

EDITORIAL OPINION

ID card system should be tested

A security system used at other schools including Georgetown and Temple Universities will soon be test run at Penn State.

The University will test computerized identification card-reading equipment in six dorms in an effort to improve campus safety. It's a good plan that deserves to at least be tested.

Donald Arndt, University director of housing, heads the committee that developed the ID card system idea after studying the campus security situation. Four students worked with the committee, so there was student input into this issue. University officials must also listen to student opinion after the system is tested, and act to follow up on their recommendations.

Arndt said the equipment — to be tested in a cross-section of University dorms — will not replace the current night receptionist program, but will help the receptionists do their jobs. The system would serve to better regulate who gains admittance to the residence halls.

Arndt added, "If someone tries to tamper with the system, the computer records it and actions would be taken."

So far the system sounds ideal. Even if students aren't concerned about attack or

burglary, there might be a decrease in vandalism and related expenses that would be sufficient reason to justify the cost of the installation of new equipment. Arndt said if implemented Universitywide in the future, the system will affect the entire University community, including employee security.

Of course, there are potential problems that could arise before the situation reaches that stage.

Students could lose their ID cards or forget to carry them along because of the inconvenience and consequently have difficulty gaining access to the dorms. However, the same is true for current room keys, and eventually students will adjust to the new system.

Arndt hopes to limit any problems with communication by following the lead and suggestions of other universities which use this system of security. These universities have overcome student difficulties with the system by making sure all students are fully acquainted with the new security measures.

If the system succeeds on campus, apartment buildings should look into following suit. Students living in town deserve to have the same attention given to their safety as students living on campus.

U.S. presence necessary to protect Honduras border

For once, it was not Reagan, but the Sandinistas who really made me angry.

Only a few days before direct negotiations between the Nicaraguan Contra rebels and the Sandinista government were to have begun, the Sandinistas bombed rebel camps in Honduras.

They did this in violation of the Arias Peace Plan for Central America and in spite of all the gains that have so far been made in the region's quest for peace (which have been many) and all the imminent possible gains to be gotten from the direct negotiations.



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Instead of continuing to move to end the bloody war that has torn Nicaragua for seven years, they took action which could only prolong it.

Members of the Reagan administration are not the only ones to have criticized this action. Oscar Arias condemned it immediately, as did one of the most consistent and outspoken opponents to Contra aid in the U.S. Congress. But, whereas some criticized Reagan's sending 3,200 troops to Honduras to protect the border there as an "over reaction," I find myself agreeing with Reagan for the first time in the history of his Central American policy.

Reagan's statement "I am a Contra" has long been famous. While I would be much less willing to actually identify myself with either side of the Nicaraguan conflict, if forced to pick sides I would choose the Sandinistas.

The record is quite clear: they have brought about enormous gains in literacy, health, and land distribution in one of the most impoverished nations of our hemisphere and have created a government which in the context of Central America (well known for its bloody regimes) is remarkably nonviolent. (The death penalty is not practiced there, and while one hears of human rights violations, the existence of death squads is not among the complaints raised against Nicaragua.)

Of course, there are dark spots on the picture: repression of free speech and press, political imprisonment, mobs acting as Sandinista thugs to beat up outspoken members of the opposition. And, of course, economic disaster. But much of this is due to the Contra war: the Contras, like the Russians in Afghanistan, burn the people's crops; and besides, the United States refuses all economic aid to the country; and Soviet aid, never as plentiful as Reagan administration officials would have us believe, is steadily dwindling. As for political repression, it is to be expected in conditions of civil war: Abraham Lincoln closed presses in the North during the U.S. Civil War. It is actually surprising that Nicaragua has remained so different from the Cuban model; in Nicaragua there still exists a legal opposition. And then there are

the gains made since the signing of last year's Guatemala treaty in accordance with the Arias plan; the reopening of the newspaper *La Prensa*, and of the radio station *La Catolica*, and on and on.

And in the midst of all this Reagan and his friends have never ceased to demand support for the war of terror, with which they hope to overthrow the Nicaraguan government.

But now there's this. Why? Why did Nicaragua do it?

If the Reagan Administration has stated its intentions truthfully, to protect the sanctity of the Honduran border and not to enter Nicaragua, then I support their position, in the name of peace, and of the Arias plan. If there is ever to be peace in Central America, the Contras and the Sandinistas will have to lay down their weapons and begin to treat each other as legitimate political entities. Many would object that the Contras are not legitimate: the whole organization was started by the CIA and has remained, as several of its former leaders (including Eden Pastora and Edgar Chamorro) have lamented a tool of the CIA; they have engaged in numerous acts of terrorism; they have been involved in drug smuggling; they have no real credentials as genuine democrats (their military leadership is drawn primarily from members of the National Guard of the country's hated former dictator Anastasio Somoza). And besides, they would point out, there's been too much U.S. intervention already.

All true. But to say that the Contras are therefore illegitimate group is to deny the fact that the common rank and file soldiery consists almost entirely of poor peasants, most of them forced by fear into the army, and it is also to ignore the fact that a significant opposition has grown up in Nicaragua (and why not? In every democratic country, whether the government is good or not, there is always opposition, and that is as it should be) and has, to a large degree, rallied around the Contras.

There's nothing pretty about this war, but we have to accept the realities that have become established. We cannot change the past; we cannot reach back into 1981 and undo the CIA's creation of the group — it is there, and like the PLO and the African National Congress in southern Africa, it will sooner or later have to be dealt with as a legitimate force.

Intervention in other nations' affairs is a bad principle, but it is just as bad a principle not to try to clean up the messes one has already made. (Would any non-interventionists care to argue against the Marshall Plan?)

If Honduras had bombed Sandinista camps in Nicaragua, I would have supported sending U.S. troops to Nicaragua to protect its border. But that's not what happened. And until the Sandinistas show themselves willing to respect the legitimacy of the Contras and the sanctity of the Honduran border, then I support, not a war against Nicaragua either directly or indirectly through lethal Contra aid, but a U.S. presence in the region to protect the peace. It's been a long time since those people have had any

Rick Woodward is a sophomore majoring in history and a columnist for *The Daily Collegian*.

National Quotable Quotes

By The Associated Press — "We now have the possibility that a number of trained hijackers could lead missions of their own." — Rodney Wallis, security director of the International Air Transport Association, a Montreal-based airline trade group, criticizing the Algerian-brokered deal that freed the nine hijackers of a Kuwaiti jetliner.

"I'm only sorry that there weren't more Niseis (Japanese-Americans) living today to be able to see a great nation apologize for its actions. It is, I think, unprecedented in the annals of the history of any nation." — Rep. Norman Mineta, D-Calif., after a Senate vote to approve a \$1.3 billion program of reparations and apologies to Japanese-Americans confined in World War II internment camps.

"In all of my 22 years as an attorney and in all of the hundreds, if not thousands of cases I have been involved in, never have I seen the emotional effect lingering as long as I have in this case." — Richard Bieder, lead counsel for the families of the 28 construction workers killed in the collapse of an apartment building a year ago in Bridgeport, Conn.

"While good progress has been achieved, WFXT has suffered as a result of the regulatory cloud that the Kennedy-Hollings amendment placed over our Boston operations." — Rupert Murdoch, who put his Boston television station up for sale yesterday.

Rhetoric and paranoia

Something strange is happening here on the campus of Really Big University, Inc. At first I thought that this strange behavior was caused by something in the water, but then I noticed that not everyone was affected. So, in order to get to the bottom of things I went to speak to Dr. Ineeda Grant, the University's top researcher.

After taking a seat in her office, I quickly got to the purpose of my visit. "Doctor Grant, do you have any idea what is causing this great unrest spreading across campus?"

She took a deep breath and exhaled slowly. "The recent outbreak of radical behavior among left-handed students has three main ingredients. You have your revolutionary rhetoric, your ridiculous demands, and a slight touch of paranoia. I know what's causing it, but if I show you, you have to promise not to tell a single soul."

"I promise. Cross my heart and all that stuff."

She got up from behind her desk and told me to follow her. We went down a dimly lit corridor to her private laboratory. There were sophisticated doohickeys and electronic gizmos everywhere.

"This all looks very interesting," I said, "but I don't see how this stuff is going to explain what's going on."

"You'll see soon enough," she said. She handed me a dime-sized piece of plastic which bore a remarkable resemblance to a turkey caller. "This is one of my greatest inventions. I call it a dialogue-to-rhetoric transformer. Just put it on your tongue and say something."

I did as she instructed. I tried to recite one of my favorite nursery rhymes, but what came out sounded like "Price Gordon is a hate-filled Twinkie. Down with the spam-faced oppressor swine-pig."

"Wow!" I exclaimed as I took the gadget out of my mouth. "Do I have any control over what I say with this thing?"

"None at all," answered the good doctor. "That is the student activist model. I also have a model designed for administrators. Each has a one-track mind."

"What is the use for such a thing?" "Well, everyone knows that rhetoric makes for much better front page stories than productive dialogue," answered Doctor Grant.

"Are you telling me these little thinga-ma-jigs are causing everything?" I asked.

"No, there's more. Look over there," she said, pointing towards a small lab table. On it was an old Yankees baseball cap with wires sticking out all over and a toggle switch on the bill.



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"I call that my Thinker-Upper. Would you like to see how it works?"

Of course I did, and she proceeded to show me. She placed it on her head and flipped the switch. Her eyes rolled back in her head as she went stiff as a board and fell over backwards. I was just about to dial 911 when she suddenly began to speak.

"I see it now. The answer is so simple, even an idiot could have thought of it. The lefties are upset because there aren't enough left-handed desks in the classrooms. So, to make them happy, all we have to do is build them a Left-Handed Student Center. We'll put left-handed kitchens and left-handed lounges in it with lots of left-handed desks. That should solve the problem."

"I see now," I said. "We can make them feel comfortable here by simply separating them more from the right-handers. It's a wonderful idea."

"And if that doesn't work, we can bribe them. We'll pay them a thousand bucks a piece if they get above a 2.75. Heck, let's make it two thousand."

"Doctor Grant, those are great ideas, but how are we going to get more left-handed people to come here to Really Big University, Inc? We do have a quota to fulfill."

"That's easy too. We go to the left-handed people and ask them to come to school here. If they don't want to, we knock them over the head and put chains on their hands and feet. It's really hard to run away when your feet are in irons."

"That's a great thinking cap you have there Doctor. Do they know about this on Capitol Hill?"

"Yep, they already have a dozen." "I see where all the rhetoric and unreasonable ideas come from, Doctor Grant, but what about the paranoia you mentioned?"

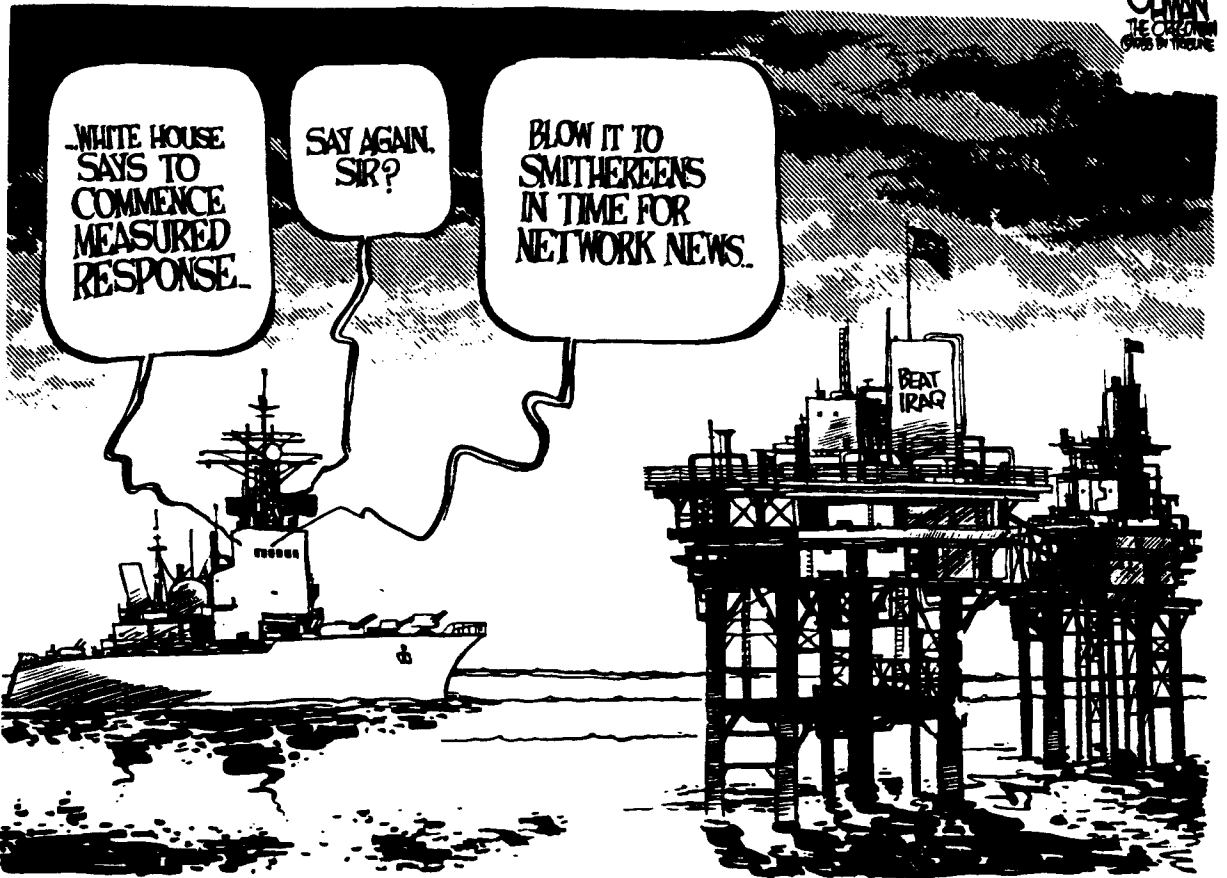
"That comes from special eyeglasses which I have developed. I call them, with good reason, Paranoia Specs. I built a Hammer-and-Sickle model for Eugene McCarthy a few years back. Here, try on this pair."

I took the glasses she handed to me and put them on. I looked out in the hall and saw a group of about a hundred righties gathered around a large fire. They were burning left-handed desks! Being left-handed myself, I was horrified. I shrieked, and tore off the glasses. When I recovered from my shock, I turned to Doctor Grant.

"Doctor, why don't you make glasses to see the world as it is?"

I must have said something wrong. She directed a powerful kick at my buttocks and screamed, "You must really be sick! Get out of my lab right now!"

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PSU Peace Accords

The Collegian recently ran an editorial called "The Penn State Peace Accords," which was about one of the many burning issues in the Middle East — the Arab-Israeli conflict. The editors' handling of the issue was very good and fair. The proposal for the Accords is not so out-of-the-question.

If done properly it can help allay much of the tension that is occurring on campus between Jews and Arabs, as well as give others a model to proceed upon. Of course, many firm ground rules would have to be included.

What might interest the editorial board in regards to the proposal is that a number of Jewish organizations have been offering to meet with Arab groups for months now. Attached please find a copy of a letter that was given to the organizers of the anti-Israel march held two months ago (there was an article written about our proposal).

FORUM

Also, please be aware that almost all the editorials and letters written by pro-Israel students and groups have called for a meeting between Arabs and Jews at Penn State. Look at the editorials that Yachad has submitted, and you will find that we are indeed concerned for both sides, not just our own. We want dialogue. We want to stop worrying about

propaganda attacks in the op/eds. But has there been any positive response from the Arab groups? No. Not one. This is due to two reasons. One is that most Arab students do not understand compromise, nor do they recognize Jews' right to live in the ancient Jewish homeland.

These are not common elements in Arab society.

The second reason is that the Arab and Moslem groups are so involved in their propaganda war that they cannot see the forest for the trees. They do not realize that there is no benefit, really, in bringing one anti-Israel speaker after another to campus. Do these silly events truly enlighten anyone? Do they bring us closer to understanding each other's needs? Closer to peace? No, unfortunately not.

When considering future editorials on the Arab-Israeli conflict here at Penn State, please compare the actions, words and deeds of the pro-Israel community to those of the Arab and anti-Israel community. I believe that you will see a genuine wish expressed on our part to engage in meaningful dialogue.

As has been said too many times, the world is ever smaller, closer, peoples more interdependent... there is no room for extremism and ethnocentrism. We have got to learn to live together. If any editor has a question, please do not hesitate to call or write.

Joshua First is an adviser to Yachad.