

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION • TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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Monsoon season strikes

While it is true Texas A&M University isn't heaven, it can't be hell — no fire could exist in a place with such an obscene amount of water.

During the fall semester of 1978, it rained quite a bit in College Station. During the spring semester of 1979, it rained even more in College Station.

Now it's summer, 1979 and Mother Nature again has begun a monumental, moistened offensive against us — the T-shirt-clad and sandal-wearing peasants in College Station.

She ain't no kin to me, pal. It wouldn't take Jeanne Dixon to figure out that a rather monotonous weather pattern has begun to develop in College Station.

Despite arguments by the University administration and their minions, the Corps of Cadets, rain is undoubtedly the most sacred and revered tradition in Aggieland.

However, despite the continual shower of rain on the area, most people are unwilling to accept it as the way of life. These people actually think it's supposed to be sunny during the summer. Imagine that.

College Station and Texas A&M without rain is like Houston without murderers and gas stations without lines — some things are made for each other.

Considering the almost obscene amount of rain the Bryan-College Station area receives, one wonders why the local radio and television newscasts even waste their time with weather reports. It would probably be much more effective to simply announce when it's not going to rain. This anti-forecast could be used as "the top story of the hour" whenever (and if ever) the situation arises.

Another perplexing situation is the ridiculous condition of the streets in the area. A few months of driving in Aggieland is like tying your car to one of those paint mixing machines in a hardware shop and shaking it at full-throttle for a few weeks. Automobiles driven in the area for a few years look like the losers at a demolition derby.

Still, everytime it rains, the respective city governments spend thousands of dollars patching the newly spawned canyons, uh, I mean

holes, in the streets. What a waste of time! Why fix the streets? The holes will always win out. Bryan and College Station have been and always will be automobile hell!

Fixing the streets will not solve a thing. For that matter, paying them won't even help the damn things. The cities should save the money spent on street repair and construction and set up a local agency to distribute umbrellas to the needy or subsidize a study to invent a splash-free bicycle.

If the chuckholes don't ruin the suspension, the humidity will rust the body off! This has prompted several car dealers in town to offer custom 1979 cars with plastic bodies at substantial mark-ups. These dealers also offer heavy-duty shocks and roll-bars for drivers who drive on FM 2818. Now, windshield wipers are being offered at outrageously high prices.

Also on the financial front, despite all of the business opportunities in new specialty cars for the weather, the smart money is being invested in "while-you-wait" shock absorber/body shops for the used cars. All of the shop's mechanics were once armored

tank mechanics for the U.S. Army. The free-enterprise system triumphs again.

As far as the campus is concerned, is it possible for anyone to imagine Texas A&M without the perennial holes in the Prairie Film (the trade name is misspelled) sidewalks? I have seen many students step into a crevasse, never to return.

And what about the sidewalks themselves? When wet, Prairie Film has the same traction as a waxed ice skating rink. There are rumors the U.S. Winter Olympic skating team is going to have tryouts right here at Aggieland.

In addition, a few more heads-up businessmen have decided to petition the government to ship thousands of refugees from Southeast Asia to Aggieland to provide cheap labor and to help initiate a sizeable rice growing industry in the swamp/farm land in the county.

There's no doubt about it; if people would accept the monsoon situation like the business community has, we would all be as happy as sitting ducks.

Roy Bragg

Oil imports not only cause of deficit; confusing federal policies to blame

By LeROY POPE

United Press International

NEW YORK — The notion so widely held that oil imports are the only, or even the biggest, cause of the mounting U.S. trade deficit is illusory, says a survey just concluded by Heritage Foundation of Washington.

Heritage Foundation describes itself as "a conservative think tank." It is financed by other foundations and individuals interested in the examination of important issues from the conservative point of view.

The study, prepared by policy analyst Susan Woodard points out that Japan and West Germany, two countries even more dependent on imported oil than the United States, have managed to avoid trade deficits in spite of having to pay much bigger prices for oil during the time the United States moved from a trade surplus of \$9 billion in 1975 to a deficit of \$34.9 billion in 1978.

Conceding that the U.S. bill for imported fuel spurted from \$7.6 billion in 1974 to \$39.5 billion in 1978 (down slightly from 1977), analyst Woodard says confusing and contradictory federal government policies on exports and business regulation in general are more responsible for the trade dilemma than high priced foreign oil.

She concludes that the American people must face up to the deficit crisis and increase exports dramatically because "the nation no longer can rely on its own ability to supply all the desired social consumption items, nor a sufficient quantity of raw materials."

The first big problem analyst Woodard sees as "the absence of a definitive U.S. export promotion policy." Exports still account for only 7 percent of the Gross National Product as against 14 percent of Japan's and 22 percent of West Germany's.

The only U.S. exports that have increased in recent years are of such basic farm crops as grains, soybeans and rice.

Although the Commerce Department claims U.S.

exports have been rising by 7 percent a year since 1974 against a rise of 13.5 percent a year in imports, Miss Woodard is more impressed by the finding of the National Association of Manufacturers that U.S. exports did not rise at all in 1977 and that the country's share of global markets dropped from 18.2 percent in 1960 to 11.8 percent in '77.

The complex of federal laws that discourage American exports, she said, includes:

—Amendments and provisions of the Trade Act of 1974 such as the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which limits the extension of most favored nation trading privileges to nations who do not engage in restrictive emigration policies, and the provisions giving the president the power to interfere with foreign trade.

—The anti-boycott provisions of the Export Administration Act of 1977, and the export controls for national security reasons provided in the act. "It is difficult to measure," she writes, "the cost of restricting U.S. export growth (by these amendments) in the Middle East where a market newly glutted with petroleum dollars is anxiously looking for ways to absorb the growing wealth."

—Restrictions on the activity of the Export-Import Bank such as the 1974 prohibition against financing trade with nonmarket (i.e. communist) countries which practice restrictive emigration policies, and Section 143 of Public Law 95 requiring consideration of any country's human rights policy before any loan can be granted. Also the restrictions on financing nuclear equipment sales and the recent ruling that any loan made by the bank must first be determined by the President to be in the national interest. Miss Woodard does not challenge all these restrictions, she simply points out their restrictive impact on exports.

—The Carter Administration's phasing out of the DISC (domestic international sales corporation) tax deferrals for American companies operating abroad. Miss Woodard calls DISC "the country's only tax export in-

centive" and points out that it has been the only American machinery for countering a foreign country's ability to rebate value added taxes on exports.

Section 615 of Public Law 95 raised the U.S. taxation of Americans living abroad so drastically that it greatly increases the cost of doing business abroad and undermines the competitiveness of American goods.

—The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977, designed to halt the use of bribery by American firms to promote sales abroad, has so many ambiguities that it discourages many American companies from engaging in new ventures abroad.

—Over regulation and divided regulation of high technology exports. This, Miss Woodard implies, may be the most serious cause of the trade deficit aside from the high cost of oil imports. She gives example after example of conflicting rules of different government departments, with resulting bureaucratic waffling, jealousy and stalling on approval of multi-million dollar orders with the result that the company involved lost the sale to foreign competitors.

—Economic sanctions for moral and political reasons against such nations as South Africa. Again Miss Woodard does not challenge the sanctions but points out their effect.

—Arms export limitations. —The January, 1979, executive order to eventually extend the implementation of stricter environmental standards in the United States "to include the environmental effects abroad of U.S. exports."

—Such anomalies as the sudden refusal of the Carter Administration to permit continued selling of the Lockheed C-130 cargo plane abroad because it might be used as a combat transport after Lockheed already had sold 1,500 of the craft in 45 countries.

Similarly, the sale of Swedish Saab Viggen aircraft containing American components to India was blocked although the planes had been sold to both Israel and certain Arab countries.

1001 definition for inflation

By HELEN THOMAS

United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Carter is having his usual troubles making the administration speak with one voice on a given subject. A recent announcement that Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal will head the Economic Policy Group that will meet three times a week at the White House is a reflection of the Carter's growing annoyance with the free-wheeling comments from other advisers on the economic outlook.

From week to week, the public is treated to various assessments of the picture from more inflation to no recession in sight, or maybe a slight recession.

Press secretary Jody Powell insisted that the designation of Blumenthal as the chief economic spokesman is not a putdown for chief inflation fighter Alfred Kahn. From time to time, White House aides have cringed at Kahn's outspoken frank economic prophecies when they undoubtedly would have liked a little more sugar coating. Kahn is articulate, amusing and not afraid to revise an opinion.

It is not the first time Carter's laissez faire approach to his top-level staff has caused him some grief. He finally laid down the law that on foreign policy matters, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was the voice of Carter diplomacy, not national security affairs adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski.

More recently, the administration has been turning the other cheek on recurring reports that CIA director Stansfield Turner has deemed questionable certain aspects of verifying the strategic arms limitation agreement. Turner's posture is that he does not make political and policy assessments. That gets him off the hook, temporarily at least.

In an earlier period, presidential assistant Midge Costanza was being encouraged to do her own thing. She was designated as Carter's public liaison staffer, and the public indeed did come to call, picking up the chits the president had passed out during his campaigning days.

But soon after he got into the White House, Carter and his top aides decided that Costanza was not on the same wave length. The coup de grace occurred when image maker Gerald Rafshoon decided that she should not be allowed to appear on ABC-TV's "Good Morning America" program as a representative of the White House. She resigned shortly afterwards.

Bella Abzug was fired as head of the President's Advisory Committee on Women because her panel took a broad view of women's affairs to cover most of the issues of the day, including Carter's budgeting for defense versus social problems. The president replaced her with Lynda Bird Johnson Robb, wife of the lieutenant governor of Virginia and daughter of Lyndon B. Johnson, on grounds that she would represent a "typical" housewife's viewpoint.

Probably the most outspoken and the most difficult for Carter to muzzle or corral is U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young, who has his own opinions and does not mind expressing them.

From time to time, it is apparent, though the White House won't admit it, Carter has tried to bring Young into line and has toned him down. The president also has personally disagreed publicly with Young, and has had Powell do it for him as often.

Young's views on "political prisoners," likening the death penalty of John Spenkelink to the Ayatollah Khomeini's executions, run counter to Carter's opinions. His view that the elections in Rhodesia were not fair also may come in conflict with Carter's, depending on whether the president decides to lift sanctions against that African nation.

But clearly Young is an unguided missile, and all Carter can do about it is dissociate himself from the U.N. diplomat's positions from time to time.

Employee rip-off - too much leisure, not enough work

By LeROY POPE

United Press International

NEW YORK — Possibly the biggest cause of declining productivity in the United States is that too many Americans spend 45 percent of the working day doing nothing, says the head of a prestigious group of management consulting companies.

James A. Skidmore, Jr., is president of Scienxmanagement Corp., of Moorestown, N.J., which owns a group of consulting firms including the Handy Associates, Hendrick & Co., O'Donnell Associates, A. W. Martin Associates and the WOFAC Group.

Skidmore was an adviser to Presidents Johnson and Nixon and has held executive posts with PepsiCo and other companies.

What makes his opinion most intriguing is that his company's original division, WOFAC (standing for Work-Factor), has played a major role in raising the productivity of the United States' greatest international competitor, Japan.

WOFAC was formed in 1946 to create a system for monitoring the productivity of blue-collar workers. It began working in Japan in 1949 and has since spread to England and many other countries.

In sounding the alarm about what he called the "widening gap" between productivity in the United States and competitor countries, Skidmore said other countries are beating American industry at its own game and, for the most part, are using technology and methods invented in America to do it.

What is missing, he said, is the drive and will to work hard and put all the skills I American workrrrkers and executives to work.

Indifference is largely to blame, he said. "That is what creates the productivity gap and the gap is the biggest cause of inflation — it is the greatest threat in the United States, short of the threat a new war would pose."

"People who don't stop to think what it costs to stretch a five-minute coffee break to 25 minutes every day just don't realize how much that attitude contributes to inflation," he said.

Skidmore said 65 percent of Japan's electronics industry, regarded as the world's model for technology and productivity, uses the Work-Factor method of stimulating factory workers' productivity — a system imported from the United States right after World War II. So do many other Japanese industries.

Originally developed by James H. Quick, the Work-Factor method breaks labor into time measurable and analyzable steps. Over the years, Science Management has added related services, including VE-Fac, a way of monitoring and measuring the productivity of white collar and supervisory workers.

THE BATTALION

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