

## THE TAR HEEL

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## Register at will

A judge ruled last week that a law requiring male students to disclose their draft registration status when applying for financial aid is unconstitutional. The law, scheduled to go into effect late next week, has been on the books since last September. It deserved to be thrown out the window.

U.S. District Judge Donald Alsop issued a permanent injunction against the federal government last Friday and ordered that the law not be enforced in any state. This week the judge rejected requests from U.S. Justice Department attorneys to stay his order to allow for an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. Kudos to Alsop.

Not only does the law, known as the Solomon Amendment, lead to self-incrimination, thus violating the Fifth Amendment, but it exhibits a simple attempt by the government to coerce members of society. It takes away an important tool of democracy, that of protest, and curbs freedom of speech.

Proponents of the amendment say they are prepared to argue the case before the Supreme Court immediately. If it gets that far, hopefully the brethren will have insight enough to uphold Alsop's injunction.

## An impressive week

This must be Ronald Reagan Week. Newspaper headlines sing sweet serenades of the wondrous space shuttle goings-on. They tell of the "wise" reappointment of the president's Federal Reserve Board chairman. The International Monetary Fund predicted Tuesday that after three years of stagnation, the world economy is poised for "modest but significant improvement" for the rest of this year and 1984. And yesterday the government announced that the GNP is rising the fastest in two years.

Not bad for a president fighting accusations of naivete and bullheadedness, a president toying with the idea of reelection next year. Sort of takes the wind out of the Democratic presidential hopefuls' sails. Other big stories like the pope's visit to Poland and Lt. Gov. Jimmy Green's indictment, of course, have done little to disturb the president's Week. Again, the California knight in shining armor has come through in "the clutch."

Wow. We're impressed.

## Ethical opposition to U.S. foreign policy

By ASHLEY MCKINNEY

The editorial in last week's *Tar Heel* ("Evolution of an American War," June 16) described U.S. interest in Central America as complex, but nowhere does it penetrate the thin surface of White House double-talk on foreign policy. What are the real reasons that current policymakers define the area as vital to U.S. interest? What motivates our leaders to defend right wing dictators who atrociously abuse human rights?

The editorial places the blame for our Central American policy on the shoulders of our "confused president," but U.S. foreign policy is rooted far deeper than in Reagan's moral and intellectual cretinism. Reagan, after all, is hardly standing alone on this issue; he is backed by a number of conservative intellectuals, such as Jeane Kirkpatrick. And, his course of action in no way deviates from traditional policies toward Central America. The CIA destabilization effort in Nicaragua stems from a long history of U.S. intervention. If the current course proceeds, the United States will invade Nicaragua for the 15th time.

Neither is Reagan's policy inconsistent with the general policy toward the Third World. A Vietnam-style escalation in military involvement appears imminent. Reagan's pledge not to send combat troops to El Salvador recalls Lyndon Johnson's pledge that "we seek no wider war" soon before the massive

escalation of "non-combat advisers" to 500,000 U.S. troops.

The fact is that Reagan's policy cannot be discounted as idiotic, the result of confusion or misconception. It is, in fact, based on the pursuit of certain interests.

But are these interests the interests of most Americans? The majority have nothing to gain by the U.S. effort to impose right-wing governments on the people of Central America. And young men are not the only ones who will lose in America's imperialist war games. Military spending impedes the funding of human needs. With raging unemployment, hunger and housing problems, Americans can no longer afford U.S. foreign policy.

In contrast to popular interest, however, there is the interest of the capitalist elite. North American-based companies have invested in the agricultural business of Nicaragua, investments now threatened by economic transformation.

Prior to the Nicaraguan revolution, the country's economy was based on export production at the expense of the production of food and other internal necessities. The Sandinistas are trying to rebuild the war-crippled economy through agrarian reform. Their objective, to make Nicaragua more self-sufficient, runs counter to U.S. corporate interests. This transformation threatens to dissolve markets for U.S. goods and to deplete the supply of cash crops.

Thus from the perspective of U.S. corporations, Nicaragua

is a bad example for the rest of Central America and the entire Third World. Nicaragua could send another "domino" toppling, and thus, the U.S. is not inclined to let even Nicaragua fall.

Corporate interests are very influential in the creation of national policy and explain how even a war opposed by a majority of Americans could still be waged. In order to prevent direct intervention, domestic uprisings must reach such a height that it becomes more costly for the policymakers to maintain corporate rather than popular interests.

People who oppose our continued entanglements in Central American affairs are not simply draft-frightened youth who wish to save their own skins. There are also those who object morally to denying the right of people to improve the conditions of their lives. And yet the *Tar Heel* editorial only excites self-interest by alleging that "you or someone you know might be sent to El Salvador for actual combat." Playing to people's self-interest may not be a bad tactic in building resistance to U.S. involvement. However, in order to insure a more principled resistance, opposition to the policy must be ethical as well as emotional. It isn't simply that you might die in El Salvador or that the U.S. might suffer an embarrassing defeat. Opposition must come from the conviction that the policy is abjectly wrong.

Ashley McKinnon is a junior from Raleigh.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Red, white, blue and afraid

To the editor:

I am not on the left. I am not on the right. I am not radical. I am not conservative. I am an American, and I am afraid.

I am afraid of our involvement in Central America. I am not so much fearful of our physical presence there, as much as of the morality which has placed us in the current situation.

A moral madness seems to have possessed the Reagan Administration. Our country was founded upon the particular morality embodied in the Declaration of Independence. It has served us well, been a source of strength. Now, unfortunately, our moral interests are being subtly subverted in the name of "national interests" (meaning money and power) in El Salvador and other Central American countries.

I am afraid the Reagan administration is manipulating our fears to convince us that the way we are handling Central American problems is the moral way. "Communism" and "The Communist Threat" are words frequently used by the administration in public declarations. But we no longer know what these words mean. Their only effect on us is a vague fear. Something to be avoided. Like a shadow sliding in the darkness of an alley at night. The spectre of an "Evil Empire," as Mr. Reagan stated, is another blatant scare tactic.

I am afraid that you and I will allow the administration to involve us in Central America

in a way that is contrary to our beliefs and humanity. We are already involved there is a strikingly Vietnam-like way.

The early days of the Vietnam war were chronicled in the back pages of the national newspapers. First, equipment and weapons went in. "Military advisers" were next. It was not too long before the first killing of an adviser was detailed on newsprint. Our administration says that no more than 55 advisers will be allowed in El Salvador (the first one has already been killed), and 100 advisers are based in neighboring Honduras. Because of the Vietnam war, the media are giving greater, more visible coverage to early developments in Central America. Yet, it seems that we have not learned from our past. The Reagan administration is going along the path of war with little popular resistance.

I am afraid that as United States transgressions against the humanity of other peoples increase, we will ourselves become less human. Now is the time to deliver a message to the Reagan administration.

On July 2, at 4:30 p.m., a march will be staged in Washington, D.C., to protest the handling of U.S. affairs in Central America. The march will culminate with a rally in front of the Shoreham Hotel, where President Reagan will host the Independence Day Gala Ball.

Joel Richman  
Chapel Hill

### The Vietnam parallel

To the editor:

While people in Central America continue to die at the hands of U.S.-sponsored right-wing terrorism, we have no right to be silent. U.S. preparations for direct, Vietnam-style intervention must be met with more than acquiescence and passive despair.

Electing a new president might help. But that is not enough. Our policy in Central America is a manifestation not of presidential evil or idiocy, but it represents the perceived short- and long-term economic interests of particular segments of the private sector.

But these interests do not determine U.S. policy; they just exert powerful influence in its formulation. Specifically, in addition to preserving international climates conducive to corporate profits, policy-makers must maintain domestic stability and preserve the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the public.

How can we best demonstrate the potency of our opposition?

Joe Morris  
Chapel Hill