthetic assertions are only a few; the unbowed, unafraid and alone

—T.J. Graven

The *Observer* welcomes *Letters to the Editor*. *Letters should be short, and must contain the writer's name and address (addresses are not printed).* The *Observer* reserves the right to edit for length.

**Grenada**

(Continued from page 1 column 6)

to have been developed by the same mentality that assaulted and destroyed Black and progressive organizations in the 1970s. The invasion is another blow to the self-termination of people everywhere.

In 1984, Afro-Americans must struggle harder. This Kwanzaa let us remember the New Jewel Movement and its slain leaders. We must carry on the slogan, "Forward together, backwards never!"

**Happy New Year!**