

# PEACEKEEPERS OR PROBLEM?

William O. Beeman

In the wake of the tragic bombing of French and American troops in Beirut, President Reagan has said that the United States intends to keep forces there, and to resist "the bestial nature of those that would assume power" in Lebanon.

Yet the blunt truth is that, for the majority of Lebanese it is the United States and France who are the beasts. Their perception is rooted deeply in history, and force will only confirm it.

In the first place, Washington's approach ignores an essential fact about Lebanon. There is only one thing on which its warring religious and ethnic groups have been able to agree over the years -- they do not want foreign forces occupying their nation, and will go to extreme lengths to remove them.

The feeling is especially strong among Shi'a Moslems. The Shi'as are the largest single group in Lebanon today, with approximately 30 percent of the population. By contrast, Sunni Muslims and Maronite Christians each constitute slightly over 20 percent of the population. But the Shi'a community is also Lebanon's poorest and most powerless. And they have nothing to gain from supporting a course of events which will perpetuate Israeli occupation of their homeland, and a Maronite Christian minority government in Beirut.

Thus, Lebanon is fertile ground for the philosophies of the most powerful Islamic movement in the 20th Century -- the Iranian Revolution. Pictures of the Ayatollah Khomeini adorn every Shi'a mosque in Lebanon. The Druze, who share some common theological history with the Shi'as, have been likewise affected by the power of Iranian rhetoric.

Khomeini's revolutionary doctrine calls for resistance of corrupting, non-Islamic forces at whatever cost -- even at the sacrifice of one's own life. For the Shi'a community, this message has enormous potency right now, because it is also their most important period of religious mourning -- the Islamic month of Moharran, in which the death of Imam Hussein, the seminal Shi'a historical figure, is mourned. Hussein chose martyrdom in 680 AD, rather than yield to what he considered the illegitimate rule of external corrupt forces. He was the chief symbol of the Iranian Revolution.

During Moharran, Shi'as hear daily sermons about the meaning of Hussein's death, and participate in ritual chanting and mourning, emphasizing the need to defend rights and resist the wrongs, whatever the cost. In Iran, such gatherings inspired thousands to march to their deaths, unarmed, at the hands of the Shah's army.

Today, the United States and France are seen as the principal supporters of illegitimate power in Lebanon, as represented mainly by Israel and the Christian minority government. Moreover, the history of that nation has been a continual struggle for self-determination against external domination, often against these same enemies.

Arguably, the very event which brought about the creation of the state of

Lebanon was a bloody conflict between French-backed Maronites and British-backed Druze 120 years ago. In 1860, the Ottoman Sultan carved a new province out of greater Syria, around Mt. Lebanon, to contain the two warring factions. The French continued to protect the Maronites, and in the eyes of the Muslim community, to support their exploitation of other religious communities.

The French continued to dominate Lebanese affairs until the end of World War II. Paris defied a League of Nations mandate assuring governance of Syria and Lebanon as one territory, and created the modern state of Lebanon by appending Moslem areas of Syria to the Christian Mt. Lebanon area. This state included Beirut, Tripoli and the southern Shi'a territory -- just enough Christians to assure Paris' continued influence over trade and cultural affairs, but enough Moslems to assure that France would always be needed to defend "Lebanese interests."

The revolution of 1958, to

which Pres. Eisenhower sent troops for the "preservation of order," and to help Lebanon defend itself against "indirect aggression," had its origins in an attack on Maronite president Tamille Chamoun for his extreme pro-Westernism. The use of U.S. troops then had a calming effect on the country, and resulted in a coalition which lasted until the next civil war in 1975.

By the '70s, demographics had shifted, however. Christians were much more distinctly in the minority, and a pro-Western Christian government found itself pitted against a majority Muslim population, full of Arab nationalism and committed to oppose Israel.

In 1983, dissident Muslim and Druze factions in Lebanon see only one possible outcome from the round of talks proposed for early November -- continued Christian (hence French) and American domination of their nation.

In their eyes, the Syrians do not count as foreign, because most of present-day Lebanon was historically part

of Syria. Indeed, many Lebanese still consider themselves Syrian, and a central issue in the conflict with the Christians has been the desire of the Muslims and Druze to establish closer ties with Damascus.

For this reason, Israel's peace formula, which equates Syrian and Israeli occupation of Lebanon, is simply not culturally accurate.

Given these underlying perceptions and realities, one thing is now patently clear: The United States cannot play an effective diplomatic part in Lebanon unless it is willing to forego military force. The longer the Marines remain there, the more they will be digging themselves into a ready-made villain's role -- serving as symbols of Western domination for people who have been combatting such forces for over a century. The result would not be peace, but a prolongation of violence in Lebanon.

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## CUBAN ALAMO?

Nelson Valdes

For those who measure success with a geopolitical ruler, the invasion of Grenada signifies a swift and major victory for the United States in the ongoing struggle between East and West.

But this is not just another play in that familiar global chess game.

The confrontation on the tiny island of Grenada represents instead a battle between the developed "North" and the weak, underdeveloped "South." In those terms, countries of the Third World see Cuba winning a significant political and moral victory.

Consider the following:

-- Cuban nationals on Grenada moved quickly to resist the U.S. intervention, and to defend the territory and installations they controlled. Soviet personnel on the island did not resist in any manner.

-- An estimated 800 Cubans, of whom 40 were actually military advisors, managed to fight an invading force of about 3,000 for some 36 hours -- despite the fact that the U.S. controlled the air, the sea and most of the surrounding land.

-- The Cubans had orders to resist until they ran out of ammunition and under no circumstances to surrender.

-- In the final moment of battle, the morning of Oct. 26, six Cuban nationals, holding their country's flag, may have killed themselves rather than be taken by the U.S. forces, according to Cuban media.

This is the sort of behavior that Pentagon computer programs cannot quantify or evaluate. Yet the commitment

it reflects has significant impact on world affairs.

U.S. military planners were surprised by the opposition they encountered from a portion of the Grenadan population and the Cubans. They had to bring the Rapid Deployment Force of the 82nd Airborne into the battle, although this was not originally planned because American strategists assumed the whole affair would meet little resistance.

Cuban civilians put up an unheard-of fight. U.S. military officials have said most of them may have been regular soldiers, which would explain their fighting capacity.

That may be so. But anyone who knows about Cuba knows that the Cuban Revolution has universalized military training, which now begins in elementary schools, as well as discipline and organization. U.S. forces at Salines Airport confronted a highly motivated force of Cubans. The Third World understands that motivation.

-- The Cubans were defending the integrity as well as the honor of the Grenadian people, even though the Cuban regime had been highly critical of the murders committed Oct. 18 by the government of Hudson Austin.

-- The Cubans were fighting as well for the dignity of revolutionaries the world over who have rejected colonial rule and control.

-- The Cubans were also demonstrating their leadership and their commitment to stand up to the United States.

-- The Cubans also believed that standing firm in Grenada could send a message to the United States -- that

it should not try to do the same in Nicaragua or Cuba.

As Angel Pino, speaking from the Cuban Interest Section in Washington, D.C., puts it, "Those Cubans in Grenada are determining not only their own fate but the fate of Nicaragua and Cuba. In other words, to the extent that they offer resistance, they will make sure that this aggression will not go unnoticed. If this were an easy victory, those who make policy in the U.S. would continue to escalate. They will think that if it was easy in Grenada, it will also be easy in Nicaragua and next in Cuba."

Cuban defiance of the greatest power in the world may very well capture the imagination of the Third World countries, as the death of Che Guevara did in the 1960s.

It might seem to us that it is foolish to resist insurmountable forces. Yet actions such as this take on symbolic import and contribute to the building of a nation, to developing of national identity, to the strengthening of community. In the 19th century, "Remember the Alamo" elicited the kind of response in Americans that the word Grenada will now produce among Cubans.

Cuban behavior in the Third World is not a response to Soviet designs. The Cuban Revolution has a foreign policy of its own.

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# GREEN ALTERNATIVE Cont'd

issues. It is the domination of human by human as it is ultimately expressed in war, weaponry and the Patton-image of the combative male that gave rise to the very notion of dominating nature. From the age of Homer's 'Illiad' and the bronze-age warrior to the present, the war against nature in the form of resource-exploitation and lust for control of the entire living world has had its origins in the war of human beings against each other. On the other hand, the abolition of the war against nature with its all-consuming fever of domination has its roots in a sensibility of peace -- of peace between humanity and nature that derives from peace between human and human. Ecology and peace are united by the grammar, vocabulary and sensibility of a respect for life as a whole, be it life in human society or the more general web of life we call the biosphere.

Consider, too, how ecological issues interlock with feminist issues. From time immemorial, woman has been the symbol of nature revered and later, in patriarchal society, of a nature degraded. The attempt to curb her rich spontaneity and to "manage" her fecundity as the bearer of children expresses in the most personal terms the domineering male's appetite to subdue the life forms of our planet. In the subjugation of woman, he daily affronts her very being as the symbol of nature, just as his affront of nature expresses his violation of woman's identity and integrity.

Not accidentally, women has now taken increasing custody of ecological and peace issues in the form of eco-feminism and the opposition to missile-siting. The English women who stood vigil at the American military base at Greatham Common are the exact counterpart of their American sisters in Women for Life on Earth who ringed the Pentagon in protest against Washington's rearment policies and the women who took part in the Seneca Falls peace Encampment this summer. For women of both countries, it is not only war in its military sense that has to be eliminated but war in its ecological sense.

Finally, consider how our existence as a democracy and the libertarian traditions spawned by the American Revolution overarch this broad constellation of problems, including the freedom of our communities and the empowerment of our citizenry. Bereft of our liberties, we become voiceless and passive -- the debased conscripts of an all-encompassing military machine. No less than our freedom to express our views and act upon them, we must seek to perpetuate the institutions that guarantee these rights -- the forms of freedom such as town meetings, the electoral accountability of public officials to the people, and the various constitutional means we use to alter public policy.

Germany's Greens have their origins primarily in battles waged by counter-cultural people around nuclear reactors, the Frankfurt Airport's plan to extend a landing strip into one of the area's last pine forests, the occupation of old buildings by squatters, the impact of an all-pervasive feminist movement, and only later, the Pentagon's attempt to site Pershing and Cruise missiles on German soil.

We have not reached this broad, unified and increasingly coherent level of social concerns. We are too focused on trying to deal with each issue as though it can be separated from the others which loom over us. We suffer from a bad American habit of "setting priorities" rather than establishing connections in a coherent and programmatic way. The attempt to extend our democratic liberties is a striking example of a problem that can be narrowed to a "single issue" with its own "network" and "constituency" -- or can be broadened to the proportions it deserves so that it becomes the cement for uniting all the other issues into the historic problem of public empowerment and grassroots control of our social destiny. We can deal with it as a matter of "civil rights" and lock it into exhausting court battles or election campaigns. Or we can deal with it as a matter of human rights that concerns the fate of our republican constitution and our basic liberties as a free people.

With a vast technological revolution in the offing, based on dazzling advances in cybernetics and robotics,

our country is faced with long-range unemployment on a massive scale, social unrest, and ultimately a concerted effort to regiment our country by diminishing its liberties and rights. This is no idle problem. It overshadows everything we will do in the decades ahead -- that is, short of nuclear war of ecological catastrophe. Indeed, our very power to prevent war and ecological breakdown will grimly depend on our ability to preserve these very liberties and rights so painfully gained over past generations.

The industrial, military and political elites that manage America know this only too well. They are burdened by our traditional, semi-agrarian republican constitution which continually entangles them in obstacles that guard the public interest. Limited as we may think our freedoms may be, they are too numerous and compelling to enable the elites to manage a society in which millions will have no home in a robotic economy, no stake in a cybernetic technology, and no hope in an increasingly centralized bureaucratized political structure.

The establishment, you can be sure, has no "tunnel vision." Nationally, it is giving more power to the FBI and CIA, training "special forces" for domestic as well as foreign control, sophisticating its surveillance technology, closing off information to the public, and trying to meld the legislation and judicial branches of the government into an increasingly imperial executive.

The entire Bill of Rights is under siege. Ultimately, these powers will have to militarize the entire country on a scale that will make futuramas like 'Blade Runner' seem picyune. The trick they use is to not overhaul the republic in one fell swoop. They pare it away piecemeal by extending executive terms of office (a six-year presidency is currently being floated in Washington), by substituting bureaucratic and professional agencies for local citizen organizations, by enlarging centralized government functions at the expense of the city and town functions. All of this, to be sure, is done in the name of "efficiency," "cost-reduction," and "expertise."

This is the Army way. It is militarism in politics, economics and daily life as it is militarism in schools when the ROTC plants its noxious roots. Seen in this broad light, the peace movement is fighting the larger issue of a militarized society, not only a monopoly of violence by state agencies and their armed forces. It is fighting the regimentation of people in every walk of life, not merely the conscription of young people. It is fighting a suffocating sensibility that sees nature as mere "resources," not only people as cannon fodder. It is fighting "generals" at every level of society -- in three-piece suits, lab coats, and academic gowns, not only brass-decorated uniforms.

Looking beyond the obvious: the struggle to prevent a six-year presidency covers exactly the same terrain as fighting the production of Gatling guns or B-1 bombers. Once the Army way prevails in our politics, economics, and life styles, we may well lose the very means to deal with the single issues that confront us, indeed the very freedom to cry out, "Peace!"



## CITY DESK Cont'd

forms out to license-holders and got an amazing 220,000 back. The response, says a city representative, is "phenomenal." She said it was doubtful that many of the certificates of insurance were fraudulent.

Diana McCellan in the Washington Times reports that Florence Tate, whom Marion Barry foolishly dumped as his press secretary back in '80, will crop up as Jesse Jackson's pressie. As Diana puts it, Tate got the mushroom treatment from Barry: they keep you in the dark, shovel a lot of crap on you, and you spend your time worrying about getting canned.

The city council revised the city's cooperative housing law last month to allow apartment associations to base voting on value of equity rather than on a one-member-one-vote system. The only problem is that one of the key elements of a cooperative is the one-member-one-vote principle. Allowing more votes to those with larger shares is not really cooperativism -- it's just traditional capitalism. What the city council actually did was to vote to allow cooperatives not to operate as cooperatives.

### The plan

As mentioned here previously, a legally-enacted land-use map is a key part of any comprehensive plan. For any readers who won't take my word for it, I offer as witnesses on my behalf Kirk White and Phil Feona -- lawyers for the zoning firm of Linowes & Blocher. White is also formerly a top aide in the city planning department. Hear what words they saith in a letter to developers and real estate types:

"The most controversial aspect of the proposed plan is the use of a detailed land use map. The mayor has transmitted to the council a proposed land use map and, while he encourages the council not to adopt this map as law, it is likely the council, under political pressure, will adopt the map in some form. The map and the plan are not consistent. If the map is adopted, the land use objectives expressed in the map will have a serious limiting effect on future actions by District agencies in regard to zoning and development. It is, in effect, a zoning map. It largely depicts existing conditions and thus suggests maintaining the status quo....The plan and map, if adopted, greatly limit the flexibility of the District government to react positively to specific development proposals."

White and Feon also notes, "The major potential problem is that the plan, if adopted as proposed, can be misused by opponents of growth and change to tie up land development through litigation. Further, the land use, urban design and historic preservation elements, when read together, significantly restrict the flexibility of property owners. For example, new buildings in historic districts would be limited to the height and bulk of existing buildings. This, in effect, would supercede the zoning of the site and significantly restrict its development. Further, the plan seeks to regulate and/or discourage many land uses, such as fast food operations, churches, restaurants, entertainment establishments, hospitals, universities and others."

The key is the map. The plan itself is written in Planner Gothic, a mealy-mouthed document that can only make a lawyer happy. The map, if enacted into law -- with certain necessary changes, would provide real protection. That's why Kirk White and Phil Feola are so worried about it.

One of the ways the city has improved its stats has been more than a decade of effort directed towards reducing the number of families in the city. Families, according to the city hall view, are a pain in the neck. They require expensive things like public schools. Then when the kids get older they become juvenile delinquents and that costs money, too. This agenda has never been articulated but it has been clear from the planning policies since the sixties. As a measure of the success of the city agenda, DC now has only thirty percent of its households headed by married couples.

### Where the growth is

Despite the tons of money poured into DC east of 15th Street, the real growth in downtown employment has occurred on in the Connecticut-K Street area. The area added 25,000 jobs between 1976 and 1980 -- almost as many as exist at the next largest area employment area, Tysons Corner. This should be something of an embarrassment to city planners and politicians but they undoubtedly will choose to ignore the implication that they have wasted millions of dollars fighting natural shifts in the center of downtown. You will find precious few grand city schemes for the Connecticut & K area, but you will find jobs. Council of Governments analyst Robert B. Dumphny, who did a study of employment centers, notes that "Employment in Washington increased sharply over the period in the growing office center around Connecticut Avenue and K Street, even while there were job losses in the older retail core." The latter being, of course, where the public money went. Sic transit your tax dollars.

The [Comprehensive Plan] indicates the need to produce about 38,000 new units of housing to replace deteriorated stock and meet market ademand between now and the year 2000. Additionally, some 5000 units current not in use need to be rehabilitated and brought back into use. \*\*\* Nearly 24,000 units of housing are unoccupied of which nearly 10,000 are vacant units, not for sale or rent. The highest concentrations of vacant housing stock is in Wards 1,2 and 8.

Unfortunately, \*\*\* the plan makes no correlation between the need for housing and targeting housing development to those areas of the city where vacant housing is most abundant. \*\*\* The plan states there is a need and that the city must do all it can to meet this need, but nothing is offered in terms of providing any assurances that the need will be met in those areas of the city faced with critical housing problems.

\*\*\* The plan clearly lacks a commitment to addressing the needs of overcoming the problems of long neglected neighborhoods. At no point does the plan indicate that anything will be done relating to these neighborhoods or provide any steps to be taken to indicate anything will be done.

\*\*\* The vagueness of the plan places tremendous limitations on what we can really determine to be its intent. This ambiguity is the primary weakness. We really don't know where this plan will take us. It doesn't make a commitment to taking us anyplace.

BETTI WHALEY  
President  
Washington Urban League

## Traffic ignores Metro

The latest spinoff from Metroflop was reported last month by the Post: "The number of cars heading into the downtown area at rush hour has reached a new peak this year, leaving highways jammed and prompting many commuters to start out from home before 730 am, according to a study released....by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Most of the roadways leading into the downtown area 'are at capacity,' said Jon Williams, a transportation engineer who headed the COG study. 'There's no room for [more] cars.' The number of cars traveling into the central employment area during morning rush hours climbed by nearly 11 percent during the past two years...."

Long-time readers of the Gazette can skip to the next item because I'm going to repeat for the benefit of new subscribers something that has been said here repeatedly for the past twelve years: subways do not reduce street traffic. A major reason is that subways function as an attractive nuisance. They encourage development but only a minor portion of the new development's occupants arrives by subway. Most of them come by car. Thus a net increase in commuter street traffic can actually be caused by a subway -- precisely what seems to be happening in downtown Washington.

Now some cheerful mass transit news. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission does not regulate horse-drawn carriages. This is not historical trivia but a contemporary decision of the aforementioned body in a matter brought before it by the Old Vet Carriage Company Inc., which wanted to operate some horse-drawn tours and asked the WMATC for a decision on the matter. In a seven-page ruling, the WMATC plumbed the legal precedents and announced that "we can divine no intent for us to regulate transportation by horse or any form of conveyance not artificially powered." The commission solemnly declared that it had "found it has no jurisdiction over transportation for hire, by horse-drawn vehicles, between points in the Metropolitan District."

Just for the record, a recent report of the city government found that there was a rental vacancy rate of 2.5%, approximately 200 new rental units have been built in the city in the past year compared with 1400 having been demolished, and only 344 units had been rehabilitated in the same time.

Algae blooms started appearing again last summer on the Potomac River, after several years' absence. The blooms showed up at various points including coves on the Maryland side below the Wilson Bridge. There's some controversy as to the cause. Some note the the hot, dry weather combined with high spring flows. Others suggest that discharge from waste water plants is to blame. Northern Virginia treatment plants and possibly poor performance at Blue Plains are being cited by proponents of the later view.

The group that has been working on an initiative to provide more citizen control over utilities has decided to offer two separate proposals. One would provide for an elected public service commission and the other an elected Peoples Counsel. This is on its way to being a really hot issue. Watch it.

Don't Tear It Down, with the support of the Shaw Neighborhood Commission, has received federal funds to do a historic survey of the Shaw area to determine whether it merits an historic district application.

## DC notes

David Scheim, author of 'Contract on America,' will discuss his book on November 22 at noon in the main lobby of the Martin Luther King Library. The free talk is part of the library's lunchtime author series.

A new edition of 'Resources for Older Persons,'



## Roses & Thorns

ROSES TO JOE GRANO for yet another victory in the long battle to save Rhodes Tavern. Overcoming the developer's best old friend, the Washington Post, and the developer's surprising new friend, the labor unions, Grano and a growing band of Rhodes supporters won a smashing success for an initiative that will, unless the appeals court overturns a lower court decision on the matter, force Oliver Carr to negotiate with a city commission in a serious attempt to preserve the building.

ROSES TO LORETTA NEUMANN, who recently retired as editor of the Neighbors Inc. newsletter, perhaps the best journal published by a neighborhood organization in the city.

THORNS TO DON'T TEAR IT DOWN, which in its final newsletter before the election had only this to say about Rhodes Tavern: a quote from Benjamin Forgey, towit, "The dispute has tended to obscure these important facts: There are entire clusters of attractive buildings downtown, and there is time left to save them. What has been lacking, so far, is the will." The important word here is "attractive." Don't Tear It Down struck a deal with Oliver Carr to preserve two "attractive" facades on 15th Street in return for not fighting for the preservation of Rhodes Tavern.

It is extraordinary that the group that considers itself the leader of the preservation movement should be a no-show on one of the great preservation issues of the city. But the reason, sadly, is that there are a lot of people who think that only the beautiful of the past should be preserved. Don't Tear It Down has done much good work but in this case took a Walt Disney approach to history.

THORNS TO COUNCILMEMBER JERRY MOORE for introducing legislation to rename U Street from 9th St to 19th St NW as Prince Hall Avenue. Prince Hall was a founder of the black Masons, but is more associated with Boston than Washington. More importantly, if Moore's move is successful, it could be the opening step towards the destruction of DC's logical street pattern. Who knows when it might end -- perhaps with 7th Street being renamed Ivanhoe Donaldson Strasse? The mind reels at the awful possibilities.

published by Iona House, was issued in September. The guide is revised and expanded. To get a copy call Iona House at 966-1055.

The Washington Deposit Coalition has been formed to seek a law that requires a five cent deposit on soft drink and beer cans and bottles. Sponsors include Common Cause and the League of Women Voters. Info: 387-3915

David Burnham, author of the 'The Rise of the Computer State', speaks at the MLK Library on November 29 at noon. The free talk is part of the library's luncheon book program. The library says to feel free to bring a bag lunch.