

## VOICES

## Narcopoliticians

Medicalization of dope is the simple expedient that would give us back a wholesome community and would've prevented 20,000 deaths in the generation the "crime wave" has lasted.

Yet politicians won't budge in their refusal and when questioned answer wisecracks.

The fox is indeed guarding the chickens. Nevertheless one wonders. Might not life for our pols be more fulfilling if they looked beyond bestowing on themselves every privilege and pleasure money can buy?

*Guillaumette Tyler,  
Puerta de Tierra*

## Healing vs. Profit

To. Gov. Fortuño and Res. Com. Pierluisi:

As used as we are to mooching everything off Washington, we don't get deducted Federal Insurance Contributions Act tax and health care's a pretty penny.

The commonwealth doesn't need the fed for this. Taxes have been raised obscenely here, so you've plenty of geld now. Simply upgrade public facilities to usability and open them for everybody. Simple solutions are always the best ones.

And it's been shown that once doctors' tricks and hospital/insurer scams are out of the picture, the cost of public health drops to reasonable levels.

*Nina Fotze,  
San Juan*

## Sprialing cost of health care?

Is it that when the doctor makes you call on him three times for something that would've been fully handled in one session? Just to triple-charge you.

What when he prescribes stuff that your health plan won't cover and you can't afford when there's something almost as good that costs tenth? Because he says you'll sue him if he prescribes anything but the best and latest and you get worse.

And when a hospital charges \$500 a day a bed? I mean, can anybody argue this isn't stealing? Extortion actually, your rear-end is being held for ransom.

And so on. Our very lives shouldn't be in the hands of merchants. Perhaps nothing should.

*Rina Rinaldi,  
San Juan*

## Should have tried this

How ridiculous, and sad, that Gov. Fortuño plans to campaign for fellow Republicans on a visit to Florida. At the same time that the governor is asking Washington to be fair to Puerto Rico in the health care bill, and recovery legislation, he is campaigning for Republican elected officials and candidates who oppose that very health bill in its entirety, as well as oppose the entire Recovery Act. Doesn't he realize that the White House, Senate, and House are controlled by the Democrats?

If anything, he should show his frustration with fellow Republicans for opposing health reform, and the Recovery Act, by renouncing his Repub-

lican membership, and becoming a Democrat. That would certainly get the attention of Washington, to Puerto Rico's benefit.

*Jeffrey Kassel,  
Condado*

## Accidental toll violation

Driving back to San Juan today from Bayamón, I drove up the ramp signed to San Juan onto the expressway without knowing I was not only in a toll lane, but in a lane which needed an AutoExpreso pay card.

I never saw any sign of an AutoExpreso lane and when I reached the Toa Baja toll, there was absolutely no choice of lanes, and no possibility for avoiding the automated toll. So I drove through the extreme left lane that I was occupying, then back over to the shoulder, and walked back to the booth and asked if I could pay. The supervisor said no, I would have to call 1-888-688-1010. I did exactly that to try to pay and save a lot of time, and paperwork, but there was no option. I spoke with gentlemen who indicated that when we received notice of the violation in the mail in a week or two, we would be able to pay the 95 cent toll with this explanation.

I wish to suggest that if there was any signage on this lane at the entry point, neither myself nor my passenger saw it, and so perhaps the signs need to be more clearly exhibited. Any lane that restricts driver access in this way to the toll plaza should be clearly designated for those unfamiliar with the route.

*John E S Lawrence,  
Ocean Park*

## Now everyone knows

Gov. Luis Fortuño, how inept is your government? Let me cite one example among many.

You sign a bill that was crudely crafted, was not well thought out, and which did not consider the impact of its implementation. Yes, the new birth certificate law is a disaster.

You and your New Progressive Party-controlled Legislature are accustomed to passing legislation which has not been thoroughly thought out or its impact being considered. All of a sudden, almost four million Puerto Ricans born and living here, and an estimated 1.5 million living in the states, but born here, have to replace their birth certificates. Even if you discount most Puerto Ricans not immediately needing new certificates, those in the states need them right now.

In the meantime, some jurisdictions in the United States have begun to refuse to accept existing birth certificates for drivers licenses and other legal matters. Hundreds of thousands are now in an identity limbo. No one who knows how Puerto Rico works expects the replacement of birth certificates to be efficient, speedy or correct. You, Secretary of State Kenneth McClintock, and the NPP legislature have now informed the entire world how incompetent you all are. Only Puerto Ricans knew it before.

*J. D. Aragon,  
Old San Juan*

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## The empires crumble: From the Atlantic Charter to Dien Bien Phu

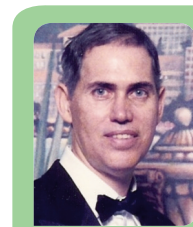
To most people familiar with the history of Puerto Rico, the process of decolonization of the island began either with the appointment of Rexford G. Tugwell as governor of Puerto Rico by President Roosevelt in 1941, or with the appointment of Jesús T. Piñero, the first Puerto Rican to be nominated by an American president, in 1946. Tugwell, an economist with a Ph.D. from the prestigious University of Pennsylvania, was a personal friend of the President. He used his experience and contacts to facilitate the implementation of institutions that specialized in economic and social development. Some of these are still in use today, as is the case of the Government Development Bank and the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company.

Piñero, an engineer by training and governor of Puerto Rico from 1946 to 1948, facilitated the electoral process of 1948, in which Luis Muñoz Marín became the first Puerto Rican to be elected by the people of Puerto Rico.

By 1952, commonwealth became the official status of Puerto Rico, which had by then its own constitution, modeled after the the U.S. Constitution. However, two important questions beg to be answered. First, why did Puerto Rico's decolonization process take place at this time? Secondly, and surely to apply to even today's crossroads: Who led this process, local politicians or stateside and international events and priorities?

World War II brought the issue of colonization to the front burner, as President Franklyn Roosevelt, or FDR, was vehemently opposed to this subservient relationship between nations. FDR blamed the war on colonialism. In his Pulitzer Prize winning book "Valley of Death," Ted Morgan states that FDR told his son, "don't think for a minute that Americans would be dying in the Pacific tonight if it hadn't been for the short-sighted greed of the French and the British and the Dutch." FDR held a special grudge against the French, as due to the surrender and the Vichy government's collaboration, Japan had obtained the formers strategic bases without the wasteful investment of an occupation army. In addition, French forces subdued and imprisoned the Jewish population of Indochina (current day Vietnam) even though the Japanese had not required it. FDR sent former Puerto Rican Governor and current Admiral William D. Leahy to Vichy as ambassador to remind the French that an axis victory would mean the dismemberment of the French empire.

FDR also took the British to task. On August 9, 1941 he and



**José L. Bolívar**  
Commentary

Winston Churchill had their first face-to-face meeting. Held in the Atlantic, hence it was called the Atlantic Charter, they agreed that all people should have the right to choose the form of government under which they live, and sovereign right and self-government must be restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them. For FDR, the Atlantic Charter applied all over the world, and it would mean the end of all empires. By the end of the war, the United States was willing to restructure its relationship with its colonies, including Puerto Rico, and to do it under a peaceful guise. The British and the French would not give up without a fight.

It should come as no surprised that the war the French fought in Indochina was financed by the U.S., as Europe was dependent on the Marshall Plan and American aid to survive. By the time the World War II ended, the Cold War was beginning to brew, former friends became foes and former foes became friends. France fought to regain its former empire in Indochina, fighting communism as a pretext. After all, by 1953, the U.S. was under the influence of the "Red Scare" and McCarthyism, and it was willing to supply France with equipment, supplies, and logistical support. After 14 years of war, France was unwilling to continue. However, it took the defeat at Dien Bien Phu, a base located on a remote valley on the border of Laos — where out of 15,000 defenders only about 3,000 returned to France — to finally convince the French to give up their dreams of an empire. Indochina cost the French more than 45,000 lives, almost as many as the U.S. would lose during the following two decades.

So did Puerto Rico's decolonization take place in a vacuum? Was it a result of the effort by local politicians? History tells us otherwise.

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