

**Guest
Opinion**

Former fighter pilot asks 'why'

In light of Veterans Day, it would seem appropriate to respond to the recent comments by Sen. J. James Exon concerning Soviet supply of military arms to Nicaragua.

According to last Friday's quotes in the Lincoln Star, Exon said that if MiG-21 warplanes have been shipped into Nicaragua and were not removed through some peaceful fashion, Exon expands, "I believe they will and should be properly disposed of by forces of the United States."

May I ask, Exon, just how do you intend to do that? Are you personally ready to go down there and make an air strike? A strike like your Washington colleagues engineered against the oil storage tanks at Haiphong 20 years ago?

Perhaps you should take a closer look over across the river at the Pentagon. Those generals and admirals sitting behind the desks now are the same pilots ordered into action over Vietnam those 20 years ago. They are the same pilots that your Washington colleagues expected to attack the enemy with their hands tied behind their backs! Hands tied by that Congress and a good portion of the American public who so flagrantly supported the enemy during those trying days.

This time when you demand such a military action, Exon, you and your colleagues had better look just a little closer at what you are asking, and more importantly, "why" you are asking it.

While you and your colleagues have been busy campaigning and passing such important legislation as the "Washington Theater"

bill, the people of the Caribbean Basin area have been starving! Oppressed and terrorized by the dictatorial puppets that have been entertained in Washington at taxpayers' expense, those people have at least found some outside force to help them in their futile quest for food and freedom.

That same outside force that was offered to Fidel back in 1958 when your colleagues turned their backs on him and the starving people of Cuba. After all, if the U.S. Congress had supported Fidel, it would have meant the end of the Batista regime that "wined and dined" them so elegantly when they visited that fun city of Havana.

So, now you want to call for an air strike to remove those MiGs? Please just remember those MiGs are there now because you and the Congress have been sound asleep for the last five years. You want to make a war? Then go make it; but make it yourself, and leave the rest of this country out of it. This is one veteran of Vietnam who has heard from your kind before: "Go fight, make that air strike, get your body twisted and bent, watch your friends die!" And then come home to a group of American public demonstrators who wait for you at the airport to shout "murderer." Come home to a family broken by the war, to friends who disagreed with the war (without bothering to vote against it) and now turn their backs on you. Come home to find your job taken by a young fellow just back from Canada; but then

he is a little better physically qualified than you, because your back doesn't move so good anymore. And come home to an America that you fought so hard for. An America that now turns its back on you so completely that you have to put up your own monument to your buddies killed in that God-forsaken place called "Nam."

Well, I got a message for you and your kind, Exon, "go fight this one by yourself!" The Nicaragua problem is there because you ignored those people when they were crying for help, you and your Congressional colleagues have made this problem, now go solve it! Oh, and in the meantime, if you can take time off from your demanding theater schedule, you just might take a look over at that Pacific area again.

Remember that fine couple, Ferdinand and Imelda, who showed your Congressional colleagues such an elegant time the last time they visited there while flying to Hong Kong on that Air Force jet? Well, it turns out that friendly couple were really pretty dictatorial, and those starving people in the Philippines have had enough of it. They're starting a rebellion of their own.

Are you interested enough to try to help them out a little? Or are you going to ignore them until those MiG-21s are sitting on the pier in Manila?

Have a happy Veterans Day, Exon, and a nice evening at the theater.

Dick Shaffer
Vietnam fighter pilot
graduate student

THANK YOU!

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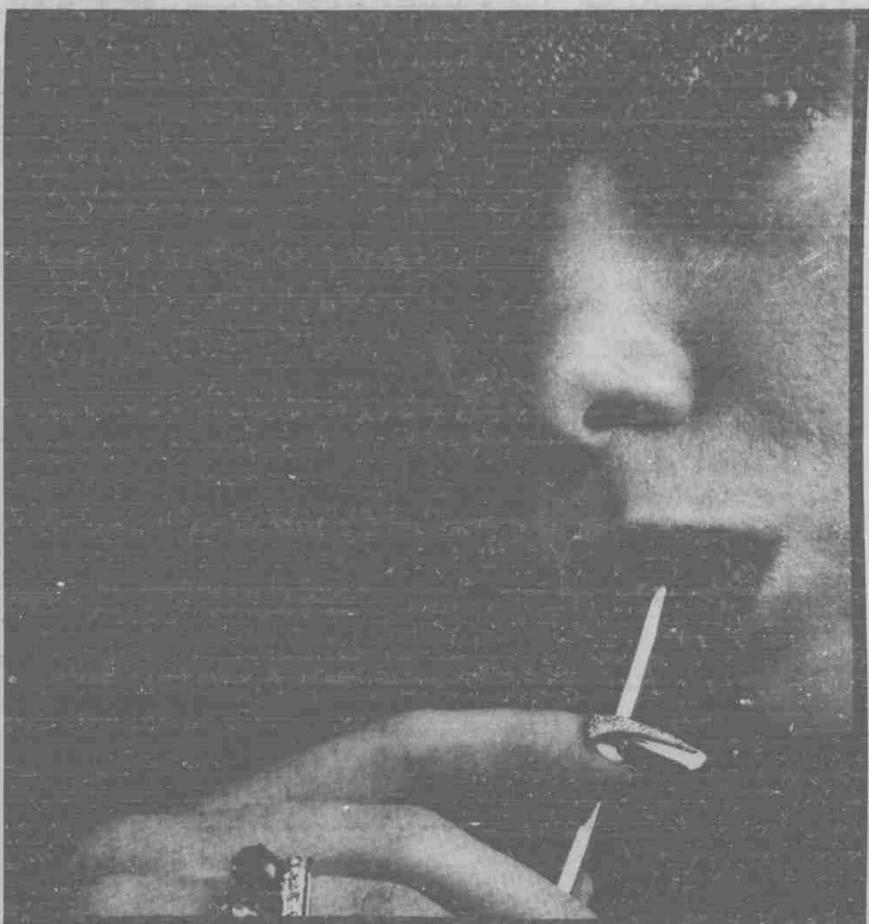
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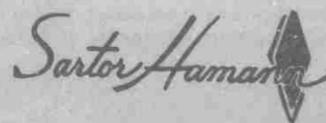
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