

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Training Exercise?

Who do military officials think they're kidding when they say that the recent Oregon National Guard mission to Honduras was "strictly a training exercise?"

As if the entire history of the region for the last decade and the U.S. role in propping up bloodthirsty dictatorships didn't matter.

On the contrary, the training is preparation for hostilities in Central America, most likely in Nicaragua or El Salvador, hostilities in which Oregon boys could die.

Some of "the boys," as referred to by their commanders, are still in high school. Can they be expected to understand the geopolitical forces at play in Honduras, and the root causes of Central America's revolutions, given the poor education they receive about the region, and the propaganda fed to them by their superiors?

Upon their return, the young Guardsmen, jostling and joking, acted like they had just come back from a camping trip. Too young to remember the horrors of Vietnam, they appeared full of the élan of young boys out for adventure. Do they have an inkling of the horrors that could be unleashed by

white-haired old men in positions of power, of how they could be blasted away as pawns in their game?

Honduras has been turned into an armed camp. Millions of U.S. taxpayers' money has been poured into the country to stem the tide of popular revolutions in Central America long overdue. Honduras is the base for the contra war against Nicaragua, a war in which taxpayers' money is financing torture and murder of civilians. The effect of the military build-up in Honduras is to pressure and destabilize Nicaragua — that is what the training is all about.

As for Oregon's spineless governor, the responsibility rests with him. He could have opted not to send the Guard, yet chose to do so in spite of opposition by legislative leaders and Oregon's Catholic Bishops.

We have a right to be critical. Do we want a repeat of the tragedy of Vietnam? Do we want another generation of bitter and disillusioned war veterans, in wheel chairs and on drugs? By putting a stop to such "training exercises," Oregon could contribute a small increment toward halting a Central American tragedy in the making.



Plight of the Black Single Mother

Along the Color Line by Dr. Manning Marable

Last month's CBS television report, "The Vanishing Family-Crisis in Black America," was highly praised in nearly all quarters as a long overdue expose on the "crumbling" Black household. The *New York Times* termed the show "one of the best television reports in years. It plunged into an enormously important, culturally unpopular topic with intelligence and grace." Nevertheless, the show's mainstream liberal interpretation, espoused by commentator Bill Moyers, advanced a "blame-the-victim" thesis of Black poverty.

Gingerly, without actually informing its audience, CBS's goal was to revive the controversial Moynihan Thesis, which in 1965 argued that the Black family was "pathological" and that Black males were marginal social figures. The report's author, Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, then assistant secretary of Labor, had stated that "Negro children without fathers flounder — and fail. Within the minority community, skilled Negro 'models' after whom the Negro might pattern himself are rare." Moynihan noted that 25 percent of all Black children were born out of wedlock, and suggested that "Black matriarchy" was the cause. "Both Negro men and women operate to enlarge the mother's role, undercutting the status of the male and making many Negro families essentially matriarchal," he insisted.

Moynihan's thesis was implicitly racist and theoretically flawed. He blamed the problems of single-parent households squarely on the Blacks themselves, saying little about institutional racism, the lack of health clinics, high unemployment, legal segregation, poor public schools, and other factors. Moyers and CBS could have avoided Moynihan's errors, but failed to do so. First, viewers were hit with shocking data: "Black teenagers have the highest pregnancy rate in the industrial world, and in the Black inner city practically no teenage mother gets married." A series of young Blacks were briefly interviewed, most below the age of 25, with one to four children each. The basic themes constantly repeated were twofold: first, that practically no young Black male apparently exists who takes any responsibility for his children and second, that the welfare system which provides Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) actually is "counterproductive" and promotes Black female "promiscuity." In other words, Black young women have babies primarily because the welfare system will "pay" for them.

A more balanced interpretation of the issue might begin with some harsh economic realities about the nature of American poverty. Any single-parent family is at a relative economic dis-

advantage in that there are fewer adult income earners inside the household than in two-parent families. Federal programs designed to combat poverty have not been effective in reducing poverty for single mothers. For instance, between 1959 and 1974, the percentage of Black two-parent households below the poverty line fell from 43 percent to 14 percent; for all white families, 15 percent to 7 percent; but for Black female householders, 65 percent to 53 percent. To an extent, what Moynihan and Moyers blame as a "racial problem" is actually a "class and gender" problem. In 1975, 39 percent of all white female-headed families earning \$4000-\$6000 annually were below the poverty line. For white female-headed households with less than \$4000 annually, the poverty rate was 63 percent, compared to 83 percent for comparable Black female householders. There are literally millions of white single mothers with children, living below the poverty line, in urban public housing or in Appalachia. Yet neither Moyers nor CBS discuss the "crisis of the Vanishing Poor White Family!"

Does welfare make Black single mothers less self-reliant and dependent on government handouts? Contrary to public rhetoric, the level of welfare benefits actually dropped 22 percent between 1972 and 1984. In New York City last year, the typical AFDC family received only \$410 per month. And according to the research of Harvard professors Mary Jo Bane and David Ellwood, states which have relatively low levels of welfare benefits frequently have the same percentage of female-headed families as states with high benefits. For example, in Mississippi 16 percent of all families are headed by women, vs. 14.8 percent in California. Yet Mississippi's AFDC payments are the lowest in the country, while California's are almost the highest. This indicates that the level of payments has no direct bearing on the rise of female-headed households.

One hidden reason for the rise of Black single-parent households is the decline in the ratio of Black single males who are employed. In 1982 there were only 47 employed single Black men for every 100 single Black women between ages 20-24, down from 69 men for every 100 women in 1960. For the 25-34 age group, there were 59 employed single Black men for every 100 women. Unemployment, drugs and crime are eliminating an entire generation of young Black males — and Black women have no choice except to raise their children alone. To attack Black single mothers for their poverty is to blame the victim.

Dr. Manning Marable teaches political sociology at Colgate University, Hamilton, New York.

EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY

Once again President Reagan has proposed a budget which calls for more guns and less butter. If Reagan gets his way with the 1987 budget, every segment of mainstream America will be dropped one level downward in social position. The President's budget will eliminate programs that are critical to the economic health of cities and programs which help to stimulate private investment. Also programs such as mass transit, employment, school lunch programs, student loans (over 1 million students could lose their aid), and energy programs for the needed will be slashed.

His budget calls for a \$10 billion cut in farm and nutrition programs. Despite the fact that farm foreclosures and child pov-

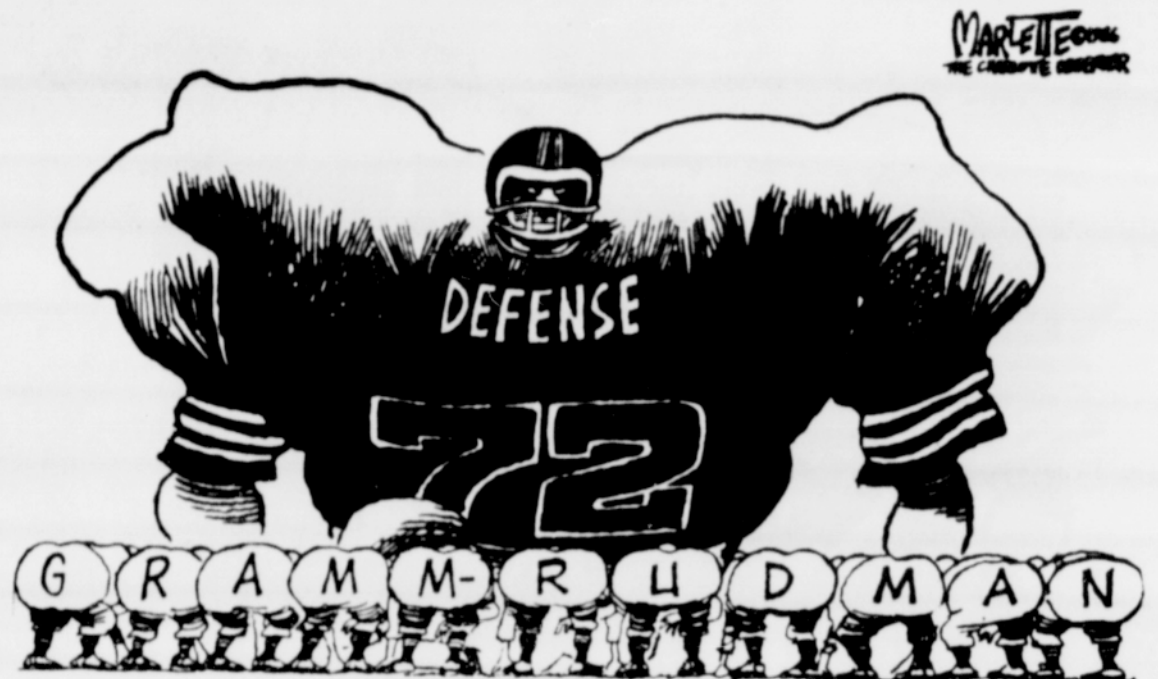
erty rates are rising at record rates. American farmers are facing serious economic problems, some are predicting that as many as 65,000 farmers will lose their farms in 1986.

Some 14 million children live in poverty in the United States. Since President Reagan took office in 1981, poverty among children has increased noticeably. Today one out of every five children in the United States lives in poverty. Critics of the administration blame the increase in child poverty on the President and domestic policies. Massive cuts in nutrition programs have had a devastating impact on poor children. Malnutrition can lead to severe mental and physical disabilities.

Seniors will be affected by the Reagan budget also. New

guidelines in Medicare will result in higher premiums. There would be a freeze on military and federal pension.

The President's philosophy of "peace through strength" will continue. Reagan is proposing a 8 percent real growth in military budget. It's been estimated by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) the Pentagon budget will be anywhere from \$274 billion to \$289 billion. This is a tremendous amount of money; what's even more remarkable is that the Pentagon already has billions (some put the amount at \$53.7 billion) in unarmarked funds. The rationale for such high military expenditures are the same. The United States must keep up with the Soviet Union's military buildup.



THE REFRIGERATOR

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your cooperation and assistance in getting the monumental task done which we faced in the past four weeks. Never before have I seen such a tremendous showing of true love and caring. The Portland Community pitched right in to serve the Garlington family, handle the media, correspondence, transportation, lodging, food, maintenance, public reception, and most of all held each other up with encouragement and prayer.

We want to also take this time to thank the community for their prompt and generous response to our needs.

Rodgers Cable Systems for their cameras and the overflow hookup
The Cosmopolitan Hotel for their assistance

The community for opening their homes and providing transportation
Friends Church for transportation
New Hope Baptist for transportation
Urban League for helping coordinate transportation

Portland International Airport for their assistance

The Portland Police Bureau for their assistance and traffic control

Warner Pacific College for help in providing housing

St. Andrews for food and housing
Berean Baptist Church for child care and food

New Hope Baptist Church for transportation and
Mr. Martin Sims who donated 100 lbs. of fish, several hundred lbs. of fruit and vegetables, and over 100 packages of bread and rolls.

And again to all of you who cooked the meals, cleaned the church, removed garbage, served our guests and made yourselves available to whatever needed doing.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL.
Rev. Joshua D. Phillips
Pastor of Maranatha Church

To the Editor:

I enjoyed reading "Black Economic Independence Tops NB-CSL legislative plan," Jan. 1. It will be the middle class Blacks who will be required to make some Spartan adjustments, and it remains to be seen as to how willing they will be to turn their skills to "Black economic independence" so long as the option is open to them to sell their skills at a higher price in Caucasoid America. The dictionary defines autonomy

as "self-government"—which is essentially a political concept. Economy autonomy would presumably refer to a situation in which a group is self-supporting; that is to say, the group is not dependent upon the largesse of others for its continued survival. Autonomy should be clearly distinguished from "autarchy" a term with which it is often confused. Autarchy refers to national economic self-sufficiency, whereas economic autonomy refers to the less ambitious concept of economic self-support.

Black Economic Autonomy, however, would describe a Black community which produced in accordance with the most efficient use of the particular resource capabilities which it had, and then traded with other groups or nations in order to acquire things that it lacked. Autarchy does not seem to me to be a feasible, nor even a desirable, objective for Black people today, the degree of interdependence which characterizes the world of 1986 probably renders autarchy an unrealizable objective for any group of people.

I'm inclined to believe, if the Black community were to be provided some form of monopolistic advantage in certain areas of economic activity, it might then have a basis for trading advantageously with the caucasoid community. When I was last in New York, at the U.N., many of our Third World Brothers/Sisters wondered why we were so isolated. I'm inclined to believe, the sole possible source which I can envision for obtaining such a monopolistic advantage is from our Brothers/Sisters in Afrika. If they were to become persuaded to provide Amerikan Blacks with exclusive rights to sale of their property products (oil, minerals, cocoa, diamonds, etc.) in the United States, then it might ultimately be possible to construct a Black domestic economy

with the caucasoid economy. Not too many Black folk are psychologically ready to deal with this model for Black liberation, which really they are not ready to discuss the question of economic autonomy. And so we see

that the economic answers are heavily influenced by the sociological considerations as well as by the political ones.

The entire blueprint for building economic autonomy cannot even be anticipated at this juncture. It may, however, be time to spell out some initial steps which a well-organized coalition of Black groups could begin to undertake.

Since the canons upon which this country supposedly exist is distorted by hypocrisy and prejudice, and the U.S. Constitution is not respected as some of us think it should be. The nation is unable to rally vigorous mass support for laws against discrimination, but has laws supporting oppression.

The subject, barriers to Black people's participation in the Amerikan economy is either a very simple one or a very complex one, depending upon your point of view. It is my opinion that it is a simple one in that there is, in the final analysis, only one barrier to Black participation in the Amerikan economy and that is institutionalized racism.

I would like to close on an optimistic note, but it's difficult for me to find any cause for optimism. I would like to be able to believe that all that is required is that Amerika be shown that Blacks are able, despite all the handicaps of racism, to succeed as entrepreneurs on a large scale. I would like to be able to believe that Amerika needs only be shown that our greatest business successes could be duplicated many times over in a really free market. The fact of the matter is, however, that I believe Amerika has already been shown these things. And not only has she been shown that it is to her advantage to create a truly free market, but she also has been shown that it is to her distinct disadvantage not to invest in Black Amerika.

The difficulties with the NB-CSL programs are obvious — but along with the difficulties it offers some real hope. This is more than can be said for our present unorchestrated efforts, which are unlikely to yield even a measure of economic autonomy for our beloved Poor Black Community.

Dr. Jamil Cherowee

PORTLAND OBSERVER \$15 for one year
\$25 for two years

Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

Mr. Mrs. Miss

Street Apt.

CITY STATE ZIP

CLIP IT

TO START THE PORTLAND OBSERVER COMING EVERY WEEK

Portland Observer

The Portland Observer (USPS 959-680) is published every Thursday by Exile Publishing Company, Inc., 1463 N.E. Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97211, Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

The Portland Observer was established in 1970.

Subscriptions: \$15.00 per year in the Tri-County area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.

MEMBER **NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION - Founded 1885**

Alfred L. Henderson, Editor/Publisher
Al Williams, General Manager

National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc. New York

288-0033