Join the Army, Be a Narc

Bill Kauffman

The government's war on drugs is reaching a fittingly obscene climax. Tots betray their parents to state authorities and are rewarded for their treachery with lucrative movie offers. The first presidential candidate of what promises to be a dreary 1988 lot, Delaware's Pete du Pont, threatens mandatory dope tests for public-school students. Otherwise sensible people are calling for drug traffickers to be put to death. (Even the Soviet Union treats its blackmarket capitalists better than that.)

Most ominous, though, is that the metaphorical war on drugs has been literalized. Politicians who conjure up the imagery of battle to emphasize the ardor of their cocaine-hating no longer need to feel like literary prigs; this is no wimpy Carteresque "moral equivalent of war"—it's the real thing, with soldiers and helicopters and some day, inevitably, blood.

Enlisting the armed forces in the war on drugs was, one supposes, inevitable. Militarism is the great public-works project of our day, employing well over 4 million Americans. Liberals are enamored of the government-as-employer aspect of it, while conservatives bask in the radiant glory a powerful army casts upon the nation-state. But a military really ain't much fun unless you can use it. Florida congressman Clay Shaw (R) was at least honest when, apropos the antidrug campaign, he asked: "Why have all of those men and women and machinery and equipment, airplanes, ships, all of that talent, all of that manpower? Why keep it bottled up and suppressed and not use it?"

Well, now we are using it. War is declared, and battle come down, and the site of our first major campaign in the literal war on drugs is Bolivia. The president of that desperately poor South American land, Victor Paz Estenssoro, was made to understand by his sugar daddies in Washington that the price of continued foreign aid was the surrender of national sovereignty. Paz's government was unwilling to risk losing its \$50-million annual subsidy from Uncle Sam;

moreover, Bolivian drug merchants were gaining political clout throughout the country. So the hemisphere's superpower was invited in.

Six Army Black Hawk helicopters and about 160 troops invaded Bolivia in July, ostensibly for a 60-day operation (which has been, predictably, extended—"indefinitely"). Their mission: help Bolivia's notorious antidrug squad, the Leopards, destroy the remote cocaine-processing laboratories.

The element of surprise was lost, thanks to Bolivian newspaper reports of the impending raids. (By contrast, the New York Times, Washington Post, and Los Angeles Times knew of the raids beforehand but withheld the information until their Bolivian brethren broke the story. The self-proclaimed independent American press didn't want to "disrupt the raid," says the Los Angeles Times's Jack Nelson. Reed Irvine and other baiters of the "liberal press," take note.)

Despite the advance notice, the raids were reportedly a success. Processing labs accounting for 90 percent of Bolivia's cocaine trade have been destroyed, forcing the coke entrepreneurs to shift operations to neighboring countries or go underground for a while.

ut consider, for a moment, the true victims of this raid. Bolivia's 90,000-acre coca crop is the second-largest in the world, behind only Peru's. Its cocaine exports totaled \$600 million last year—\$100 million more than all legal exports combined. Tens of thousands of peasants earn their daily bread picking coca leaves.

Now there is "virtually no market for their crop," according to the Associated Press. The U.S. government has annihilated the most important industry in South America's poorest country and left a goodly portion of Bolivia's population—perhaps seven percent—without the means to support themselves. These people sure can't feed their kids on Nancy Reagan's anti-drug homilies.

Weep not, however, for Bolivian "leader" Paz. This is a superb deal for the Bolivian government. A troublesome source of domestic political opposition has disappeared. A vital (though untaxed) illegal export may be gone, but Paz will be rewarded for his complaisance. Just days after U.S. military forces invaded, the Bolivian planning minister appeared in Washington, hat in hand, begging for \$100 million in economic assistance in addition to the \$50 million U.S. taxpayers are already sending these mendicants. Just how much of this aid finds its way into the pockets of destitute peasants is a matter left to reader speculation.

Unfortunately, the Bolivian tragedy is but one example of U.S. meddling in the agricultural affairs of her smaller neighbors. A U.S.-backed marijuana-eradication campaign in Jamaica (U.S. aid, \$140 million annually) has erased 40 percent of one of that impoverished island's chief cash crops. Again, the victims are poor rural farmers, as well as members of a religious minority, the Rastafarians, who use *ganja* in their rituals.

The U.S. government's new role as world narc is earning us the hatred of Mexicans, as well. In our cover story this issue, Dale Gieringer documents the outrageous abuses of Americans' rights committed by the Drug Enforcement Administration. The DEA is no less assiduous in harassing Mexicans. Its heavy-handed meddling in Mexican police affairs has provoked a new round of anti-Americanism south of the border.

Having deprived Bolivian and Jamaican peasants of their livelihoods and whipped up nationalist resentment in Mexico, the Reagan administration is ready for new triumphs in the war on drugs. Officials are trying to use the promise of increased foreign aid to bribe the governments of Columbia, Ecuador, and Peru into surrendering their sovereignty, just as Paz has given up Bolivia's.

We are already, in Latin America, reaping the bitter fruits of past decades of mili-

editorials

tary intervention to further our own ends. To "send in the Marines" all over again is insanely short-sighted.

Of course, the militarists' thirst is never slaked, and a large number of our statesmen are now clamoring to turn the army loose on the *American* drug trade. They hide behind the well-worn national-security fig leaf. Thunders South Carolina's Thomas Hartnett (R) of the drug menace: "This threat to national security [is] worse than any nuclear warfare or any chemical warfare waged on any battlefield." (Remember: men who are capable of saying things like this with a straight face make the laws that *you* have to live under.)

Prodded by Hartnett and legislators of similar stature, the House version of the recently enacted drug law contained an astonishing provision commanding the president to use the armed forces to "substantially halt the unlawful penetration of U.S. borders by aircraft and vessels carrying narcotics within 45 days." This extraordinary proposal—which called for the military to create an Iron Curtain around a free nation—passed the House easily, 237-177.

Cooler heads prevailed—including that of Defense Secretary Weinberger, who called the proposal "absurd." The provision was quietly dropped, but expect it to resurface next year.

Siccing the military on the domestic drug trade is probably not, strictly speakly, illegal. The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 forbids using the armed forces to execute the law, but exceptions have been made in the past, notably during riots in the 1960s. (More problematic is the legality of the Bolivian raids, which may have violated the War Powers Act of 1973.)

But beyond the legal issues lies a more basic question that the militarists ought to consider. That is, are we still a republic, with a limited government and a civilian-controlled military whose sole purpose is to defend this nation against attack; or are we to become a huge Banana Republic, where a jack-booted military acts to ensure social control at home and hemispheric hegemony abroad?

The grotesqueries described above certainly confirm the worst fears of the Founding Fathers, who, almost to a man, feared that a standing army could become an instrument of tyranny. James Madison spoke for his Constitutional Convention colleagues when he wrote: "Armies in time of peace are allowed on all hands to be an evil."

That is a lesson we have all too easily forgotten. The people of Bolivia are learning it the hard way, and unless the message sinks in soon, so will we.

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About the Author

Psycholinguist Suzette Haden Elgin has presented her innovative self-defense principles in a variety of formats. She has given workshops and seminars all over the U.S., including verbal self-defense sessions for doctors, lawyers, and other professionals. Dr. Elgin has also created a self-defense tape and a training manual for people who teach her self-defense techniques.

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brickbats

et's put Richard Adams's face on a postage stamp, a commemorative issue honoring economy in government. Adams, a Democrat running for a seat in the Arizona legislature, has cleverly saved postage for years by keeping the envelopes his letters come in, inserting his responses, and writing "Return to sender, please" on the outside. "It saves postage, saves envelopes, which are trees, and saves processing time," says Adams. But finicky postal officials say the practice is illegal. Adams's mailing practice came to light when he returned two completed questionnaires, with some campaign literature thrown in, to the *Arizona Republic* newspaper. Oops...

ho was the Israeli prime minister until November, and who is it now? Who is the leader of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa? If you know the answers, you're a lot more informed than the candidates running for U.S. Senate in Maryland. During a TV debate, the moderator shocked the politicians with a pop quiz. And they both flunked. Rep. Barbara Mikulski, who asked if the cameras could be turned off before she answered, said Jonas Savimbi heads the ANC. Rep. Michael Barnes, who sits on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, wouldn't even venture a guess. The politicians' excuses were more pathetic than their answers. "Some days, you just can't even remember your wife's birthday," said Barnes. In case you're thinking of running for office, the answers are: Shimon Peres until November, when Yitzhak Shamir took over. As for the ANC, either Nelson Mandela or Oliver Tambo is an acceptable answer.

Government Accounting Office (GAO) has rendered its decision. If you're a federal employee and you use your own pen at work, Uncle Sam will buy you a refill. Although the government buys 32 million retractable black ballpoints each year, not all the 2.8 million federal workers choose to use them. So the Office of Personnel Management sought the GAO's opinion as the government's court of last fiscal resort. In a three-page decision, the GAO ruled that the government can buy refills for employees' private pens, but only if the pen is used solely on government business. And of



" 'WE NEED YOUR ANALYSIS,' HE SAID! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! HE SENT FOR ME!
THE PRESIDENT ACTUALLY CALLED AND SAID, 'WE NEED YOUR ANALYSIS!!"

course, requests for pen refills must be submitted in triplicate and should be typewritten or in ink. A grateful nation breathes a collective sigh of relief.

They don't like rock 'n' roll in Westfield, Indiana. And they're not all that fond of classical, gospel, jazz, or pop either. The town planning commission rejected a music promotion company's proposal to build a \$7-million performing arts center. The reason? The facility might attract drug users, cultural dropouts, and devil worshippers. The town's youth think the adults' reaction is naive. "Drugs won't move in just because of a concert," says 19-year-old Kim Loller. "I go to church. But I see nothing wrong with rock music. I don't think the Lord condemns us for listening."

s if you didn't know it, here's proof that Washington is the paper-pushing capital of the world. A new study confirms with statistics that much of the paper produced in Washington is just garbage. Environmental analysts studied the city's trash and found that 46 percent of it was paper, compared with a national average of 30 percent. Because of the paper glut, Washingtonians throw away 4.5 pounds of waste a day, a

third above the national average. So many reports, memos, letters, and newspapers are being thrown away that the city has had to resort to landfill sights in nearby Virginia to find space to dump it all. You know what they say: "Garbage in, garbage out."

he farm-subsidy program keeps rolling along. Not content with taking tax dollars for not growing crops, some farmers are finding curious ways to evade a law that limits them to a maximum of \$50,000 in annual income subsidies. Federal audits show that a lawyer in Great Bend, Kansas, is fighting to make three "farmers" eligible for \$50,000 each. The "farmers" are two brothers and their sister, ages 10 to 14. And in Arkansas, a farmer was able to triple his payments last year by reorganizing into three separate corporations. The reorganization was approved by the local Agriculture Department board, of which the farmer himself was chairman. Another farmer and his son received \$50,000 each in subsidies, even though the son owned no farming equipment and was away from home all year attending college. The federal government says it's only just become aware of the chicanery and has no idea how much it's costing taxpayers. So what else is new?

-Mark Edward Crane

December 1986

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trends

Deregulation Transports Women to Higher Levels

ow do you open up a maledominated industry to women? The popular solution seems to be to require employers to hire a certain number of women. Alternatively, women can try to force the hand of businesses by bringing costly discrimination suits. But deregulation? Yes, that's right. It may not be the "in" solution yet, but if the transportation industry is any indication, it has a lot of potential.

There seems to be general agreement among those in the know that deregulation has significantly increased employment opportunities for women in the previously male-dominated field of transportation management. (Transportation managers coordinate the transport of raw materials and finished products for shippers and carriers.) According to a recent issue of the newspaper The Journal of Commerce. many members of the Women's Traffic Club of New York credit "the unraveling of decades-old statutes that regulated traffic on the nation's highways and the proliferation of truck companies as key reasons for their successful entries" into the field.

Until just six years ago, the Interstate Commerce Commission kept a tight clamp on how many hopeful trucking firms could get into the business. Then Congress passed the Motor Carrier Act of 1980, which, among other things, substantially eased entry regulations. The number of trucking companies has since shot up over 80 percent, from 18,045 in 1980 to 33,283 last year. And The Journal of Commerce reported recently that "observers say

the rise of women in transportation correlates with the mushrooming in the number of truck carrier firms" since deregulation.

Marie E. Forsythe, sales manager for the international division of Paper Corp. of United States, agrees that deregulation has helped women break into the industry. "The number of women in traffic manager positions was very small but over the last 10 years our numbers have grown enormously," she notes. And Gloria M. Orlando, records manager for Transway International Corp., a transportation company based in White Plains, New York, says that now there are "a lot of women that are being offered manager positions."

The success of women in a formerly male domain shouldn't surprise those familiar with the other benefits of deregulation. Whenever the government prevents people from freely entering an industry, it hurts most those who are already excluded —usually, women and minorities. It should be a sobering thought for those who would now call on government to intervene in the free marketplace in behalf of women.

On Your Mark, Get Set, Launch!

ree enterprise is coming to the final frontier. In the wake of the Challenger disaster, President Reagan announced that NASA will launch only 14 more commercial satellites from the space shuttles before bowing out of the commercial launching business. (The first of those 14 won't be put aloft until shuttle flights resume in early 1988.)

At the same time the president was getting NASA out of the commercial satellite business, he announced his support for the

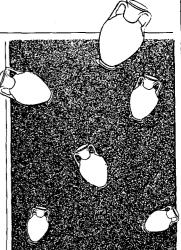
construction of a fourth shuttle, to replace the Challenger. (For a dissenting opinion, see "Scuttle (the Shuttle," REASON, June). Even if the new shuttle is operational by 1991, the space agency will be unable to launch nearly 30 commercial satellites for which it has contracted.

Exit NASA, enter private industry. Nearly two years ago, Patrick Cox reported in these pages ("Space Entrepreneurs," Jan. 1985) on the ways NASA's space-transportation monopoly was thwarting the development of a thriving private space industry, primarily through highly subsidized commercial satellite launchings that made private competition infeasible. As long as NASA was in the launch business, said one investment banker, there was the impression that "the elephants are dancing and some mice will be crushed." But as Cox predicted, "The bureaucratic barriers are destined to fall. The question now is how soon." In the immortal words of The Smiths, "how soon" is now.

Several aerospace firms—most notably Martin Marietta and General Dynamics—appear "ready, willing, and able" to take up where NASA left off, asserts Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole. Martin Marietta, for example, has received "informal inquiries" from 21 firms about satellite launchings, according to spokesman Jack Boyd. The company has made it known that it will be offering its Titan III launch vehicle to lift commercial satellites.

Most significantly, Martin Marietta has signed a memorandum of understanding granting Federal Express the aerospace firm's first satellite-launch reservation. Boyd told REASON that they're shooting for a Federal Express launch date of 1989.

And why did the government ever think there wouldn't be sufficient interest on the part of the



private sector in providing this service? Rick Endres of Transpace Carriers figures that satellite launching will amount to a \$6-billion business over the next six years.

Tom Brosz, editor of Commercial Space Report and a stout champion of space entrepreneurs, pronounces himself "delighted" with the new competition for satellite launchings. Brosz points out that this decision helps not only the Martin Mariettas of the world but the smaller, more visionary rocketmen (some of whom were profiled in Cox's article), as well-"smaller entrepreneurs are getting a lot more interest" from potential customers, he declares. Houston-based Space Services Inc. even reports that it is in business with two customers to launch eight satellites on its Conestoga II.

As the private-sector space industry grows, satellites won't be the only things blasted into the great unknown. Perhaps the most unusual private space venture is in the planning stage at Celestis of Melbourne, Florida. Celestis is one of Space Services Inc.'s customers, and what it will launch is an orbiting mausoleum, probably "at the end of 1987," according to Space Services spokesman Mark Daniels.

The first space mausoleum at least two more will follow—will contain the cremated remains of more than 3,000 dead