

been special reports, but none approaching Barbara's last of 1984 in which she, an unmarried, unpregnant and unengaged woman interviewed three women, one married and pregnant, treated as an unusual condition, an aberration — one married and not pregnant — and one pregnant and not married. According to reports, Barbara is now engaged and not pregnant. She has recently been listed as among the ten best quiffed women in America, rated somewhere behind Joan Rivers.

My fourth wish was for the disappearance of Lee Iacocca from the news and even from his own television commercials. I have lost on this one. Although Lee was passed over — by whom I do not know — for the Vice Presidential nomination by another Italian, Geraldine Ferraro, Lee is still on television in his own company's advertisements and is occasionally mentioned by columnists desperate for material as a potential Democratic candidate for the presidency.

John DeLorean, automotive genius, was my fifth choice for disappearance. John, now divorced from the wife with whom he fought the legal battle, seems to have had it.

At the end of 1984 I expressed a willingness to call the Ferraro-Zaccaro case closed. It has not quite been closed. It has continued in court and has been, according to Mrs. Ferraro, a factor in her deciding not to run for the Senate seat in New York. Geraldine meanwhile is pitching an ad for Pepsi Cola and Motherhood.

My next three wishes, that Gloria Steinem (or at least her reflections on life after fifty), Frank Sinatra, and the Gabor sisters would be retired from the news have, been fulfilled beyond my reasonable expectations. And on Claus von Bulow, whom I hoped would be left to the tabloids, more than I hoped for has been accomplished. Even the tabloids have lost interest in him.

I would say that on my ten most unwanted news persons, the year has given me a victory in the range of seven to three.

Nicaragua and the Bay of Pigs

MICHAEL ROBBINS

Twenty-five years ago President John F. Kennedy's underestimation of popular support for the Cuban Revolution led directly to the fiasco known as the "Bay of Pigs." His miscalculations on Vietnam were even more costly. Today, President Reagan's escalating war in Nicaragua threatens to replay those ignominious chapters of American history.

During a recent two-week visit to Nicaragua, I found that all of the citizens I spoke with — in Managua, Esteli, Condega, and Masachpa — viewed the FDN, the main contra group, as a mercenary invading force made up of former Somoza National Guard. Even those who oppose the Sandinistas viewed the contras as the instrument of US imperialism. Having spent six months in Nicaragua over the last two years, it is clear to me that the vast majority of Nicaraguans recall that the United States supported 46 years of the Somoza dynasty, and therefore they are reluctant to believe that the "gringos" could today have the Nicaragua people's best interests at heart.

"Look," one shop owner told me, "I don't like the Sandinistas. They are lousy administrators and want too much control of importing and exporting. But I will never support the contras. Look at their methods: killing innocent people, burning crops and buildings, stealing like a bunch of bandits."

A middle-aged woman, once an active supporter of the Sandinista party, today criticizes the government for too much bureaucracy, abuse of privileges, and poor economic planning. Yet what if the contra forces show up in the foothills near her small town? "I will pick up my gun like every other patriotic Nicaraguan and protect our sovereignty—to the end. This is our process."

Given such sentiment and the fact that 63 percent of the population voted for the Sandinistas in the November 1984 election, the majority of Nicaraguans appear quite disposed to protect their independence from outside aggression. This sense of nationalism—which is obvious to most of the 40,000 US citizens who have visited Nicaragua since the 1979 re-

volution--is a fact that seems to have escaped administration policymakers.

How is it possible--in the 1960s in Cuba and Vietnam, and now in Nicaragua--that the most sophisticated and experienced intelligence gathering agencies, military analysts, and foreign policy bureaucracy cannot accurately determine the political climate of a revolutionary country? Are US policymakers blinded by their own preconceptions and values? Why cannot they accurately gauge the subjective view of people in other cultures? Has anti-communism and its by-product, crisis mentality, so skewed the policy apparatus that it cannot evaluate hard data?

Policymakers have assumed that, because the Sandinista regime looks to them Marxist-Leninist, the Nicaraguan people must be anxiously waiting to throw off their Sandinista oppressors. Never mind that, to many Nicaraguans, the mixed economy, the preponderance of private property, the participation of priests in the government, and the existence of diverse political parties do not add up to the Marxist-Leninist picture administration officials paint.

A number of vital facts get overlooked in this mode of reasoning. The Nicaraguan peasant who has received land, health care, literacy training, greater access to credit, and technical assistance under the Sandinista regime is not likely to want to return to the past. The Nicaraguan worker whose barrio today has electricity and running water, whose wages increase with inflation, who is involved in a labor union for the first time, and whose children have access to education at every level is likely to defend the Nicaraguan revolution. While such persons do not make up all of Nicaragua's population, they do form the vast majority.

The inability to take off the blinders of virulent anti-communism and reckon with the participants' view resulted in misreading the Cuban people in 1961. In Vietnam, it resulted in the useless death of the more than 50,000 young North American men and as many as two million Vietnamese. Policymakers appear once again unable to accept the reality of popular support for the forces of change and revolution.

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How Italian cities reindustrialized

C. RICHARD HATCH

The United States continues to lose blue-collar jobs at an alarming rate. Since January, 1985, we have lost 250,000 factory jobs; since 1980, 900,000. Third world competition, rising energy costs, a strong dollar, high wages, and rigid union rules are all offered as explanations for the decline of American manufacturing. Most American cities have given up on industry and look to services, such as banking and insurance, to relieve unemployment and replenish dwindling revenues.

But there is no need to give up on manufacturing or to abandon hope for blue-collar jobs--as the recent reindustrialization of Italian cities like Bologna and Modena shows. Faced a decade ago with factory closings and mass unemployment, these cities today enjoy the highest standard of living in Italy. In ten years industrial employment has grown 50 percent. Nearly half of all jobs are now in manufacturing (compared to a declining 20 percent in the U.S.). Public and private entrepreneurship saved the day.

In 1973, when the first oil shock occurred, labor disputes, low productivity and relatively high wages had already made Italian firms vulnerable to overseas competition and shrinking export markets. Particularly affected were the agricultural machinery and machine tool sectors, as well as textiles and other low-priced consumer goods. Traditional mass production firms were in crisis.

The economic resurgence of Italy's central region is based on very small, flexible enterprises organized around multiple-use, automated machinery. These tiny shops are essentially intermediate producers, which link together in varying combinations and patterns and form networks to carry out complex manufacturing tasks for world markets. Frequent subcontracting within networks makes it easy to upgrade product specifications and even change product lines rapidly in response to market signals. There are now nearly 500,000 small firms in the region. In the cities, the density reaches the level of one firm for every five members of the labor force. The vast majority of the owners and managers of