

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

Wednesday
October 26, 1977

Carter's troubles exaggerated — for now

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — It is a rare privilege for a beat-up veteran of the Potomac battles to be able to view Washington with the eyes of a stranger. Coming back to this city after four weeks in Asia — most of it without any news from home — is about as close as one can come to getting a fresh-eyed perspective on its problems.

If one is to believe the conventional wisdom of this city, the past month has been an almost unmitigated disaster for Jimmy Carter. "The thing is in shambles," one is told, not just by the ever-present critics of the administration, but by members of the White House staff as well.

If you ask what has gone wrong, you hear a recital that ranges from the mismanaged Lance affair to the bungled battle over the energy bill and the quick-switch Middle East diplomacy, which has alienated the American Jewish community without bringing the elusive peace agreement visibly closer.

The same people who talked last summer as if Jimmy Carter could walk on water now are just as convinced he is drowning.

Maybe. But to the returned traveler, who has not lived through the past month's misadventures, it looks like a classic case of overreaction.

Objectively, it is hard to see why there should be so much hand-wringing. Yes, the President lost a loyal friend and aide in Bert Lance's forced resignation. But he also ended a running story that was steadily depleting the administration's moral credit.

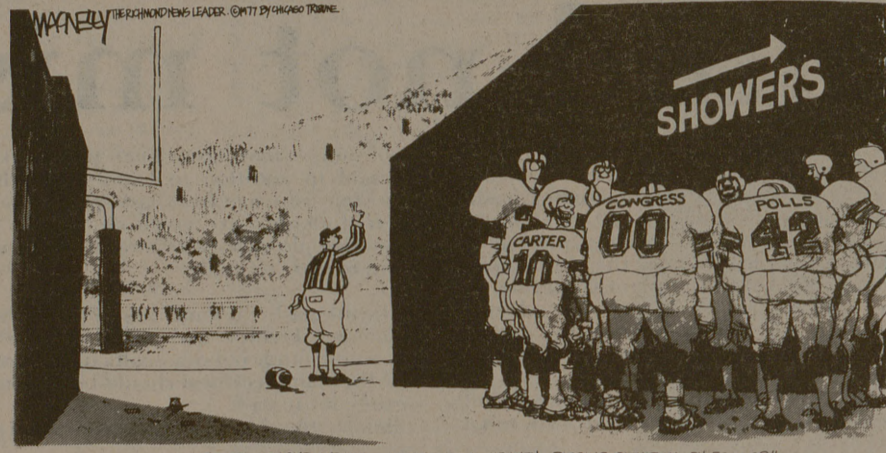
Yes, the tactics used to end the Senate filibuster on the energy bill were unnecessarily crude. But both Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill predict that the final bill which will emerge from conference next month is likely to contain enough of what the President recommended to justify a claim of success.

As for the Middle Eastern peace effort, which was never more than an outside bet for complete success, there still seems, as this is written, at least a 50-50 chance that the administration can nudge the reluctant parties into talks at Geneva.

Then, why the hangdog looks and gloomy forebodings at the White House itself? Mainly because these problems — whether temporary or long-term — have confirmed what many of the insiders already knew about the serious, unresolved shortcomings of Carter's approach to his job.

The criticisms being shouted now are no different than those catalogued in this space last June. Then, I attempted to summarize the serious concerns of several people I was able to describe only as "important friends and well-wishers of the President and frequent visitors to the White House."

Those same problems now have been recognized by many who work in the White House every day. They include: Carter's failure to sort out his priorities and make them clear, even to his close associates; his inability to match his day-to-day tactics to his broad, philosophical principles of government; his unwillingness to delegate sufficient decision-making



WELL, LET'S SEE... SECOND AND 114... LOOKS LIKE A HEHEH PASSING SITUATION. EH, FELLAS

authority so that he can spend his time leading the government, rather than trying to administer it on an hour-by-hour basis, and his refusal to name an overall staff coordinator with a sure feel for both political realities and policy substance.

One reason for discouragement on the White House staff is that the public, which last June was quite beguiled by Carter, has begun to discover that these shortcomings in Carter's approach to his job doom many of his promises to failure.

The second reason for gloom is that there is as yet no firm indication — only a few presidential hints — that Carter himself is concerned enough about the situation to rethink his concept of the job and to reconstruct his White House staff accordingly.

These concerns about the fundamental direction of events are not misplaced. But, ironically, some of those who see the basic problem quite clearly are still helping the President camouflage it behind the autumn offensive for "victory" on the energy and Middle Eastern fronts. Somehow he has convinced himself that if he can just "win" the energy bill he wants and get a Geneva conference started before Christmas, everything will be all right.

It won't. The fact of the matter is that in the remaining weeks of 1977, about all the President can reasonably hope to do is salvage whatever is salvageable from an agenda that was ill-considered in conception and far too ambitious in scope.

But by pressing as hard as he is just now on both the energy and Middle Eastern fronts, he risks damaging even that salvage operation.

The time for reconstruction — for signaling a new and more coherent approach to governing — will not come before next January at the earliest. Then, in the Senate of the Union message and in his own first budget, Carter will have a real opportunity to show he has got his priorities straight.

If he does that, the gloom of October will seem as exaggerated as it probably is. And if he doesn't — well, he still has three years to reelection.

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Correction

A letter in yesterday's Battalion was inadvertently published without its author's name. The letter, "Was O'Hair thrown to the Christians?" was written by Tommy Peacock. The Battalion regrets the error.

Gas price controls not answer

By PETER D. HUDDLESTON

Editor's note: The following commentary is in response to an editorial in the Wheeling, West Virginia "Intelligencer" which the Battalion carried Oct. 20, 1977. That editorial bemoaned a Senate decision to remove price controls on natural gas, suggesting that maintaining controls while allowing prices to rise would be a better compromise.

In reference to the article, "Gas Compromise Best" there are several ideas set forth which seem to be a less than American approach.

The article states, "...something which has life and death consequences for consumers should not be without controls." This statement is clearly in opposition to the rules of supply and demand no matter what the commodity might be. It has been known for many years that the world's reserves of natural gas (and oil) are not keeping pace with our growing rate of consumption. Also, the energy companies, in an effort to supply energy to the American

people, have begun to drill in areas of marginal economic operation.

One must realize that Americans have thrived on our own economic system 200 years, we have survived times of prosper-

ity and poverty yet we still have the highest standard living and lowest energy costs in the world.

The article quotes President Carter as saying what we need is "legislation that provides adequate production incentives while protecting the interests of American consumers." Do we really need someone to watch out for us?

It seems that Americans have always been quick to speak their mind and forcefully assert their opinion. If we decide that we are being ripped off by the gas companies there are two alternatives which may be taken. The first only requires that we cease to use so much energy — a household temperature of 60° is not unbearable when faced with an exorbitant gas bill — in fact the average temperature of homes in England is about 62°.

The other alternative is to use an alternate energy source such as coal, nuclear power or solar power. If such steps are taken, gas companies will certainly keep their product competitive in the energy markets.

Readers' Forum

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we must not depend on government control to curb energy costs unless we are also ready for government intervention in all phases of our economy. All that is required is that we show the same strength of character that Americans have shown for the past 200 years to help get through this energy crisis.

Peter Huddleston is a sophomore petroleum engineering major. This commentary contains his opinions and not necessarily those of this newspaper.

Letters to the editor

Library coin changing policy needs revision

This is in response to C. Bradford's letter that appeared in the Thursday, Oct. 20 edition of the Battalion. It's bad enough that "occasionally, the change machine runs out of coins, or gets too full of bills" but that after you discover this fact you have to go stand in line and wait who knows how long and only during the day! What about at night? What about weekends?

What if you didn't "plan" to copy material and suddenly found an article you wanted copied and didn't have the change? Are you supposed to bring your own Xerox machine? Or maybe just tear the article out?

Maybe with the tremendous loss of material the library might consider it beneficial and more economical to let the circulation desk or some other personnel handle the change matters on weekends and nights, patrons would then be satisfied and

then we wouldn't spend so much money on replacements and could spend the excess on developing collections, and enlarging our assets.

—Darlene Maliawco
Former library employee

Floors dangerous

The finished concrete floors in the new Agronomy & Entomology building are made to shine like glass and bust your — (fill in the word yourself).

I can't believe they actually polish this stuff, as if it weren't already slick enough. It's discouraging to walk for ten minutes and then discover you haven't moved.

Seriously, these floors are very dangerous. I am surprised that someone hasn't really hurt themselves by slipping down. I

have come close many times and have seen others do so. I guess I'm gonna have to shed my leather soled boots and get a pair of spiderman shoes so I can get around without embarrassing myself. As it is now, I must take tiny little steps and hang on to the wall. Have you ever tried hanging on to a wall?

Maybe I've exaggerated a little but not much! There must be some solution to this problem. I'm sure the University does not want to spend any more money on this building for something like carpeting, so I won't ask for that. But perhaps there is some sort of rubber base substance that can be mopped on the floor to prevent someone from not only injuring their ego, but their tail end as well.

—Bobby Lane

Traffic again

During the past month, the traffic problem on campus has seemed to be the popular subject for letters to the editor. These letters accused pedestrians, drivers, and bicyclists of carelessness, discourtesy, and general wrongdoings, but the problem has continued to grow.

I have been accused of being a speed demon while driving through campus. By way of retort, I could name incidents in which bicyclists fail to stop at intersections or persons step into a street without looking both ways, but that is not my point.

Instead of accusations, may I suggest cooperation between driver, bicyclist, and pedestrian? If all Aggies work together, maybe we can alleviate the traffic problem, or at least its attendant antagonisms.

—Bill White '79

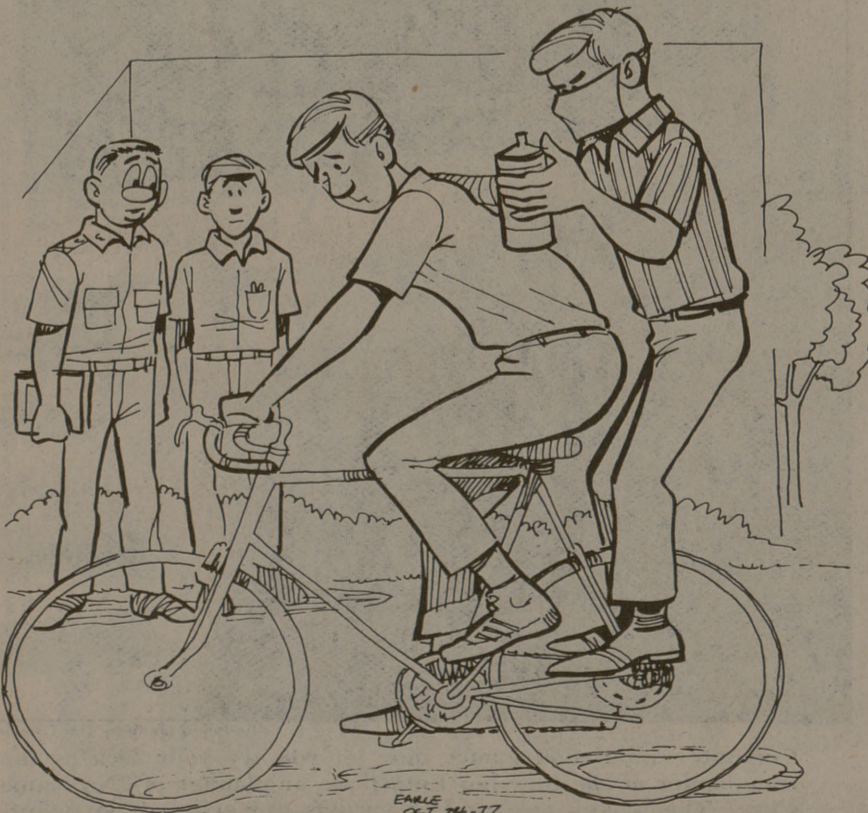
One man's poison...

I was very much pleased with the opportunity to hear the Philharmonia Hungarica and I must take issue with your comments that the orchestra played some of the pieces "darkly and hesitantly" and that one piece "sagged sadly and became morbid in some spots."

Whether these references were to the compositions or to the quality of the performance, I am not sure. Considering how complex music can be, how can we be so certain that both the music and the performance were not possibly a reflection of some deeper emotions that these persons who have been displaced from their homelands must have.

—Curtis McCallip

Slouch by Jim Earle



"IT HAD TO HAPPEN: BIKE HIJACKING!"

Top of the News

Campus

Women may apply for aid

Women doing graduate work at Texas A&M University may now apply for fellowships financed by the American Association of University Women. The deadline for filing applications in Washington is Dec. 15. Interested women should contact the local Educational Foundation Programs chairman, Mary Evelyn Tielking, at 846-6673 for details concerning eligibility requirements and guidelines.

Local

City Council agenda set

The College Station City Council will meet Oct. 27 at 7 p.m. for a public hearing on rezoning three tracts on the northeast corner of Live Oak St. and Texas Ave. The council will also consider approval of final plans for the police station and a warehouse, reconsider authorization of the mayor to vote on steering committee items on urban transportation and discuss the Capital Improvements Program.

Davis Airlines sold to Rio

Rio Airways of Killeen has bought Davis Airlines of Bryan-College Station. Guy A. Davis, founder, owner and president of Davis, will become vice president sales and planning for Rio. All of Davis' employees will be offered employment with Rio. The acquisition of Davis by Rio must be approved by the Texas Aeronautics Commission.

State

Let's keep Christ in Christmas

More than 2,000 Goose Creek Independent School District residents in Baytown packed a school board meeting Monday to support keeping Christ in the system's Christmas this year. The district superintendent prohibited the use of the name of Jesus Christ after a federal court suit was filed on behalf of a Jewish mother who complained of school prayers and Bible readings in violation of the Constitution. Because of complaints about the system's ban, the board met to study the matter.

Hill says Hughes was a Texan

Harris County Probate Judge Pat Gregory forbade lawyers from publicly discussing evidence in the Howard Hughes estate case scheduled for trial Nov. 14. This trial will determine whether Hughes legally was a Texas resident when he died. Texas Attorney General John Hill intends to prove Hughes was a Texan when he died and, therefore, his estate taxes must be paid to the State of Texas. Hughes' relatives and estate administrators contend he was a resident of Nevada.

Nation

Tucker accused of funds misuse

Frank Tucker, district attorney who prosecuted singer Claudine Longet, said Tuesday he learned of his own criminal indictment for misuse of public funds while watching television. The grand jury accused Tucker of misusing funds from Garfield and Pitkin counties in Colorado, two of the three counties in his 9th Judicial District. Tucker said there is no truth to any of the accusations.

Puerto Ricans take over statue

An unarmed group of Puerto Rican nationalists Tuesday took over the Statue of Liberty, ousting hundreds of tourists and a movie crew. The demonstrators demanded that they be allowed to hold a news conference, but police barred reporters from going to the island. The group said they represented the New York Committee to Free the Five and the Supporters of the Puerto Rican Independence Movement. (The Puerto Rican Five was a group of terrorists who shot five U.S. Congressmen in 1954.)

College freshman kills family

Michael Swihart, 18, was charged Tuesday with the murder of his parents and two brothers. Swihart is a freshman at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Brunswick, Ohio, Police Chief said Swihart admitted killing his family. They were beaten with a baseball bat and then burned beyond recognition when Swihart set fire to their home.

World

Kaddam escapes assassination

A gunman killed a United Arab Emirates cabinet member Tuesday in an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the Syrian foreign minister at Abu Dhabi airport. The assassin seized seven hostages and forced them into a plane on the airfield before surrendering to police about 90 minutes later. Syrian Foreign Minister Abdel Halim Kaddam escaped injury, but this was the second attempt on his life in less than a year.

Sadat wants Israeli withdrawal

President Anwar Sadat says Egypt will cut Israel down to size unless it withdraws from all occupied Arab lands and accepts Palestinian demands. The comments were in a speech delivered on Sadat's behalf Monday by State Minister Hamed Mahmoud at a rally in Suez City. Western observers said they believed the speech was aimed at putting pressure on the United States and Israel to accelerate the Middle East peace contacts.

German leaders protected

Police made extensive security arrangements to protect top West Germany political and business leaders Tuesday at the funeral of industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer. He had been shot three times in the head by his kidnapers, members of the Baader-Meinhof terrorist group. The group vowed to avenge the deaths of their imprisoned leaders.

Weather

Fair and mild today and tomorrow with light and variable winds. High today mid 80's. Low tonight mid 50's. No precipitation.

The Battalion

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LETTERS POLICY
Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification.

Address correspondence to Letters to the Editor, The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

Represented nationally by National Educational Advertising Services, Inc., New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday from September through May except during exam and holiday periods and the summer, when it is published on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester; \$33.25 per school year; \$55.00 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request. Address The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843. United Press International is entitled exclusive rights for reproduction of all news dispatches appearing in this newspaper. Rights of reproduction of all other matter herein reserved. Second-Class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

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