

Policy of cynicism

Susan Purcell (Viewpoint, Sept. 27) is correct that the Reagan administration must make "urgent decisions" regarding the Guatemala peace accord. Unfortunately, she presents only a thinly disguised brief for traditional (and morally bankrupt) foreign policy.

Historically, most U.S. administrations have arrogated to themselves the right to interfere in the internal affairs of poor nations. Since 1917, the reason given has always been the same: to protect the "free" world from the "communist menace." The real reason is somewhat less noble.

It was stated explicitly in 1948 by George Kennan, then director of the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department. He noted "... we have about 50 percent of the world's wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population."

He then advised: "Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security." To achieve this — "We should cease to talk about vague ... and unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we will have to deal in straight power concepts, and the less we are hampered by idealistic slogans, the better."

Kennan's advice was top secret, and in following it, postwar administrations gave the world brutal dictatorships in Iran, Guatemala, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic, Chile, and Indonesia, among others. Many were created by destroying popular governments, some democratic, whose sin was attempting to use national resources to benefit the people; Counting Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia; millions have died through U.S. efforts to "maintain the disparity."

The Contras, created and maintained by the U.S., are the symbol of what is, in fact, an incredibly cruel and cynical stance by U.S. officials toward the Third World. The "urgent decision" is to repudiate this stance by letting the Central Americans, with international moral support, negotiate their own peace. We will find ourselves more secure, not less.

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