

poems, essays, stories, and novels attacking modern, industry-based agriculture, and extolling "traditional" farm methods, by which he means pre-mechanized methods, such as the horse and mule farming of the Amish. Berry's promoters make a plug for how he has lived simply on 75 acres in Henry County, Kentucky. Berry is on the board of the Land Stewardship Project, the Minnesota-based group that serves the interests of the international food cartels, by pushing the line on farmers that they should be happy to return to old, tried-and-true backbreaking farming, to keep their costs low, and help the environment.

Berry's latest novel is a pompous diatribe about the virtues of plain Amish farming versus high-debt, high-tech agriculture. The story line traces the alienation of a young man, Andy Catlett, who leaves his farm roots to be a reporter, then sees the light when visiting an Amish farm. However, he loses his hand in a cornpicker accident, he suffers terrible depression, but finds his way back to peace of mind with his family and a "sense of place" by returning to his Kentucky farm.

Berry's writing is as poor as his reasoning. In the opening chapter, Catlett is visiting in San Francisco, and is depressed. "In his dream a great causeway had been built across the creek valley where he lives, the heavy roadbed and its supports a materialized obliviousness to his house and barn that stood belittled nearby, as if great Distance itself had come to occupy that place. Bulldozers pushed and trampled the loosened, deformed, denuded earth, working it like dough toward some new shape entirely human-conceived."

Any serious farmer should be wary of romantic drivel like this, and even more wary of the motives of those who write it.

Crisis management can't win drug war

by Stuart Pettingell

Clear and Present Danger

by Tom Clancy

G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1989

656 pages, hardbound, \$21.95

In the absence of leadership, people revert to the little that they know and are trained to do when faced with a crisis. Usually this is not sufficient. So it is today, with the Bush administration, where statecraft has been replaced by "crisis management," and one bungled covert operation after another.

Tom Clancy's best-seller *Clear and Present Danger* is a fictional promotion of such a covert operations solution for the current drug plague which is destroying the United States and Western civilization: Invade Colombia with covert teams, shoot down some drug planes, wipe out some coca refineries, kill off some drug lords in hopes of starting a war between them, then get the hell out. Even Clancy admits that this will not stop the drug problem, but it will help, he insists.

In Clancy's scenario, we see what must be a very close representation of the secret fantasy life of every special operations field man. Smoothly run, successful operations, highly skilled and trained operatives who are virtually selflessly dedicated patriots, few or no leaks, and the politicians kept at bay.

Clear and Present Danger takes us through the political origins of a covert plan, into the planning stages, recruitment of personnel, special training and deployment. The operation is the covert insertion of troops into Colombia to monitor traffickers' airfields, while Air Force fighters intercept the planes and either escort them into a U.S. base for arrest, or shoot them down.

Things escalate when the narcos, "the Cartel," kill the U.S. FBI director in Colombia, in retaliation for the FBI's seizing of over \$600 million in Cartel bank accounts. The White House responds by redeploying the troops further up country to destroy coca refineries and personnel, and employing pinpoint bombing techniques to assassinate several leaders of the Cartel in their homes.

The issue of violating national sovereignty is never really discussed by Clancy. In fact the Colombian government is written out of the scenario. The military is inept and corrupt. The justice system is helpless and terrorized, and anyone can be bought by the Cartel. It is a fight between the Cartel and the intelligence community.

Likewise, the United States government is downplayed. Congress is, of course, kept in the dark, so there will be no meddling by politicians. The President and agency officials only set policy, leaving the planning and execution largely in the hands of the field operatives. The best, and most important decisions are always made by the field men. This is truly an agent's dreamland, where the REMFs (Rear Echelon Mother Fuckers) don't mess up the operation.

What seems to be of more concern than sovereignty is the difference between murder and sanctioned killings. All of Clancy's characters struggle with this "ethical dilemma." When a drug lord's house is bombed, killing four leaders of the Cartel, the White House gets upset when it finds out the drug lord's wife and children were killed also. The soldiers sent into Colombia worry about it. But, "Christ, these drugs are killing our kids back home," they rationalize. The Air Force pilot who shoots down drug pilots in the Caribbean laments, "What else can you do?" His mother had recently been killed by a crack cocaine addict.

At one point in the story, the planned operation "goes off

the wire" thanks to internecine political intrigues. It appears that Clancy's hero will try to come to grips with the legal and moral problems of the invasion. But, in the end, he finds the only real issue is a technical problem of running operations behind the backs of the Congressional Oversight Committee, and the old ethical problem of abandoning field operatives to be slaughtered in the field, to the political exigencies of covering up a potential scandal.

More verisimilitude than truth

Clancy, who is obsessed with giving his tales verisimilitude, with details sometimes bordering on the tedious, loses touch with reality, when he keeps out some "extraneous" factors that might complicate the scenario.

The economic issues behind the growth of the drug trade are avoided. Colombia was a nice country, one of the characters observes, "It was a pity that the economy had not developed along proper lines." This is echoed several times in the text by various characters, and is the only concession to the fact there are other dimensions to the drug problem in Colombia. But Clancy is an intelligence buff, and intelligence and military people cannot concern themselves with the larger political intricacies. So they act in the only way that they know.

The issue of money laundering is dealt with as a simplistic scheme in which the Cartel buys a few corrupt businessmen who do some fancy manipulations. Major banking and finance institutions are apparently just as naive and helpless as the Colombian government.

There is also no involvement of hostile foreign powers in the cocaine business. The Cartel has bought the loyalty of a former DGI Cuban Intelligence colonel. Clancy accepts the existence of small conspiracies, but does not entertain the possibility that the drug trade is a low-intensity war against the United States by the Soviets and their allies in what is called the "Anglo-American-Soviet Trust."

Clancy's oversight is the equivalent of the lone assassin theory of the Kennedy assassination, but in Clancy's world such a depiction of "the larger picture" might complicate things past the point where a field operative would be able to make the best decisions on the ground. Clancy's story is only a struggle between the Cartel and military and intelligence field operatives.

Unfortunately, as we have seen over the past decades, things don't work quite so smoothly. And the real constitutional and moral issues are never discussed. Clancy's scenario revolves only around the problems brought out in the Iran-Contra scandal, and described so clearly during Oliver North's 1987 congressional testimony, when North explained that he had violated the laws of the American Constitution in order to preserve the American Way.

So, this book, which will fall on receptive ears in Washington, is no more than another position paper, reinforcing the current thinking about how to conduct the "war on drugs."

Apparently, since the Vietnam War, we have forgotten the fundamental lesson that in order to win the war, it is also necessary to win the peace.

Books Received

Pardons: Justice, Mercy, and the Public Interest, by Kathleen Dean Moore, Oxford University Press, New York, 1989, 271 pages, hardbound, \$22.95.

Parting the Waters, America in the King Years, 1954-63, by Taylor Branch, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1988, 1,064 pages, hardbound, \$24.95.

Insider: My Hidden Life as a Revolutionary in Cuba, by José Luis Llovio-Menéndez, translated by Edith Grossman, Bantam Books, New York, 1988, 466 pages, hardbound, \$27.95.

Taking the University to the People, Seventy-five Years of Cooperative Extension by Wayne Rasmussen, Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa, 300 pages, 1989, hardbound, \$24.95.

Toward a Well-Fed World, by Don Paarlberg, Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa, 1989, 270 pages, hardbound, \$29.95.

Massacre at Beijing: China's Struggle for Democracy, by the Editors of Time Magazine, with an Introduction by Nien Cheng, Time-Warner Books, New York, 1989, 280 pages, paperbound, \$5.95.

The Andy Warhol Diaries, ed. by Pat Hackett, Warner Books, New York, 1989, 807 pages, illus., \$29.95.

The World of Jeeves, by P.G. Wodehouse, Harper and Row, New York, 1989, 654 pages, paperbound, \$10.95.

Collecting Himself: James Thurber on Writing and Writers, Humor and Himself, edited by Michael Rosen, Harper and Row, New York, 1989, 268 pages, hardbound, \$19.95.

For Love and Money: A Writing Life 1969-1989, by Jonathan Raban, Harper and Row, New York, 1989, 344 pages, hardbound, \$22.50.

"Dumbth": And 81 Ways to Make Americans Smarter, by Steve Allen, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, N.Y., 1989, 359 pages, hardbound, \$19.95.