

EDITORIALS

Central America and Low Intensity Conflict

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Today, eight years after the Contra war started, about 30,000 Nicaraguans are dead, and young men in wheelchairs crowd Managua streets. In El Salvador, more than 60,000 people have been killed in nine years—mostly civilians—and disabled soldiers beg for coins outside San Salvador restaurants.

Aid levels from both superpowers are now falling fast amid budget cuts. Total U.S. military and economic aid to regional allies dropped from \$1.2 billion in 1987 to \$851 million last year. Aid to El Salvador plummeted by 35 percent; to Honduras, 27 percent. The Soviet Union, embroiled in reforms at home, has agreed to continue aid at present levels only with apparent reluctance, and has encouraged the Sandinistas to settle with Washington and the Contras.

The policies in both El Salvador and Nicaragua, as proposed by the Pentagon, represent a new military doctrine for the U.S. for the late eighties and beyond. Termed Low Intensity Conflict (L.I.C.), this military doctrine was initiated in Central America as a response to guerilla

warfare.

L.I.C. grew in the early 1980's as a military doctrine because during the Reagan-Gorbachev years, much occurred to ease tension between the two superpowers. United States foreign policy, under L.I.C., focuses now not so much on Europe, NATO, and the Cold War with Russia, but on the Third World. Colonel James Motley of the Army, writing in 1985 in *Military Review* summarized this new focus: "The U.S. should reorient its focus and traditional policies away from an almost exclusive concentration on NATO to better influence politico-military outcomes in the resource-rich and strategically located Third World areas."

Many policymakers feel that L.I.C. is an appropriate strategy. Compared to Cold War policies, it appears safer (since it presumably diminishes the risk of nuclear war), cheaper militarily because Third World light infantry units will not cost as much as heavy armored units in Europe, and

more realistic since problems in today's world seem to be coming now from the Third World—from countries such as Iran, Kampuchea, or El Salvador. Nevertheless, there are inherent dangers and other problems with Low Intensity Conflict.

One of those dangers is the enormous monetary costs of this policy, as Nicaragua and El Salvador have shown. More important are the human lives lost in vain because nothing in terms of real political gain has been achieved for either the U.S. or the Soviet Union.

L.I.C. is also an extremely immoral policy for two reasons. First, at the heart of L.I.C. is U.S.-supported terrorism and counterterrorism, according to the Pentagon. Secondly, it is keeping the angry, frustrated peoples of the Third World at each other's throats while at the expense of human life, both superpowers devour resource-rich areas for their own gain. It is also illegal because it is a policy which gives far too much power to groups like the Central Intelligence Agency and takes the power to make foreign policy out of the hands of the people.

Proponents of Low Intensity Conflict soon will make the same discovery that Kennedy and

Johnson made in Vietnam, that Gorbachev learned in Afghanistan, and that Bush may learn—or already has learned—in Central America: that persistent military involvement in Third World conflicts leads to deadly, bloody wars of astonishing depth. And future quagmires may be more deadly than past ones, now that many guerilla-type groups are equipped with sophisticated weaponry.

And while it may seem that L.I.C. or Third World conflict may reduce the risk of a U.S.-Soviet confrontation, this may be a dangerous fallacy. While General Secretary Gorbachev has promised to diminish Soviet involvement in the Third World, he has made clear that the Soviet Union will remain a global force in friendly Third World countries. So it may be possible for U.S. leaders, unaware of Moscow's determination to keep a presence in Third World countries, to initiate attacks against a Soviet ally which would provoke a Soviet retaliation. This retaliation, leading to a U.S.-Soviet clash in the Third World, remains the most plausible path to a nuclear war envisioned today.

REFLECTIONS...

A student and member of the Black Student League at Penn State Delco reflected recently on Myra Dillingham, Assistant Director of Student Programs and Services and Retention Specialist. Many students can echo the feelings recounted here. After five years as a member of the Delaware County Campus, Dillingham has left the Penn State community to pursue doctoral studies. We will miss her and we wish her well.

During my freshman year at Penn State, I attended a smorgasbord sponsored by the BSL. There was a tall brown-skinned woman who was running around tending to the affair. I noticed how all the students were running to her for everything. She was like a mother and these were all her children coming back to her.

I knew one of the members of the BSL and she asked me to help out. Like always I said "yes." That's when I first met Mrs. Dillingham.

Although she did not know me, she acted as if she did. She asked me what my name was and I told her. She smiled and said, "Glad to have you aboard. Here take this!" From that moment I knew this woman would be my mom away from home.

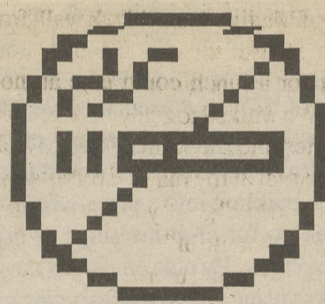
I have shared many times with her. She cheers me up whenever I am sad, like the time when the BSL went to Camp Tomwoch on a retreat. When we first arrived, I thought, "This is going to be a rotten weekend." There were bugs everywhere. Mrs. D. was saying, "Everything is going to be all right." We all shared intimate things about ourselves. We discussed our problems that we thought were unsolvable. We laughed. We cried. We really enjoyed ourselves. Through it all, Mrs. Dillingham was there.

Then there was the time that we went to New York with the French Club. On the bus, I sat with Mrs. D. and she and I talked until we got sleepy and fell asleep against each other. She and I and two friends toured the museum together, and Mrs. D. showed us how to appreciate the art. After we left the museum we went to Chinatown. There we walked and shopped. For dinner we went to Little Italy. Before the meal came we shared things. We talked about boys. We talked about men. We shared secrets. And anyone who did not know us would have thought that we were just good friends. Mrs. Dillingham has a gift, and I am overjoyed that she has shared it with me.

Many times I have needed to talk to someone about home. There was the time I considered moving out. I went to Mrs. D. and asked her if it was wise. She asked me what was wrong. I explained to her how I felt that my parents were being unfair, how they should let me grow up; how they weren't letting one make decisions for myself. She told me that there was nothing wrong with me. However, there is a right and a wrong way to do things. As this "minute" talk turned into a half hour conversation, I realized that Mrs. D. had put a report aside that was due at 12:30. I looked at my watch. It read 11:16. I needed her then, if only to talk to and to have her advice. I will never forget that moment.

You know, I almost went to Howard University because I thought I would meet someone there who might be able to help and guide me, someone who would understand me. Just think, I met that person at Penn State. I'll never forget her! I believe God puts a rainbow in the sky for all of us. For me, Mrs. D. is that rainbow.

New Smoking Policy Leaves Campus Inflamed



by Ellen Schilling
and Karyn Swartz

NO SMOKING! As per University policy, no smoking is permitted in any university building as of April 1. Failure to comply with the policy will result in disciplinary action.

When the above announcement was printed in a recent issue of Penn State's newsletter, *What's Happening*, it served as a spark to light not another cigarette, but many questions and concerns raised by those affected by it. The fact is, everyone who sets foot on any Penn State campus in the Commonwealth will be affected by this policy, smokers and non-smokers alike. This is not to say, however, that they share similar opinions on the matter, or even that both groups were aware of the policy in the first place.

Both smokers and non-smokers were surprised to hear of the new policy when this reporter asked for their opinions on it. This did not, however, keep them from bringing up important questions about the new policy and in many cases, expressing emotions ranging from joy to outrage.

Among the most important questions asked were, "Why did the University decide to take away the smoking privilege now?" "Do they really think that this is going to stop students from smoking if they don't want to?" "Where will they go to smoke now?" "What kind of disciplinary actions will the University take if a student is caught smoking in one of the school buildings?" This article will answer none of these questions. What it will do is give an insight

into the thoughts of the students who are no longer allowed to smoke here.

Said one smoker, "I think it stinks because if you're going to smoke, who are they to say that you can't?" Another smoker added, "Smoking is not illegal. Where are we going to smoke when it starts getting cold outside?"

Some non-smokers expressed sympathy for the smokers. One non-smoker said, "It (smoking) doesn't bother me. I think they should have a designated area because I can't see it eliminated completely."

Surprisingly, one supporter of smoking in the student lounges is the very man who will have to discipline the smokers if he catches them smoking in any building. The Penn State Security Officer, Andy Kearney, feels "smoking should be permitted in the student lounge in the main building and in the library lounge. I do not see prohibiting smoking altogether on the campus." When asked about the possibility of creating special lounges for smokers, he responded, "We do not have the facilities for separate lounges. I don't smoke, but I have to feel empathy for people who do smoke."

"I think smoking is disgusting and it's worse for the people who breathe it in," said one non-smoker. Naturally, one person who was glad about the policy was Penn State's nurse, Phyllis Touchstone. "I'm delighted. Being an ex-smoker, it's difficult to be around people who smoke and not want a cigarette." She added, as did many spoken to about the policy, that "more preparation should have been made for it. There should have been great big signs up."

Prepared or not, the policy is here and is showing no signs of going away. We know how we feel about it; now what's to be done about it? The long-term effects of the new policy remain to be seen. For now all we can do is accept it. Hopefully, as the nurse said, it "isn't going to hurt anybody for the few hours that they're here," but it is a right that has been taken away, and that in itself is enough to drive a person to smoke.