Two professors discuss Nicaragua

by Bill Powell
Staff Writer

Dr. Thomas Sheehan, professor of philosophy

Q: Do you believe that the United States should help overthrow the government of Nicaragua?
A: I think the United States should have nothing to do with overthrowing the government of Nicaragua, a legitimately elected government, a government with which we have diplomatic relations. The United States has yet to show that the Sandinista government is not a popularly supported government; has yet to show that in any way it has violated international law.

It's the U.S. on the contrary that has violated international law in its efforts to overthrow that government. It's illegal, it's immoral, and it's counter-productive.

Q: Do you believe that Nicaragua is a threat to other Central American countries as well as the United States?
A: The story is that Nicaragua has managed this immense military build-up for no reasonable defensive purposes. In 1982, the same time as the United States was illegally training Contras and the Sandinistas were building up with knowledge of that, we declared already that their build-up had no reasonable defensive purposes.

The International Institute for Strategic Studies in London has pointed out that the Nicaraguan army, in comparison with the armies that surround it, is in no way superior in anything except perhaps in second-hand tanks. The air space over Nicaragua could be easily dominated by the Honduran Air Force which has eight bombers and Huey's (helicopters).

Nicaragua has nothing by the way of an air force. It has attacked helicopters which it has used and used effectively against the Contras. This myth of Nicaragua poised to attack Honduras is precisely that. It's a myth that only Americans believe.

Q: Recently, representatives of eight Latin American countries sided for a political solution to the conflict in Nicaragua based on negotiations. Should the U.S. support the Cantadora plan for peace in Central America or should it continue to support the Contras?
A: We've said that the only way to bring Nicaragua around is with pressure. I'd like to translate that word. That means murder.

That means that you send mercenaries and counter-revolutionaries into the country and you destroy the economy, you kidnap and kill teachers, you murder civilians. That's what we call pressure, which is our alternative solution to sitting down at these talks instead of international bandits to deal with this country.

Dr. Sam Sarkesian, professor of political science

Q: Do you believe that the United States should help overthrow the government of Nicaragua?
A: I'd have to start by trying to assess what you mean by overthrow. If you're talking about the actual overthrow of an existing system without any kind of political backing of the people within the country (directing the overthrow) and the direct involvement of the United States, no.

Secondly, I think one has to look at how we assess the present Nicaraguan government. Is the Nicaraguan government a threat to American interests and to the rest of the Central American states? I think that's the crucial question.

If we perceive that the Nicaraguan government is a serious challenge to Central America, to other open systems, and our security interests, then we should do everything in our power to assist those in revolution against Nicaragua.

Q: Do you believe that Nicaragua is a threat to other Central American countries as well as the United States?
A: Based on my own reading, I find it difficult to presume that Nicaragua should have an army of 120,000 people and the modern implements of war including MIGs, airports, and tanks. I often wonder, 'what do they need this for?'

Now certainly you could make an excuse that it's against the threat of the U.S., but this build up started before the U.S. got involved, at least verbally. And after all, the U.S. did offer over 150 million dollars to the anti-Somoza revolutionaries when they got into power. And it was the Carter Administration that froze this and Reagan stopped it.

So the question is: do they pose a threat to their neighbors? With a 120,000 man army including militia and regular army and modern weapons and MIG airfields, I'd be a little bit worried if I was in Costa Rica, Honduras, or El Salvador.

Q: But, certainly they aren't the most formidable military power?
A: They are in Central America. Maybe not in all of Latin America, but certainly in Central America they are. I mean here you have a country that's less than the population of El Salvador and has an army three times the size of El Salvador's army. And you often wonder why?

Now you can argue well, they're afraid of the United States. Well, they may be. I'm not denying that's a possibility. But this build-up started before that kind of confrontation started. I'm not suggesting, therefore, that they're going to march on Washington.

Career day offers options for biology majors

by Leslie Morse
Staff Writer

Tri-Beta, the Biological honor Society, will sponsor Career Day, Wednesday, Feb. 26 to inform majors of alternative careers in medicine and dentistry.

Speakers from various fields will have presentations from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the classroom of Centennial Hall.

Students will have the opportunity to hear about future career paths in the seven programs, all of whom are degrees in biology.

The 20-minute speeches will inform the students of different jobs opportunities open to biology majors and the degree requirements for each position.

The scheduled speakers include Dr. Rosemary Grady of Loyola, professor of biology, and Loyola professor Dr. Donna Bishop of the Biology Department. They will discuss the differences between doing laboratory research as a professor and doing research for a company.

Also on the agenda are Ann Hennickel, a senior science writer for the Museum of Science and Industry, Joseph Barron from the Academy of Sciences and Christian Kelley from Loyola Medical Center who will discuss the medical technology program. Alumni Laboratories' toxicologist, Dr. Robert Dudley will address the question of research work for a company, and a talk will also be given by a Brookfield Zoo zookeeper.

Of the 1985 Loyola graduating class, 30 percent of the biology majors who applied to medical schools were not accepted. Demetra Lagen, president of Tri-Beta, hopes that the Career Day will educate biology majors about other professional careers.

"(Biology majors) often don't know what to do with their degree and they don't bother to find out because they think they are guaranteed entrance into the health profession," Lagen stated.

Lagen said she is "sadly" to see a student work four years to get a biology degree and then to have to work in a field that has nothing to do with biology.

"We (Tri-Beta) are offering to show biology majors that medicine and dentistry are not the only occupations in the world." She strongly encouraged all students considering a biology degree to attend.

The Tri-Beta Career Day is open to all biology majors.
professors

Dr. Thomas Sheehan

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Yes, the United States should commit itself seriously to the
Contadora process and negotiate. If it doesn't like what's on the
table it should talk about what's on the table and negotiate it.

Q: The International Court of Justice has consistently ruled
against the U.S. in its efforts to overthrow the government of
Nicaragua. In light of our adherence to the Court's jurisdiction
during the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979, shouldn't we be abiding
by its decisions today?

A: I would like to cite something that Secretary of State
(George) Schultz said: America has a moral responsibility. A
lesson of the post-war era is that America must be the leader of
the free world; there is no one else to take our place.

Listen, the record that we have in Central America and
Nicaragua is so bad, that to claim that we, in the name of a higher
morality, can choose to tell the World Court that we will not
abide by any of its decisions is almost a self-confession of ban-
ditry.

What the Central Americans say is: "the North Americans
never remember and we never forget." The only reason why
Reagan can get away with the policy he has is that we never
remember where we've been and what we've done down there
for the last century. The Central Americans, who have borne
that policy on their backs, never, never forget.

Q: Are the Contras the moral equivalent of our founding
fathers as President Reagan claims them to be?

A: Ask George Washington if he'd like to be associated with
Col. Enrique Bermudez, formerly of the National Guard under
Somoza, and now a Contra leader. Ask him if he'd like to be
associated with Col. Ricardo Lau, also a Contra, who received
$120,000 for arranging the assassination of Archbishop Oscar
Romero. Ask Thomas Jefferson, ask the men who pledge their
lives and sacred honor to bring about freedom in the world if
they'd like to be a part of the dirtiest war that's been fought on
this hemisphere. I think the question answers itself.

Closing Comment:

I think it would be an excellent idea that there be a debate
between Professor Sarkesian and me on these very sensitive issues. I
believe that it would be for the good of the students that we do
have an open debate on this, perhaps the most burning foreign
policy issue of this year.

Dr. Sam Sarkesian

On the other hand, I think it is critical to understand that
Central America is not our backyard. These are sovereign
countries and ought to go with their national inspirations. But, on
the other hand, I wonder if we should stand by if other open
systems or those that are trying to be open, like Costa Rica, which
has no army, are going to be threatened.

Recently, representatives of eight Latin American countries
voiced their support for a political solution to the conflict in
Nicaragua based on negotiations. Should the U.S. support the
Contadora plan for peace in Central America or should it con-
tinue to support the Contras?

A: I don't think these are contradictory. I think that you have
to pursue every possible avenue, and I think politically and
diplomatically that's crucial. And you've got to do it through
regional concerns.

On the other hand, you've got to understand who you're deal-
ning with. Now this is a system that's already shut down the
Catholic radio, Cardinal Obando Reyes. He presented an
indictment against the Ortega regime directly to the U.N. general
secretary Castrillo. The Catholic church is being shut down in
Nicaragua. That doesn't mean human rights to me.

When you say a political solution, what is a political solution
in Nicaragua? A political solution seems to mean the Sandinistas
originally today that watered down Carter and Reagan. Free
elections, free opposition, free newspapers. I don't see that.

Q: Regarding the Contras and human rights, groups such as
America's Watch have documented severe abuses of human
rights by the Contras—should the U.S. be supporting a group
such as this?

A: I think the U.S. should make it a point, if it's going to sup-
port these people, that there must be strict rules and regulations
of their behavior. And I think we must also keep in mind that
human rights are also on the other side. The human rights com-
mision has already come out very recently criticizing both the
Ortega regime and the Contras.

I don't think we should be in the business of supporting
someone who makes a deliberate decision to violate human
rights. Now there's always going to be violations, but it cannot be
a policy and a deliberately followed policy. And if we're going
to support the Contras, we've got to be sure that some controls
are put on to minimize this kind of thing. Otherwise, you become
like them. You become the very people you're fighting against.

Closing comment

You really have to weigh the information you get very care-
fully, and right now I don't know what policy the United States
should follow. And I'm not advocating one policy or another.

But it would surprise me greatly to think that the (Reagan)
aministration is developing a military plan to invade Nicaragua.
I think that would destroy the very purposes of what it is trying to
achieve. And I would think if Ortega is as smart as he claims he
is, he'd know that too.

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