

Reagan accepts diplomatic reality

Betrayal. That's what then Gov. Reagan called President Nixon's recognition of China's Mainland Government in 1978. Betrayal of our loyal allies in Taiwan.

Two years later Reagan promised that he would restore official U.S. relations with the democratic government that ruled China before Mao's army took control of Peking.

Thursday, Reagan will eat roast duck with Communist leaders.

Reagan's cabinet members say that the trip is a result of the president's realization that if Asia is to be politically stable, America must work side by side with the Communist government of the Red China. Other experts on Chinese policy see Reagan's change of view on the "two Chinas problem" as a political maneuver, rather than a change in political philosophy.

In reality, Reagan had no choice. The United States recognized Red China in 1972 — and, personal philosophy aside, reversing that wasn't one of his options as president.

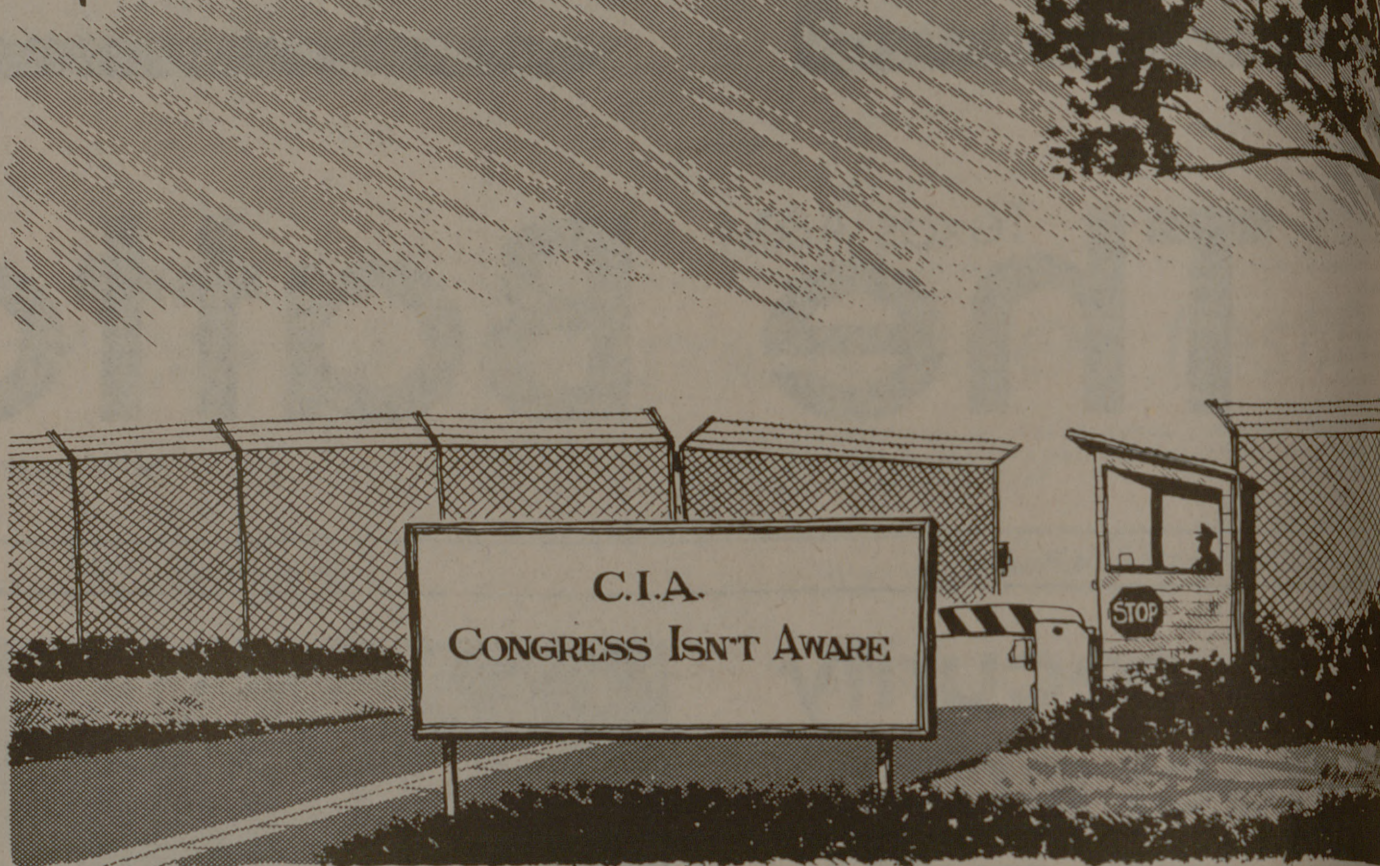
As former secretary of state Alexander Haig said at the MSC Endowed Lecture Series last week, a president can't assume the world began with his administration. But that's exactly what Reagan did with his rhetoric about betrayal.

The Chinese, initially confused by the White House rhetoric, see Reagan's trip as a chance to strengthen diplomatic and economic ties with the United States by hosting the man they believe will most likely run America for another four years.

Reagan's trip is a victory for facing political reality.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

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Covert or overt — that is the question

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

An old-timer from Langley, now living in a safe house in McLean, said of Nicaragua, "I've never seen a CIA covert operation more overt in my life."

"I was thinking the same thing myself," I said. "I thought you guys were supposed to have deep cover when you went into the jungles of Central America."

"That used to be the case. But present U.S. foreign policy demands we let the whole world know we're operating covertly to save El Salvador and bring down Nicaragua. President Reagan wants to make sure friend and foe are aware the United States is actively involved."

"Why doesn't he just declare an overt war and let it go at that?"

"He needs Congress to declare an overt war. He's not going to ask for one during an election year. So the president is conducting a covert war, with all the fanfare of an overt one. The only problem is that when you conduct a covert war, you have a lot of restrictions placed on you, in order for it not to become overt. The mining of Nicaraguan harbors is a good example of that. The president said it was covert — the rest of the world considered it overt."

"And Congress cut off the CIA's funding for its war in Central America."

"It was a big mistake on the president's part because up until then the House and Senate supported the CIA's covert operations in the hemisphere. You see, the object of fighting a secret war is that when something goes wrong, the government can say it knew nothing about it. But in the case of the mining, everyone in the administration defended it, and there was no way of dumping it on a wild rogue elephant at the CIA."

"The administration's strategy was, the more publicity the covert mining operation received, the stronger message we would be sending to the Sandinista government that we really mean busi-

ness. Unfortunately, Congress got the same message."

"Does this mean that the CIA's covert war in Central America is over?"

"Of course not. But it will have to be done much more covertly. Funds for it will have to be channeled from money buried in the education budget, CIA agents will have to be given cover in the Honduran-American Coffee Bean Exchange, and President Reagan will have to shut up about how well his administration's covert operations are going in the Western Hemisphere."

"That's going to be hard for the president to do," I said.

"He has no choice. He needs congressional support for his policy in El Salvador to train the army to fight the Nicaraguan-trained Salvadoran rebels."

"You mean the Nicaraguans are fighting a covert war against El Salvador, at the same time we're fighting a covert war against Nicaragua?"

"Yes, the only difference is that Nicaragua is denying it, which I must say is to their credit."

"Why is that?"

"If you deny you're fighting a covert war, then everyone can pretend your country is not involved. But if you make a legal case for it like President Reagan did, and it goes sour, you're up Central American creek without a paddle."

"What should the president have done when the mining story leaked out?"

"He should have been publicly horrified. Then he should have appointed a presidential commission headed by Henry Kissinger to see how such future incidents could be avoided. Finally, he should have told Bill Casey if the CIA was going to act in such a despicable manner, he didn't want to be his friend any more."

"But the country needs a CIA," I protested.

"There's nothing wrong with having a CIA," the old-timer from Langley said. "But there is something wrong when it suddenly becomes the most overt agency in the government."

Senioritis strikes students suddenly

"Hey kid — what did you learn in school today?"

As I slowly made my way through grade school and childhood, I never knew how to answer. I suppose adults expected answers like:

"I learned how to write my name today!"

"I learned how to subtract numbers."

"I learned how people in Brazil celebrate Christmas."

If so, they were doomed to disappointment. At the end of a school day, my lessons were the last thing on my mind.

It is a shame I never thought to answer honestly. A truthful answer might have been:

"I learned how to avoid getting into a fight with the class bully."

"I learned how to play with a yo-yo."

"I learned not to say '@*#!' unless I want to visit the principal."

No one has asked me what I learned in school for years, but I can't help wondering what kind of answers someone would get if they put this question to a number of undergraduates. Someone might expect answers such as:

"I learned how to solve a triple integral in spherical coordinates."

"I learned how to titrate an acid with a base."

"I learned Plato's Theory of Forms."

But answers would most likely be along these lines:

"I learned how to parallel park in heavy traffic."

"I learned how to float a keg."

"I learned how to cram a semester's worth of material in one night before the final exam."

The point is that people rarely get what they expect out of their college education. After being ushered through

13 years of a pre-programmed public education, it is easy to expect four more years of the same in college, followed by a promising high-paying career with some major corporation.

At some point during this period, every undergraduate is hit by the realization that things such as careers don't come automatically. Some even find that a standard, safe career with a large

of grade points from accumulating any one field; dropping courses at the last possible moment; and taking courses — but care must be taken to keep from being booted out of school and into the real world.

A better-known disorder is senioritis. Symptoms are an increasing impatience with schoolwork and a hostility towards underclassmen and professors.

The progress of this malady is gradual, but in a Doonesbury syndrome sufferer, it can hit suddenly and unexpectedly. Such was the case with me.

Last December, I awoke in the hours of a Saturday morning and did not get back to sleep. As I sat down on my guitar and trying to figure why I was troubled, it hit me that I was anxious for the upcoming spring semester — hopefully my last here at A&M University — to be over with. I was surprised with myself. All my prospects for a job in journalism were slim to nonexistent, and I had the vaguest idea what I was going to do with my life.

Later, when senioritis had taken root in my psyche, I knew the fears of graduation had been confirmed. There was no question that I would support myself. I had not been doing for myself, but for my parents and everyone who had expectations about me. I was supposed to turn out.

Now that I can reflect on my years of college, I find that I did not learn that the size of my

paycheck and where it comes from is not important — as long as I can live with it.

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brian boyer

company isn't what they wanted in the first place, even if it would please Mom and Pop.

Many students react to this trauma by slipping into the Doonesbury syndrome, a malady named after Gary Trudeau's now-dormant comic strip. Victims of the syndrome, like the strip's Zonker Harris, develop an irrational fear of graduation and the unknown world that lies beyond. In advanced cases, the mere sight of a cap and gown or the mention of such terms as "resume" or "interview" can cause victims to break into a cold sweat.

Sufferers of the Doonesbury syndrome engage in a variety of tactics to put off graduation: changing majors frequently, to keep a significant number

The Battalion
USPS 045 360

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Texas Press Association
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The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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