

opinion/editorial

Reagan's dogma must be rejected

Ronald Reagan this week offered a valuable insight to his views on what American foreign policy should be and what he might try to make it if elected to the presidency.

He blamed the Carter administration for the war between Iraq and Iran, citing "weakened defense capabilities" and "vacillating foreign policies."

Implicit in Reagan's remarks is the belief that America still can be the world's policeman, capable of defending any region it chooses and preventing any war it wishes through threats backed up by the U.S. arsenal.

First, it is clear that even if the United States had built every death-dealing weapon proposed during the Carter administration the Soviet Union's arsenal would be a formidable threat, and that U.S. choices and wishes for the world would be balanced by the other superpower.

Secondly, it is silly to believe that the United States or the Soviet Union is capable of preventing certain conflicts in the world. Tension and hostility between Iraq and Iran is motivated by something much deeper than American world views.

Religious and ethnic claims and conflicts have kept the two Middle East neighbors in adversary roles longer than Jimmy Carter has been president.

Ayatollah Khomeini was expelled from Iraq after the shah expelled him from Iran and before he set up shop in France. Since taking power, Khomeini's regime has called for the overthrow of Iraq's secular government through radio broadcasts aimed at the Shiite Moslem population in Iraq.

Thus, the ayatollah, with a rapidly decaying military force, has been escalating tensions with a traditional rival with a capable war machine. That is not Carter's fault.

Reagan also charged that the Carter administration "helped in the fall of the shah." The assumption that the United States could have prevented the shah's fall runs along the same lines as the view that we can be the world's policeman. We have enough trouble with



domestic politics without trying to control other states.

The United States did a great deal to prop up the shah's religiously unpopular regime, for which we are now paying the price—for the 328th day. The shah's monarchy could not withstand the pressure from within, despite the help from outside.

But the unrealistic nature of Reagan's view of foreign policy and what can be achieved by military strength is not the important consideration. What is most important is that Ronald Reagan could be the next president of the United States unless the electorate rejects his dogma.

If that happens, his philosophy of the 50s will be a major force in what the United States decides to do in crisis situations. Would Ronald Reagan decide that Iraq or Iran is "a third-rate, raggedy-assed country" (Lyndon Johnson referring to Vietnam) and take charge of the situation?

Judging from his comments, he would, and then he would have to deal with the real Soviet threat—a very likely response if American troops and guns start maneuvering in their backyard.

Yes, let's make America great. But let's defeat Reagan so we still have that opportunity.

Pentagon's answer man knows all the questions

WASHINGTON—Time now for the military-industrial-complex World War III answer man:

Q—What is it about the radar proof "Stealth" bomber that will make it impossible for the Russians to see it?

A—After President Carter is safely re-elected the White House will never build it.

Q—How is the Cruise missile working out? Is it adding to our strategic deterrent?

A—Many of those being tested have shown an unfortunate tendency to fly at supersonic speeds at mid-tree level, including one that collided with a campground in Utah. The Cruise is expected

to be quite a deterrent, however. Especially to any Russians who try to sneak into the United States as campers.

Q—Is it true our B-52 bombers are 25 years old?

A—No, I think that they're now 27 years old.

michael kilian

Q—How is the Navy's women-aboard-ship program working out?

A—Judging by the recent lesbian trials, the only time the Navy's women-aboard-ship program has truly been successful was when that submarine commander hired a go-go dancer named Cat Futch to perform on the forward deck while he sailed into port.

Q—I just read where six of the 10 infantry divisions the Army has in the United States are considered unfit for combat. Can this be true?

A—That's in error. The more accurate figure is nine divisions unfit for combat. According to a confidential report that fiendish Republicans seem to have leaked to every newspaper in the country, the 82nd Airborne Division was the only one found not to have any major deficiencies. A few minor deficiencies were found in the 82nd, I think largely stemming from the fact that the division is deployed mostly in the beer bars of Fayetteville, N.C.

Q—How come our army is in such crummy shape? Is it because of moral laxness in our youth?

A—I think it's because there was a mixup somewhere, and Army Secretary Clifford Alexander got the idea he was being appointed director of the Job Corps. It should be noted, however, that many Job Corps units have had a higher combat proficiency than many of our infantry divisions.

Q—Is it true we're stripping Navy ships of crew just to keep other ships operational?

A—Yes. Just as our new MX missiles are moved around, from site to site so the Russians won't know which site to target, the Navy apparently moves crews from ship to ship so the Russians won't know which ones to sink.

Q—Was our military ever in such bad shape before?

A—After the Revolutionary War the Congress reduced the size of the United States Army to just 80 enlisted men.

Q—What happened then?

A—The War of 1812.

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Daiquiri-sipping mannequins 'makeup' Jason's compromise

A newly-compromised Jason and Marie are spending the night in opposite parts of town. Having lost the toss, I get Jason. We sit at the bar and discuss how he plans to change his ways to keep Marie as he watches the waitress's legs airstream around the corner.

michael zangari

"So what's it going to take," I ask, "Lassie or stilts?"

Jason inclines his head to a table full of picture-perfect mannequins sipping strawberry daiquiris near the stage. They are coated in two-ply makeup and smile our way.

"You mean the pre-fab four?" I ask in amazement, "There's nothing subtle about them."

"I know," smiles Jason, "and the number is about right too..."

A pistol-whip rim shot from the band saves me from having to answer him and the band slides into a sensuously pulsating version of the Temptation's "My Girl."

Jason orders another picture of beer and I wheel around and tell him that I really don't want anymore. He gives me one of his famous "I just raised my eyebrows" looks and says, "I didn't offer you any."

He takes the pitcher and sips from it like it is a mug with a hormone problem.

Couples move to the dance floor and Jason and I watch them dance for a while in silence. As usual, I am transfixed by one dancer or another and am a metaphoric mile away. Jason taps me on the shoulder and nods toward a couple on the fringe of the crowd. They are incredibly physically mismatched. He is a good foot-and-a-half taller than she is, and slim; she is heavy. They rock to and fro, tense and closed into what is obviously a self-conscious defensive posture.

It seems as if all eyes are on the couple, and amidst much side jabbing and smiles there is something courageous about the two. Their dancing becomes almost a statement of their mutual commitment and tenderness. I am moved.

Jason sees that I'm not smiling and leans closer expecting explanation. I don't offer any and look away. Jason sips his beer.

The band slips back into a disco drone and the crowd on the dance floor swells. The couple on the dance floor is no longer a main attraction.

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