

Ready for Whitaker

LOS ANGELES - Oscar De La Hoya, an astute student of his trade, believes he learned something recently by watching tape of Pernell Whitaker's draw with Julio Cesar Chavez three years ago.

De La Hoya, concluding a barnstorming tour to drum up interest for his match against Whitaker, said, "I saw that Whitaker couldn't stop Chavez, so that shows that he doesn't have the power to knock me out."

Whitaker, who risks his WBC welterweight title against De La Hoya on Saturday night at the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas, has lost just once and had one draw in his 42 career fights. But he's won only 17 by knockout.

Only three of the unbeaten De La Hoya's 23 opponents have gone the distance. Chavez wasn't one of those, lasting just four rounds against him last June.

The 24-year-old De La Hoya, nine years younger than his foe, said he definitely isn't taking the fight for granted.

"Whitaker's dangerous. I know he'll be in great shape. I've been training not for the Whitaker of today, but for the Whitaker of four or five years ago," said De La Hoya, who won an Olympic gold medal in 1992, eight years after Whitaker was an Olympic champion at the Los Angeles Games.

"I've trained hard, and I'm in the best shape of my life. I'm very focused," said De La Hoya, who is

moving up from 140 pounds to the 147-pound welterweight limit. "There's a huge difference at 147 pounds. When I fought Chavez and (Miguel Angel) Gonzalez at 140 I felt strong, but I feel better than I ever have."

Whitaker, who joined Tuesday's press conference via phone from Las Vegas, derisively called De La Hoya "the kid." "This is the best I've felt in seven

years," said Whitaker, who fought his first pro fight in 1984, after winning at the Olympics.

"The young kid has never seen anything like he's going to see Saturday night. This is not a rock concert, not a commercial."

Asked if De La Hoya figured to be the toughest foe he'd met, Whitaker answered, "Never, not even close. ...

Not to take anything away from the kid. I'm just glad the kid signed. It got me back to my old ways."

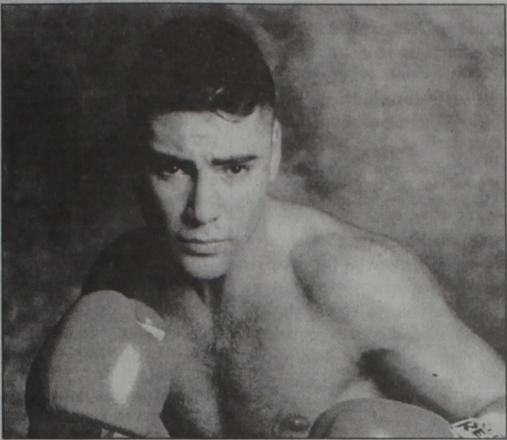
De La Hoya refused to get into verbal sparring with Whitaker, saying, "Sometimes I think he's trying to motivate himself by putting me down. Trash talking doesn't bother me a bit. It's a big joke to me."

Both fighters will be coming off less-than-overwhelming performances.

Whitaker trailed unheralded Diobelys Hurtado on all three judges' cards when he knocked Hurtado out in the 11th round of their match Jan. 24 in Atlantic City. De La Hoya had to go the distance against Gonzalez, although he took a lopsided decision in their Jan. 17 bout in Las Vegas.

"There's no such thing as looking back for me, Whitaker said of the Hurtado bout. "I'm looking forward."

De La Hoya admitted he
(Continued and See more stories on page 5)



• Niño bonito no gana

La esperada pelea del 12 de abril en Las Vegas entre Oscar De la Hoya y Pernell Whitaker ya tiene sus reacciones. Whitaker señaló que el ganador no se impondrá por su "bella cara" ni por la bolsa que vaya a cobrar, haciendo clara alusión a la fama del "Golden Boy".

"Lo voy a arruinar. Voy a poner fin a su carrera. Tendrá que buscar trabajo en el cine. Voy a destruirlo", dijo Whitaker, quien advirtió que el combate no tendrá consecuencias fatales para De la Hoya: "Afortunadamente no le romperé el alma y entonces podrá volver. Es bueno que se le castigue ahora que es joven (tiene 24 años) y no más tarde", finalizó.

News Briefs

Segregation Creeps Back Into Schools

According to a new Harvard University study, the nation's schools are becoming resegregated at the fastest rate since the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education ruling, reports The New York Times.

Researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education found that from 1991 to 1994, as the Federal courts made it easier for school districts to abandon desegregation plans, the percentage of minorities in schools with a substantial white enrollment fell appreciably.

Combined with the increasing segregation of Hispanic students, who are now more likely than black students to be isolated in schools that are largely minority and poor, the report portrays a nation in which the "separate but equal" education outlawed by the Supreme Court in 1954 is alive and increasing.

Although the report sees the trend away from desegregation as a social blight, other analysts say it simply reflects that many parents and educators, white and minority, no longer see desegregation as a paramount educational goal.

The report is the latest in a series of studies done since the late 1970s by Gary Orfield, a Harvard education professor, and various colleagues. The previous study, in 1995, found the beginning of a trend toward resegregation, and this one found the trend accelerating.

The report, based on school enrollment, found that in fall 1972, after the Supreme Court's 1971 decision mandating school busing, 63.6 percent of black students were in schools where less than half the student body was white. Fourteen years later, the percentage was almost exactly the same. Since then it has risen to 67.1 percent. Almost three in four Hispanic students attend schools that are predominantly minority.

In 1980, the typical black student attended a school that was 36.2 percent white. Now it is 33.9. The typical Hispanic student attended a school that was 35.5 percent white. Now it is 30.6 percent white.

Orfield said that a particularly troubling finding in the report was the increasing segregation in suburban schools. In effect, minorities moving from inner cities to suburbs seem to find the same kind of racial separation, he said.

The study also found that Hispanic students, the fastest-growing segment of the school population, are now more likely than black students to be isolated in schools that are overwhelmingly minority and poor.

And, in a curious role reversal, the study found that much of the backtracking on desegregation is in the South. Schools there, which have been the most integrated, are experiencing resegregation that is making them look more like schools in the North, which have been the most segregated. Now as in 1980, the states with the highest levels of segregation for black students are Illinois, Michigan, New York and New Jersey, the report said.

The changes reflect trends in both demographics and the law.

Two court decisions created the legal impetus for school desegregation in two different ways: Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954, which declared the South's policy of "separate but equal" schools unconstitutional, and Swann vs. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education in 1971, which ordered busing to achieve school desegregation. But in several court decisions in the 1990s, the Supreme Court has made it increasingly possible for schools to end desegregation orders. The report said the effects of those decisions are just beginning to be felt.

Meanwhile, the proportion of minorities in the nation's schools has been growing. From 1968 to 1994, the number of Hispanics in the nation's schools grew by 178 percent and the number of blacks by 14 percent. The number of whites fell by 9 percent.

Affirmative Action Ban Upheld in California

Proposition 209, a measure which bans the use of affirmative action in hiring and education, has been upheld in California, reports Reuters.

Soon after it passed, a federal judge blocked enforcement of the initiative, saying the measure probably violated the constitutional right to equal protection.

In its ruling Tuesday, the Appeals Court overturned the injunction, saying "we must conclude that, as a matter of law, Proposition 209 does not violate the United States Constitution."

The ruling was a blow to the Clinton administration which had supported legal action to overturn the law.

Prop. 209 bars preferential treatment based on race or gender in public employment, education and contracting in California. The initiative was the first of its kind to pass in any state. It would eliminate most California affirmative action programs designed to create opportunities for women and racial minorities.

Census: 1 in 10 Born Outside US

New census figures show the highest share of foreign-born residents since the 1930s, with one in ten born outside the country, reports Associated Press.

There were 24,557,000 people in the United States last year who were born in another country, 9.3 percent of the population, according to the Census Bureau.

That's up sharply from 4.8 percent in 1970 and the highest since the 1930 census counted 11.6 percent foreign born. Still, the percentage is lower than it was in the previous century.

In 1910, some 14.7 percent of the population had been born elsewhere and the share ranged from 13 percent to 15 percent throughout the last half of the 19th century, Census Bureau researcher Kristin A. Hansen said.

Recent arrivals are more likely to be living in poverty, to have lower incomes and to have higher unemployment rates than native born people, the report found.

But foreign-born residents who have been here for a few years tend to recover from their initial economic problems and those who arrived in the 1970s are nearly matching native-born residents in terms of income, the report said.

For example, 33 percent of new arrivals in the 1990s are listed as living in poverty, compared with 24 percent of those who arrived in the 1980s, 17 percent of those who came in the 1970s and 10 percent of those who arrived before 1970. The poverty rate for the native-born population is 13 percent.

Some 42 percent of native-born Americans had income of more than \$20,000 in 1995, compared with 40 percent of for-

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"El Respeto Al
Derecho Ajeno
Es La Paz"
Lic Benito Juarez
ESTABLECIDO 1977
ESTABLISHED 1977



EL EDITOR

Celebrating 20 years of Publishing

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Comentarios de Bidal

by Bidal Agüero

Recently we have been getting faxes from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers bringing our attention to abuses by local contractors who get contractors to build public building such as the UMC additions, ISD additions and others.



It's a well know fact that Lubbock is not a Union town but contractors are obligated to honor prevailing wages if they win a bid from a public entity.

Apparently, according to documents furnished to El Editor many contractors evade paying the prevailing wage by classifying workers at a different level than the work they are actually doing. For example, workers who are doing electrical work are being classified as laborers and electricians are being classified as journeymen, etc.

Apparently many of those affected are minorities. Mainly because those working are, first, in need of a job and second, because getting paid a little more than minimum wage is better than no job at all.

It was not long ago that Linda DeLeon fought some abuses similar to the instances now happening. Maybe it's time for our elected and appointed officials to once again look into abuses to workers on building being paid for by public/taxpayers money.

If any workers suspect that they fit the situation described they should contact the wage and hour division or their Unions.

*****Pico de Gallo****
I was asked by a Tech student this week, "what was wrong with busting piñatas and having fajita cook-offs, and after all they did have folkloric dancers."

Nothing is really wrong with it. It's just that shouldn't there be room for questions concerning Affirmative Action, Morales's actions on Hopwood, Immigration and Welfare Reform and countless other issues be at least discussed?

Comentarios Sobre
Comentarios?
Escribanos

Campesinos En Mexico Son Los Más Pobres

JAVIER CERON

Primera de dos Partes

VALLE DE CULIACAN, Sin., 15 de marzo. La explotación de trabajadores en los campos agrícolas del país es desencarnada y similar a la esclavitud del siglo pasado.

Los campamentos y barracas en los cuales viven los jornaleros agrícolas, propiedad de los grandes terratenientes, son verdaderos "campos de concentración".

Aquí la "ley es letra muerta", sólo prevalece la del más fuerte.

El "enganche" de los trabajadores en las montañas de Guerrero y Oaxaca se hace en condiciones totalmente desventajosas y bajo mentiras. De tal manera que los jornaleros son "carne de cañón" para los terratenientes que controlan la producción hortícola en el país.

Estimaciones cercanas sobre los jornaleros contratados revelan que en plena temporada agrícola suman entre 450,000 y 500,000 trabajadores. Quienes ganan salarios de miedo. Es la cara oculta de la riqueza agrícola, denuncian diversas organizaciones agrícolas.

"Orale, hijos de María Morales..."

Levántense. Son las cuatro de la mañana, a trabajar Retumba el grito en los oídos de mixtecos, zapotecos, triquis, náhuatl, tlapanecos y hasta tarahumaras. Anuncia el despertar de un nuevo día de arduo trabajo, explotación y bajos salarios.

El capataz maldice y advierte: "Ya llegó la camioneta que sale para el campo Costa Rica, al Mesquitillo II. Acomódense, no podemos esperarlos más o les descontamos el día".

Nadie protesta. Unos avanzan cabizbajos, otros en su dialecto vociferan.

Unos más se desentuman, luego del crudo frío que azota en la madrugada.

Los indígenas mexicanos son los más pobres entre los pobres. Mexican Indians are the poorest among the poor. (CNS photo from KNA)



Apresuran a las mujeres con el itacate, hecho en comales de lámina y atizado con leña que pica hasta los ojos.

Poco a poco se prenden los focos instalados rústicamente. Van apareciendo, de los pequeños cuartuchos los rostros morenos de hombres, mujeres con niños a la espalda y menores de ocho, nueve y diez años, con sus morrales para trabajar. Todavía fresco en el rostro el cansancio de la jornada anterior.

Esto es la cotidianidad en campamentos y barracas, convertidos en verdaderos "campos de concentración". La otra cara de los prósperos valles agrícolas del país, donde el uso de la biotecnología ha quintuplicado las cosechas, todas destinadas a la exportación que dan ganancias millonarias, que son orgullo del país.

Y aquí el reportero con el sobrenombre de José Hernández, le corresponde el número 122. Avanzamos hacia el vehículo: una camioneta de redillas de tres y media toneladas. Abordamos y quedamos apretujados como sardinas.

No hay seguridad alguna en el traslado. Platican los que más se conocen, los demás sólo se miran, sumidos en sus pensamientos. Otros dormitan todavía, tratando de

descansar en el trayecto de casi una hora.

El camino es sinuoso, parte pavimento, parte terracería, y de pronto, otra vez el bozarrón: "... Ya llegamos batos, al surco". Grita nuevamente el contratista de la camioneta. Se distingue por su vestimenta con pantalón de mezclilla, camisa de lana, botas y sombrero de copa. Cuida cada uno de los jornaleros como a una fortuna, los enlista y les asigna un número, aquí el nombre sale sombrero, porque al patrón le cobrará ocho pesos por cada trabajador transportado. Tanto de ida como de regreso.

José Hernández, infiltrado. Es uno más, sin distinción, en el surco cortando tomate, cargando cajas, bajo el quemante rayo del sol durante 10 horas, del que sólo se escapa a la hora de otro grito de gloria: "... paren, paren, a comer!". Ya es la una de la tarde. La jornada empezó a las seis y media de la mañana.

Todos en la guardarraya del surco, convertido en la mesa para tomar los alimentos en sólo media hora. Tacos de frijoles con chile, con huevo.

Agua (hasta en ocasiones sin tratar), y uno que otro frasco preparado de café. La leche sólo se ve en las tiendas.

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¿A Usted Le Gusta El Ingles Oficial? Oiga Mi Relato

Por CARLOS D. CONDE

Por décima vez en los últimos diez Congresos, se han presentado en la legislatura nacional uno o más proyectos de ley para hacer del inglés el idioma oficial de los Estados Unidos.

Esta vez, los Representantes Federales Randy Cunningham (repblicano por California) y Bill McCollum (repblicano por la Florida) están co-auspiciando un proyecto de ley en la Cámara.

¿Comprende alguien la sabiduría de esto? ¿Es para aligerar el papeleo burocrático y ahorrarles dinero a los contribuyentes, para engranar en nosotros la necesidad de funcionar con una red común de comunicación?

¿Es el temor de que el poliglotesmo podría deteriorar la solidaridad de los Estados Unidos?

Si les cuento mi relato, puede que ustedes comprendan por qué me siento desconcertado.

Soy un mexicanoamericano nacido y criado en un pueblo pequeño fronterizo de Texas. Mi madre nació en los Estados Unidos; mi padre nació en México. El se naturalizó como ciudadano de los Estados Unidos.

Ellos aprendieron a hablar y leer inglés. Nadie los obligó a hacerlo. Lo hicieron porque sabían que la destreza era un puente hacia cosas mejores, aún cuando entonces las oportunidades económicas para los latinos en una comunidad predominantemente angloamericana eran difíciles de lograr.

Ellos enfatizaron a sus dos hijos la importancia de aprender inglés para tener éxito. Pero al mismo tiempo, nos instilaron el orgullo por nuestro origen mexicano y

las ventajas de ser biculturales. Era un don el poder comunicarse en dos idiomas, nos dijeron. Luego nos pagarían dividendos.

Ellos tenían razón.

A la comunidad angloamericana no parecía importarle si aprendíamos inglés o no. Mi hermano Juan y yo tuvimos que asistir a una escuela católica en español porque nuestras autoridades escolares públicas dijeron que nosotros -- y otros chicos mexicanoamericanos -- no teníamos un dominio suficiente del inglés como para ir a sus escuelas.

Nuestros padres, junto con varios otros, combatieron la segregación. Su perseverancia prevaleció por fin. Estuvimos entre los primeros mexicanoamericanos de la comunidad que abrieron la escuela en idioma inglés para los latinos.

En seguida, los administradores escolares trataron de desvalorar nuestra ventaja bilingüe al prohibirnos hablar español y castigarnos si se nos sorprendía haciéndolo.

Juan y yo tratamos con tanta dedicación de acomodarnos a este edicto que íbamos por toda la vecindad saludando a todos al decir: "Hi, guy" (Hola, chico). Nuestros compañeros de juego chicanos nos apodaron "los guys."

Gracias a la determinación de nuestros padres de que conserváramos el español así como de que aprendiéramos el inglés, tuvimos la oportunidad de dominar ambos. El ser bilingües dió a nuestras carreras -- a mi hermano como educador y a mí como periodista -- un impulso vital.

El ser bilingüe es una ventaja, no un defecto. De modo que, ¿por qué persisten los

legisladores de nuestra nación en querer aparentemente ahogar su práctica, antes que reconocer sus beneficios?

El año pasado, un proyecto de ley sobre el inglés oficial fué aprobado en la Cámara de Representantes, pero nunca llegó a votarse sobre él en el Senado. Al promover el proyecto de ley de la Cámara, el presidente de la misma, Newt Gingrich, empleó el argumento de que "el ser estadounidense" implica saber inglés.

No hay discusión ahí; el 97 por ciento de la población de los Estados Unidos ya habla inglés, y el resto está apresurándose para aprenderlo. Más del 99 por ciento de todos los documentos federales se publican en inglés.

El Representante Federal Kika de la Garza (demócrata por Texas), jubilado hace poco, puede haber tenido razón al calificarla de legislación especiosa dirigida contra hispanos y asiáticos. Las iniciativas parecen encaminadas a desalentar al uso de idiomas que más personas -- antes que menos -- deberían conocer.

Mientras viví en la América Latina, observé constantemente las ventajas que tenían los extranjeros bilingües. La mayoría de los comerciantes y consultores europeos y japoneses habían estudiado y llegado a dominar el español. Ellos funcionaban con facilidad en un ambiente latino. La mayoría de los comerciantes y hasta los diplomáticos estadounidenses luchaban, para su detrimento, tanto con el idioma como con la cultura.

No es fácil vender maquinaria o aparatos electrónicos -- o la política exterior de los Estados Unidos -- cuando uno difícilmente puede abrirse

paso en el idioma nativo en los hoteles y restaurantes.

El costo de enfatizar un sólo idioma resulta especialmente evidente entre la juventud estadounidense. Los caminantes de Europa viajan fácilmente por la América Latina, hablando español, inglés y sus propios idiomas. Los jóvenes estadounidenses se las arreglan con un chapurreo del "spanglish". Los turistas estadounidenses son presa fácil de numerosas bromas de "gringos". Es demasiado obvio lo que perdemos cuando suprimimos los idiomas.

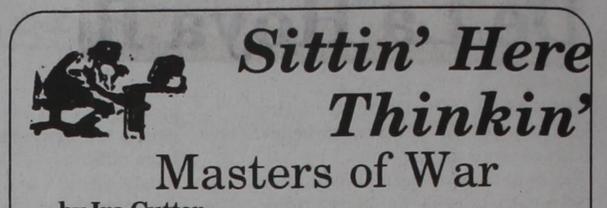
Hay 28 millones de hispanos que viven en nuestros 50 estados. La mayoría, especialmente nuestros jóvenes, hablan un español atroz. Muchos no lo hablan del todo.

Mis propios hijos hablan tanto español como inglés perfectamente. Ellos ya están cosechando sus recompensas. Pero lamento lo que la mentalidad del "inglés solamente" de la nación les ha hecho a muchos de mis parientes más jóvenes.

Recuerdo haber regresado una vez de la América Latina y haberles hablado a mis primos en español. Fuí amonestado por su padre, quien dijo casi con orgullo, "Háblales en inglés. Ellos no entienden el español." Los miré con asombro. Qué pérdida de idioma y de cultura! Ellos habían perdido un don y un instrumento en aras de la conformidad desorientada.

(Carlos D. Conde, de Falls Church, VA, ha trabajado en gobierno y periodismo en Texas, Washington, DC y la América Latina. El prestó servicios como ayudante de prensa al Presidente Nixon.)

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**Sittin' Here
Thinkin'
Masters of War**

by Ira Cutter
We used to talk a lot about guns and butter and about how much we could afford of each. Guns, in that context, referred to the costs of national defense -- the ships, planes, submarines and military personnel it took to fight wars and to look so powerful that it would deter others from attacking us. Butter referred to the things that made up the quality of our lives like health care, education, highways, housing and pretty much everything else on the domestic side of the federal budget. Twenty or thirty years ago, before liberal became a shameful thing to be and before cholesterol made butter out to be a killer, we wanted all the butter we could get.

The history of guns and butter in the past few decades has been a roller coaster. Lyndon Johnson spent lavishly on both guns and butter in the 1960's and created the runaway inflation of the 1970's that left Jimmy Carter with very little money for either one. Ronald Reagan loved guns, but he hated the kind of butter that is for poor people. He lowered the taxes on rich people, all the while spending tons for new and better guns, and created the biggest federal deficit ever.

But it was George Bush, believe it or not, who had the greatest influence on today's guns and butter picture. Bush waged a three day, seemingly bloodless, highly televised little war in which we kicked the butt of a backward little country and this restored war itself to "thrill of victory" status, over-shadowing the then prevailing, Vietnam-inspired, view of war as an "agony of defeat."

Most people in the country today are too young to remember much about Vietnam, much less Korea or World War II, and a lot who are old enough to remember have re-written history in their minds. Consequently, the military is once again trusted and respected, no longer is the top brass thought to be liars, fools and incompetents and so, even with no real enemy on the horizon, we are still spending huge resources on higher tech and more expensive guns all the time.

How much on guns? I read recently that the Air Force has requested a budget to include over 400 new fighter planes, F-22's, at \$160 million apiece. At the same time 400 "obsolete" F-16's, which cost \$20 million each and were until recently the best in the world, were sent to the warplane junkyard in Arizona, to be parked forever in the desert. And airplanes are only the beginning. The boys at the Pentagon want new ships to play with, and submarines, and spy satellite things and every single doodad down to battle helmets that are computerized, digitalized and all the rest. Meanwhile, Russia is barely able to govern itself without falling apart, the Chinese are becoming fat capitalists and Americans in record numbers are sleeping on the streets.

The guns and butter debate is, or should be, back on center stage right now as politicians try everything they can think of to balance the budget. We are so broke that Bill Clinton and the Congress have convinced themselves that they have to cut back on everything. But in the midst of hearing about cuts in Medicare, I hear no talk of removing the gazillion troops we have had in Korea for 45 years, or Europe for over 50 years, or cutting back on high tech armaments, or consolidating the various branches of the armed services, or making the Europeans and Japanese shoulder more of the load.

Personally, I think we could cut defense spending a lot more, not just cut the rate of increase in defense spending but lower it by large percentages. Yet, I do not see it happening. With the military back to respectability, with Clinton still trying to make up for dodging the draft, with the Republicans all loving to play soldier, with at least some defense expenditures producing jobs in various strategically placed congressional districts, I see a lot of mindless expenditure that will produce very little positive in our daily lives or even significantly increase our security.

And, unfortunately, this excessive arming of ourselves is only half the equation. In addition, we are busily about the business of arming everyone else in the world, too. It used to be that revolutions were fought by desperate people who poured gasoline into Coke bottles and threw them at tanks. Molotov cocktails. Now every little revolutionary punk in the world, and not a few psychotics and Los Angeles bank robbers, have automatic weapons, bombs, even hand-held missiles and the firepower to do catastrophic damage. These are not things that are being made in people's basements, so where is all that stuff coming from? To a large extent it is Made in USA.

Arms, ships and planes are big business and they produce jobs, revenue and maybe even campaign contributions. And while the federal government may pressure and sometime restrain American companies from trading with the worst of nations -- the definitions are unclear and ever-changing -- governments are overthrown, weapons get into different hands and weapon designs, once spread around, are nearly as easily copied as knock-off designer jeans. Apparently we are not as bad as the French, who will sell pretty much anything to anybody, anywhere in the world, but we continue to see France as our NATO ally nonetheless. Speaking of NATO, part of its proposed expansion will require upgrading the weaponry of our newest allies, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, and they reportedly need lots of stuff and need lots of our foreign aid with which to buy it.

Aside from simple morality, the selling of weapons overseas has the bizarre impact of creating a self-perpetuating need for newer, better weapons. We are in an arms race with ourselves and competing endlessly for weapons superiority. We develop the X-23 ray gun, we use it for awhile, we sell some to our allies, they eventually stop being allies or they sell them to someone else and, lo and behold, we now need the new X-24 ray guns because everyone else in the world has X-23's and we want the best weaponry for our boys. We helped Iraq arm itself for a war against Iran, in which we hoped they would destroy each other while not messing up any oil fields, and we wound up facing the very same American made and American paid for equipment when we decided Iraq was our mortal enemy.

There is bitter irony all through this. The same federal government that is now self-righteously waging war against cigarette manufacturers and drug dealers, calling them purveyors of death, sees arms manufacturing and exporting as a legitimate American business and is using our tax dollars to help these companies gain exporting advantage. When we give a country foreign aid, you see, we expect that they will use that money to buy their killing machines from American companies.

We watch the news and see people who do not have indoor toilets carrying machine guns that cost twenty times their annual income and we do not often wonder how this could be. We see it so often that it no longer affects us.

The arms makers themselves are solid citizens today, in this post-Desert Storm world. They are no doubt breakfasting with the Speaker of the House, addressing the local Chamber of Commerce luncheon, arguing against welfare and corporate taxes, and maybe even sleeping in the Lincoln bedroom. But I remember when we used damning terms like war profiteer and munitions maker, when we distrusted the military-industrial complex and held these folks, quite rightly, in the lowest regard.

It seemed to me then, and it seems to me now, that there should be a special place set aside in hell for the kind of people who would profit from the guns in use in Rwanda and Bosnia and on America's city streets. Instead, we give them tax credits and protect, at all costs, their bloody share of our federal budget.

Ira Cutter, says he's seeking a semi-legitimate outlet for thoughts and ideas too irreverent, too iconoclastic, or just too nasty for polite, serious, self-important company. He promises us a Monday column most weeks. More recently Ira has become involved in communicating in another way, through speeches which he calls Standin' Here Talkin'.

You Like Official English? Hear My Story

By CARLOS D. CONDE

For the tenth time in the last 10 Congresses, one or more bills to make English the official language of the United States have been submitted to our national legislature.

This time U.S. Reps. Randy Cunningham (R-Calif.) and Bill McCollum (R-Fla.) are co-sponsoring a bill in the House.

Does anyone understand the wisdom of this? Is it to lighten the bureaucratic paperwork and save taxpayers' money, to ingrain within us the need to function with a common communication network?

Is it a fear that polyglotism might retard U.S. solidarity? If I tell you my story, maybe you'll understand why I am baffled.

I am a Mexican American born and raised in a small Texas bordertown. My mother was born in the United States; my father in Mexico. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen.

They learned to speak and read English. No one forced them to do it. They did it because they knew that the ability was a bridge to better things, even though at that time economic opportunities for Latinos in a dominant Anglo community were hard to come by.

They stressed to their two sons the importance of learning English to succeed. But at the same time, they instilled in us pride in our Mexican origin and the advantages of being bicultural. It was a gift to be able to communicate in two languages, they told us. It would pay dividends later. They were right.

The Anglo community didn't seem to care if we learned English or not. My brother, Juan, and I had to attend a Spanish-language Catholic school because our public school authorities said we -- and other Mexican-American kids -- were not sufficiently proficient in English to go to their school.

Our parents, along with several others, contested the segregation. Their perseverance finally prevailed. We were among the first Mexican Americans in the community to crack the English-language school. Right away, the school administrators tried to diminish our bilingual advantage by forbidding us to speak Spanish and punishing us if we were caught doing so.

Juan and I tried with so much dedication to accommodate this edict that we went around the neighborhood greeting everyone with "Hi, guy." Our Chicano playmates dubbed us "los guys."

Thanks to our parents' determination that we retain Spanish as well as learn English, we had the opportunity to dominate both. Being bilingual gave our careers -- my brother's as an educator and mine as a journalist -- a vital thrust.

Being bilingual is an asset, not a liability. So why do our nation's lawmakers persist in seemingly wanting to stifle its practice rather than recognize its benefits?

Last year, an official-English bill passed in the House, but never came to a vote in the Senate. In promoting the House bill, Speaker Newt Gingrich used the argument that "being an American" involves knowing English.

No argument there; 97 percent of the U.S. population already speaks English and the rest are cramming to learn it. More than 99 percent of all federal documents are published in English.

Recently retired U.S. Rep. Kika de la Garza, (D-Tex), maybe was right in calling it specious legislation aimed at Hispanics and Asians. The initiatives seem aimed at discouraging the use of languages that more -- not fewer -- people should know.

Living in Latin America, I constantly observed the advantages bilingual foreign-

ers gained. Most European and Japanese businessmen and consultants had studied and mastered Spanish. They functioned with ease in a Latin environment. Most U.S. businesspersons and even diplomats struggled, to their detriment, with both the language and the culture.

It's not easy to sell machinery or electronics -- or U.S. foreign policy -- when you can barely negotiate your way in the native tongue in hotels and restaurants.

The liability of stressing one language is particularly notable in today's youth. Backpackers from Europe travel easily in Latin America, speaking Spanish, English and their own language. U.S. youth hack around with a smattering of Spanglish. U.S. tourists are fodder for many "gringo" jokes. It's all too evident what we lose when we suppress languages.

There are 28 million Hispanics living in our 50 states. The majority, particularly our youth, speak atrocious Spanish. Many speak no Spanish at all.

My own children speak both Spanish and English perfectly. Already they are reaping its rewards. But I lament what the nation's English-only mentality has done to many of my younger relatives.

I recall returning once from Latin America and speaking to my cousins in Spanish. I was admonished by their father, who said almost proudly, "Speak to them in English. They don't understand Spanish." I looked at them in bewilderment. What a waste of language and culture. They had lost a gift and a tool to misguided conformity.

(Carlos D. Conde of Falls Church, Va., has worked in government and journalism in Texas, Washington, D.C., and Latin America. He served as a press aide to President Nixon.)

Welfare Recipients Vie with Working Poor for Jobs

The evidence continues to mount that welfare "reform" throws recipients into brutal conflict with the working poor, reports the Boston Globe.

The Jersey City Medical Center has cut full-time staff while hiring welfare recipients as temporary "volunteers." New York City has cut its full-time municipal work force for street and park maintenance and put welfare recipients into those jobs. Baltimore is paying welfare recipients \$1.50 an hour to train as school janitors, eliminating workers at some schools who made \$6 an hour. It is also training school bus aides at \$1.50 an hour, striking fear into the hearts of current aides who make \$6.60 an hour.

"I went to the office and asked what were they trying to do, take my job?" Veronica Jiggetts, one of the \$6.60 an hour aides, told The New York Times. "They said, 'No, Miss Jiggetts, we are not trying to take you off your job.' But the way it looks to me, I might not be invited back for September."

None of this is surprising, since neither President Clinton, Congress, nor state governments truly planned to produce enough jobs to put welfare recipients to work. Massachusetts and New York City have already admitted they do not know what has happened to the majority of people they have thrown off welfare.

The ones who are visible to the naked eye are testament to the nation's cruelty. Forced with no job expansion to join the ranks of the working poor, their presence ensures that the already working poor stay poor. For employers, this is gold. Businesses in Richmond, Va., and Salt Lake City say the influx of welfare recipients saves them from raising wages. For workers, this is garbage. The growing replacement of

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foreign-born who arrived in the 1970s, 29 percent who arrived in the 1980s and 17 percent who came to America in the 1990s.

Over half of the foreign-born population were natives of the Western Hemisphere, with more than one-fourth of the total, 6.7 million, from Mexico.

Following Mexico, the second most common country of origin was the Philippines with 1.2 million. Other countries with large representations are China, 801,000; Cuba, 772,000; India, 757,000; Vietnam, 740,000; El Salvador, 701,000; Canada, 660,000; Great Britain, 579,000; Korea, 550,000; Germany, 523,000; Dominican Republic, 515,000 and Jamaica, 506,000.

And the foreign-born population is not evenly distributed. California has the most at 8 million, making up 25.1 percent of that state's population. New York is second with 3.2 million, 17.7 percent of its population.

Other states with at least 1 million foreign-born residents are Florida, Texas, New Jersey and Illinois.

Dems, GOP Disagree on Aid to Documented Immigrants

Republicans said Monday that they were drafting legislation to provide as much as \$2 billion in aid to states with large numbers of documented immigrants who will lose benefits under the new welfare law, but Clinton administration officials said they strenuously opposed the plan because it would result in disparate policies in different states, reports *The New York Times*.

Instead, the officials said they wanted full restoration of disability benefits for most documented immigrants, including children and elderly people who have not become citizens.

Republicans in Congress want to provide states with lump sums of money, or block grants, to help documented immigrants. House Republicans, led by Rep. E. Clay Shaw Jr. of Florida, said they were considering a maximum of \$2 billion in aid over the next two or three years.

By contrast, President Clinton would permanently restore disability benefits and Medicaid for many documented immigrants, at a cost of \$15 billion over six years.

Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said the administration opposed block grants because they would be "unfair and unworkable."

In an interview, Shalala said the administration believed that the federal government should set uniform national standards for providing disability benefits to documented immigrants, who were admitted to the United States under federal policies.

With some exceptions, the 1996 welfare law bans immigrants from receiving federal Supplemental Security Income and food stamps unless they become citizens.

But Cecilia Munoz, deputy vice president of the National Council of La Raza, a Hispanic civil rights organization, said Monday: "A 95-year-old woman losing Supplemental Security Income benefits is not going to be comforted by the fact that her governor will get a block grant. What she needs is her SSI check. It will be extremely difficult for states to find the people most in need and get them enrolled in a new program."

Under the new law, states may deny welfare and Medicaid to noncitizens here before Aug. 22, when Clinton signed the law. A recent commentary in the *Harvard Law Review* said that this last provision authorized states to violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

A wide range of bills to revise the welfare law have been introduced in Congress. Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill., and Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn., have offered the most comprehensive proposals, which would repeal all of the new restrictions on benefits for immigrants. They would cover the cost by eliminating some corporate tax breaks.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., and Rep. Tom Campbell, R-Calif., have introduced bills that would restore SSI benefits for documented immigrants who were in the United States on Aug. 22 and are elderly, disabled and poor.

Campbell and Ms. Molinari said they strongly supported the 1996 welfare law. But Campbell said: "No law is perfect. There is one glaring problem to be corrected, dealing with those documented immigrants who are too old and infirm to obtain their citizenship."

Cuban Immigrant's Benefits Cut; Kills Self

A Cuban immigrant with AIDS, depressed over the impending cutoff of his Medicaid and Social Security benefits, took an overdose of his medication and died, reports Associated Press.

Alfredo Linares, 57, died Sunday, nearly a week after he swallowed four bottles of his AIDS medicine, said Gustavo Linares. He found his brother and called 911.

"He didn't want to die of AIDS," Linares said. "He knew they were going to cut off his checks; mine too. He was afraid he might be deported back to Cuba. It is horrible, just horrible. He was so sick and needed the help to stay alive."

"A lot of people are going to die because of this," Linares said of the August deadline for many immigrants who stand to lose federal and state assistance.

The brothers shared a Miami Beach efficiency apartment, and each received \$484 a month in supplementary Social Security income.

About two weeks ago, Gustavo Linares, 53, received a letter stating he was going to lose his Social Security and Medicaid benefits.

Alfredo Linares overdosed on March 31 and contracted pneumonia while he was in the hospital. The letter advising him of the suspension of his SSI and Medicaid checks arrived April 1.

Impact of Minimum Wage Raise Barely Felt

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy called an increase in the \$4.25 minimum hourly wage "the overarching issue of our time and the election." The Republican House Majority Leader

Richard K. Armey, a former professor of economics, said, "Study after study demonstrates" that hikes in the minimum wage shut out the neediest job seekers.

He vowed to fight an increase "with every fiber of my being." And Republican Sen. Hank Brown of Colorado warned that the resulting jobless teen-agers would trigger "a crime problem and a juvenile problem of epic proportions."

The increase kicked in Oct. 1. Now, six months later, the government's employment report suggests that the fulminations were mostly hot air. Last month's 5.2 percent unemployment rate was the lowest in five months. The new wage is a boon to some working poor. But the wage increase has had little effect elsewhere.

Most people's pay is rising by a barely perceptible clip, suggesting that the increase in the minimum wage has little ripple effect. Last month they averaged \$12.15 an hour, 24 cents more than in September and 47 cents more than a year ago.

As for looming unemployment, finding a job has rarely been easier. Since September, a robustly growing economy has pulled nearly two million more people into jobs, including 124,000 more of those dreaded jobless teen-agers.

None of this surprises most economists, who say that the law of supply and demand still works, that employers will hire fewer workers when the minimum wage rises a lot as it has sometimes in the past.

But most say this latest relatively small increase in a very low minimum wage has a minimal impact on jobs or the economy. At most, a higher minimum might discourage employers from hiring an additional 200,000 workers while they raise the pay of many more.

So why the big debate? One reason was business as usual: Congress responds to pressure groups like labor unions, which favor higher wages, and groups like fast-food chains, which hire most minimum-wage workers and want to hold down wages. This time a political skirmish became a brawl over ideological fundamentalism.

In setting a minimum wage, Wilson of the Heritage Foundation explained, government intrudes upon the freedom of employers and workers to negotiate the terms of a job. "Slowly but surely," he said, "they're taking away your liberty to mutually make employment decisions. I dare say that's socialism. It's government paternalism at its worst."

To lend credibility to their ideology, both sides drew on distinguished economists. Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich seized upon the work of two Princeton professors, Alan Krueger and David Card.

Both economists had looked at employment in fast-food shops in New Jersey and Pennsylvania before and after New Jersey raised its minimum wage above Pennsylvania's. Employment in Pennsylvania didn't change, they found, and it even grew slightly in the New Jersey shops.

Reforms Haven't Eased Latin American Poverty

According to a new UN report, free-market economic reforms, once touted as the route for Latin America to escape poverty and gaping income disparities, have yet to better the lives of most people in the region, reports *The Chicago Tribune*.

Jobs remain scarce, and vast income inequities linger, said the report, which was released at a conference in Sao Paulo this week. Although poverty is declining in some countries, such as Peru, Chile and Brazil, people remain poorer than they were before the brutal economic recession of the early 1980s.

That adds up to a "gloomy social picture" that may result in the "emergence of threats to peaceful coexistence and social integration," said Gert Rosenthal, executive secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to the commission's report, "The Equity Gap," the overall poverty rate in Latin America declined from 41 percent in 1990 to 39 percent at the end of 1994. During that time, poverty fell in most Latin American countries, with a few notable exceptions such as Venezuela.

Those small gains, however, failed to bring Latin Americans back to the lifestyle they enjoyed in 1980, when 35 percent of the region's population lived in poverty.

Moreover, the study found evidence that the fight against poverty has stalled further since 1994, with poverty actually growing in Argentina, Honduras, Mexico and Venezuela.

Today in Latin America, one out of every six households is still unable to satisfy its basic nutritional needs, "even if it were to spend its entire income on food," the report noted.

Jobs also are proving no ticket out of poverty, according to the study. Across the region, job growth has not kept up with population growth, leaving millions without work and forcing many into the informal sector, where they are self-employed but off the government tax rolls with no benefits or security.

Social spending, the report noted, is one of the keys to fighting poverty in Latin America. Among the countries studied, those that showed the greatest social improvements were those that made a "persistent effort to increase social spending and assign it efficiently" while at the same time striving to boost economic growth, create more jobs and direct as many of those jobs as possible to the poor.

Increasing social spending isn't easy for many Latin American countries, which find themselves trapped by low growth, heavy debt payments and demands for public works projects and other programs far beyond the limits of their budgets.

But economists and political leaders at the four-day conference, which ends Wednesday, said that backing away from the free-market economic reforms that have spread across the region is not the answer to combating poverty and inequality.

"Globalization holds enormous risks, but we can't turn our back on it," said Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Brazil's president. What is required, he said, is social action to complement economic reform.

'La Mordida'

Por JOE RODRIGUEZ

"No daría ni un céntimo por México!"

Mi padre acostumbraba decirnos eso cada vez que México le rompía el corazón. El era "muy indio," con su piel oscura pardo-rojiza, sus manos enormes encallecidas y una nariz elegantemente ganchuda. En nuestros viajes ocasionales a Tijuana para visitar a nuestros parientes, él veía a las mujeres indígenas mendigando en las calles, a los chicos indígenas vendiendo goma de mascar "Chiclets" y a los mexicanos de piel blanca como dueños y administradores de todo.

"Ni un real por México!"

El era más mexicano que cualquier tecnócrata con enseñanza de Harvard; que cualquier "gachupín" de apariencia española; que cualquier guerrillero-intelectual zapatista de la clase media; o que cualquier expresidente calvo y pillito del distrito lujoso de Polanco, en Ciudad México.

Mi padre no estaba refiriéndose al pueblo de la nación, sino a un sistema político y social que todavía fomenta la pobreza extrema, la discriminación y la injusticia, y a los privilegiados y faltos de escrúpulos que se benefician de ello.

Yo debería haber recordado el céntimo de mi padre el mes pasado, cuando dos agentes de policía de Ciudad México me detuvieron por hacer una vuelta a la izquierda, prohibida en el famoso Paseo de la Reforma.

Yo estaba conduciendo mi auto alquilado hacia la gigantesca ciudad después de tres días en el campo. Había escapado un accidente de tránsito sólo unos minutos antes. Tenía calor, estaba cansado, gruñón y nervioso -- el pollo perfecto para estos dos coyotes uniformados.

Ambos agentes salieron de su auto. El más viejo comprobó las placas de alquiler. El más joven quiso ver mi licencia para conducir.

"¿Dónde está su hotel?" preguntó él.

"Ahí mismo," le dije, "el 'María Cristina D'."

"No conozco ningún hotel que se llame así," dijo él. "Pruébelo. Enséñeme algo del hotel."

Registré mi billetera y saqué una tarjeta-llave para mi cuarto.

"Ya veo," dijo el policía joven. "¿Qué está haciendo usted en México?" El baile había comenzado.

"Soy periodista," le dije.

"Usted sabe," dijo él, "por hacer esa vuelta ilegal a la izquierda, vamos a tener que quitarle su licencia de conducir y las placas del auto."

Le dije, "¿Qué? ¿Por qué no puede usted darme solamente una boleta de multa?"

El caminó a preguntarle al policía más viejo "¿Cómo quieres que solucionemos esto?"

El agente veterano se hizo cargo del asunto. "La infracción conlleva una multa de 471 pesos. Tenemos que llevarnos sus placas y su licencia. Usted puede recogerlas en la jefatura de policía cuando pague la multa, o bien yo puedo entregárselas mañana en su hotel, pero sólo después que usted pague."

Ya para entonces, me figuraba que todo esto era un montón de basura. ¿Quién oyó alguna vez de que le confiscaran a uno las placas por una

infracción menor? Pero no sabía mis derechos. ¿Por qué no me preparé para algo como esto?

"De modo que, puesto que usted dice que necesita el auto," dijo el guardia, "¿podemos arreglar esto de otro modo?"

Yo le dije que preferiría una boleta de multa.

El guardia veterano estiró sus brazos hacia arriba, se relajó un poco y después puso sus antebrazos en la puerta de mi auto. Se inclinó hacia dentro y puso la cara a sólo pulgadas de la mía.

"Lo que tenemos aquí se llama corrupción," dijo sonriendo.

De modo que ahí estaba -- la mordida -- un sistema complicado basado no en el servicio civil, sino en el soborno, el padrinazgo político, el favoritismo personal y la ganancia individual.

Todo el mundo en México sabe que la corrupción está muy extendida dentro de la policía y el ejército. Una dependencia nacional ha llegado hasta a poner anuncios en los periódicos pidiendo al pueblo que no compre a los policías corruptos, diciendo, "La mordida se propaga tan fácilmente como la rabia."

El zar nacional de los narcóticos de México fue arrestado recientemente por proteger a un barón del narco-tráfico. La corrupción en las altas esferas sólo sirve para envalentonar a los más pequeños, como estos dos guardias de camisas pardas de Ciudad México.

El pueblo de México merece mucho mejor. Su integridad personal y la fuerza de sus familias son lo que llevan a la nación, a pesar de la incompetencia y deshonestidad del partido gobernante y de los funcionarios corrompidos, grandes y pequeños.

"¿Qué dice usted si nos ayuda con 500 pesos?" dijo el guardia veterano.

"¿Qué quiere decir usted? La infracción vale menos que eso."

"Cuatrocientos pesos."

"No tengo tanto," le dije, mintiendo por entre mis dientes.

"Trescientos pesos."

Después de un rato él bajó hasta 250 pesos, o sea \$31.25 en dólares. Busqué en mi billetera el dinero, tratando de evitar que él viera que yo tenía mucho más.

"Escuche," dijo él. "Usted es un periodista de los Estados Unidos. Usted gana mucho dinero. Puede darme fácilmente 300 pesos."

"Yo no gano mucho," le dije. "Mi periódico es el que lo gana, no yo. No soy rico. Soy únicamente otro mexicano como ustedes, tratando de arreglármelas."

El no se conmovió.

Una vez que saqué los 250 pesos de mi billetera, él me pasó una libreta de notas a través de la ventanilla.

"Ponga el dinero aquí, para que la gente no vea que cambia de manos."

Puse el dinero en la libreta y se la di. El me pidió más nuevamente.

"Andale, hombre," dijo él. "Puedes darme otros 50 pesos. Considéralo mi propina."

(Joe Rodríguez es un redactor de editoriales y columnista del "San José Mercury News," donde apareció este artículo primero. Se pueden comunicar con él en el "Mercury News", 750 Ridder Park Drive, San José, California 95112.)

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A Second Opinion On 'Covering Castro' Close-Up

BY MIGUEL PEREZ

In theory, the idea of U.S. news agencies opening bureaus in Havana is a great one. Who wouldn't want to see Fidel Castro's communist dictatorship loosen its grip on freedom of expression, allowing the Cuban people to denounce his despotic regime?

But that question should be rephrased in proper context: Who is naive enough to think Castro would ever allow it to happen? Apparently, the answer is many. A growing number of non-Cubans here and throughout the world still believe that Castro will give up power peacefully, if only we throw him a few carrots.

It's one of the most frustrating things we Cuban Americans experience, the inability to convey to others that we know our fellow Cubans a little better. You should trust us on this one: Castro can only die by strangulation -- economic, at least.

Every so often he flirts with some members of the "We should be talking to Castro" club. He makes a trip here and there and enchants the easily enchanted. Eventually, he convinces a few investors to pump money into his ill-fated economy. But he doesn't give an inch on dissident incarcerations, press censorship, banished elections or any of Cuba's other human rights violations. His only objective is to buy time to stay in power.

When there is a so-called "opening" of Cuba's wall of isolation, it's usually just a crack, and it is Castro who determines how microscopic the crack should remain.

Case in point: The opening of U.S. news bureaus in Havana. Until now, Castro has granted U.S. reporters only short-term visas, enough for them to do quick, superficial stories. When the U.S. press began to discuss bureaus with



the Cuban government more than a year ago, Castro-club members saw a potential panacea for Cuba.

Cuban Americans knew Castro would never allow the scenario U.S. news executives were proposing. The thought of dozens of U.S. newshounds based there long enough to feel the pain of the Cuban people and free enough to uncover and expose Castro's secretly guarded atrocities was too incredible.

Of course, the irony is that the Cuban people will have no access to reports by those U.S. journalists and that dissident Cuban journalists are constantly being jailed in Havana.

Cuban Americans knew that even on this one-way information highway, Castro would keep a close eye on whomever he allows in.

When the U.S. government finally gave approval to 10 news agencies to open Havana bureaus two months ago, Castro hand-picked only his good friends at CNN -- better known in the Cuban-American community as the Castro News Network -- to be the first and only U.S.-based news organization to operate in Cuba in 27 years. His government announced that it "will continue analyzing the rest of the applications" and will make decisions "when the Cuban government considers it opportune." In other words, sit and wait.

By the time CNN finally opened its Havana bureau last month, the whole image of an "opening" of Cuba's clinched fist was already tainted. Castro will choose the journalists who cover him and keep their numbers low and manage-

able. In the past, these have been journalists who have admitted that in order to keep returning to Cuba, they have to censor themselves. "Seeing that you have admitted you censor yourself," asked a Cuban American at a recent Columbia University journalists' forum on this subject, "do you have any credibility?"

So why is CNN in Cuba first and exclusively? If you believe that it is pure coincidence and that it has nothing to do with Castro's close friendship with Ted Turner and Jane Fonda, I have a Bay of Pigs I'd like to sell you.

CNN is there to provide Castro with a worldwide audience whenever he desires it. As for the other nine news agencies, the White House thought that together they would create a vehicle to increase pressure for democratic change. It is being denounced by Cuban officials as a U.S. plot to destroy the Castro regime.

The problem is that when communist Cubans talk, many people don't really listen. If they did, they would hear Castro keep saying that he has no intention of allowing changes that will under mine his supreme authority. "Socialism or Death," he says, and he means it literally. But it goes in and out of the ears of those who still believe we can talk to him.

Recently, the dictator said President Clinton "is going to win the title of idiot if he thinks he can liquidate the Revolution." Apparently, in one of his fits of machismo, he didn't see his insult can also be applied to all the members of the "We should be talking to Castro" club.

(Miguel Perez is a columnist with the Bergen Record in New Jersey.)
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Una Segunda Opinion Sobre 'Cubrir A Castro' Demasclado De Cerca

POR MIGUEL PEDREZ

En teoría, la idea de que las agencias estadounidenses de prensa abran oficinas en La Habana es muy buena. ¿Quién no querría ver a la dictadura comunista de Fidel Castro aflojar su agarre sobre la libertad de expresión, permitiendo que el pueblo cubano denuncie su régimen despótico?

Pero esa pregunta debe ser redactada en el contexto adecuado: ¿Quién es lo suficientemente ingenuo para pensar que Castro permitiría alguna vez que se le denunciase?

Aparentemente, la respuesta es "muchos". Una cantidad en aumento de no cubanos aquí y por todo el mundo aún cree que Castro abandonará el poder pacíficamente, si sólo le tiramos unas cuantas zanahorias.

Una de las cosas más desilusionadoras que nosotros, los cubano-americanos experimentamos, es la incapacidad de transmitir a otros que nosotros conocemos a nuestros compatriotas un poco mejor. Ustedes deberían tenernos confianza sobre este punto: Castro sólo puede morir por estrangulación -- la económica, por lo menos.

De vez en cuando él coquetea con algunos miembros de la sociedad de "Deberíamos estar hablándole a Castro." El hace un viaje aquí o allá y encanta a los que se encantan fácilmente. Con el tiempo, él convence a unos pocos inversionistas para que le inyecten dinero a su economía desgraciada.

Pero él no cede ni una pulgada sobre la encarcelación de los disidentes, ni sobre la censura de prensa, ni sobre la prohibición de celebrar elecciones ni sobre cualquiera de las demás violaciones a los derechos humanos en Cuba. Su único objetivo es comprar tiempo para continuar en el poder.

Cuando hay una llamada "apertura" del muro de aislamiento de Cuba, acostumbra ser sólo una pequeña grieta, y Castro es quien determina cuán microscópica debe continuar siendo la misma.

Por ejemplo: La apertura de agencias de noticias estadounidenses en La Habana. Hasta ahora, Castro ha concedido a los reporteros estadounidenses visas a corto plazo solamente, que sean suficientes para que ellos redacten artículos rápidos y superficiales. Cuando la prensa de los Estados Unidos empezó a discutir la idea de dependencias noticiosas en Cuba con el gobierno cubano, hace más de un año, los miembros de la "asociación de Castro" vieron una panacea en potencia para Cuba.

Los cubano-americanos sabemos que Castro nunca permitiría el escenario que los ejecutivos periodísticos de los Estados Unidos estaban proponiendo. La idea de docenas de sabuesos noticiosos con sede allá durante tiempo suficiente para sentir el dolor del pueblo cubano y lo suficientemente libres como para descubrir y exponer las atrocidades secretamente guardadas de Castro era demasiado increíble.

Desde luego, la ironía es que el pueblo cubano no tendrá acceso a los informes de esos periodistas estadounidenses, y que los periodistas cubanos inconformes continúan sien-

do encarcelados constantemente en La Habana.

Los cubano-americanos sabemos que aún en esta carretera de información de una sola vía, Castro vigilaría de cerca a quienquiera que él dejara entrar.

Cuando el gobierno de los Estados Unidos dió por fin su aprobación a 10 agencias de noticias para abrir oficinas en La Habana hace dos meses, Castro seleccionó únicamente a sus buenos amigos de la CNN -- mejor conocidos en la comunidad cubano-americana como la Red de Noticias de Castro (Castro News Network) -- para ser la primera y la única organización de noticias con sede en los Estados Unidos que haya funcionado en Cuba en 27 años. Su gobierno anunció que "continuará analizando al resto de las solicitudes" y adoptaría decisiones "cuando el gobierno cubano lo estime oportuno." En otras palabras, siéntense a esperar.

Para el momento en que la CNN abrió su oficina en La Habana el mes pasado, toda la imagen de una "apertura" del puño apretado de Cuba ya estaba contaminada, Castro seleccionará a los periodistas que informen sobre él y mantendrá su cantidad baja y manejable.

Anteriormente, éstos han sido periodistas que han reconocido que, a fin de continuar regresando a Cuba, tienen que censurarse ellos mismos. "Viendo que usted ha reconocido que se censura a sí mismo," preguntó un cubano-americano en un foro de periodistas reciente en la Universidad de Columbia, "¿le queda alguna credibilidad?"

De modo que, ¿por qué está la CNN en Cuba primera y exclusivamente?

Si creen que es pura coincidencia y que no tiene nada que ver con la estrecha amistad de Castro con Ted Turner y Jane Fonda, tengo una Bahía de Cochinos que venderles.

La CNN está allí para dar a Castro una audiencia mundial siempre que él lo desee. En cuanto a las otras nueve agencias periodísticas, la Casa Blanca pensó que, juntas, ellas crearían un vehículo para aumentar la presión a favor del cambio democrático. Pero eso está siendo denunciado por los funcionarios de Cuba como un complot estadounidense para destruir al régimen de Castro.

El problema es que cuando los cubanos comunistas hablan,, muchas personas no escuchan realmente. Si lo hicieran, oírían que Castro se mantiene diciendo que no tiene intención de permitir cambios que socaven su autoridad suprema. "Socialismo o Muerte", dice él, y lo dice literalmente. Pero les entra y les sale de los oídos a aquéllos que creen todavía que podemos hablarle.

Recientemente, el dictador dijo que el Presidente Clinton "va a ganarse el título de idiota si piensa que puede liquidar la revolución". Aparentemente, en uno de sus ataques de machismo, él no vió que su insulto puede aplicarse también a todos los miembros de la sociedad "Deberíamos estar hablando con Castro."

(Miguel Pérez es columnista del "Bergen Record" en Nueva Jersey.)
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Peléa Oscar Contra Whitaker

No habra Segunda Chance Para Chávez

De la Hoya From Page 1

overcame problems prior to the Gonzalez fight.

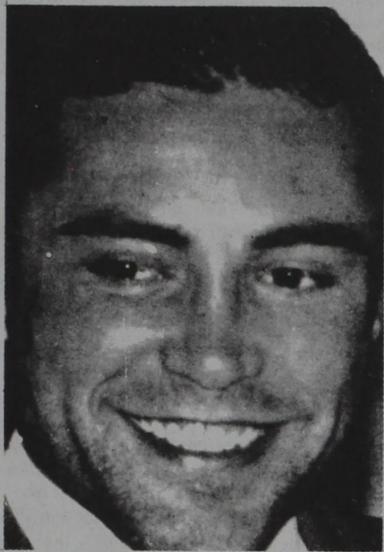
"I was worried about my condition since I had missed six days of training because of flu I had two weeks before the fight," he said. "But I beat him just using my left jab, and I wasn't sure of my conditioning, and I still saw that I was winning the fight with no problem."

"That gave me a lot of confidence."

Considaro "El Rey"

Cuidad de Mexico - Ni hablar. Hoy por hoy Oscar de la Hoya es el rey de los super-ligeros de todo el mundo, además de convertirse particularmente en el verdugo de los mejores boxeadores que México ha tenido en esa y otras divisiones.

El primer boxeador mexicano importante en ser víctima del llamado Golden Boy fue



Jorge Maromero Páez. Fue noqueado tan ridículamente, que ahora la carrera del ex-riculero de Mexicali naufraga compeltamente en la mediocridad.

Después siguió Rafael Ruelas, el tapatio avencindado en Estado Unidos que también había apaleado feamente al Maromero Páez.

Luego continuó Genaro Chicanito Hernández, quien por más ganas que le puso al pleito, no pudo con Oscar de la Hoya y perdió corona y todo un prestigio que hoy le está costando mucho volver a reunir.

La cuestionada fama del Golden Boy alcanzo la cima cuando en un remedio de pelea acabó con la mejor cada que México había tenido hasta ese entonces: JC Chávez, quien en cuatro rounds vio desplomarse su carrera aunque, como consuelo, se llevó muchos millones de dólares.

Superado el supuesto obstáculo que Chávez representaba para su carrera, a Oscar de la Hoya sólo le quedaba un pequeño desadío para de una vez por todas demostrar que es el mejor boxeador del mundo: Miguel Angel González.

Este combate denominado pomposamente como la pelea Por Orgullo y Patria debió efectuarse en septiembre de 1996. Sin embargo se suspendió proque Oscar se lastimó un hombro en un entrenamiento y no faltó quien dijera que era una excusa para prolongar su enfrentamiento con el ex-campeón ligero

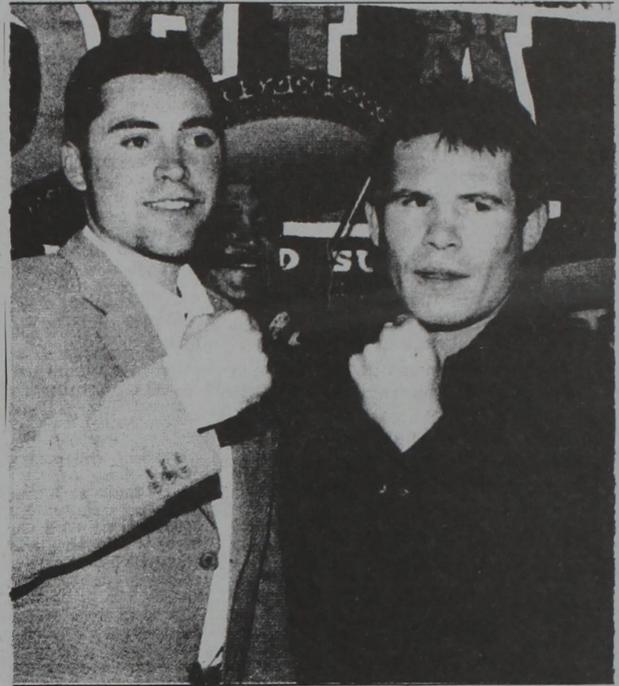
invicto del CMB. Pero Por Orgullo y Patria se realizó finalmente este sábado 18 de enero y Miguel Angel demostro orgullo ni mucho menos se acordó que toda una patria, su

México, estaba creyente en él para que hiciera realidad un milagro que nunca llegó.

Y ese milagro no llegó simplemente porque Miguel Angel no pudo y no supo cómo combatir a Oscar. Es cierto que el Golden Boy no lo pudo noquear y también es cierto que terminó con el ojo izquierdo casi cerrado, a conse-cuencia de escasos pero muy buenos golpes que le propinó Miguel Angel.

Pero también es cierto que el llamado Mago, que ese noche subió al cuadrilátero con récord de 41-0 con 31 nocauts, evidenció lo que tanto se ha dicho de él: como fajador es muy bueno, pero como boxeador es pésimo porque no sabe defenderse pese a tanto años en el boxeo.

Y precisamente por no saber anular lo golpes de sus rivales es que perdió ante Oscar de la Hoya, quien desarrolló una pelea no para impresionar ni mucho menos noquear, simplemente para asegurar el triunfo y la inminente llegada de otros combates todavía mucho más millonarios que este



El Editor Number 1 In Sports

mexicanos porque soy mexicano y nunca la conseguire enfrentando a boxeadores mexicanos", indica.

Mientras se prepara a conciencia para enfrentar el posiblemente más difícil reto de su carrera, pelar contra Pernell Whitaker este 12 de abril en Las Vegas, Oscar agrega: "Estoy en otra etapa de mi carrera y ahora quero conseguir otras metas, como ganar el titulo welter, super-welter y hasta el mediano".

Es claro al decir que Julio César ya tuvo su oportunidad ante él: "Lo derroté claramente y nadie tuvo la menor duda en eso, aunque él en todo tiempo trató de disculparse con salidas infantiles, como que había sido cortado antes de la pelea. La verdad, eso no me gustó pues no es de caballeros".

Oscar explica que de obtener el titulo welter ante Whitaker, es casi un hecho que deje vacante el super-ligero del Consejo para que algún mexicano tenga la oportunidad de disputarlo, dando a entender que esto podría suceder entre el propio Chávez y Miguel Angel Gonzalez, a quien también derrotó ampliamente a principios de año.

North Lubbock Boxing Club Holds Successful Tournament

The North Lubbock Boxing Club held a successful Tournament a few weeks ago at which over 500 persons attended. The board of directors, managers, coaches and boxers wish to thank all of those who helped to make it successful.

The North Lubbock Boxing club is a non-profit organization established to help young persons to live a productive life by way of providing the the opportunity to participate in boxing and related activites. The organization provides counseling, tutorial services and related services to the participants in the boxing club. Look for other events already being schedules. Again, thanks to everyone.



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From Page 2

full-time workers with welfare workers bears out the worst fears of the Economic Policy Institute, which estimated in 1995 that adding welfare recipients to the labor pool could drop wages 12 percent for the bottom 30 percent of American workers by the year 2000.

A worker making \$7 an hour will drop close to \$6. The institute says that the working poor would lose \$36 billion in earnings, \$8.5 billion more than the entire federal and state spending on Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

In California, more than 1 million people have to be moved off welfare into a state job market where there are already 2 million people not on welfare looking for work and another half-million part-time workers who want more work. But the economy is growing by only 300,000 jobs a year. Los Angeles, for instance has 359,000 people already unemployed, with 255,000 welfare recipients who have been told they must seek permanent jobs.

Even the most successful job placement programs for welfare recipients in the Los Angeles area have admitted that the best that many recipients can do is \$5.60 an hour, or \$11,648 a year. The federal poverty level for an adult with two children is \$12,500 a year. Researchers at Northern Illinois University estimate that a family of three needs \$23,424 a year, after taxes, for the basic necessities of housing, food, transportation, health care, child care, utilities and clothing.

That assumes that welfare recipients will find full-time work. So much of it will be part-time that one study by the Department of Health and Human Services estimates that the actual earnings for the average recipient who is forced to work would be only \$8,000 a year. Sheldon Danzinger, a University of Michigan poverty policy analyst, said, "It is simply not the case that most of today's welfare recipients could obtain stable employment that would lift them and their children out of poverty if only they would try harder."

As it is, recipients will only add pressure to the nation's 38 million working poor, who, at \$7.50 an hour and less, often have no health insurance and are losing what few subsidies they had for housing and child care. In Baltimore, 1,000 advocates for the working poor staged a rally last month, protesting their being dislodged from jobs by welfare recipients. "The new welfare reform policy places us in a revolving door where we continually switch places with one another at low-wage jobs," said Paul Booth of the American Federation of State, City and Municipal Employees.

In Jersey City, the Times found one situation where a welfare recipient took hospital work from a woman who had her hours cut back from 40 to 20 and her pay from \$22,000, nearly a livable wage, to \$11,000. When the nation enacted welfare reform, it did so in a blind anger over assumed laziness. It is becoming clear that reform is so bad for the working poor it is plunging some of them right back into poverty.

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'La Mordida'

By JOE RODRIGUEZ

"I wouldn't give you a dime for Mexico!"

My father used to tell us that every time Mexico broke his heart. He was *muy indio*, with dark reddish-brown skin, huge calloused hands and a handsomely hooked nose. On our occasional trips to Tijuana to visit relatives, he'd see Indian women begging on the streets, Indian kids selling Chiclets chewing gum, and white-skinned Mexicans owning and running everything.

"Not a dime for Mexico!"

He was more Mexican than any Harvard-educated technocrat, any Spanish-looking *gachupin*, any middle-class Zapatista guerrilla-intellectual, or any bald-headed ex-president crook from Mexico City's ritzy Polanco district.

My father wasn't referring to the nation's people, but to a political and social system that still fosters extreme poverty, discrimination and injustice, and to the privileged and the ruthless who benefit by it.

I should have remembered my Dad's dime last month, when two Mexico City policemen pulled me over for making an illegal lefthand turn on the famous Paseo de la Reforma.

I was driving my rental car back into the giant city after three days in the countryside. I had escaped a traffic accident only minutes earlier. I was hot, tired, grumpy and jumpy -- the perfect *pollo* for these two uniformed coyotes.

Both cops got out. The older one checked the rental plates. The younger one wanted to see my driver's license.

"Where's your hotel?" he asked.

Right over there, I said, the Maria Cristina.

"I don't know any hotel by that name," he said. "Prove it. Show me something from the hotel."

I fumbled through my wallet, producing a card-key for my room.

"I see," the young policeman said. "What are you doing in Mexico?" The dance had begun.

I'm a journalist, I said.

"You know," he said, "for making that illegal turn, we're going to have to take away your driver's license and the plates from the car."

I said, "What? Why can't you just give me a ticket?"

He walked away and asked the older policeman, "How do you want to take care of this?"

The veteran officer took over. "The violation brings a fine of 471 pesos. We have to take your plates and license. You can pick them up at police headquarters when you pay the fine. Or I can deliver them tomorrow at your hotel, but only after you pay."

By now, I figured this was all B.S. Who ever heard of license plate confiscation for a minor violation? Still, I didn't know my rights. Why didn't I prepare myself for something like this?

"So, since you say you need the car," the cop said, "can we take care of this another way?"

I would prefer a ticket, I said.

The veteran cop stretched his arms upward, relaxed a bit, and then rested his forearms on my door. He leaned in and stuck his face inches from mine.

"What we have here is called corruption," he said, smiling.

So there it was -- *la mordida* -- the bite, the bribe, a complex system based not on civil service, but on bribery, political patronage, personal favoritism and individual gain.

Everybody in Mexico knows that corruption is rampant among the police and the military. A national agency has even taken out newspaper ads asking people not to pay off corrupt cops, saying, "La mordida spreads as easily as rabies."

Mexico's national drug czar was recently arrested for protecting a drug lord. Corruption at the top only emboldens small-fries like these two brown-shirted Mexico City cops.

Mexico's people deserve so much better. It is their personal integrity and family strength that carry the nation, despite the incompetence and dishonesty of the ruling party and corrupt officials big and small.

"What do you say you help us out with 500 pesos?" the veteran cop said.

What do you mean? The violation is worth less than that.

"Four hundred pesos."

I don't have that much, I said, lying through my teeth.

"Three hundred pesos."

After a while he came down to 250, or about \$31.25 in U.S. dollars. I thumbed through my wallet for the bills, trying to keep him from seeing that I had much more money.

"Listen," he said. "You're a journalist from the United States. You make lots of money. You can give me 300 pesos easy."

I don't make a lot, I said. My newspaper does, not me. I'm not rich. I'm just another Mexican like you trying to get by.

He wasn't moved. Once I had the 250 pesos out of my wallet, he handed me a notebook through the window.

"Put the money in this so people don't see it pass hands."

I put the money in the notebook and gave it to him. He asked me once again for more.

"Andale, hombre," he said. "You can give me another 50 pesos. Consider it my tip."

De La Primera

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Don Eulalio Reyes, oriundo de la región de Tlapa, Guerrero, en la mera Montaña, ve sus desgastados huaraches y sus pies ajados llenos de tierra. Platica: "Aquí mi amigo, la ley es letra muerta. Estamos igual que los esclavos del siglo pasado, somos carne de cañón, los olvidados del país. Sobre nuestras espaldas florecen las grandes riquezas y fortunas de unos cuantos que todo callan con su dinero y si no que se lo pregunten a los licenciadillos encargados del trabajo, que en nada nos ayudan". Alude a los funcionarios de la Junta Local de Conciliación y Arbitraje de Culiacán. Recuerda: "Yo llegué a estos campos por engaños. Allá, cuando nos embarcaron, nos dijeron que tendríamos casas buenas, cocnas con gas y leña, escuelas para nuestros hijos y que ganaríamos bien". Pero todo eso ha sido pura mentira.

Su voz quema como el sol de mediodía: "Aquí hay trabajo, no se niega, pero nos tratan mal, como animales, dizque tenemos sindicato, pero ni lo conocemos". Nos quitan 50 centavos de cuota semanal, que quién sabe a donde quedarán. En cuanto se termine esto "a lo mejor me voy para otro lado". Se consuela.

Otro grito en medio de por lo menos 45 trabajadores: "... a trabajar batos, a los surcos es hora del jale!". Explota: "Andale ca... a qué horas", le grita el capataz a un niño de unos 9 años, que juega con otro un poco mayor. Pronto retoman el surco para continuar en el tramo final de la jornada.

"Otras tres horas de corte y estaremos fuera", dice Enrique Alvirde,

originario de Chilapa, Guerrero, casado, con dos ni-

ños, también de la Montaña, quien ya tiene trabajando dos años en cada temporada en el corte de tomate, chile, berenjena, brócoli, uva y hasta mariguana. Si señor, he ido a la sierra a cortarla y pagan hasta cuatro veces más, pero es muy riesgoso". Presume.

Porqué está aquí? Vine porque un compadre me dijo que si quería ganar dinero, pues que viniera a Culiacán". Allá en Tlapa, un paisano nos dijo que si queríamos trabajar había que estar temprano en el vado del río y, esperar a que llegara el camión.

Allí estuvimos, éramos como 500, comíamos lo que fuera y nuestras necesidades también donde se pudiera. Todos de las rancherías y poblaciones donde no hay empleo, porque las tierras no dan nada. Algunos ni eso tienen.

Con el rostro curtido por el quemante sol, para la una de la tarde llega a los 35 grados a la sombra en esta temporada, Enrique, continúa: "Esperamos casi una semana para que llegara el contratista. Decía que iba de Culiacán, no dio más explicaciones".

Sólo comentó: "Ya les dijeron las condiciones de trabajo, así es que el que esté de acuerdo que dé su nombre y se suba al camión, los que no, háganse a un lado". Decía Enrique, mientras cortamos tomate agachados.

Y allí nos tenían. Todos queríamos subirnos, siquiera para ganar unos pesos y poder dar de comer a nuestras familias. Llegaron por lo menos cinco camiones de re-dilas. La mayoría nos trepamos. Unos solos, otros con toda su familia.

Nadie lo interrumpía, seguimos en el corte de tomate: "Ya teníamos varios días sin comer, y así hicimos el viaje". Hasta que llegamos a la entrada de Pénjamo, Jalisco, luego de 24 horas de carretera, a un restaurante donde conocían bien al contratista. Todos le llamaban Chuy.

News Always
In El Editor

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