Viewpoint

MAREW

The Battalion Texas A&M University

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THE THIRD WORLD

Foreign policy dictates privacy law

Almost any law can be made to look ridiculous if it is interpreted in ridiculous ways. The state department seems to have done that with respect to the Privacy Act of 1974. When an American citizen died last summer in a fall from the 11th floor of Moscow's Intourist Hotel, the U.S. Embassy withheld his identity and facts of his death from American reporters on the ground that disclosure would be an invasion of privacy under the 1974 act.

The law prohibits the federal government from giving out certain information it has collected about a citizen without the citizen's consent. With various federal agencies collecting and computerizing information about citizens, the law was designed to prevent the exchange and easy dissemination of such information. Rep. William S. Moorhead, who helped write the act, said its authors never intended it to bar the release of information about Americans arrested, convicted or otherwise having difficulties abroad.

But the state department told its employees essentially to follow the policy of the host country. In Russia very little police information is given out ergo, don't give out information about a death the police investigated. Such a rule might make sense regarding host country citizens. With respect to American citizens, however, why graft foreign law onto an American statute? Perhaps the state department should shed some light on the privacy of its

bureaucratic thinking.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The press in cloak and dagger

By ARNOLD SAWISLAK United Press International

WASHINGTON — A network radio commentator recently observed that the United States was about the only country he knew of — including some democracies — that is concerned by the use of reporters as spies.

That statement, part of an account of the recent hearings into employment of jour-nalists by the CIA, betrayed a lack of sen-sitivity to the constitutional relationship of press and government in this country that would flunk a freshman journalism student.

For openers, the comment almost surely was misleading in its assertion that the practice of hiring reporters as intelligence agents is countenanced in other countries

It may well be true that many governments, including democracies, see nothing wrong with the practice. But after the last turbulent decade it should be clear that it is risky to assume that the policies of government always reflect the attitudes of the governed.

Washington Window

So it is just possible that not everyone in Britain, France or West Germany approves of the clandestine marriage of journalism and espionage. It also is possible that the people in those countries were not told about, let alone asked for their endorsement of, such practices. But that it is beside the point for the

United States. Here, the issue of journalists secretly working for the govern-

ment involves constitutional questions that do not arise in other countries.

The First Amendment gives the news media in the United States a unique status. The framers of the constitution gave only two institutions - the press and religion — immunity from government interference. They did it in language so absolute that some legal scholars believe the First Amendment could not be altered except by a constitutional convention of the

There are limits on freedom of the press — libel, for example — but there is very little that the civil authority can do to restrict reporting and comment on government activity. Even during wartime cen-sorship had been imposed by the press on itself, not by the government. This constitutional grant of immunity

entitles the public to a privately owned

press completely independent of government. As surely as reporters and editors should not have to fear government, they also should not let themselves become part of government.

It has become obvious — not only in the foreign intelligence area but in domestic police work as well - that some government officials believe the imperatives of national security or of law and order override the need to keep the press independent. Either with appeals to patriotism or promises of financial reward, they see nothing wrong with buying the services of

But if the first Amendment has any meaning, there is something very wrong with the press climbing into bed with government. Very simply, it cheats the people, to whom in this country both owe their existence.

Top of the New Campus

Application deadline set

Feb. 10 has been set as the degree application deadline for Texas A&M students expecting to graduate this spring. Registrar Robert A. Lacey said graduate and undergraduate students must apply in order to be granted degrees May 5-6. He emphasized that degree applica-tion is the student's responsibility. Both graduate and undergraduate students initiate application by paying an \$8 graduation fee at the Fiscal Office in the Richard Coke Building. The fee receipt must be presented upon application. Undergraduates make degree applica-tion at Heaton Hall, formerly registration headquarters on Ross St. Graduate students present the fee receipt at the Graduate College in the Olin Teague Bldg, to apply. It is important that graduating stu-dents meet the application deadline because of the anticipated larger number graduating this semester, a records official said. The univer sity awarded degrees to 2,556 last May.

Three honored by Silver Taps

Silver Taps will be held today for three Texas A&M students, including Philip McGuire, 24, who was killed in a car wreck Saturday. McGuire, a first-year veterinary medicine student at Texas A&M, lived in Bryan with his wife and three-month-old daughter, who was also killed in the two-car accident south of town. His wife received minor injuries and has been released from St. Joseph's Hospital. Services for McGuire and his daughter will be held Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. at A&M United Methodist Church. Burial will be at 2:30 p.m. at Forest Park's Lawndale Cemetery in Houston. Local arrangements are under the direction of Callaway-Jones Funeral

Silver Taps will also honor Robert Alan Stroud, a sophomore marketing major from Conroe, who died Jan. 2 in a one-car accident west of Conroe, and Robert J. Mitchell, a senior microbiology major from Houston, who died after being found unconscious in his dormitory room Dec. 10. Silver Taps begins at 10:30 p.m.

State Five agencies abolished

The staff of the Sunset Advisory commission recommended Monday that five state agencies, one of which had never functioned and another that was dormant for 14 years, be abolished. The duties assigned to the five agencies could easily be transferred to other state agencies without any loss of service to Texas residents, the staff said Sen. Bill Meier, D-Euless, said the commission will conduct publi hearing on the staff recommendations before taking final action t abolish the agencies under terms of the "Sunset law" passed by the 1977 Legislature. The law provides for a periodic review of state agencies and establishes procedures for abolishing agencies no longer considered essential.

Nation Hunt 'wife' agrees to settle

A woman who claimed she spent nine years as the bigamous wife of the late oil billionaire H.L. Hunt agreed Monday to an out-of-court settlement of her suit seeking a portion of his estate. In Shreveport, La., neither side disclosed the amount accepted by Frania Tye Lee, 73, of Atlanta, who said she was married to Hunt from 1925-34, when she learned he had another wife and family. The Shreveport Times reported Saturday that Lee was offered \$5 million to drop her claim. Her son, Hugh Lee Hunt, refused to confirm of deny the report, but said \$5 million would be "ridiculously low." The settlement was reached after one week of a federal court trial on Lee's demand for a share of the Hunt fortune. The trial was to resume Monday, but Judge Tom Stagg delayed the proceedings while the settlement was negotiated.

Anti-cancer policy initiated

The Labor Department, initiating a controversial anti-cancer policy, today issued an emergency order requiring a drastic cut in worker exposure to a compound commonly used in producing syntheacrylonitrile, which was blamed for an excess risk of lung and colon cancer among workers in an E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Co. plant in Camden, S.C. The order was governed by OSHA's new policy to reduce worker exposure to cancer-causing chemicals to the lowest feasible level. In this case, it was two parts per million averaged over eight hours, down from 20 parts per million.

Mondale's Mexican reception may be chilly

By CAROL COOK

United Press International MEXICO CITY — When Vice Presi-dent Walter Mondale comes to Mexico on a good-will visit Saturday, he will find bilateral relations at their coolest since President Carter took office. The reason is twofold — illegal migrants and natural gas.

The migrant problem is a historic one based on Mexico's chronic jobless rate and the U.S. market for cheap labor. But Car-ter's plan for undocumented foreign workers is not to Mexico's liking.

Mexico worries that the program, which would give non-deportable status to illegal migrants who arrived between 1970 and Jan. 1, 1977, will lead to tighter controls on Mexican workers in the future. U.S. job market is an important safety valve for Mexico's unemployed.

The gas issue is a newer one, but politi-ally more volatile because it concerns

Mexico has canceled plans for the U.S. Bank link in an 800-mile gas pipeline that would have been feeding a billion cubic feet of fixed. natural gas a day into the United States by

the start of next year. The move came after the U.S. Energy Department turned down Mexico's price on future sales of natural gas — \$2.60 per thousand cubic feet - which had been accepted by six U.S. gas companies contract-ing to buy the gas in 1979.

Energy Secretary James Schlesinger reasoned that the companies were looking for a precedent to deregulate gas prices from their current domestic rate of \$1.75. Canadian gas costs \$2.16. In Mexico, energy has not been just a

matter of pesos but a highly charged political issue since the nation nationalized its oil resources in 1938. The U.S. decision is seen here as a form

Bank in Washington blocked a loan to fi-nance the pipeline until the price was

Mexico canceled a \$33 million pipe con-tract with U.S. Steel and will get the materials from Japan and Europe instead. The pipeline will be built, but will stop short of the border and branch off to supply industries in northern Mexico.

The United States thinks Mexico will have to lower its price and sell to its north-ern neighbor. Mexican officials say the United States will have to accept their price, or an even higher one, sooner or

Meanwhile, Mexico feels like the victim of a domestic price squabble between the Carter administration and the oil companies. And it feels ill used by Eximbank. The withholding of financing to put pressure on prices was denounced by President Jose Lopez Portillo as "a serious

The price squabble was particularly galling to Mexico because the pipeline had put the government in an annoying political bind

Ultra-nationalists and leftists charged the pipeline would be a giveaway of Mexico's hydrocarbon wealth, calling it 'Mexico's Panama Canal.

The government was placed on the de-fensive, and now it seems the pipeline will not go to the United States after all.

So the government is faced with disposing of the estimated surplus 2 billion cubic feet of gas a day it will have available by 1981. The state oil company, Pemex, says it can sell the gas domestically, and Lopez Portillo has suggested a pipeline be built to supply Central America.

Politically, it will be very difficult for Mexico to back down on the price now. As Pemex director Jorge Diaz Serrano said recently, "We don't want to sell cheaply:

Mexico's energy resources.

fact that the Export-Import Development step backward" in U.S.-Mexico relations. we can wait

of the kissable cop **Exploring the case**

By DICK WEST United Press International

WASHINGTON - At first I was only listening with half an ear so I didn't catch all the details. But on the radio the other day they were talking about a case in which a male motorist had tried to kiss a policewoman who was giving him a traffic ticket.

That sort of thing is, I would imagine, a major problem for lady cops. Some of them just look so darn cute in those uniforms that lawbreakers of the opposite sex can't resist trying to give them a big smackeroo.

This is an occupational hazard with which I can readily empathize, for I have the misfortune of being the cuddly type myself.

Letters to the editor

I'll be interviewing, say, a female bureaucrat about the ratio of domestic swizzle stick production to the importation of foreign ice cubes. All of a sudden she'll pucker up her firm but pliant bee-stung lips and plant one on my cheek, brow, mouth or shell-like ear.

The Lighter side

An incident like that can completely derail your train of thought. Early in my journalism career I used to get so flustered I'd forget to ask half of the questions I needed to have answered for the story. Then I'd go back to the office and some editor would chew me out for sloppy re-

Long lines at health center defended

porting. If I heard the radio version correctly, the question in the case of the kissable cop was whether occasional osculation was something policewomen must learn to live with.

Based on my experiences, I'd say the latter.

It's true there probably is some degree of sexism involved in the kissing of policewomen. But probably at least 90 percent of it is impulsive with no disre-spect for a minion of the law intended.

Granted also that there may be a difference between being kissed by someone you're interviewing and someone you're arresting.

An interview is usually an arrangement between mutually consenting adults, whereas in the issuance of traffic tickets

one of the parties is likely to be an unwilling participant. Thus, a kiss from the party of the second

part has an extra element of suprise. I do believe, however, that with a little

practice policewomen can handle these in-terruptions without letting it interfere with the performance of their duty.

I've found the best reaction is insouciance. You can't pretend it didn't happen but you can treat it matter-of-factly. I simply say "Moving right along," and proceed to the next question. That usually brings her to her senses.

Policewomen could say "Moving right along," and proceed to clap on the handcuffs or whatever. Initially, they'll feel a bit disconcerted.

But after so long a time, it gets to be just part of the routine.

World

Soyuz cosmonauts return

The Soyuz 27 cosmonauts, who five days ago performed the first double docking in space, today prepared to leave their fellow Soviet spacemen in orbit and return to Earth. The two-man Soyuz 27 crew was scheduled to descend from the orbiting Salyut 6 space laboratory in the capsule that carried the two Soyuz 26 cosonauts into space 37 days ago. Soyuz 26 cosmonauts Yuri Romanenko and Georgi Grechko, who blasted into space Dec. 11 and linked up with the space station the next day, will remain on board for what was expected to be a lengthy stay.

Weather

Mostly cloudy and cold today. High today mid-40's, low tonight low-30's. High tomorrow upper-40's. Winds out of the north at 15-25 mph. 50 percent chance of rain tonight and tomorrow. Cloudy and cold Thurs.-Sat. with a chance of rain Fri. & Sat.

Editor:

The Beutel Health Center was recently criticized in a letter for its waiting lines and business practices. It is truly unfortunate that students must wait for care, but this delay is to be expected even if that student were to see his family doctor. As for the business practices, the doctors must see many patients each day, as the time he may take with each is severely limited. It is not the doctor's choice to rush with a patient; he would like to spend much more time, but he cannot. He simply cannot. I'm sorry, but that's the way it

From what I understand the University is attempting to increase the Health Center fee in order to pay for another doctor. But for now, please realize that the Center is giving excellent care; even though it may seem slow.

- Stephen C. Fischer Thank you

Editor: Mrs. Mitchell and I wish to ex

appreciation for the flowers sent to remember our son, Robert. Texas A&M was a most important part of Robert's life. The spirit and unity of Aggieland is a truly impressive student relationship. We are comforted by this expression from Robert's school.

-Robert W. Mitchell

Editor's note: Robert J. Mitchell, a senior microbiology major, was found unconscious in his dormitory room and died Dec. 10. Silver Taps begins at 10:30 p.m. today.

Automated theft?

Editor:

Something should be done about the snack machines on campus. I'm tired of putting my quarter in the coffee machine and having it drink it for me. Then I have to take the time between classes to go to some distant location to get my money -Frank Bruce, '79



BLUEBONNET BOWL, COTTON BOWL, SUGAR BOWL, ROSE BOWL, SUPER BOWL OR FOOTBALL OF ANY KIND?'

The Battalion

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