

OPINION PAGES

Guest VIEW

Borderline U.S., Mexico relations affect drug trafficking

From The San Diego Union-Tribune

It was no coincidence that threats by Mexican drug mobsters to kill a U.S. cop came at about the same time as an American decision on whether to certify Mexico's anti-drug efforts.

Nobody would benefit more from increased antagonism between the United States and Mexico than the drug dealers, and that means no one would have benefited more from decertification than they would have. Recently, President Clinton wisely decided to continue engagement with Mexico.

The drug dealers' threat to kill an American law enforcement officer is clearly designed to sway American public opinion against Mexico and therefore lead to disengagement between the two nations. Increased friction between the United States and Mexico would mean more chaos on the border, and chaos is the best setting for the drug trade.

Mexican drug lords are brutal and cynical enough to try to carry out their threat. That's why American law enforcement agents, from San Diego police to FBI agents, need to be extremely careful, especially if they're traveling in Mexico.

At the same time, the American public needs to understand that building walls — literally or figuratively — between the United States and Mexico plays right into the hands of drug dealers. Anybody who thinks the United States shouldn't have such close ties with Mexico would find a sympathetic ear among the drug lords.

Criminals don't want scrutiny and attention. Mexican drug lords prefer to bribe government and law enforcement officials in secret. Although the drug cartels may seem to be acting with impunity in Mexico, some pressure is being put on them by Mexican officials, with help from American law enforcement and the news media.

If rapprochement between Mexican and American leaders receded, so would pressure on the drug dealers. And that's exactly what they want.

Implicit in the threat by Mexican drug gangs to kill a U.S. agent is the message that meddling in their affairs may be dangerous. In other words, if we leave them alone, they'll leave us alone. But that's the last thing we should do.

It would be the same as kowtowing to terrorists. Instead, the United States needs to step up pressure on Mexican drug lords by increasing engagement with Mexico. By pressing for continued political and legal reforms there, we can make it harder for the drug cartels to do their work.

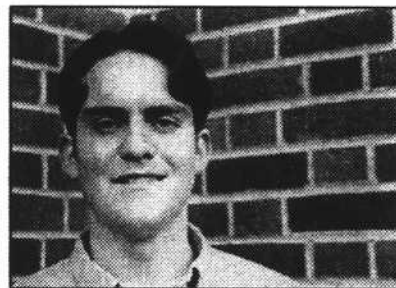
Granted, the depth of political corruption in Mexico is outrageous. But since there's no wall high enough to prevent Mexican drug dealers from supplying U.S. demand for illegal drugs, we have no choice but to continue working with Mexico to lessen corruption there. The threat by drug cartels makes it clear that U.S. and Mexican pressure is hurting their business. And that's exactly why pressure must be increased.

Mehsling's VIEW



Michael DONLEY

American eyes a'smiling Irish or not, drink to the day!



Once again my favorite holiday is upon us. ST. PATRICK'S DAY! Roll out the kegs and the green food coloring, and let's party! I called the Psychic Friends Network, so I know what you're thinking.

"Hey, isn't Donley the guy who usually talks about 'important stuff,' like politics, the death penalty, responsibility, etc.?"

And you are right, but I do have a shamrock tattooed somewhere on my body — a very long story — so it falls upon me to explain all of the intricacies of the American version of St. Patrick's Day.

As always, if we don't like history, we can just rewrite it. So I looked up all of the historical facts about St. Patrick's Day and rewrote them so we can celebrate the holiday how we want to.

St. Patrick was born in England where he perfected the recipe for green Jell-O shots.

St. Patty was captured by Irish raiders and forced to work as a slave herdsman in Ireland for six years where the Irish forced him to wear really cheesy plastic hats with shamrocks on them and lie to his friends about knowing Irish traditions.

Pat was ordained a bishop and promptly went out and got drunk to celebrate.

Because St. Patrick was a humble man, he refused to live in the townhouse provided by the church for him, as a bishop. He instead lived in a cave where he had his

private brewery and stockpile of ugly green shirts.

St. Patrick was a "shabby and ill-dressed man suggesting a rustic simplicity." He needed this disguise to hang out in vaguely "European" pubs, like Iguana's, so the alcoholics there wouldn't find out he was a bishop.

Thus ends Americanized Irish History 101.

You may say that there are some similarities in how the Irish and Americans celebrate this wondrous holiday, and I agree.

The Irish —
Sing traditional songs.

Americans —
Get drunk and sing "Y-M-C-A" at the top of their lungs.

The Irish —
Go to church to pay homage to the blessed St. Patrick.

Americans —
Go to the bar and pay Trevor, the bartender, for anything green and alcoholic.

Again, I know what you are thinking.

"We couldn't have taken a perfectly good religious holiday and polluted it," (like we did with Christmas). And once again, you are correct. Our particular version of St. Patrick's Day also has some grounds in history.

A few centuries after St. Patrick, some of the Irish began using March 17 to plant their crops. According to superstition:

*To make cabbage seed grow,
Sow it in your night clothes,
on March 17th.*

I'm not making this up. Sometimes fact truly is stranger than fiction.

People centuries ago actually believed going out into their cabbage patch and performing a sexual act would help their crops grow.

This does not surprise me. What surprises me is that Americans have not taken this tradition to its logical conclusion.



JASON GILDOW/DN

I can hear it now, the newest pick-up line: "Hey, babe, you want to grow some cabbage?"

Funny as it may sound, it brings new meaning to "Cabbage Patch Kids," doesn't it?

Well, I guess I've had enough of making fun of American tradition for one column.

But seriously, remember that there will probably be more inebriated people out tonight than during a prom chaperoned by Boris Yeltsin.

So whether you are rubbing the doorman's green hair for luck at Decadance, or if you are at Bodega's Alley enjoying the free food, green beer, basketball combination — I'm still not sure how those components relate — above all, be safe.

If you find yourself in a cabbage patch, I hope you have the time to drink a toast to the real St. Patrick.

Donley is a sophomore philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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