

Editorial

U.S., Japan need unrestricted trade

The United States and Japan are at war again — only this time, it's economic war — and neither side is going to resort to kamikaze strategy.

The U.S. has had a trade deficit in the billions for some time with Japan. Auto imports and electronic equipment are among the largest selling items from Japan.

Last week Japan announced that it would continue to enforce export quotas on cars, but boosted the quota by 25 percent. This move outraged the Reagan Administration as well as Congress. The Senate approved 92-0 a resolution encouraging the administration to do anything it can to have the quota decreased or to have Japanese markets opened.

Reagan had offered to open U.S. markets for the Japanese in hopes that the Japanese would reciprocate. No such luck.

Increasing trade deficits have Reagan and Congress worried. Imports threaten U.S. jobs and industry. Time reports that the foreign trade deficit was 11.4 percent in February, the biggest in months. Japanese products comprise \$4.2 billion of the total. The total trade deficit may reach \$140 billion in 1985, which is a 15 percent increase from last year.

Japan's small cars are still better than their closest American competitors. The American car makers are importing parts and technology from Japan for their compacts and some go as far as just importing the cars from Japan and putting new names on them.

Opening our markets would probably cause the automobile industry to redouble its efforts to improve mileage and performance of small cars. Opening our markets would probably also cost the economy some jobs.

However, if Japan would reciprocate, new jobs in other industries would be created, and the trade deficit could be trimmed.

Reagan should lean hard on the Japanese for open markets. As it stands now, Tokyo enjoys lenient trade policy in a country hungry for quality compacts while the U.S. cannot sell its technology to Japanese consumers.

Good news for whales

And now, the good news from the Land of the Rising Sun: Nippon has agreed to stop hunting whales. The Associated Press reported Saturday that Japan bowed to U.S. pressure to stop hunting whales in 1988 to support a worldwide moratorium on whaling.

The U.S. had threatened to reduce Japan's fishing quota in U.S. waters by 50 percent if Japan did not agree to end whaling by April 1.

Norway and the Soviet Union are the only two countries left opposing the ban.

Whaling has been obsolete for some time. Most materials gleaned from whales can be obtained from other sources for less money. Continued whaling threatens the existence of many species of the huge, intelligent ocean mammals.

Japan "reserved the right to withdraw the withdrawal" pending a U.S. Appeals court decision, AP reported.

A U.S. law, the Packwood-Magnuson Amendment, calls for sanctions against countries that do not conform to the 1982 International Whaling Commission ban. The appeals court blocked the sanctions against Japan until violations could be certified. If the ruling goes against the U.S., Japan may decide against the ban.

The world can hardly afford to lose a creature as magnificent and mysterious as the whale. People do not need the whale for survival anywhere — but whales depend on people to guarantee their survival.



'Nicaragua = lie'

Reagan exaggerates Sandinistas' 'ruthlessness'

Washington loathes the word lie. Instead, it prefers imprecisions such as "misspoke," "political rhetoric" or, in congressional testimony, "to the best of my recollection." In that spirit, let me propose a new word for a statement that is — ahem — at variance with the facts: a Nicaragua.



Richard Cohen

A recent "Nicaragua" was the president's charge that the Sandinistas were "using Stalin's tactic of gulag relocation..." Stalin? The Gulag? What's this man talking about? The Sandinistas are moving people out of combat areas. That may or may not be a nice thing to do, but it is a long way from Josef Stalin and his gulag — the Soviet prison system idyllically chronicled by Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

Similarly, the president stretched things a lot when he called the contras "our brothers" and "the moral equivalent of the Founding Fathers." A whopper of a "Nicaragua" there. Unless Washington, Jefferson and the venerable Franklin did some raping on the way to Valley Forge, the contras are something less than their moral equivalent. In fact, they are a mostly peasant army created not by Nicaraguan dissidents, but by the CIA, and whose significant leaders are former officers of the brutal National Guard.

Still another "Nicaragua" is the repeated assertion that the Sandinista regime is ruthless and tyrannical. It is not

by any means a democracy and it may be heading toward a communist dictatorship, but it is not there yet — not by a long shot. In fact, compared to El Salvador, Nicaragua has an admirable record on human rights. The Sandinistas do not drag people out of their homes and decapitate them in gullies.

Yet another "Nicaragua" is the canard that Nicaragua poses a military threat to its neighbors. In fact, Nicaragua's army of 40,000 is smaller than El Salvador's and not significantly larger if the 20,000-man civilian militia is included. It has no air force worthy of the name and its tanks, Soviet-built T-54s and 55s, are 25 to 30 years old — sitting ducks against modern anti-tank weapons or the respectable air forces of Honduras and El Salvador. Moreover, the Sandinistas must know that even a feint toward a neighboring state would bring the wrath of Reagan down on them. Talk about making his day!

So what's going on? Why is the president (and his Charlie McCarthy of a vice president) so exaggerating the faults and the capabilities of the Sandinistas and the attributes and vulnerabilities of their enemies? Why is the administration's rhetoric so out of proportion to the facts? In other words, why so many "Nicaraguas" about Nicaragua?

The answer is Cuba. It's the monkey on the administration's back. The creation of a communist state in our hemisphere is to Reagan's brand of conservatism what the treaty of Versailles was to a generation of Germans — a sellout and a humiliation. Reagan will not permit it to happen again, not again allow what he thinks is the

inescapable nature of Marxism to be camouflaged by grains of literacy or health, declarations of peaceful intent, promises of an eventual democracy and the seemingly limitless ability of some Americans, particularly liberals, to be taken in by all this.

You may want to argue with some or all of that, but it is a legitimate enough theory. The trouble is, though, it's not what the President tells the American people. Instead, in the manner of a parent talking to a child, he dispenses with ambiguities and subtleties and even with the future tense. In rhetoric, he has created a Nicaragua that is already a Cuba.

If Nicaragua won't be Cuba on its own accord, he will make it one. He makes war against it, forces it to militarize and then cites that very militarization as evidence of aggressive designs. He plants mines in the harbors, saboteurs on land and then cries totalitarianism when the Sandinistas respond with a state of emergency.

Maybe in the end the president will be able to vindicate his own exaggerations. Given his actions and the proclivities of the Sandinistas, Nicaragua might well end up being another Cuba. And then we can all wonder who's to blame — the United States for its hostility or the Sandinistas for causing that hostility.

In the meantime, Nicaragua is a long way from becoming a Cuba. To declare otherwise forecloses policy options — and hastens that day when a lie finally becomes the truth.

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Soviets continue murder tactics

The Soviets have murdered an American officer but have promised not to bear a grudge about it, and we have promised to work with them to prevent such "episodes." Detente is back and standing tall.



George Will

The Soviets have been intimately involved in killing scores of thousands of U.S. servicemen, but generally have used Korean and Vietnamese surrogates. Still, who will remember Army Maj. Arthur D. Nicholson, Jr., a month from now? Who

remembers Peter Fechter? He was shot in 1962 while trying to climb the Berlin Wall and was left, like Nicholson, to bleed, while persons eager to help were kept away at gunpoint. Today, the Wall is a state-of-the-art killing machine with automated firing devices. Behind the Wall is a U.S. Embassy. "Normalization."

The Soviet empire requires low-tech murder, too. The day after an Afghan officer led a defection from a convoy reinforced by Soviet troops, the Soviet troops arrested 40 civilians. Patrick David, a physician with Aide Medicale Internationale, told representatives of Helsinki Watch: "They tied them up and plied them like wood. Then they poured gasoline over

them and burned them alive."

The Soviet empire is based on murder, retail as well as wholesale. A Polish priest is murdered by secret police wholly subservient to the KGB. The attack on the pope is organized by Bulgarian secret police subservient to the KGB. The Soviets watch Nicholson bleed for an hour, and stalk Korean Airlines flight 007 for two hours, and what price do they pay? Pay? President Reagan said the murder made him especially eager for a summit with Gorbachev, who used Chernomko's funeral to threaten military action against an American ally, Pakistan, if it continues to aid Afghan freedom fighters.

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