

Editorial

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Rebel news Contras create chaos

Interesting news about the U.S.-backed Contras in Nicaragua is beginning to make its way to the United States. It looks like the so-called "freedom fighters" aren't quite the good guys President Reagan paints them to be.

Contra rebels are disrupting life in neighboring Honduras, where they live in settlements on the Nicaragua-Honduras border, according to the Christian Science Monitor. In addition, an internal battle between U.S. and Contra officials still exists. It appears no one in the rebel group knows who is in charge.

Contra forces, while occupying Honduras, have forced people in several Honduran villages to flee the region. They have stolen food, killed cattle and murdered citizens of that country. Several Hondurans fear military conflicts between the Sandinista forces of Nicaragua and the Contras. About 3,000 Hondurans have had to relocate because of the threat. About 1,200 families live as refugees in the town of Las Trojes, the Monitor reported.

It looks like our endangered Contra forces seem to lack the patriotic and God-given drive and duty that we've been told they have.

In addition, few Hondurans think the Contras can overthrow the Sandinista regime successfully. Hondurans, who fear Nicaragua, probably would want nothing more than to see the Sandinistas overthrown.

The Contras' fate looks even bleaker when you look at the power struggle going on in the group now. Within the Unified Nicaraguan Opposition — the

Contras — three leaders continually claim they are the group's leader: Arturo Cruz, Alfonso Robelo and Adolfo Calero. No wonder the Contras have been so successful in overthrowing the Sandinistas.

Congressmen continue to debate the effectiveness of the Contras. Many still believe they eventually will win the battle and establish a democracy.

But we hope these new developments regarding the situation slow things down a bit in Washington — enough that the House members, who haven't finally approved the \$100 million in Contra aid, will slow down and reevaluate the situation before casting their final vote. The news of a Contra power struggle and displacement of Honduran citizens represents sound reasons why Congress shouldn't support or reject an idea immediately without careful investigation — and a little patience.

Perhaps a vote won't even be needed. Things in Central America look a little brighter this week. U.S. Presidential Envoy Phillip Habib has been working out negotiations between the Contras, Sandinista leaders and other neighboring countries that might alleviate some of the problems in the area. No details have yet been worked out, but officials are discussing setting up free elections and a restoration of a democratic institution.

It's nothing certain, but it's a start. Congress should cool its heels, sit back and look the situation over a little more before deciding to involve the United States in another hopeless Vietnam-like situation.

Donation dispute UNL loses valuable book addition

UNL's Love Library seems to be caught in the middle of a political battle.

The library was to have first shot at about 2,000 books that did not fit the mission of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

But last week, the society's executive board rescinded the agreement with Love Library. It now intends to send the books to the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation, which is a private, non-profit corporation.

The reversal appears to stem from a feud with James Hanson, state historical society director. Some members of the executive board disagreed with Hanson's 2-year-old "weeding" project, which would eliminate books that are not related to the society's focus on state genealogy and history.

At a meeting earlier this month, society board member Nellie Snyder Yost of North Platte asked the board to fire Hanson because of his alleged mismanagement of the project.

The board defeated the firing

motion, but rejected Hanson's Love Library donation decision.

UNL lost a valuable addition to its collection because of the historical society dispute.

The donation would have come at a time when UNL's libraries sorely need a boost. UNL's library ranked last in a study of 11 peer institutions. The libraries' total operation expenditures, salaries and wages were last among peer schools and sixth of seven in Big Eight schools, according to the 1983-84 Association of Research Libraries study.

The historical society's executive board missed the chance to help the state university's library improve.

If the books had been donated to UNL, anyone could have used them. The historical society foundation, however, is a private, non-profit corporation. It now will decide which books will be saved and which will be discarded.

The society's executive board might better have served Nebraskans by donating the books to Love Library.



Graduating senior takes stock Despite budget cuts, UNL still offers a good education

Last year, I interviewed NU Regent Kermit Hansen for a story about growth and the quality of education at UNL.

I asked Hansen if he thought budget cuts in recent years had hurt the quality of education here. His response caught me off guard.

"Well, you've been here four years. Have you gotten a good education?" he asked.

I fumbled with my notebook for a few seconds before responding that I did get a good education. His point was well-taken: An education is only what the student makes of it.

While it's true that NU recently has taken a drubbing financially and that not all programs and facilities here are first-rate, a good education is still here for the taking. This is a plea for those with time left. I graduate in May.

Like many freshmen, I was confused. I didn't know what I wanted to do, and I felt alienated by the university's immensity. But, as time went on, I found my niches — at the Daily Nebraskan, on the rugby team, in the journalism school, in the English department.

I had some excellent professors, and some who were not.

If I have one regret about my time, it is that I did not take fullest advantage

of my professors. I don't think very many students do.

They are there to talk to, and quite often, I learned more in conversation than in the classroom. Nothing destroys the alienation between student and teacher in this gargantuan institution like a face-to-face chat. The automaton who throws ideas at you becomes a man or woman.



Chris Welsch

From my better professors, in every field of study, I've gained an unquenchable curiosity. After five years of higher education, I feel hopelessly under-informed. I have a lot of questions. That, I think, is the mark of a good education.

The information, the facts, the theories have helped me understand the world and, at the same time, have left me thirsting for more. But just as important as the classroom experience is what you do outside of it.

Involvement in any organization, be

it the Daily Nebraskan, the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska or the Meat Judging Team, gives you social skills, a frame of reference, friends, a sense of place. ASUN senators, DN writers and meat judges often are viewed with disdain by each other and by the general student body. But each knows he has accomplished something, perhaps something for the good of the university community.

I'm aware this has been said many times before. I might have even heard it when I was a confused freshman. But it bears repeating: Your education is what you make of it. As reprehensible as the cuts to higher education are, they cannot be used as an excuse.

I cannot in good conscience write my last regular column (I have a finals week "Ask Chris" column coming up) without some overdue thank you's.

I hereby publicly and shamelessly use this space to express my profound thanks to my parents for supporting me through school and to my grandparents, who bought my books.

Without their help, I would still be a dishwasher at Mr. Steak.

Welsch is a senior journalism and English major and a Daily Nebraskan copy desk chief.

Like any smart executive, chieftains of terrorism learn how to delegate

Listening to the rantings of people like Moammar Khadafy, the Ayatollah Khomeini or Yasser Arafat, it's easy to get the impression that they're fierce and warlike.

In a way they are, of course. They've been responsible for much of the terrorism plaguing the world.

But despite their menacing manner, they're really quite thoughtful and shrewd. If you notice, their hides remain intact.

As crazy as they can sound, they're not dummies. They don't strap bombs under their own coats or get behind the wheels of a truck loaded with dynamite or personally hijack planes or ships.

Like any smart executive, they've learned to delegate. They let somebody else do the risky jobs.

And that tells us something important about the leaders of the countries and organizations that go in for international terrorism. They don't necessarily believe their own preachings.

They tell their devout followers that there is simply nothing better than dying while fighting for their religious beliefs. To blow yourself up while ramming a barrack, or shooting up a plane, or bombing a cafe, guarantees a one-way, first-class ticket to eternal heavenly bliss.

This obviously appeals to the religiously devout but ignorant people they recruit, because they've had no

shortages of young boobs willing to go on risky or suicidal missions.

But if eternal bliss is the payoff for getting oneself blown to bits, I have to wonder why the terrorist leaders and organizers are so resistant to a dose of bliss for themselves?

After the hijacked Italian ship was finally free, the veteran leader of that terrorist group went to great lengths to sneak out of Egypt, then out of Italy. He clearly was in no hurry becoming a sitting target and getting prematurely blissful.



Mike Royko

So it is with the rest of them. Arafat looked warlike the time he showed up at the United Nations wearing ammunition. But when was the last time he snuck into Israel to blow up a bus? And nobody ever knows where in Iran the crazy Ayatollah is doing his brooding.

I thought about their knack for self-survival and bliss-avoidance when the word came that Khadafy's infant daughter was killed during the raid in Libya.

To use a word favored by diplomats, the child's death was unfortunate. But

it is a harsh reality that children die in the conflicts created by adults.

Only recently, a terrorist bomb went off on a commercial airliner and one of the innocent passengers sucked through the hole was a baby. Children die when terrorist explosives flatten restaurants and when buses or airline terminals are sprayed with terrorist bullets.

To people like Khadafy, the deaths of children is one of the penalties that his enemies must pay for being his enemies.

So, at the risk of sounding cold-hearted, I have to say that if any child had to die in this conflict, it might as well have been one who was a member of Khadafy's own family.

Even for someone like Khadafy, who deals in death, those other deaths can be distant, impersonal and remote. I'm sure he doesn't know the names of the people who were killed in that German disco. Or the names of those killed in the Rome airport. Or the names of those killed in all the other terrorist attacks.

And I'm sure he has given little thought to the grief felt by the families of each one of the people killed by his terrorists.

No, being a mover and shaker, Khadafy looks at the big picture. A death here, a death there — why, it's all just part of the grand scheme, the flow of

See ROYKO on 5