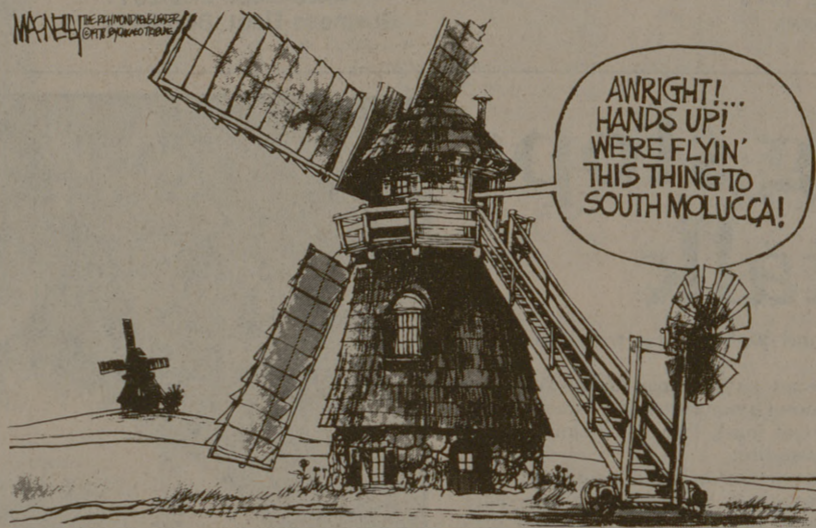


Opinion perspective

A Louisiana senator is under the gun. It seems a number of the state's residents want to oust Sen. Russell Long (D) for his affirmative vote on the Panama Canal neutrality treaty. They say Long voted contrary to the wishes of the people of the state. And they're scouring Louisiana for 600,000 signatures of people who share their feelings.

This brings up an interesting point about public opinion. We at the Battalion, for instance, have at various times been bombarded with student opinion (most frequently regarding sports columns). When these opinions are published in the letters section of this page it often appears that there is but one view held by the Texas A&M populous. But publicity is deceiving. It is important to keep in mind that generally those persons upset by an issue will be the ones to make their opposition known. Those who agree have little impetus to say so — their views have already been expressed by the writer. Because of the nature of silent approval, many times the printed reaction is a distortion of the actual mood.

It's something to keep in mind whenever group opinions are aired. Public opinion pollsters make big money trying to find out what people really think. It's not an assumption to take lightly. J.A.



Change for the sake of change?

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — The Carter administration is now racing the clock in the effort to meet the self-imposed deadline of having its long-heralded "urban policy" ready for the president to announce before he leaves on his journey to South America and Africa at the end of this month.

That fact by itself makes people nervous, for the record of other deadline projects is not encouraging. Carter insisted his energy program be ready three months after Inauguration Day, but 11 months after its unveiling, the problems that were missed in that hasty process still bedevil the energy legislation on Capitol Hill.

In the case of urban policy, there is a special reason to fear the consequences of the all-out press to get something — anything — for the president to announce. It was best expressed by Richard Nathan, the Brookings Institution student of intergovernmental relations, when he said: "The Carter administration had a very good urban policy until it announced it was going to develop one."

What Nathan meant was that the administration, in its first year of office, continued

the rapid increase in the flow of resources to troubled cities and found some rather useful ways to deliver that assistance in forms flexible enough to be of considerable use to the cities.

Commentary

Carter followed the pattern of his Republican predecessors in providing greater discretion for local allocation of community development funds. And he added significant amounts of anti-recession aid to the already rich stream of federal assistance to the urban areas.

As James McIntyre, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, remarked last week, the political difficulty in all the advance publicity about Carter's forthcoming urban policy statement is that any new urban initiatives will be small potatoes compared to what the government is already doing.

Budgetary realities rule out any grandiose scheme for a "Domestic Marshall Plan." So the risk is great that those (includ-

ing the big-city mayors) who are looking for multi-billion aid packages will find the Carter response inadequate.

But as a new publication of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) makes clear, the charge cannot be sustained that the federal government has been niggardly in its treatment of the cities.

"Direct federal aid to the nation's big cities has risen more than tenfold over the last 11 years," the ACIR report says. Aid to the 47 largest cities, excluding New York City, a special case, grew from \$406 million in 1967 to an estimated \$5.4 billion this year.

Whereas federal aid amounted to only nine cents of every dollar of locally generated revenue in 1967, this year there will be 50 cents of federal aid for every \$1 those big cities raise from local taxes.

What is true of the biggest cities is equally true of local and state governments generally. Uncle Sam has been accelerating his assistance.

The flow of federal aid to states and cities grew at an annual rate of 8.9 percent in the

first half of the 1960s; at a 15 percent annual rate in the last half of the 1960s; at a 16.6 percent annual rate in the first half of the 1970s; at a 16.6 percent annual rate in the first half of the 1970s; and at a rate of 18.7 percent a year between 1975 and 1977.

In other words, the Carter program — whatever it finally is — cannot be much more than a thin layer of icing on a very rich cake.

It is these trends which underline the wisdom of the president's injunction to his urban advisers to concentrate on improving the utility of programs already in existence, rather than designing "bold new initiatives."

The problem, politically, is that the urban policy is likely to be condemned for the absence of those initiatives. Which is why Dick Nathan said the administration was doing fine in urban policy until it launched this massively publicized search for something that already exists in abundance.

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The taming of the Congress

By DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Having rushed to judgment on the first Panama Canal treaty after only 22 days of debate, the Senate is expected to move more deliberately in considering the second treaty.

The Lighter Side

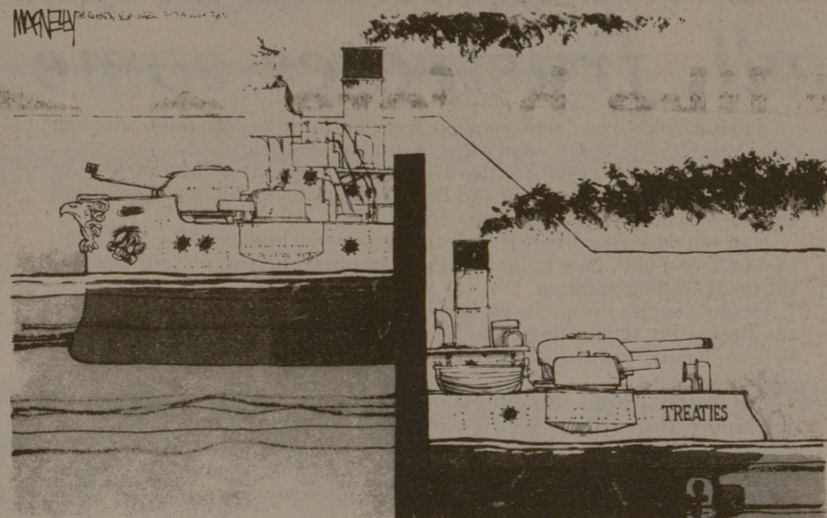
Present outlook is that the vote will come sometime between mid-April and the year 2000, which is when the treaty would give Panama control of the waterway.

One reason for the studied pace is to allow both sides time to analyze the first treaty debate and figure out where the turning point was.

Several senators, you may recall, were on the fence right up to the moment the roll call began. For future reference, it is important to know what made them topple the way they did.

As best I can tell, the bombshell that tipped the vote in favor of the treaty was Democratic leader Robert Byrd's surprise Shakespearean quotation.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune," declaimed the canny West Virginia drama-lover.



That line from "Julius Caesar" confounded the opposition and swung several wavering senators into the pro-treaty camp.

"I knew they were claiming God was on their side, but this was the first time I realized which way Shakespeare was leaning," one uncommitted senator told me. Byrd's blockbuster sent treaty foes scur-

rying upstairs to the Senate library in search of quotations to offset or neutralize the Immortal Byrd's influence. But by then it was too late.

You may be certain they will not be caught unprepared next time.

Some senators who voted for the first treaty have indicated they might vote against the second. Should they need any

quotations to rationalize the turnabout, they'll find Shakespeare equally flexible.

Here, in handy catechism form, are a few quotations that might prove useful:

A. What do those who want to retain control of the canal mean when they say history is on their side?

A. "Look in the chronicles; we came in with Richard Conqueror."

Q. Of what use is the Canal Zone to the United States?

A. "As a moat defensive to a house. A fortified residence. One foot in the sea and one on shore."

Q. Why do we need to keep troops down there? What are they protecting us against?

A. "Against the tooth of time and razure of oblivion. Against infection and the hand of war. Against the envy of less happier lands."

Q. What alternate routes would our ships have to use if the canal ever were closed?

A. "There is a river in Macedonia, and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth."

Q. After having been quoted by a senator in favor of the treaties, how could Shakespeare be quoted by senators opposed to them?

A. "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose."

Letters to the editor

SG reforms needed after elections

Editor: An open letter to the student body: Are we going to have a repeat of this past year in respect to the entire student government?

By this we refer to the rail-roading in and out of office of various and sundry individuals and interest groups, be they Corps or civilian.

Slouch
by Jim Earle



"IT'S A PETITION TO POSTPONE THE MAILING OF MID-SEMESTER GRADES UNTIL AFTER SPRING BREAK!"

This year we, personally, would like to see an election based solely on qualified persons and pertinent issues.

Such as, the appropriate and timely revision of the student body constitution, more effective and equal representation of the student body (individually and as a whole), better student-faculty communication, and an improvement in the investigation and allocation of student service fees.

We do not feel that we are alone in these beliefs.

We sincerely hope that if this can be accomplished within the next year, we as a group of intelligent students will not be faced with the fiasco that recently befell t.u.

— Owen D. Massey, '79
Scott Farthing, '78

Israel defended

Editor: I, for one, feel compelled to differ with Jamie Aitken's assessment of Israel's retaliation to the Palestinian raid that killed 35 Israelis.

Mr. Aitken's statements exemplify a fundamental misunderstanding as to the true nature of peace. Arguments as to just how far the retaliation should have gone are legitimate, but I can not accept the argument that the act of retaliation in itself was uncalled for, immoral or damaging to lasting peace. Peace is simply not maintained through acquiescence, appeasement or through weakness.

When PLO terrorists violated the status quo by conducting a raid in Israel and killing 35 people, they became the cause of the ensuing retaliation and must assume responsibility for it. To avoid the encouragement of future violations the Israelis were forced to react immediately to punish the violation.

The question of whether the Israeli response was proportional to the initial violation is open for discussion. However, it is perhaps necessary to consider other PLO violations such as Entebbe, Munich, the poisoning of oranges, Bader-Meinhoff, the assassination of Egyptian journalists, threats on the life of Anwar Sadat and more.

It may seem alien to many more liberal-minded individuals, but the fact is that peace must be maintained through strength. Appeasement in the face of aggression will not bring it about, it will only encourage more aggression. History shows that periods of peace are rare, perhaps because the maintenance of peace requires risks and sacrifices that many are unwilling to make. Peace through strength is not alien to morality as many would claim. Acquiescence in the face of continued and unprovoked violence in hopes of a miraculously imposed peace is hardly moral. The rejection of all strength and use of force may sound nice, but as the Bible says, "Blessed are the peacemakers," not the peace lovers.

— Mark Elam, '79

No skateboards

Editor: It may interest you to know that the area, i.e., the "catwalk" over Welborn Road, where Mr. McCarthy is "practicing his skateboard technique," has four access ramps.

Each of them is clearly marked with the following, identical, warning signs: WALK BIKES. NO SKATEBOARDS. Because you gave Mr. McCarthy front page coverage, no doubt there will be many more skaters trying to emulate his "achievement."

I feel you should inform Mr. McCarthy and the student community that the place is off-limits to this kind of "outdoor activity."

— Frank Vasovski, '79

Editor's note: Mr. McCarthy, consider yourself informed.

STATE

Officers search for missing child

Officers searched an area of Northeast Bexar County Tuesday for a 6-month-old baby missing since the child's mother and another woman were shot to death. Andrea Millican, 24, and Mary C. Venus, 25, both wives of servicemen stationed overseas, were found shot to death Monday near two automobiles parked on a road. Sheriff's investigator Bill White said another investigator had talked to the victims several hours before the shooting concerning a vehicle they had sold and for which the purchaser had paid with a hot check. White said the victims were found near the vehicle they had planned to repossess.

Citizens demand tax moratorium

A coalition of Houston civic clubs Tuesday demanded a moratorium on city property tax revaluations pending reforms to equalize the local tax burden. City Controller Kathy Whitmire has said she will check into recent revaluations, which Tax Assessor-Collector Casey Fanning defends as reflecting rising value. But he expresses hope for annual citywide revaluation by 1981. More than 3,000 Northwest Houston residents, many of whom said they had experienced 300 percent valuation increase in the last four years, held an anti-revaluation rally in Delmar Stadium Monday.

NATION

Army probes shell explosion

Army officials said Tuesday the type of 90mm anti-tank shell that exploded in a trailer home, killing two persons and injuring five others, has not been used at Fort Riley since before the Vietnam War. Vaughn Bolton, Fort Riley public affairs director, rejected theories the shell recently had been shot from a base gunnery range into an area near the trailer but had not exploded. He said the shell's ammunition dumps did not contain any of the shells. A soldier told Riley County authorities late Monday that he took the shell from a tank gunnery range and dumped it in a ravine. Al Johnson, assistant director of the Riley County police department, said the shell apparently was found in the ravine by one of the two persons it later killed. Johnson refused to release further details on how the shell was retrieved or the identity of the soldier, but said he was not being held by authorities.

Last year's crime rate down

Serious crimes during 1977 dropped four percent below 1976, despite a slight upsurge in violent crimes such as rape, assault and murder, the FBI reported Tuesday. However, decreases were smaller for rural areas than for populous areas. Rural areas showed a one percent decline compared to four percent for suburban areas and five percent for cities with more than 25,000 populations.

Jazz clarinetist Cottrell dies

Clarinetist Louis Cottrell, a fixture of jazz as the white-shirted, round leader of the Onward Brass Band died Tuesday. He was 67. Cottrell and his band traditionally opened Mardi Gras festivities with a walk from uptown to Canal Street and the French Quarter.

WORLD

Israeli cease-fire ordered

Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman ordered Israeli forces to observe a total cease-fire in southern Lebanon Tuesday. The cease-fire announced by the Israel Defense Ministry was ordered after Israeli jets and artillery pounded Palestinian positions near the Lebanese towns of Tyre and Nabatieh. A U.N. general cautioned that it may be some time before his 4,000-man force can enter southern Lebanon to enforce a cease-fire.

French oil spill spreads

Strong winds and high seas pushed a 70-mile-long oil slick onto the beaches of Brittany Tuesday and France asked for American, British and Japanese help in cleaning up what experts said was history's worst oil spill. More than 110,000-tons of black crude spilled from the wreck of the supertanker Amoco Cadiz, and spread rapidly along the coast of Brittany, blackening more than 70 miles of coastline and spreading over a 250-square-mile area of the English Channel. The oil, pushed by winds which broke floating booms set up by rescue crews, hit the pink granite coast and white sand beaches of Roscoff, one of the areas badly hit by the previous worst oil spill, the 30,000-ton slick spilled by the Torrey Canyon in 1967.

WEATHER

Cloudy with fog this morning turning partly cloudy this afternoon. Slight chance of scattered showers tonight and Thursday. High today near 80, low tonight low 60s. High tomorrow near 80. Winds from the southeast at 10-18 mph. Thirty percent chance of rain tonight and Thursday.

THE BATTALION

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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.

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