

[Published 8/28/88 as a Letter to the Editor of the Los Angeles Times in response to an article of "The Reagan Legacy" the previous week]

Dear Sirs:

The Reagan years have been a time of shame for America. We could not face the truth, so we elected someone incapable of speaking the truth and have released him from all accountability. We laugh at his displays of ignorance and think him too affable to lie. Who can seriously charge Reagan with masterminding the Iran Contra mess, or anything else, for that matter?

We give ourselves an illusion of prosperity by living on borrowed money and by putting on blinders to the poverty that is growing in our midst. We bolster our feeling of military superiority and world leadership by playing the bully in the third world, and adding extra layers of barricades to our embassies worldwide. We maintain a self righteous sense of moral superiority by proclaiming the Soviet Union to be the "evil empire", while we fend off every opportunity for peace in Central America and wink at apartheid in South Africa. We tell kids in our ghettos to "just say no", while we allow our surrogate armies to finance themselves with drug money. We hunger so for examples of heroism that we latch onto one who's primary claim to bravery is lying to Congress. We are so insecure that we allow peacetime military spending to grow without apparent limits, while the American values that would be worth defending are allowed to wither and die here at home.

Feeling good is what Reaganism is all about. It is also what narcotics is all about. I, for one, would prefer to have something more substantial to feel good about.

Sincerely, David Chandler