

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Wednesday
August 31, 1977

New dorms — an expensive gamble

One of the newer and less glamorous traditions at this University reappeared earlier this week when over a hundred students waited in line, some more than 24 hours, in a last-ditch effort to get a dorm room on the Texas A&M campus.

The shortage of dorm rooms is nothing new. But the problem has become more and more acute in recent years, especially for students who simply can not live off campus, whether for financial or other reasons.

Demands for space on campus, coupled with increasing costs to maintain older dorms forced University officials to convert the oldest dorm on campus, Milner Hall, to office space last year. That cut dorm space on campus to under 8,000 beds. Another old dorm, Leggett, narrowly escaped the same fate during the July board of regents meeting.

During a committee discussion before that regents meeting, Chancellor Jack Williams argued persuasively that Texas A&M can't afford to eliminate any more dorm rooms. One regent disagreed strongly, saying that from a business standpoint office space was a greater concern than dorm space. But the majority of the board agreed with Williams.

The board did appropriate \$5,000 to begin a study of construction needs for a new women's athletic dorm, to be financed through stocks given to the University specifically for that dorm.

Vice-chancellor for administration Clyde Freeman was at that time studying the respective benefits and costs involved in building additional dorms. Although a final conclusion has yet to be made, any benefits provided by new dorms will have to outweigh the considerable problems they pose.

Cost is a major stumbling block. With skyrocketing construction costs and the many special requirements for dorm construction, any new dorm large enough to help the housing problem would cost many millions of dollars.

That would have to be locally-generated money, because state funds can not be used to build dorms. But most of the local money going for dorm expenses comes from the dorm fees students pay each month, so new dorm rooms could well make all the University's rooms too expensive for most students. The decision just to renovate Leggett Hall and keep it as a 187-bed dorm will cost every dorm student \$30-40 more per semester.

Then there's the time factor. Because of the numerous steps necessary in proposing, planning, designing, financing, building and finishing a dorm, a new one started this month wouldn't be completed before Sept., 1980. That requires some real long-term planning.

Space is another problem. There is very little open space on the main University campus, and that space isn't where parking and traffic created by dorms would be permissible. The west campus is more isolated than many College Station apartment complexes.

Planning a multi-million dollar project that many years ahead is risky, especially when it depends on the uncertainty that enrollment will continue to increase and that students will continue to clamor for any available space. The demand for dorms has been certain as death and taxes in recent years, but that's no guarantee for the future.

Local construction, especially in apartments, is running at break-neck speed to meet housing demands. In fact, many community and university experts believe that construction boom has already passed the demand for

apartments. If so, coming years will see a "buyers market" in apartments, with a resulting drop in prices as apartment managers again compete for student tenants.

Yes, there are advantages for students living on campus. Being "right here," not having to fight for parking space every day, avoiding the myriad of landlord, rent and utility problems that accompany apartment life — all are benefits for dorm students.

But are those advantages worth the major gambles entailed in building a new dorm? The question must be considered long and hard before taking those risks.

L.R.L.

Slouch by Jim Earle



"I KNOW YOU MAY THINK THAT SOPHOMORES KNOW IT ALL NOW, BUT LATER YOU'LL KNOW BETTER WHEN YOU SEE THEIR GRADE POINT RATIOS!"

Carter using 'inverse' foreign policy

By DAVID S. BRÖDER

WASHINGTON — It is an oddity of President Carter's foreign policy that the scope of his initiatives seems inverse to the size of the countries involved.

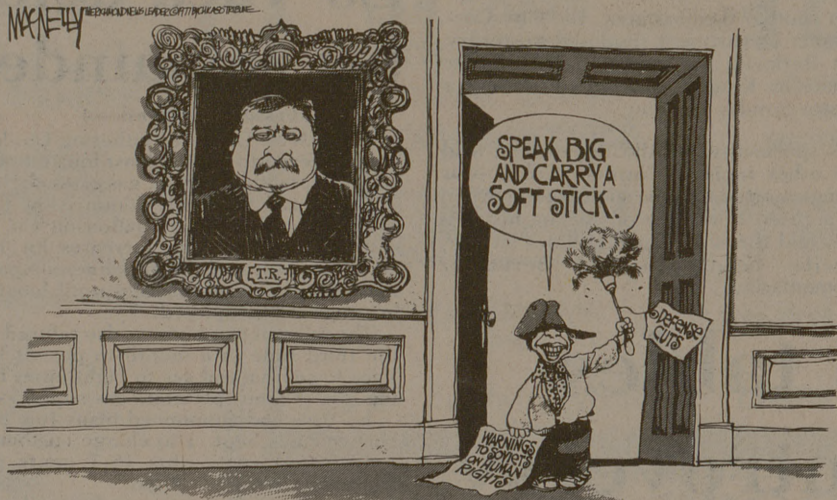
The President has made a treaty with Panama, an agreement with Cuba, and any number of proposals to Rhodesia, Israel, Vietnam, Korea and the other welterweight-class powers.

But it has taken almost eight months for the administration to discover the huge mass of China. And Secretary of State Vance, who was there last week, reportedly is operating under presidential instructions to make no waves.

Just why the President likes to take giant strides in tiny lands and baby steps when dealing with big powers is not clear. But it is certain that he does not do so based on unanimous advice from fairly qualified experts on China — a category that most emphatically does not include this reporter.

As noted here last spring, the panel of experts assembled for the American Society of Newspaper Editors convention in Honolulu included several who argued, in effect, that the President should stop frittering away his energies at the edges of the Asian continent in Korea and Vietnam and the Philippines — and go to the source, which is China.

That view reached the center of American politics last week when Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) said the time has come to establish full diplomatic relations with Peking, while downgrading the rela-



tionship with Taiwan to one of unofficial support for its military security and economic prosperity.

Murray Marder, The Washington Post's veteran diplomatic correspondent, said the Kennedy speech reflected the views of China specialists "inside and outside the government." Some of those specialists, Marder reported, were in the National Security Council and the State Department. While the department formally disowned any collusion with Kennedy, it was reportedly pleased that Kennedy's speech had brought the Honolulu dialogue to the

Mainland.

The only point worth noting, however, is that in this administration's foreign policy — like almost every other major policy — is really made by only one "specialist." And his name is Jimmy Carter.

Carter's approach to the Chinese question is one of great caution. There may or may not be solid diplomatic considerations that weigh against the bold move the China hands are recommending, through Kennedy, to cement U.S.-Peking relationship and forestall any rapprochement between Peking and Moscow.

But there are obvious domestic cautions against such boldness. Carter is willing to challenge prevailing public opinion by proposing the return of the Panama Canal to Panama. But he must cringe at the storm that would blow up if he simultaneously shifted America's diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to Peking.

A survey taken in April and released recently by Potomac Associates showed that 62 per cent of its respondents viewed favorably the prospect of American relations with Peking. But only 28 per cent favored taking the step of diplomatic recognition on the conditions that Peking has set.

They would require a renunciation of our diplomatic recognition and defense treaties with Taiwan, even if softened by an expression of presidential concern about the Nationalist island's security and prosperity.

The survey found very cautious attitudes toward active American participation in the defense of Taiwan, but even greater skepticism toward any deliberate effort to strengthen China as a rival to the Soviet Union.

As the authors concluded, "Clearly there is no set of China policies that will win unanimous support. . . . The task of the President. . . is to articulate a China policy which. . . best suits his overall view of American international interests."

A start on that task, one hopes, will not be long delayed after Vance's return from Peking. Big countries demand attention, even when big actions are untimely.

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Washington's hot check expert

Bert's our kind of budget director

By DICK WEST

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Business leaders used to complain that FDR's "New Deal" programs were being run by egghead professors and ivory-domed theoreticians "who never had to meet a payroll."

A similar complaint could be made about one of the newer agencies, the Office of Budget and Management.

Traditionally, federal budget directors, although presiding over some of the greatest deficits the world has ever known, have been individuals whose personal finances had always been in the black.

It seems almost paradoxical, but we've had some budget directors who never knew what it was like to be overdrawn at the bank.

It's difficult to see how a budget director with sufficient funds in his accounts could properly relate to all that red ink in the government's ledgers.

He would, I should think, tend to look upon federal deficits in a detached, objective manner with a view colored by his own experiences.

Ergo, administration of the deficit would not necessarily be a subjective challenge that would inspire creative management.

The foregoing explains why I think Bert

Lance is potentially the best budget director we've ever had. It's understandable that President Carter would be loath to lose his services.

Show me a banker who has tried to take more money out of an account than he had

The lighter side

put into it and I'll show you a banker who is intimately acquainted with the first principle of deficit financing.

Some critics have suggested that Lance's overdrafts indicate he is not competent for the OBM job. Just the opposite, I say.

A budget director deals in nothing but deficits. There is never enough money in the federal coffers to cover the withdrawals.

A person who has demonstrated a certain agility in fielding overdrafts is ideally trained for coping with the federal budget.

Carter has made balancing the budget one of his administration's goals.

The typical budget director of yore might have been philosophically in favor of that campaign, but would have had no feeling of empathy.

Lance, however, can bring to the effort a strong sense of identification. He knows

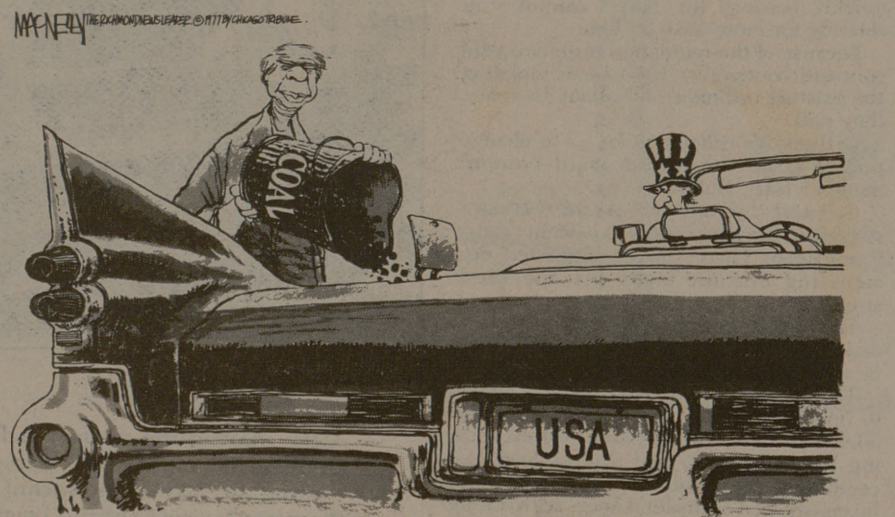
first hand the main cause of imbalance — that when a check is written for an amount exceeding the funds available, the transaction acquires a negative aspect.

Other budget directors undoubtedly were familiar with the rule in the abstract. But only those who have tested it personally — even if inadvertently — can attest

to its reliability.

Carter says he has written overdrafts himself at times. Thus he was able to confirm that "it's better not to."

That awareness surely is the first step toward achieving a balanced budget. And Carter obviously picked the right man to help him attain it.



Top of the News

Campus

University Library gets fall hours

Fall hours for the main university library will be from 7:30 a.m. to midnight Monday through Thursday, and until 10 p.m. on Friday. Weekend hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and 1 p.m. to midnight on Sunday.

State

Houston may have first encephalitis case

Health officials in Houston have reported the season's first suspected case of St. Louis encephalitis. A 24-year-old man who fell ill on Aug. 19 is being tested for the disease, said City Health Director Albert Randall on Monday. The disease, which is usually limited to warm, damp climates, is transmitted from birds to humans by mosquitoes. Last year, there were 26 cases of St. Louis encephalitis in Harris County and 19 suspected cases. In 1975, there were 26 cases and two confirmed deaths from the disease.

Braniff seeks Texas-London route

Braniff International board chairman Harding L. Lawrence said yesterday that the airline will ask the Civil Aeronautics Board to approve daily flights from Dallas-Ft. Worth to London at a round-trip cost of \$349.

Lawrence, who was scheduled to speak before the board today in Washington, said that the route award was "in the public interest." President Carter has asked the board to give the route "expedient consideration."

Houston schools show student decline

Houston Independent School District appears to have suffered its largest enrollment decline since court-ordered busing ended two years ago.

Spokesmen for the district said an unofficial count showed 3,323 fewer students in school Monday than were present opening day last year. The decline occurred mainly among white students, who comprised more than 36 per cent of the 175,558 enrolled Monday. Last year, there were 179,091 students in school the first day, 38 per cent of them white.

Nation

Air Force pilots missing in North Sea

The Air Force yesterday released the names of two Louisiana men declared missing after their jet fighter plane crashed into the North Sea. The pilot was identified as 1st Lt. Mickey L. Johnston, 26, of Baton Rouge. The weapons officer was 1st Lt. Patrick H. Phondrom, 24, of New Iberia. The jet was on a training mission from Germany to England when it crashed into the North Sea about 7 a.m.

Humphrey recuperating in Minnesota

Sen. Hubert Humphrey, D-Minn., continues to gain strength after his cancer surgery and is looking forward to going home, says a spokesman of the Minnesota Hospitals. Humphrey said he planned to return to his home in Waverly later this week. But neither the senator nor his chief surgeon would say which day he would be released.

World

Tito cheered by crowd in Peking

President Tito of Yugoslavia, once denounced by China as a traitor to Communism, arrived in Peking today to the cheers of 100,000 persons in the city's Tien An Men square. The 85-year-old Tito flew into Peking aboard a special plane from Pyongyang, North Korea, where he had called for the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea. Tito was met by Chinese Communist Party chairman Hua Kuo-feng and two party vice chairmen.

Mexican universities 'buffer' for unemployment

Mexican universities serve primarily as a buffer to protect young people against the nation's 30 per cent unemployment rate, says the president of the Technological Institute of Monterrey. Fernando Garcia-Roel said yesterday that higher education in Mexico was often a palliative until the government can consolidate economic resources. "The universities have to act as cushions for the intense social pressure of unemployment on government," he told the Pacific Chemical Engineering Congress meeting in Denver, Colo.

Western envoys silent in Africa

U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young and British Foreign Secretary David Owen arrived in Kenya yesterday on their African peace safari, silent on their much-opposed proposals to end bloodshed in Rhodesia. Young told a news conference that the trip had been interesting, but both envoys dodged questions about their faltering discussions with white and black leaders. Owen and Young were scheduled to spend today briefing Kenyan leaders and an officer from the organization of African Unity. They were also awaiting the outcome of the Rhodesian elections before their Thursday trip to Salisbury.

The Battalion

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