

opinion/editorial



Canal zone treaty should inspire trust

This week the implementation of the Panama Canal treaties should mark the beginning of vastly improved U.S. relations with Latin America.

The House of Representatives last week voted to implement the treaty which will eliminate U.S. jurisdiction over the Canal Zone and phase out American control of the canal and of military bases by the year 2000. Until that time, a Panama Canal Commission dominated by U.S. members will control the canal.

Many Americans see the changes as another reflection of decreasing U.S. power. Discussion about the SALT II treaties and the discovery of Soviet combat troops in Cuba has raised many questions about American influence and power in our own backyard and the world as well.

But despite allegations of declining U.S. military strength the American move to get out of Panama is an act of moral strength and in the end will strengthen the American position in the world.

The days of Teddy Roosevelt's big stick era have ended. We live in another time when the entire world is aware of what this country does and its effect on them. The hypocrisy which has dominated U.S. relations with Latin American countries until recently has only made us look foolish in the eyes of the world.

A country such as ours which professes to believe in human rights and popular sovereignty for all people has no right to intervene in the governance of other nations.

But a move to promote the freedom and dignity of a country that has long been looked down upon by Americans will be seen as a friendly gesture.

This will help rather than hurt the American position in the world. Trust is vital element in world relations. With that trust we are a stronger nation, not a weaker one.

Aerial goose-bumps raised from Bomb

BOSTON—The girl is worrying about The Bomb. It is, a friend assures me, a passing thing. It is, he says, just a symbol of childhood feelings of impotence in a wider and scary world.

But I think it is a symbol of her fear of the bomb.

allen goodman

I saw her staring into space when the idea goose-bumped across her body. She shivered and said simply, "I was worrying about the bomb."

I wanted to say the right thing to her. We always want to say the right thing and end up telling them to brush their hair. So, about the bomb, I said: "It is worth worrying about." That was dumb . . . unsatisfactory.

She asked for a second opinion. It's what resourceful children do, when the first answer is dumb or the source is as historically unreliable as a parent. She looked across the table and questioned a friend of ours: "Do you think I will die from old age, disease, or the bomb?"

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Idea could make big time

Guru promotes televised doctrine

I have this friend, Abba Wanna Doobie. He's got this religious thing going.

Don't think he's just a face in the crowd of gurus, revivalists, self-proclaimed messiahs and guys who walk around in crowds with hand-painted signs. With a little backing, he could make the big time.

jerry fairbanks

His idea is instant doctrine. The way Abba figures it, Pope John Paul II did the only thing he could agreeing with the American bishops to keep the hard line going because the mechanism of change in the Church is too slow. I agreed, since the last Inquisition witchcraft trial was in 1818.

Abba has an idea to make the system the absolution. He showed me a plan for a network of telephone lines to every home in America, connecting little control boards with a central tabulating computer. The computer would have display tubes at a proposed television studio with a satellite hook-up, with a broadcast area covering all 50 states.

With all this hardware in place, Abba would go on the air once a week and tell the people what they wanted to hear, instantly.

FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER the opening credits, we'd have a voice over, "And now, live from his studio in righteous downtown Sterling, Colo., it's Guru Abba Wanna Doobie!"

Abba would come on camera in a frenzy of canned applause and start his sermon for the week. He'd say, "Blessed are . . ." and on the screen would be the three choices. In this case, "1. The poor. 2. The rich. 3. The guys making less than \$15,000 but more than \$5,000 a year." In seconds, the majority would have blessed one of those choices and it's time to move on.

His next line would be, "Damned are . . ." and you get three more choices, say, "1. Humanists. 2. Anyone making the wrong choice on the first question. 3. Columnists." And so on through the sermon.

Abba says the genius of this plan is that he gives everyone a God who agrees with them, which is the same God everyone believes in anyway. It's a simple refinement of polling, the process of solidifying public whim. The same mass whining that brings the president to his knees can now make Guru Abba Wanna Doobie head of the greatest marketing scheme in American history.

WITH COMPUTER ADDRESSED dunning and a title collection squad handpicked from death rows across the country, the money is going to start rolling in. Money, mass exposure and unquestioning loyalty can lead to only one thing—bigger plans.

The second stage of his operation is turning his wired followers into a social force. He figures he can establish an absolutist theocracy, given enough time and capital. I tried to tell him that was impossible, since there is a little thing called democratic tradition in this country.

"Religious frenzy already controls a lot of communities," he said. "Witness the liquor on Sunday issue here in Lincoln. Look at the anti-pornography and blue laws. It's a small step from local controls like that to the big enchilada."

He mumbled something about a third stage involving Skinnerian conditioning, but I wasn't listening. I was making my own plans. The name I settled on was "The Humanist Liberation Front."

letter

We appreciate your report on "China Night" program in the Nebraska Union Friday night very much. However, we would like to clarify one of the statements put forth by Mary Kay Wayman which appeared on the page 8 article in the Monday Oct. 8 issue: "The evening program and displays in the Union early Friday were part of celebration of the 68th anniversary of the founding of the Taiwan." We are the people from Taiwan, Republic of China. The title of our country is the Republic of China. And the purpose of our presentation was in celebration of the 68th anniversary of the founding of Republic of China.

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