

Editorial

Buzzword 'communist' prompts El Salvador aid

Ronald Reagan wants so badly for there to be a democratic government in El Salvador that he is willing to make one up. Despite reports to the contrary, Reagan has been trying to assure us that the regime of Jose Napoleon Duarte is making strides toward more humanitarian government. In the meantime, Duarte needs just a little American help (\$100 million or so in military aid) to crush the local "commies" and make El Salvador safe for democracy.

Those of you who have been piecing this all together and who think El Salvador looks an awful lot like Vietnam West may not be far from accurate. What makes the actions in El Salvador a little worse, however, is the knowledge that the administration is willing to ignore and repeat the mistakes of such a colossal and recent disaster as the Vietnam War. Criticism of the Reagan administration's El Salvador policy on these grounds is tainted, though, by the fact that Reagan still thinks the Vietnam War was a good and just cause (see 1980 campaign for details).

The question for the Reagan administration, then, is not, "Should we get involved in El Salvador?" They have already answered that one with an enthusiastic "yes." To amplify that point, Secretary of State Alexander Haig has said that the United States will do "whatever is necessary" to contain the guerrilla war in El Salvador. Haig also has not ruled out sending troops (that's us) to El Salvador. Thomas Enders, the assistant Secretary of State, has been even more emphatic. As reported in the Feb. 1 *Lincoln Journal*, he told the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee, "The decisive battle for Central America is under way in El Salvador. If after Nicaragua, El Salvador is captured by a violent minority, who in Central America would not live in fear?"

So the question for the Reagan administration is not whether to get involved, it's how to get involved. You can't just send tanks loaded with Americans down the Pan-Am highway and expect to be able to sell it to American voters. The first thing that has to be done, and the process that is going on now, is the effort to convince Americans that the government of El Salvador is really worth our blood and money. To that end we have been

getting the aforementioned presidential assurances that El Salvador's government is trying to respect the human rights of the people of that nation. Surely Reagan must have at least a morsel of fact to back up these assurances, but he has been reluctant to make it public. In the meantime, report after report tells of civilians murdered by government troops. Those reports include murders by the American trained and supplied Atlacatl force.

One particularly damaging statement appeared in the Feb. 8 issue of *Newsweek* magazine: "But Col. Domingo Monterrosa, the battalion's commander, freely admits that it is almost impossible for his troops to distinguish between civilians and guerrillas. In disputed areas, he says, his men assume 'everyone can be the enemy.'"

Why is the Reagan administration so emphatic in its desire to prop up this government? Because it will kill communists.

"Communist" is still the ultimate buzzword in the United States, and even more so with the Reagan administration. We won't let El Salvador fall to the leftists, if we have to wipe out everybody in El Salvador to do it.

As Enders was quoted as saying in the Feb. 1 *Lincoln Journal*, "Americans will not permit Central America's future to be decided in Moscow or Havana." He failed to mention whether the Central Americans have a say in the matter. If they did, it might turn out that they don't especially want their fate to be decided in Washington, either.



UNL forced into role of mediocrity

A lot of definitions are being reconsidered nowadays. The University of Nebraska is classified as an equal-opportunity land grant college which caters to the entire state of Nebraska, and then some. But the all too familiar maxim of "We just don't have the money" combined with the collective insensitivity of the Nebraska Legislature is causing UNL some role redefining.

Because UNL doesn't have enough money, and because the Legislature won't give it any more, a lot of tactics contrary to UNL's supposed "open admission" policy are



Reid Warren

being discussed. These tactics include stricter grade point average requirements in some colleges and more selective recruitment of high-quality high school students.

And therein lies the paradox: Economic necessities are forcing UNL to serve two masters that are at opposite ends of the collegiate spectrum.

Because of money woes, UNL has to try to get as many students as possible while at the same time consider more restrictions on these students.

In an address to the Faculty Senate last week, UNL Chancellor Martin Maesengale said, in a roundabout way, much the same thing. He said that about half the money UNL lost last year when the Legislature cut UNL's budget 3 percent was regained through an increase in second semester tuition revenue. Simply put, this means that because UNL had 600 more students, it was able to make up some lost funds.

Maesengale also mentioned the possibility of starting summer seminars for gifted high school students. Active recruitment of high school students is becoming more prevalent on college campuses, and it's no secret that UNL would like to get its share.

The situation is far from ideal: UNL needs more students to make up for lost revenue, while, at the same time, it must upgrade its academic image to one of all-around "excellence" to attract both fledgling scholars and the private and public dollar.

If the Legislature continues on its present course, the question will become as follows: How can UNL reach the necessary "perceived" excellence when it must, for economic reasons, attract large-scale numbers of students?

I'm afraid the answer is through increased tuition and a further reduction of services. There is no other way, and that's the burden which the Legislature has put on students.

The Legislature is forcing UNL to deal in wholesale numbers of students precisely at a time when UNL needs to deal in the particulars of students. When UNL has to set a goal of, say, 26,000 students for the upcoming semester, does anyone really think that more attention will be paid to the need for increased services for these extra students?

The Legislature would have UNL define itself as an institution which contributes to the common good but also gives students a most common education at a most uncommonly high price. And that is a definition which can only be corrected by our state officials.

This much is certain: Without more money, there is no way UNL can define itself as anything but mediocre. And just try to attract the private dollar or the high school brain with promises of mediocrity.



Letters

Respect must be earned

Several weeks ago, while I was in the midst of cutting my department's budget, I wrote a letter to the Daily Nebraskan decrying the purchase of a lie detector by the UNL Police. I did not and do not believe that our police department needs a lie detector, but I wrote and sent my letter with tongue in cheek.

After it appeared, however, I received comments from a number of students, faculty members and other members of the university community. Virtually everyone I spoke with either supported the sentiment I had expressed or told me other stories of waste, inefficiency or incompetence by our police.

In themselves these stories don't amount to much, but after hearing all of them, I have come to the same conclusion expressed by Sharman Joseph in her Feb. 1 letter.

The UNL police are not supported by the campus community. Regardless of what they want to do for us, they are neither respected nor appreciated. Joseph is upset by this situation and I am too. She does not understand, however, that a police officer does not automatically receive respect together with a badge and a gun. Respect and support must be earned.

Whatever their achievements, or intentions, it is my strong impression that the UNL Police have not earned the respect of the campus community. That is a serious failing. Rather than investing in hardware, I believe that our police ought to be working on convincing us that they deserve our support.

Peter Bleed
Associate professor and chairman
Anthropology

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Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available in the newspaper.

The Daily Nebraskan reserves the right to edit and condense all letters submitted.

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