

# Government actions breed mistrust

By GRANT LONG

Do you trust your government? Does the American population have faith in the servants we elect and in the government agencies that our tax dollars support?

If this question was asked to the average individual the answer would be no. It is also kind of ironic that people would respond that way, especially in a presidential election year, but in this day and age it is not surprising that more and more people are starting to look at politics in an increasingly cynical manner. Two recent events that may have made people feel this way are the tragedies in Waco, Texas, and Ruby Ridge, Idaho. Although these are just two isolated incidents, the question still lingers, can we trust our government?

Before we all rush to a hasty conclusion, let's examine the latest accusations of wrong-doing by our government. Could the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) be responsible for starting the crack-cocaine epidemic?

Before you start to dismiss this as empty rhetoric let's look at the facts. Gary Webb, an investigative reporter for the San Jose Mercury News, wrote a series of articles in mid-August of this year that linked the CIA to drug trafficking activities. These activities can be traced back to the presidency of Ronald Reagan, when the U.S. was involved in a covert war in Nicaragua.

Supposedly two Nicaraguan refugees, Oscar Bandon and Norwin Meneses, sold huge quantities of cocaine to drug dealers at cheap prices. The reason Bandon and Meneses sold cocaine was to buy military supplies to support the anti-government forces in their country. These two men, almost single-handedly flooded the streets of California with cocaine.

After this the details are unclear. The then director of the CIA, William Casey, was supposedly obsessed with crushing the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Casey allegedly encouraged all the people that worked under him to do the same. Even though no

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one in the CIA has been accused of any wrong doing, we still must ask ourselves how much did the CIA really know?

The immediate response to this was outrage by many leaders in the African-American community. Rep. Maxine Walters, from California said in an interview in the Christian Science Monitor, "I think it is unconscionable that the intelligence community or the CIA could think so little of the people of color that they would be willing to destroy generations in an effort to try to win the war in Nicaragua."

The Nation of Islam paper, the *Final Call*, went a step deeper, with its headline: "How The U.S. Government Spread Crack Cocaine In The Black Ghetto."

Joseph Madison, a radio talk show host in Washington, and a member of the NAACP, summed it all up when he said, "I'm not

dropping it. We're standing up for all crack babies, all innocent bystanders hit by stray bullets during gang-related warfare over this poisonous white powder. The reaction to this story has definitely grabbed the attention of African-American political leaders everywhere."

But what if this story turns out to be true, what then? That means the United States government, the one that is excessively bureaucratic and taxes its citizens royally, is responsible for flooding the inner-city streets of America with crack. This means that the government had the intentions of pushing drugs into the African-American community, but nowhere else besides that. How often does anyone ever hear of a drug bust in Beverly Hills?

I very rarely see the police from 90210 making drug busts on Cops. The crack epidemic didn't really become a problem, until crack found its way out of the inner city. As for the war on drugs, it's just a cover up. The war on drugs is just another excuse to put more people in jail. It is very sickening to think that one of the most dangerous drugs on the street today may have been put there by our government.

Another negative aspect of the Crack Epidemic is the increase in gang activity. Gangs were around before the Crack Epidemic and will be around afterwards, but when crack came on the scene, gang activity increased dramatically.

It started out in L.A. with the

Bloods and Crypts selling crack and competing for drug addicts, but as the popularity of crack increased so did the competition among dealers. This led the Bloods and Crypts to relocate to different areas across the country and wherever they went they usually controlled the local drug market, and crack cocaine made them most of their money.

It is also because of crack cocaine that a lot of innocent people had to die, either at the hands of crack, in drive-by shootings, or by other means related to crack. And what about a generation of children born to mothers who abused crack? If anyone is a victim, they are! Is it still possible that our government could be responsible for this?

Is the American government to be trusted? Answer: Hell No! First of all, any government that might have been responsible for the assassination of a president (JFK), had the head of the FBI (J. Edgar Hoover) keep personal files on the people he hated because he thought they were a threat to national security, supply our enemies with guns (Iran), and purposely start a war that it should not have been in (Gulf and Vietnam) cannot be free of any guilt.

If a government can help to kill a president, then it is by no means above starting a Crack Epidemic. Whose interests are the CIA or other government agencies serving if they allow things like this to happen? Let this question marinate in your brain: can you really trust your government?

## Building on the 'Artes Liberales'

By DEAN MARY RUTH COX

The students of North Carolina Wesleyan College are among a host of other college men and women in this country and around the world, who are poised at the edge of a moment in history that comes only once in a thousand years. First-year students, sophomores, juniors, and seniors — together, you literally form a bridge to the next century, and into the next millennium.

Class of 1997, your final year at Wesleyan begins the momentous countdown to this new year.

Class of 1998, you're not far behind as you begin the second half of your college career.

Class of 1999, you have passed the first-year milestone and are moving ever closer to your goal as the world moves closer to this historical moment.

And then the Class of 2000, the newest members of this campus community. The year that you earn your baccalaureate degree will be the year that all of humankind will cross a significant boundary of time that holds both great promise and great uncertainty.

What is required of you as students of this college in eastern North Carolina to prepare for such a critical time? North Carolina Wesleyan is a liberal arts college.

The term, "liberal arts" is used in several different ways today, but it originated during the Roman Empire and referred to a type of training that was intended for free Roman citizens — only privileged males in those days.

The Romans borrowed the Greek idea that free men must be educated in a certain way as to ensure that society would remain stable and well-governed.

The literal translation of the Latin "artes liberales," or the liberal arts, is "work befitting a free person." We in the twentieth century might put it this way: the liberal arts is a type of education that helps ensure that the citizens of a free society know enough, and understand enough, and question enough, and learn to be responsible enough, to remain free.

It's appropriate to call a liberal arts education "work." Being a student is your job. Just as with any job worth doing, it takes great personal effort and discipline to become a fully-developed fully-liberated human being. But if you give yourself wholeheartedly to this task, your baccalaureate degree from North Carolina Wesleyan will prepare you for many things, including a vocation.

Ultimately, however, the faculty and staff and the programs of this college are dedicated to

the task of helping each one of you develop as a free citizen of the world, ready to assume leadership and responsibility wherever you chose to live and work in the next century and the next millennium.

(Adapted from Dean Cox's Sept. 9 Convocation remarks.)

