

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 16, 1978

Caution: watch for falling satellites

"This is not a horror scenario," National Security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski told reporters. "The chances of real hazard are small."

Yet it would be difficult to dispute that residents of a sparsely populated area of northwest Canada experienced a close encounter of a disturbing kind when a disabled Soviet satellite carrying a nuclear reactor plunged out of space with a fiery glow into their region.

Certainly United States officials were not as sanguine as Brzezinski sounded when they first learned that the Cosmos satellite was in difficulty several weeks ago. The elaborate preparations that were made of a possible disaster attest to that.

Those preparations were commendable, as is evidence of considerable cooperations between United States and Soviet authorities in anticipation of a possible emergency. But it seems to have been luck more than foresight that prevented a tragedy.

The incident should serve as a chilling reminder of the hazards of playing with nuclear fire — in space or here on earth in our own backyards. It should spur a searching reexamination of all nuclear safeguards and of the calculated risks that have been taken whenever and wherever radioactive materials have been employed.

Brunswick Maine Times Record

Canal zone converting to war zone

By JOHN VIRTUE

United Press International

PANAMA CITY, Panama — The U.S. military in the Panama Canal Zone is preparing for the worst in case the U.S. Senate rejects the new canal treaties.

Commentary

The worst would range from anti-American riots to outright sabotage of the 50-mile-long waterway.

Although the military has not said so publicly, it's known that most leaves have been cancelled for an indefinite period starting with the senate vote on the treaties, expected within two months.

Preparations have been made to set up M.A.S.H.-type field hospitals, if needed, to handle casualties.

Some right-wing civilian residents in the canal zone have reportedly stocked up guns, ammunition and food for a possible siege.

As for the Panamanians, most of them don't even want to think about what might happen if the senate rejects the treaties, under which the United States would turn over operation and control of the canal to Panama by the year 2010. A two-thirds majority is needed for approval.

Panama's chief of state, Gen. Omar Torrijos, who must walk a tightrope between leftist student agitators and the conservative business community, has staked his political life on the treaties.

He has said he has only two options if rioting and violence break out should the treaties be rejected: crush the demonstrators or support them.

"I will not crush them," he has said.



The negotiations which lead to the treaties date back to 1964 when anti-American riots killed 21 Panamanians and three Americans. The talks continued after Torrijos seized power four years later in a National Guard coup.

"The Panamanian people have placed a lot of hope for the future in the treaties and, even if they aren't the best treaties, nobody knows what the results will be if they are rejected by the senate," said one prominent Panamanian.

"To put it crudely, it's like the fellow who goes out on Saturday night hoping to pick up the prettiest girl in town. Comes midnight and all he's found is a homely girl, but she's better than nothing. The treaties are like that."

"There are people going hungry in Panama for the first time and unemployment is running at 15 percent," he continued.

"We hope we can help solve these problems once we have the canal."

If the senate approves the treaties, but with so many amendments that Torrijos feels obliged to call another referendum, there could be problems. The treaties were approved by a 2-to-1 margin — smaller than expected — in the Oct. 23 referendum.

Opposition to the treaties had been picking up so much momentum that Fabian Echeverre, head of the Independent Lawyers Movement, said they would have been defeated had the referendum been held two months later.

Both U.S. and Panamanian opponents of the treaties object to provisions under which the United States could intervene militarily after the year 2000 to protect the canal. The Americans want this right spelled out more clearly while the Panamanians say it infringes on their sovereignty.

Letters to the editor

Here it is, folks — Arnett's flack class

Editor:

Well, now I've had it! I kept silent all last semester while everyone was cutting everyone else down — but no more. This time Paul Arnett has gone too far!

In his article (Feb. 15) "A&M Lacks Class," he said that 300 band members were too many and we needed a 30-member band playing "modern-day tunes." That's what he likes, and "those 'Old Army' numbers went out of style after WWII."

Well, let me tell you — they haven't. If it wasn't for the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band and Corps of Cadets this University would be no different from t.u. I'm not in the Corps, but I think the male yell leaders and the "military look" kept this school unique.

His proposed "Gollie Rollie Dollies" would just turn this into a big high school — like the one in Austin — I know, I danced in high school in a drill team. Why should A&M be like all the other schools? Why can't we be different? The uniqueness of this school is what made it famous.

As for you Paul — "If you can't be big — don't be little." What's wrong Paul Arnett — are you jealous just because you're not a member of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band? Could there be any relationship between poor sportsmanship and poor sports writing?

— Marianne Lamkin, '81

Idea stinks

Editor:

This question is addressed to our glori-

ous sports writer, Paul Arnett, who wrote that piece of slop, "A&M lacks class," on Feb. 15. What the hell do you think you are doing?

Obviously you still have not accepted the idea that what makes A&M the best damn school around is because we are different from everybody else. I do not understand why you want to change a good thing like this school has got.

I agree it would be nice to listen to the Century Singers or the Singing Cadets, but the dancing girl idea stinks like a thousand skunks, and there is definitely nothing wrong with the music our Fighting Texas Aggie Band plays.

So, Mr. Arnett, the only dead ideas I have seen are the ones you always seem to produce. So if you get bored with the good old-fashioned half times, go drink a coke.

— John Poindexter, '81

Wrong drummer

Editor:

In response to Paul Arnett's article "A&M lacks class," we cite this quote: "Texas A&M needs to march to the tune of that drummer."

Mr. Arnett obviously doesn't appreciate the simple things that make Texas A&M unique. If we had wanted painted dancers, choirs, stage bands and Top 40 tunes during halftime, we could have gone to almost any other school in the United States. We came to A&M because, besides being a

fine academic institution, it refuses to "march to the tune" of the other schools. During football halftimes we don't need big drums, flag teams, and twirlers — our band is a show in itself.

During a recent home basketball game, the Texas Aggie Band played "Star Wars" and "Theme from Rocky." There was a considerable negative reaction from the crowd. I hope the band realized that we don't want to hear Top 40. Let Tech, Texas, and UH play that. We're not asking for "Old Army" tunes all the time, just leave the "modern tunes" to the bands that thrive on that kind of stuff.

Texas A&M is not perfect. Our school needs to shed some of its ultraconservative attitudes; but this can be done without sacrificing our individuality. We love A&M for what it is, and for what it isn't. In all honesty, we can't understand why Mr. Arnett is going to school here. Everybody knows that UT is a respected journalism school, and besides, UT has dancers, and singers, a show band, a flag team...

— Rich Carson, '81
Kevin Brock, '80

Inspiration?

Editor:

I only have one question for Paul Arnett. Just how good were the drugs he took prior to writing his article in The Batt on Wednesday?

— Michael Murphy, '81

See it through

Editor:

In regards to your article on Friday, Feb. 10, "Parachute Club jumps into action," I would like to clarify a major point. The action taken by Dr. Koldus, in effect, RE-approved the club as a school-affiliated organization.

The Texas A&M Sport Parachute Club was founded in September of 1961 as an on-campus organization. That club continued in operation until the 1970-71 school year when, due to reasons surrounding an accident, it lost its University affiliation.

During this 10-year period, the Texas A&M Club was instrumental in helping to start numerous other collegiate clubs. It was also active in the National Collegiate Parachuting League and competed in the collegiate national championships each year.

I guess my main point is that the Texas A&M Parachute Club now on campus is not something new, but rather an organization carrying on a fine tradition established a number of years ago.

— Capt. Fred May, '68

Fall elsewhere

Editor:

In regard to the Texas A&M Sport Parachute Club and to Jim Slater's letter (Feb. 13), I would like to point out that there is another U.S.P.A. Drop Zone in this area at Spring Creek, which is 30 miles west of Houston. This Drop Zone is only 65 miles from Kyle Field compared to

120 miles to Gatesville, the location of the Drop Zone used by the Parachute club. I save over \$200 every year in gas by going to Spring Creek Parachute Ranch. The first jump cost is \$100 at Spring Creek, less for groups, compared to \$65 for Gatesville (\$50 for dues-paying members).

Jim Slater state correctly the B.S.R. 100.25 places restrictions on the presence of obstacles on the Drop Zone, but this regulation is almost invariably waived by the Area Safety Officer because most Drop Zones lack sufficient funds to buy or clear enough land to provide the distances required. Therefore, proper Ground-to-Air communication is essential, and if instructions, via bullhorns, etc., are followed, then student jumpers will usually be able to avoid power lines and other obstacles. The landing area at Spring Creek consists of level area bordered by a big cornfield which provides soft, safe landings. Question: Why doesn't the Parachute Club jump at the closest, safest, and in the long run least expensive Drop Zone.

— Willy Caldwell, '79

Pinky pleased

Editor:

I want to express my personal thanks to those of you who sent me a birthday card on my birthday Feb. 12. I would like to thank each one individually, but since I got well over two hundred cards I am afraid it would be too much of a task. Please accept my sincere thanks, and be assured that I love every one of you.

— J.V. "Pinky" Wilson

Group committed

Editor:

Recently The Battalion published a letter concerning Town Hall and the lack of their ability to provide good concerts. Town Hall replied saying something to the effect that it is hard to get good groups to commit themselves. In the first letter mentioned, the person referred to Emerson, Lake and Palmer as a good group. I would just like to bring to the attention of the A&M students that Emerson, Lake and Palmer will be appearing at Stephen F. Austin Feb. 18. Commitment seems to be everywhere but Aggieland.

— Glenda Schultz, '81

Nothing new

Editor:

Robert Harvey's resignation Tuesday served no discernable purpose except that of his removing himself from the center of the grade requirement controversy. I am bitterly disappointed in him because he chose to relinquish his office. He should have remained president in order to clarify the GPR requirement problem. Last year, when Harvey accepted the position of student body president, he should have been accepting the responsibilities of that position. Therefore, as president, he should have felt that it was his duty to see to it that this problem was solved. Instead, he resigned.

Since the constitution has not been altered, the discrepancy in the GPR regulations still exist. Harvey's feeble "stand" achieved nothing, but to make him a front page news figure.

— Becky Matthews, '80

TOP OF THE NEWS

CAMPUS

Silver Taps rescheduled

Silver Taps ceremonies for Conrad P. Schweichler, a 27-year-old graduate student at Texas A&M University, have been rescheduled for Monday. University officials moved the traditional memorial to Monday night instead of Tuesday because of conflicting University activities. Schweichler, a native of Williamsville, N.Y., enrolled at Texas A&M in January and was killed Monday when he was struck by a car near Brenham.

Scholarship deadline nears

The deadline for the "Spring Awards Scholarships" applications is March 1. The application forms may be obtained from the Student Financial Aid Office, Room 310 in the YMCA Building. All applications must be filed with the Student Financial Aid Office not later than 5 p.m. on March 1. No late applications will be accepted.

STATE

Hughes residency established

The first major court battle over the Howard Hughes estate ended in Houston Wednesday when the six-member jury decided the multimillionaire was a Texas resident for tax purposes. However, the jury did not admit the will to probate, which means another trial will be necessary to determine who will inherit the fortune. The verdict was a victory for Attorney General John Hill, whose efforts have been to prove Hughes a Texas resident so the state could collect millions of dollars in estate taxes. The Hughes fortune is said to be worth anywhere from \$167 million to 2 billion.

Cooley team transplants heart

Surgeons led by Dr. Denton Cooley broke an eight-year moratorium and performed a heart transplant Wednesday at St. Lukes Hospital in Houston. The recipient was a 21-year-old man suffering from "stone heart" caused by an abscessed tooth. He is in critical condition, a hospital spokesman said. The patient also received a kidney transplant when the new heart was transplanted. He started beating immediately but the patient developed kidney failure. Doctors believe the new heart caused excessive trauma for the already weakened man.

Natural gas leaks discovered

Recent inspections in Huntington, Texas, have revealed dangerous gas leaks which one inspector said could be seen bubbling up along one street. Vernon Ray, chief fire safety inspector, said the town's natural gas system was built in 1952 and has had very little maintenance since. He said half of the 22 known leaks have been repaired in the past two days. Tuesday state officials ordered the evacuation of the community's school and closed the building. Ray said community leaders did not begin to take any action to remedy the dangerous situation until the Texas Railroad Commission threatened to obtain a court injunction and close the gas lines. The State Board of Insurance has ordered the State Fire Marshal's Office to watch closely efforts to repair the gas leaks.

NATION

Miners to meet in White House

In response to President Carter's request, the soft coal industry has agreed Wednesday to meet with union miners at the White House. The Bituminous Coal Operators Association agreed to meet only hours after telling Carter they had no intention of meeting with the United Mine Workers and that the UMW was to blame for the situation. Carter had called his proposal for the meeting a "final opportunity" and indicated he would issue a back-to-work order if needed. Across the nation, power companies are predicting layoffs costing millions of dollars because of dwindling coal stockpiles to fuel their plants. Automakers in Detroit have warned they may have to halt production indefinitely if a settlement is not reached in the next two weeks. Carter made clear Tuesday that a Taft-Hartley back-to-work order was one of the available options he could use to get miners on the job again.

WORLD

World population growth slows

Global population estimates for the year 2000 have been revised downward in light of a decreased world growth rate. Nick Eberstadt, chairman of an American Association for the Advancement of Science, said the rate of population growth was 1.9 percent per year in 1970, but fell to 1.7 percent last year. As a result he estimated the world's population by 2000 will range from 5.5 to 5.8 billion in comparison with an earlier estimate of 6.25 billion. The world's current population is 4.1 billion. Birth rates in less developed countries have dropped from an average of about 42 per 1,000 in 1970 to approximately 36 per 1,000 in 1977. Eberstadt credited the decrease to an unexpected decline in the fertility in poor countries. According to Eberstadt, this means poor nations should find it easier to alleviate poverty within their own borders.

WEATHER

Mostly cloudy and cool today, tonight and Friday with a chance of light rain or drizzle tonight and during the day tomorrow. High today low-50s, low tonight low-40s. High tomorrow mid-50s. Winds from the northeast at 10-15 mph. 20% chance of rain tonight and 30 percent tomorrow.

THE BATTALION

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