

## Uncle Sam must look south again

*This time, let's not intervene for our benefit, but for theirs*

**Tim Truesdale**  
Columnist

Latin America is still there. This will probably come as a surprise to those of you who depend on the nightly news for your information. Between the thawing of the Cold War and the Persian Gulf War, the world's focus has largely been turned away from our neighbors to the south.

However, the fact remains that we are not alone in this part of the world. And regardless of the new-found goodwill between the United States and the Soviet Union, there are still violent communist groups operating in several Latin American countries. Once things settle down in Europe and the Middle East, we will have to face the problems of Latin America once again.

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As much as many Americans on both sides of the Rio Grande would like to believe it, the United States is not one among equals in the Organization of American States. Citizens of this country have frequently felt responsible for parenting the rest of the Western Hemisphere. And why not? The United States was the first country in the new world to achieve independence from foreign colonial powers. And along with its high material standard of living, it allows its citizens more freedoms than almost any other country in the world.

It is only logical for the United States to guide its "children" along the path to national success. Besides, historical precedent calls for American intervention in national and international crises throughout the hemisphere. In short, the very nature of things seems to call for the United States to help its young neighbors grow. Unfortunately, oftentimes the decision to intervene (or not intervene) is based purely on self-interest.

Uncle Sam is a successful businessman who expects each of his 17 Latin American nephews to study business and join his firm. But one nephew wants to become a social worker, instead. This irritates the uncle. How could his nephew live a successful life as a social worker?

Uncle Sam can intervene, stay out of it or work with his nephew to make the choice together. The United States has chosen to intervene in Latin America more than 20 times since 1900.

For example, Guatemala popularly elected a moderate president in the 1950s. When he started talking about land reform to reduce holdings of the

20 families that owned more than 70 percent of the country, President Eisenhower was swift to act. Land reform was not the way to Guatemalan success because land reform was not the way the United States achieved success. Besides, today's land reform could turn into tomorrow's nationalization of companies owned by U.S. citizens.

Because the purpose of Eisenhower's intervention was to force the American way of life on others and to protect U.S. interests, and not to better the lives of Guatemalans, this intervention was not a case of good parenting.

Then, Uncle Sam read some popular psychology and decided the best way to help his nephew was to stay out of his life. If he wants to be a social worker, let him be a social worker. Intervention can only result in rebellion. Besides, intervention would be messy and costly.

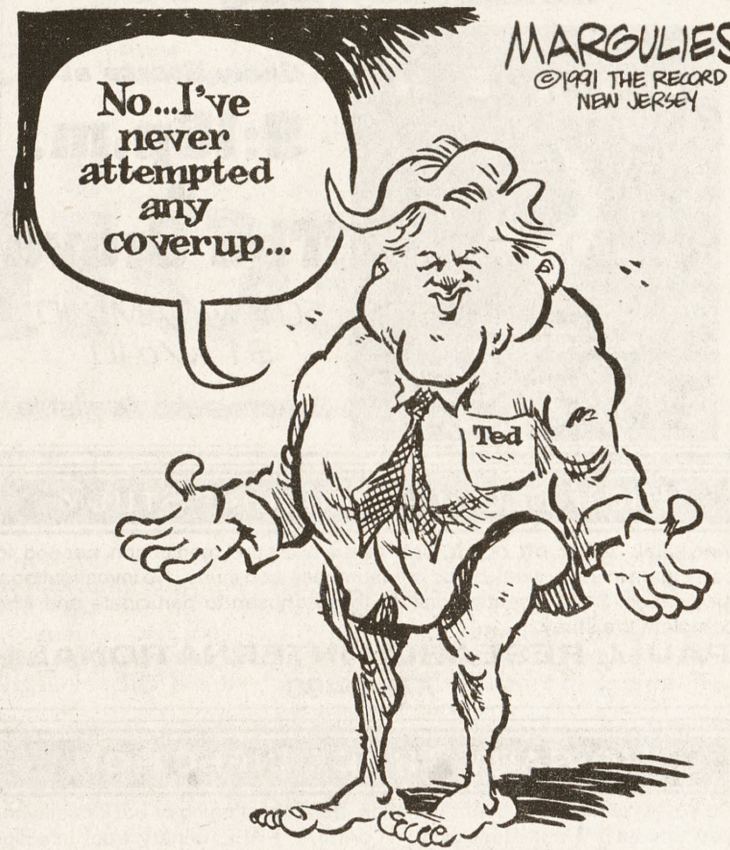
Unfortunately, both of these approaches evade the very important question: what is best for these countries? In order for them to continue growing and achieve independence and autonomy some day, Uncle Sam will not be able to force them to accept his idea of success, nor to sacrifice their identity for his self-interest.

How can the United States really know what is best for other countries? Only by open dialogue. First, we must gather information in the Latin American countries themselves. Forget about Congress basing decisions on the testimony of foreigners appearing on Capitol Hill speaking English in business suits.

Furthermore, the people we send to gather information must speak Spanish and must be familiar with Latin culture. How embarrassing to hear an interview with a U.S. ambassador who can barely speak the language of his host country.

The countries of the Western Hemisphere rightfully resent the United States imposing its will upon them. How can one country ascertain what is best for another? On the other hand, if the United States removes itself from the region, Latin American countries may be unable to contain the aggression of foreign-sponsored rebels. Before intervening in affairs of other countries, we must ask ourselves the following question: who is this for? There is a clear difference between intervention for democracy and intervention to protect our interests.

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## MAIL CALL

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers and welcomes all letters to the editor. Please include name, classification, address and phone number on all letters. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. There is no guarantee letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-5408.

### Most Aggies are hospitable

EDITOR:

I am moved by Tim Truesdale's concern for foreign students on campus (The Battalion, July 24). He is well informed on the many problems foreign students face, and he is aware of their valuable contribution to the cultural life on campus. Much as I appreciate his sentiments concerning foreign students, I am also disturbed by his column.

I was a graduate at the University of Illinois in the late '60s and have returned to an American campus for a brief visit after more than 20 years. Has life on the American campus changed much over the 20 years? Is the American student generation of the '90s vastly different from the infectiously friendly, gregarious and immensely hospitable student generation of the '60s and '70s? Are they less enthusiastic about foreign cultures than the students of my generation? Are the Aggies less hospitable and friendly toward foreign students than students on other American university campuses?

Much has changed since my student days. The foreign student population on American campuses is much larger, and there are representatives from many more countries than in the past. The Indian contingent continues to be strong, but there are also students from China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Korea, Guatemala and many other lands. Foreign students are no more a rare and exotic species; they are accepted as an integral part of campus life.

Moreover, many American students have traveled abroad, some have studied or worked abroad for short periods of time and American students in general appear to be better informed and knowledgeable about foreign lands and foreign cultures than students of my generation. But all this familiarity does not appear to have bred contempt for foreign students, but acceptance. They may not gush with enthusiasm for foreign students, but they do seem to care. The American-foreign student relationship now is a two-way street. "Seek and you shall find" may be good advice to both groups of students.

What of the Aggies? Are they different? They do not

seem to be much different but for one attribute — their fierce loyalty to A&M and its image, reputation and traditions. On most other campuses I visited in recent years, the frequent question posed to me was what do you think of America? But here in Aggieland it is what do you think of A&M?

One of the traditions they appear to most conscious of is hospitality towards foreigners, and they are ever wary of the reputation and image of their beloved A&M. Their concern and desire to help the stranger in their midst is genuine and touching.

I, of course, speak from personal experience. Many have been the little kindnesses extended to me during the three weeks I have been here. I shall carry back with me many memories — of the student drivers of the shuttle bus (I am amazed at the dexterity with which they maneuver the hulk on wheels) and their concern that I may get off at the wrong stop, the library staff who cheerfully put up with my often outrageous demands for obscure data sources and produce them, the software experts at the computer center in Blocker who patiently cope with my monumental ignorance of their science and my eager little band of students and their concern I may miss out on the sights, sounds and culinary delights of College Station. All this and more is extended to an humble academic who is most unlikely to head the government of his mother country, India, and even less so the government of his adopted land, Great Britain. The only inhospitable, incompatible and unfriendly entity I have encountered on campus is the word processor in my office. I guess it was not manufactured in Texas. But with the trio of my Texan friends — Gina, Dina and Tanya — interceding with it on my behalf, the beast is being tamed.

Yes, but what of the beer shower episode, the cause of Truesdale's righteous indignation. It is most regrettable, and Truesdale is right to condemn the perpetrators. Let us hope it is a solitary episode. I do wonder if Truesdale or I could have escaped the shower of beer and abuse if he or I were seen biking at 3 a.m. Beer-soaked brains do tend to be colorblind.

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## Beware the media-military-industrial complex

*We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.*

— Dwight D. Eisenhower

These wise words are even more true now than when then President Eisenhower said them in 1961, as the military-industrial complex has expanded into the media-military-industrial complex. Its effortless manufacture of support for President Bush's war machine made crystal clear the power of this triumvirate.

Polemicist writer Scott Henson investigated the complex's structure by looking at corporate proxy statements of some major media companies. He discovered the following people who are boardmembers of both media companies and defense contractors.

Robert Bauman is a boardmember of Capital Cities Inc. (CCI), which owns ABC. Bauman is also Vice Chair of Textron Inc., a prime contractor for the Cobra attack helicopter, and Abrams battle tank subcontractor. CCI boardmembers Frank T. Cary and Thomas Murphy both sit on the board of Texaco Inc. Texaco contracts with the Saudi government to distribute its oil in the United States. Cary also sits

on the board of the New York Stock Exchange.

Gannett Company Inc. owns USA Today, 80 other daily newspapers, 10 TV and 16 radio stations. Gannett boardmember Julian Goodman sits on the board of McDonnell Douglas, the nation's largest defense contractor. McDonnell builds F-15 and F-18 fighters, Tomahawk cruise missiles and the Apache helicopter, and is a Bradley Fighting Vehicle subcontractor.

Andrew Brimmer has been a Gannett director since 1980 and sits on the board of Dupont, a major nuclear weapons contractor. Rosalynn Carter, wife of former President Jimmy Carter, also sits on Gannett's board.

In 1980 Carter established the "Carter Doctrine," which pledges the United States to "use any means necessary, including military force" to ensure "the free movement of Middle Eastern oil," and created the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) for intervention. An integral part of the RDF was the Peace Shield program of defense contracts with Saudi Arabia.

General Dynamics holds large military contracts with the Saudi Arabian government under the Peace Shield program, and manufactures Tomahawk missiles. Former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance sits on the boards of General Dynamics and the New

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York Times Co., and is also chair of the New York Federal Reserve. New York Times director Charles Pierce II sits on the board of Texaco.

Westinghouse Electric (another Peace Shield contractor) boardmember Rene McPherson also sits on the board of Dow Jones and Co., which publishes the Wall Street Journal and Barron's. Prior to 1989, Dow Jones director James Riordan held the position of vice chairman and chief financial officer of Mobil Oil.

It is General Electric, owner of NBC, which commands the most media clout. GE is a major contractor for nuclear weapons, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle and the Apache attack helicopter. These GE divisions are not discussed on the GE-sponsored "McLaughlin Group" political analysis show on public television.

In 1989 GE's total revenues were \$54.5 billion. Of this, military contract revenues approached \$9 billion, one-sixth of the total, while revenues from NBC were \$3.4 billion.

William French Smith is a GE

boardmember who was U.S. attorney general under President Reagan and is now a Bush appointee to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. GE boardmember David C. Jones is a retired Air Force general and former chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

GE boardmember, Barbara Scott Preiskel, sits on the board of the Washington Post Company, which owns the Post and Newsweek. Washington Post boardmember Richard D. Simmons is a member of the General Electric Investment Corporation Equity Advisory Board.

Former GE director Lewis T. Preston was recently chosen by Bush to become head of the World Bank. Preston is connected to the Morgan financial empire and also sits on the board of British Petroleum, of which the Kuwaiti government owns almost 10 percent.

A related part of this mix is the eldest son of President Bush, George W. Bush, who is a \$50,000 per year consultant to and boardmember of Harken Energy Corp. Harken obtained an exclusive oil development agreement in January 1990 with the government of Bahrain, a tiny island nation off the coast of Saudi Arabia. The Texas Observer has found that Harken has direct links to institutions

involved in drug smuggling, foreign currency manipulation and the CIA's role in the destabilization of the Australian government.

These numerous interconnections render transparent some of the real motives for Operation Desert Slaughter. The war was about resuscitating business as usual for U.S. weapons makers (the Apache helicopter, F-15, F-16 and F-117A Stealth fighters are already or soon will be out of production), and securing the flow of cheap oil which powers the whole complex.

Don't be fooled by the recent letter sent to Defense Secretary Dick Cheney by CNN, AP, UPI, CBS, NBC, ABC, the N.Y. Times and others, strongly objecting to military press restrictions during the war. These companies refused to join the Texas Observer, the Nation and others in a lawsuit filed during the war to stop the censorship.

As the suffering in Iraq and burning oil fires continue, Hugh Forrest of the Austin Chronicle suggests that maybe writing the letter helped soothe the collective conscience of the mainstream fourth estate, now a full partner in the media-military-industrial complex.

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