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Donald Sanford, who wrote "Guilt of the liberals" (Public Forum, May 23), appears to be one of those hidebound conservatives upon whom instruction is wasted. But let me try nevertheless.

We liberals oppose U.S. interventionism, such as in Vietnam and Nicaragua for several good reasons.

First, we know that such interventionism is almost always based on lies told to us by our government (in much the same way that the Soviet government lies to its citizens).

Second, the brutality with which U.S. interventions always are carried out makes hypocrites of us — especially considering that honest efforts to help our so-called enemies would lead to mutually beneficial relationships.

Third, it is more practical to work to clean up our own government's act than to exhort those whose behavior we cannot affect. And, I submit, it is more ethical as well.

As regards Sanford's so-called freedom fighters in Nicaragua, it is well known by now that the real purpose of U.S. action in the Third World is control of its labor and resources. As far back as 1935, two-time Medal of Honor winner General Smedly Butler (USMC) acknowledged that he had been much more a "racketeer for Wall Street" than a defender of hearth and home.

I am proud to be one of those patriotic Americans for whom violence against other peoples is so serious that only a clear and present danger can justify it.

Isn't that better than simply asking "Who?" whenever the president says "Shoot!"?

— Bill Becker
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