

Opinion

Government backed by popular demand

Justice has prevailed in the Philippines. A dictator has been defeated. Democracy, at least for the moment, has triumphed.

Fortunately the United States didn't jump in and support the dictator just to protect its own interests. For once the United States didn't force itself upon a sovereign nation. For once the United States did what was right and not what was self-serving.

The lesson to be learned is that by doing right, the United States *did* serve its own best interests.

Everyone involved acted rationally. President Reagan didn't ignore the fraud and violence and support Ferdinand Marcos just because the virtual dictator was "untainted" by the threat of communist supporters. Corason Aquino didn't denounce the United States because of its past alliance with Marcos. Instead, the U.S. and new Philippine government both stressed calm and nonviolence and successfully waited out the storm.

The two countries should be able to continue good relations. And the Reagan administration has finally demonstrated that it can support a government of the people rather than a government of tradition. Now if only we only could apply that lesson in South Africa and Nicaragua.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Report debuts

The Restaurant Report is a new weekly public service for our readers which debuts in *The Battalion* today. This addition to the *The Battalion* is not intended to be an attack on local eating establishments, but rather is meant to increase awareness about the conditions of local restaurants.

The weekly story is compiled from County Public Health Department reports. These records are open to the public.

We feel the purpose of a newspaper is to inform and educate its readers, even if it means a loss in advertising. We think the Report will be useful to our readers.

The Battalion Editorial Board



We can't reach for the stars if they're in Reagan's eyes

This is the winter of Ronald Reagan's discontent. His instincts failed him on the Philippine elections. The situation in South Africa grows worse, the Sandinistas still reign in Nicaragua and not even the anniversary celebration of an Irving Berlin war in Grenada offsets the recent tragedy in the suburbs of space. A symbol of American expertise and daring sways gently on the ocean bottom.



Richard Cohen

All these situations or setbacks, to one extent or another, have been influenced by Ronald Reagan's thinking. In the Philippines, he embraced authority even though it had been proven corrupt. In South Africa, similar statements and an amoral policy have put the United States in bed with the racists. Nicaragua, squalid and a good six on the ten-point repressiveness scale, is nevertheless not the bogeyman of the president's imagination. The same holds for the contras. They are not the Freedom Fighters of Reagan rhetoric.

But of all the recent setbacks, the aftermath of the Challenger tragedy illustrates where Ronald Reagan's thinking goes wrong. Like many of us, his initial reaction was to reaffirm faith in the space program, to vow that manned missions would continue and to memorialize the six astronauts and one civilian who were killed. They were good and necessary words that the president, as usual, delivered well.

But because Reagan likes both the goals and the style of the space program, because it excites his imagination, he anthropomorphized it and turned what is just another government program into something out of the Oregon Trail — a heroic enterprise of pioneers. "Your dedication and professionalism has moved and impressed us for decades," he told NASA workers in his television address to the nation. They were precisely the sort of words the president would never utter to welfare workers who brave inner-city slums or mine inspectors, up to their knees in cold water. Pioneers wear white coats and do things the president likes; bureaucrats wear ties and jackets and do things he does not like.

It is now becoming clear, though, that the men and women of NASA are bureaucrats, too — always were, always will be. The investigation into the shuttle explosion reveals that even at NASA memos went astray and supervisors were not given critical information. The head of the shuttle program itself, Jesse W. Moore, has said that he was not informed about low-temperature readings at the base of a booster rocket. We are told that engineers for the rocket manufacturer twice warned that the weather was too cold for a safe launch and that NASA technicians themselves had doubts about the now-notorious O-rings — all of it put down, maybe in triplicate, on paper.

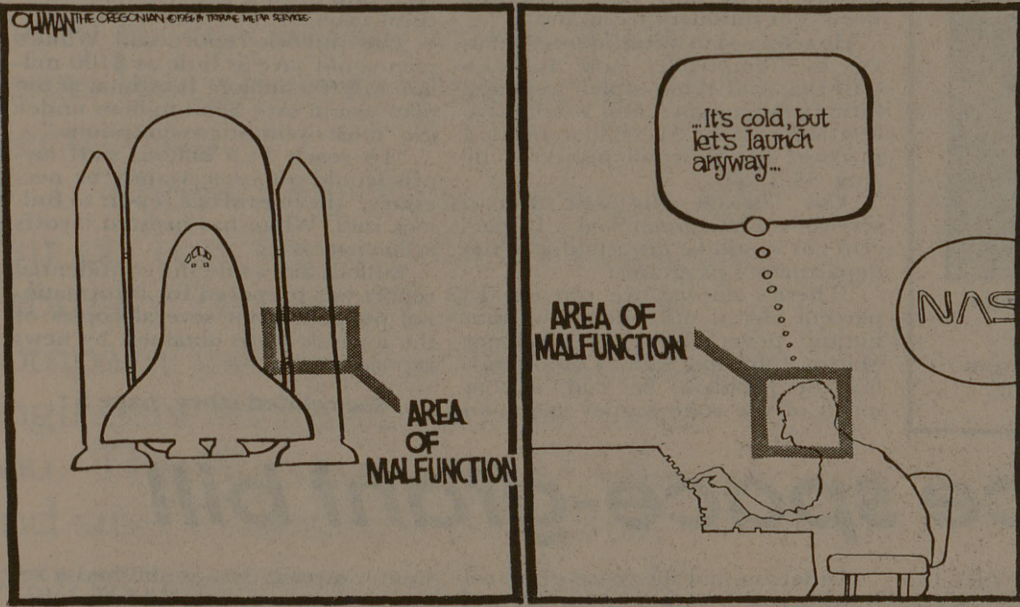
This is the nitty-gritty of management and administration. But NASA has no administrator. It has not had one, in fact, since Dec. 4 when James M. Beggs was placed on leave after having

been indicted on fraud charges stemming from his days as a General Dynamics executive. Since then, NASA had an acting director and, recently, a real general manager. He was the acting director of his day-to-day managerial duties, allowing the explosion.

What you have, in essence, is the structure of an agency in some distress. The president, who challenged NASA to do more with what it claims is substantially less, was content to stick with the acting director. So successful has Reagan become in removing himself from the consequences of his own policies — in mythologizing dash after dash and demonizing the people's work of government — that he asked not a single question about his first post-explosion news conference. The press, too, assumed the explosion was, if not an act of God, certainly was one of man. No one wanted to talk policy.

Ultimately, maybe all the questions regarding policy will amount to nothing. Accidents do happen. But they are more likely when people — bureaucrats — are overworked, tired, poorly paid, not well-motivated and not well-administered or not administered at all. What's true for the Department of Health and Human Services is true for the space program. It's all about the people. One is not a bureaucrat to be treated with scorn and the other person to be treated with respect can reach for the stars if we make it ready in our eyes.

Richard Cohen is a columnist for the Washington Post Writers Group.



AIA using Soviet-style tactics to combat Marxism

By now you probably have heard of the organization Accuracy in Academia, but you may not know much about it. How did AIA originate? What is the purpose of AIA? What does AIA have to say about itself?



Glenn Murtha

AIA was formed last August as an offspring of Accuracy In Media. AIM attempts to alleviate what it considers biased reporting in the media, in other words, liberal slant. AIA was launched to "do on college campuses what AIM has been doing with the media for the past 16 years — combat the dissemination of misinformation." "Misinformatio" means opinions AIM doesn't agree with.

Reed Irvine, the editor of the AIM newsletter, claims, "It is especially unfair when the students know that they may end up with bad grades if they disagree with the professor in class and fail to regurgitate what he has told them on the examination papers." The professors AIA opposes are so-called "Mar-

xists" who "are some of the men who are molding the minds of our future journalists, teachers, lawyers, government officials, legislators and clergymen."

How does AIA intend to correct this problem of "Marxist" professors teaching in college classrooms? Judge for yourself. The following is the complete AIA plan of action:

1. We will enlist the cooperation of students who can help us identify problem courses.
2. We will ask students taking such courses to provide us with tape recordings or notes of statements made by the teachers of such courses which they believe to be seriously in error.
3. If we agree that the statements are incorrect, we will take them up with the professors responsible for them, without disclosing the source of the complaint and will ask that corrections be made in class. If the professors are unwilling to do this, we will endeavor to publicize the errors in existing campus publications or in an Accuracy in Academia newsletter.
4. Since young students may not have the knowledge or the time to carry out this function as carefully as would be desirable, we are asking mature adults to

volunteer to enroll in courses on campuses near their home to serve as auditors for Accuracy in Academia. If funding permits, we will pay the expenses, including tuition, for the volunteer auditors. In many states, senior citizens may take courses in state colleges free. Since our funds are at present limited, we are anxious to get as volunteers senior citizens who can take advantage of this privilege of free enrollment.

5. Our adult volunteers will be encouraged to take an active role of challenging questionable statements in classroom discussions, providing alternative reading material and suggesting supplementary course reading lists. Accuracy in Academia will try to be helpful in providing such material. Volunteers will also be encouraged to provide leadership for younger students, encouraging them to cooperate with AIA and obtaining their assistance in putting out AIA materials, including a campus newsletter.

My first reaction to reading the AIA statements was anger. Who do these people think we are? Morons? I certainly don't come out of a class completely molded in the image of the professor. The professor isn't God. AIA, like other rightist groups, seems to have this irrational fear that young people

are so naive and impressionable that anything we hear, we'll adopt.

What is AIA so afraid of anyway? I doubt that accepting some Marxist ideas will turn America into another Soviet Union. Placing monitors in the classroom presents a much greater threat of achieving a Soviet-style state than advocating Marxist philosophy. I don't think it's Marx AIA is opposed to. Rightist groups like AIA tend to label anything they don't like as "Marxist," "Communist," or "Un-American." These are bad words in the American vocabulary. By using them, they just might get more people to take notice of their cause.

If there are biased professors, I suspect their numbers are relatively small. Many professors are opinionated but generally present both sides of an issue. No professor is naive enough to believe that every student will agree with him, especially if he gives an opinion without strong evidence to support it. On a test, if you disagree with the professor and support your arguments with evidence, you'll make a fair grade. If you don't, discuss the problem with the professor or someone else within the University, not with some external monitoring organization.

Texas A&M President Frank Van-

diver recently wrote about AIA: "You begin to monitor what is being said in a classroom, you are setting up as judge of what ought to be said. This is a threat not just to the classroom and to the university, but fundamentally to the American mind. . . . It causes fear, and nothing can ruin a university faster than fear. Fear of students, faculty, of administrators, of a hostile public sterilizes and pits colleagues against each other, students against faculty, the university against itself."

AIA is solely an attempt to use these tactics to silence speech it doesn't like. It's easier to silence your opponent's opinions than to work to get your own, especially when you realize that you don't have much chance of getting anyone to agree with you.

By now I think we've learned our lesson — the Salem witch hunts, the Scare, the McCarthy Era — and stand for people who attempt to silence speech or forcibly alter the beliefs of others.

It's one thing to offer differing views, but quite another to try to silence views.

Glenn Murtha is a senior political science major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.