

Opinion

The Battalion

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Treading water

President Reagan is determined to sink with his policy on South Africa. Whatever possibilities constructive engagement originally may have promised, it has failed to deliver. It is now nothing more than an empty hulk of foreign policy, and no number of vetoes can make it shipshape again.

Reagan has been fighting the rising tide of public opinion, which favors economic sanctions. Last year, he imposed an executive order — a few watered-down measures against the Pretoria government — in an attempt to stave off growing calls for stiffer sanctions.

The president is considering issuing such an executive order again, this time calling for a black ambassador to South Africa, sending Secretary of State George Shultz to meet with various black leaders and government officials and sending \$500 million in aid to bordering countries that suffer punitive sanctions imposed by South Africa.

While these measures would help ease the smoldering conditions in South Africa, they are not enough.

Apartheid is morally wrong. The South African government condones and perpetuates racism. It denies the majority of its population basic rights yet claims to have a popularly elected government. It is an insult to the concept of democracy.

By vetoing the sanctions bill, Reagan has ignored public opinion and pitted himself against his longtime allies and party members. The president doesn't have enough congressional support to keep the veto from being overridden, but his action has stalled Congress' effort to combat this morally repugnant policy.

The United States took nearly two centuries to come to terms with racism and inequality. Change also will be slow in coming to South Africa. But world opinion and growing economic isolation will help provide an incentive that pre-civil rights America didn't have.

We have a moral obligation to ourselves and the tenets of democracy to break off financial support to countries that show no respect for human rights.

The Reagan administration has done this in Nicaragua, Poland and some 20 other nations. Yet it refuses to be consistent with its own policy when it comes to South Africa.

By continuing to cling to his ineffective policies, the president is holding the United States up to world ridicule. Nations that once looked to us as a beacon of democracy are now leading the way in opposing this racist regime in democratic clothing.

It's time to abandon ship, Mr. President. You can't fight the tide of reality and public opinion forever.

Reagan administration ignores past reality in Daniloff affair

To conservatives, the United States is strong but behaves weakly. The Soviet Union, although weaker, behaves strongly. Accordingly, the ultimate citation is Yalta — the 1945 Big Powers conference at which, conservatives say, the West ceded Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union. As surely as God created little green apples, the Nicholas Daniloff affair is being compared to Yalta. In other words, any swap would be another sellout.



Richard Cohen

There is good reason not to swap Daniloff and good reason, also, not to proceed further with plans for a summit until he is freed. As they say on television, more about that in a moment.

First, though, let us examine the Yalta analogy. It presumes that the West — England, France, but really the United States — could have stopped the Soviets from dominating Eastern Europe. Who knows? But as David Eisenhower argues in his book about his grandfather, the commander of the Allied armies, Dwight Eisenhower, believed that a U.S.-Soviet war or Soviet refusal to open a second front against Japan might have been the result.

In fact, Yalta and the Tehran conference, which preceded it, acknowledged what was already apparent: A totally mobilized Russia was intent on extending hegemony over Eastern Europe. It already had occupied most of the countries it sought and, even before that, by virtue of proximity and ruthlessness,

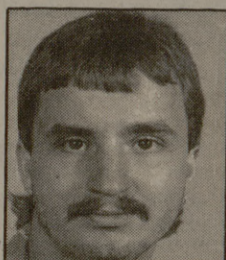
had either weakened or liquidated pro-Western forces. The Russians had borne the brunt of the fighting against Germany, and no one can say what force would have been required to dislodge them from what became their satellites.

The Yalta analogy is instructive not because it says anything about the willingness of the West always to yield to the Soviet Union, but because it always fails to take into account the reality of Soviet power and determination. The Soviet Union was — and remains — not only powerful, but ruthless. Those facts should never be forgotten.

And yet they are. Jimmy Carter registered shock bordering on betrayal when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to prop up a friendly regime on its border. But that was precisely what the Soviet Union did in Hungary in 1956, and there is little doubt it would do the same again. Now the Reagan administration is shocked because the Russians took an American hostage, probably in exchange for one of their spies. Particularly from a conservative president, this naivete comes as a bit of a shock. Whom did he think he was dealing with?

Unfortunately, the answer is not clear. Judging by the government's own actions, you would think that no one ever had cracked a history book. It arrested a Russian employee of the United Nations, Gennadiy Zakharov, and charged him with espionage. From the available information, Zakharov was working his way up to small potatoes; he had recruited a Third World student at New York's Queens College. No nuclear secrets here. Nevertheless, in a media circus, the FBI arrested Zakharov and

America's escalating war on drugs took a turn for the worse this past week when the American Medical Association announced that doctors should set aside doctor-patient confidentiality if they discover that their patients may threaten public safety because of drug abuse.



Craig Renfro

According to the AMA's code of medical ethics, doctors have an obligation to keep medical information about their patients confidential. However, the new twist in AMA policy virtually eliminates the code and makes everyone vulnerable to this tattletale drug game.

Imagine if physicians decided to reveal every problem their patients came to see them about. Pretty soon we would have an Orwellian society, with the doctors playing Big Brother and the government knowing everything about you.

One day you walk into your doctor's office, and he asks how you're doing.

permitted a judge to hold him without bail. It was only a matter of time until the Soviets dropped the other shoe. Surprise?

Hardly. The administration says the arrest of Zakharov was a routine operation, simply a matter of policy. That policy is to catch Russian spies and imprison them. That's the sort of policy that gets roars of approval from Republican National Convention delegates who think the Soviets suddenly have gone wimpy. To them, everything is a matter of U.S. weakness, not of Soviet strength or determination. Theirs is the wrong end of the telescope.

Now, though, the damage has been done. And now conservatives want to stay the course. They have a point. The Soviets should not be rewarded in any way for taking an American hostage. Not only would that lesson not be lost on the Russians, but it would be noticed, too, in parts of the world where hostage-taking is a cottage industry. The French, for instance, ransomed some hostages and were rewarded by the taking of still others. The world is full of American reporters and, unfortunately, those who would abduct them.

But even should we stand fast this time, the Soviets have sent us a message. Whatever happens to Daniloff, no responsible administration official henceforth will permit the casual arrest and media exploitation of a Russian spy. The reason for that is reality — the same reality that applied at Yalta and which a conservative administration, schooled in myth, ignored. Unfortunately, much of the cost of this lesson may have to be borne by Nick Daniloff. He is doubly a prisoner — of the Russians and of a misreading of history.

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"I don't feel too well doc, it seems as if I haven't got much sleep these last couple of weeks," you respond. "I was wondering if you could give me something that might help me relax."

So the doctor refers to his little black book of drugs and prescribes something to ensure a good night's rest.

"Just take one of these before you go to bed and you'll sleep like a baby," the doctor assures you.

So you take his advice and go home, looking forward to a peaceful evening. However, when you arrive home you find a police car parked in your driveway and two officers with stern faces anxiously waiting for you to step out of your car.

"Good evening officers, is there some way that I may be of assistance?" you ask.

The officers don't find your question funny, and they proceed to ask you questions about your daily activities.

"You're late getting home from work aren't you, sir?" the officer asks.

"Yes, just a little, but that's because I went to see my doctor after work," you respond.

"Why did you go to the doctor?"

"I don't want to sound rude, but I don't believe that's any of your business."

"So you wanna play rough," the officer says. "Well, that's OK because we already know why you went there — to get more drugs."

Feeling amazed at the sudden turn of events, you ask the officers how they found out about your prescription.

"Dr. Narc called us and said that you came for more sleeping pills," the officer responds. "He said that was the ninth time in the past year that he has

prescribed them for you, and he feels that you may have a drug problem."

"I can't believe that he told you about my prescription," you reply, stunned by such a breach of confidence. "I thought it was against their code of ethics to reveal their patients' medical problems."

"It used to be," the officer responds. "But since President Reagan got the anti-drug bandwagon rolling, it seems as if everyone is jumping on it."

"First you have the politicians, then the schools and universities and now it's the medical profession. Pretty soon everyone is going to be involved in stopping this menace to society."

"I know that everyone is getting involved in the drug war," you respond. "It's all you see in the newspapers. I think it has something to do with it being an election year."

"But what bothers me is that the medical profession has decided to get sucked into the game. Just the other day I read a story about doctors using drugs."

The police officers' curiosity is aroused, and they ask for more details such as names and addresses. You have to remind them that this was only a survey, not a surveillance.

"A Harvard University survey of more than 1,000 Massachusetts physicians and medical students revealed that nearly half of them have used marijuana or cocaine, and nearly 25 percent of them used mind-affecting drugs," you reply.

"Sounds hypocritical to me," the officer says. "In one hand they're smoking a joint and with the other hand they're dialing the telephone to squeal on their patients."

Craig Renfro is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

Response to the sticker stickler

EDITOR:

We are writing in response to Karl Pallmeyer's Thursday column. We rarely have seen the author's writing more incoherent and without merit. It is true that U.S. Rep. Joe Barton never has kept his educational background a secret. As are most of us, he is proud to be an Aggie.

The famous Gig'em bumper stickers recently received a great deal of press across the 6th District. Both the Texas A&M and the Texas Christian University stickers were printed by student groups that support Barton and hardly represent an effort to defraud the universities as the author suggests.

Moreover, Pallmeyer admits that the campaign has complied fully with the request of the universities in handling the matter.

Finally, we would like to point out that Barton has relied on issues as the foundation of his campaign. Perhaps if Pallmeyer had taken a few moments to review Barton's record, he would know the congressman has compiled a strong record that is the cornerstone of his re-election campaign.

Heather Hood '88
Steven B. Carter '87

One bad apple

EDITOR:

The two percenters have taken over the campus! I've reached this conclusion because three of my books and three of my spiral notebooks were stolen from the Commons. Like the old saying goes, it only takes one bad apple to spoil the barrel. My faith will be restored if my books are returned to me. Don't let me down, Ags.

Krissy Weatherspoon

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