

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY
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Panama's puppy bares his teeth

Ever have a dog that was a sweet, whimpering puppy while he was begging for food, but ripped open your hand as soon as you gave him a bone?

That's the kind of reaction the United States received from Panama's dictator Omar Torrijos when the U.S. Senate approved the final Panama Canal treaty Tuesday.

Torrijos said Tuesday night that Panamanian troops were posed to attack and seize or destroy the canal by Wednesday morning had the Senate not approved the second canal treaty. He also vowed to "destroy the canal" if U.S. troops ever invade Panama to defend it.

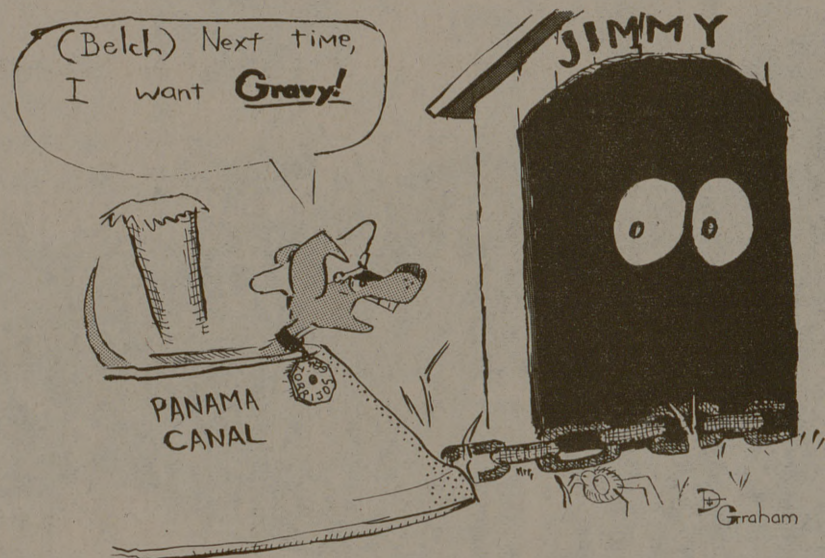
That is in direct violation of the first canal treaty, approved by the Senate March 16, which gives the U.S. the right to defend the canal forever, which military action if necessary. How fast the puppy dog bares his fangs when he's gotten what he wants.

The days of U.S. imperialism and Teddy Roosevelt's "big stick diplomacy" are gone. The people of Panama have as much right to sovereignty over the territory within their borders as any other nation. But should the United States bow to the whims of a dictator like Torrijos, to whom the phrases "good will" and "neutrality" are only tools to fool a U.S. whose president may be too eager to appease and too quick to agree.

Consider Gen. Torrijos' comments Tuesday night:

"If we are invaded, we will destroy the canal. We are capable of destroying it. The National Guard has the capability of destroying it and we don't intend to lose that capability. Yes, they (U.S. troops) can intervene, but when they get here, they'll find that the canal has been destroyed."

This is the man into whose hands we have given the canal for safekeeping?
L.R.L.



Nuclear face-off certain

By BRYAN SILCOCK
International Writer's Service

LONDON — For more than three months last year, Britain's nuclear industry underwent an unprecedented ordeal as a special government commission grilled its representatives on a plan to build a mammoth reprocessing plant at Windscale, in northern England. That the hearings were held at all was considered a triumph for the foes of nuclear energy.

But the commission's report, just published, has dealt a bitter blow to the anti-nuclear forces by coming out in favor of the project. And the report, which is virtually certain to spur British government approval of the project, may also lead to a clash with the United States, since it bluntly challenges President Carter's efforts to block nuclear proliferation.

The Windscale project, due to start construction in two or three years, will engage in large-scale reprocessing of nuclear waste, including waste from foreign countries. The operation produces plutonium, which can be used in the manufacture of nuclear bombs.

President Carter's anti-proliferation policy, announced last year, strongly opposes reprocessing for that reason. As the non-Communist world's biggest source of nuclear fuel, the United States can enforce its

policy, which insists among other things that no fuel it supplies can be reprocessed without Washington's permission.

Politics

But the West Europeans and even Japan disagree. France has decided to go ahead with a new reprocessing installation at La Hague, on the English Channel. Britain is following suit at Windscale. The West Germans are looking for a site. And the Japanese are negotiating reprocessing contracts with both the French and British.

The dilemma for the United States was summed up in a recent letter to President Carter from a group of American senators and congressmen. It said:

"Once vast sums have been committed, our own options will decisively deteriorate. To grant reprocessing approval for fuel of U.S. origin... would be to make a mockery of our policy. To disapprove in the face of multi-billion dollar investments by our allies would be to court trouble."

The West Europeans and Japanese are as hostile as President Carter is to the possible spread of nuclear weapons. But why they rejected his initiative of a year ago is spelled out in the British commission's report on the Windscale plan.

A main point is that most countries, in contrast to the United States, possess no uranium of their own. The plutonium they can recover through reprocessing nuclear waste in fast breeder reactors could increase the energy extractable from a given amount of uranium 50 to 60 times.

This offers, over the long term at least, the prospect of almost total independence from imported sources of energy. For the West Europeans and Japanese, who rely heavily on Middle East oil and remember its recent steep price rise, this is a powerful argument for reprocessing.

But it is powerful enough to counter the potential dangers of nuclear proliferation? Speaking to this question, the British government commission made some further points.

In the first place, the world's principal obstacle to the spread of nuclear arms is the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1970, whose signatories pledged not to acquire such weapons in exchange for help in developing peaceful nuclear energy.

But, the commission said, an attempt by the United States or any nuclear power to prevent others from reprocessing their waste amounts to a breach of the treaty. Moreover, it contravenes the spirit of the treaty by dividing its signatories into nuclear "haves" and "have-nots."

Countries with nuclear energy programs, the commission said, are bound to seek ways of reprocessing their fuel as they pursue the goal of energy independence. Should they be denied reprocessing facilities, they will inevitably construct plants of their own.

So, the commission concluded, the result of efforts to stop reprocessing could well be to increase rather than diminish the threat of nuclear proliferation.

These points may not appear to be convincing in Washington, but they carry weight here in London, Paris, Bonn and Tokyo.

So the decision to support the Windscale project means that Britain is going to push ahead with its reprocessing plant, as will the French. The real test, however, may not emerge until the early 1980s, when the Japanese request American permission to have their fuel reprocessed in Britain and France.

If the United States gives Japan the green light, Carter's policy will have changed. If not, a conflict within the Atlantic Alliance is inevitable. The showdown is still a few years away, but rarely has an event of such importance been so certain. (Silcock writes on science and technology for the London Sunday Times, the British weekly newspaper.)

TOP OF THE NEWS

CAMPUS

Vandiver, Williams to speak

Rice University Provost Frank E. Vandiver and Texas A&M University Chancellor Jack K. Williams will share spring commencement speaking honors at Texas A&M May 5-6, President Jack E. Miller announced. Dr. Vandiver will address graduate degree candidates at 3 p.m. May 5, and Dr. Williams will speak at two ceremonies for candidates for undergraduate degrees. The first program is set for 7:30 p.m. May 5 and the second for 9 a.m. May 6. More than 2,800 students are expected to receive diplomas this spring. The May 5 afternoon ceremony will be in Rudder Auditorium, with the other program scheduled for G. Rollie White Coliseum.

STATE

Texas seeking deepwater port

An official of the Texas Deepwater Port Authority said Wednesday Texas is seeking a government application for the construction of a deepwater port 26 miles off the coast of Freeport, Texas, to handle supertankers carrying crude oil imports. Gerald Jackson, general manager of the Texas Deepwater Port Authority, said he will deliver a letter of intent seeking the application to Transportation Secretary Brock Adams. The state authority, organized after the oil company consortium Sea Dock disbanded March 31 and dropped its application for a similar project will seek to amend Sea Dock's application for a public-owned and operated project. The proposed Texas project would provide docking for supertankers transporting crude oil, which would be delivered by pipeline to refineries on the state's Gulf Coast.

NATION

Leukemia victim must be treated

A Massachusetts judge ruled that 2-year-old Chad Green must undergo chemotherapy for leukemia rather than suffer "immediate and painful death" under his parents' own care. Superior Court Judge Guy Volterra issued a 30-page ruling Tuesday sharply criticizing the boy's parents, Gerald and Diane Green of Scituate, Mass., who have waged a court fight since February to keep their son from undergoing the "poisonous" treatments. Volterra said the Greens may stop the treatment only if Chad suffers a relapse and doctors determine there is no chance for a cure. The family lawyer, George Donovan, said he may appeal the decision to the Massachusetts Supreme Court.

Man killed in ammonia leak

A pipe burst in three places during an ammonia transfer in Port Allen, La., Wednesday, killing one man and sending a cloud of white fumes wafting across the Mississippi River toward the state capital. Thirteen other persons were injured in the accident, including two state troopers. The dead man, Marion Himmel, was a maintenance supervisor at the sugar cane plantation where the accident occurred. Officials said he warned his family about the leak and then rushed into the fumes to try to close a valve and stop the spreading vapors. The injured were taken to Earl K. Long and Baton Rouge General hospitals and are in good condition. They are apparently suffering the effects of ammonia inhalation, which is similar to smoke inhalation.

WORLD

France explodes neutron bomb

France has exploded a neutron bomb in the Pacific in a top-secret test of the controversial weapon, the newspaper France Soir and Magazine Le Point reported Wednesday. French military experts said they believed it was the first time a neutron bomb had been set off anywhere. In Washington, a Pentagon spokesman declines comment on whether the United States has previously set off a neutron warhead. Sources at the Nevada Nuclear Test site, however, told United Press International last year that at least two neutron bombs had been exploded in underground tests at the desert site during the last several years. Federal officials did not deny the UPI report. Barring accidental "vents," such underground tests do not release radiation into the atmosphere.

Lebanese government resigns

Lebanon's first post-civil war government resigned today, amid a controversy over last week's fighting between Christian militiamen and the Syrian peace-keeping troops, the official Beirut Radio said. The resignation of Prime Minister Selim al Hoss although rumored in the press several days ago appeared to come as a surprise. Hoss and his government of technocrats took over 17 months ago after 19 months of civil war between Christians and Moslem coalition of Lebanese and Palestinian leftists. The resignation came after Israeli military sources said Israel would surrender half of occupied south Lebanon within two weeks and has no intention of retaining any part of the area if U.N. troops can guarantee they will keep Palestinian guerrillas out of the region.

WEATHER

Partly cloudy today, tonight and tomorrow with warm afternoons and cool nights. High today mid-70s, low tonight upper 50s. High tomorrow near 80. Winds from the north at 5-10 mph becoming southerly late this afternoon.

THE BATTALION

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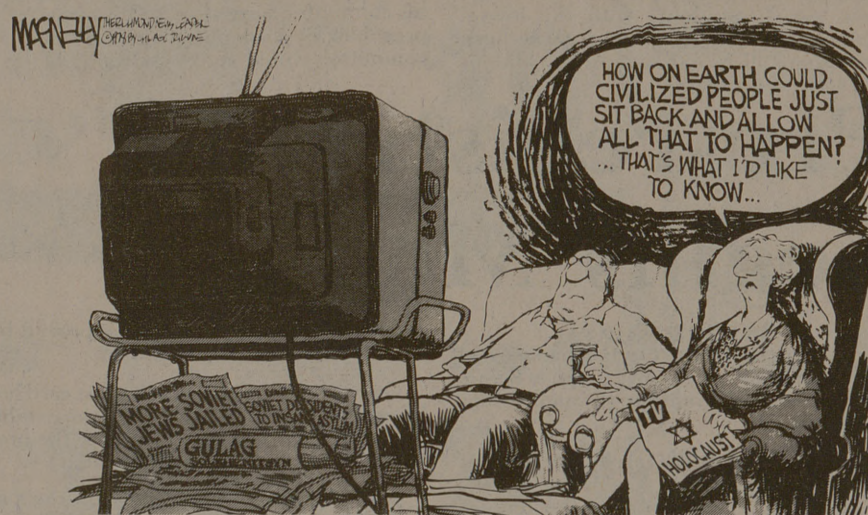
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families willing (if not exactly eager) to accept \$2.65-an-hour jobs to provide extra spending money for themselves or save for college costs. In some instances, they will even pass up college and start careers as meat-cutter trainees, grocery trainees and so forth for \$4 and \$5 an hour.

"This week, for an unfortunately too-frequent example, two of our graduates were placed as welders for Hughes Tool Co. in Houston, beginning at \$5.96 an hour. This was permanent, stable employment with a good firm, beginning at almost \$50 a day base salary — not too bad for 18-year-old dropouts, one would think."

"Neither of the two showed up for the first day's work. Both elected to return 'home' to broken families on welfare rather than work for so low a salary. Their demand

seemed to be \$15 an hour or nothing, and I fear nothing is what they will get. I repeat that, while this is probably not the norm, it is far from being unique, or even exceptionally unusual."

What's going on? Have these young people been misled by counselors and recruiters? Have they run across one plumber making physician's income and concluded that such pay is normal? Or is it the fact that when there aren't any skilled workers in the household, it's hard to get a realistic sense of what skilled workers earn?

Grimes has weighed the theories, ranging from "instant gratification" to the televised "good life," and concluded that all the theorization is as useful as speculation on angels' feet and pinheads.

"As a pragmatist," he says, "I am less

interested in esoteric treatises on 'why' than mundane answers on 'how.'

"How — if my observations have any basis of validity — do we change the situation? How do we make the underprivileged realize that a basic education and employable trade are not an immediate panacea for all the ills of their lives; that, in reality, most middle-class whites do not sail around on 100-foot yachts or sit around in glistening resorts being served endless delicacies from some unknown cornucopia; that a job paying a livable wage is merely the basis for beginning a life which will involve innumerable problems and sacrifices but, if pursued reasonably, can lead to acceptable rewards?"

I don't know the answers. Most children from middle-class or working-class families grow up with a fairly realistic idea of what sort of lifestyle can be supported by what sort of career. It's enough to look at what Dad and Mom do for a living and see what kind of creature comforts their jobs can produce. Maybe children from non-working families miss out on that common knowledge.

Even so, shouldn't it be obvious that an income of \$3, \$4, or \$5 an hour will buy a lot more than no income at all? What produces the expectations and attitudes that Grimes and others encounter with such distressing regularity? Grimes admits he hasn't a clue.

"But I do assure you," he said, "that it is awfully depressing and frustrating to work very hard for much less money than I might be making to convert a grade-school dropout and functional illiterate into a capable, employable tradesman — only to see him angrily reject his potential and blindly rage against me."

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Lawyer deserves credit

Editor:

I would like to commend a service provided by the University that I feel deserves a lot of credit. That service is the Student's Legal Advisor. This office provides free advice and legal service to students and recognized student organizations.

After recently having trouble with an insurance claim, I turned to this office and was amazed at the professionalism and efficiency with which my case was handled. My claim is now settled and I would like to thank this office for their assistance.

—Charles W. Auten III, '80

A bum 'deal'?

Editor:

Being to my first "Casino" last Friday, (I missed my first two years), I had the best

time ever at a school function besides dates at football games.

This gathering provided something different than the usual and also proved to be somewhat exciting. The outfits worn by the saloon gals were very stimulating also. However, the gambling didn't seem worth while as in the auction everyone began pooling their money. I thought the point of it all was to see how well one individual could do with his or her gambling prowess.

Personally, I thought I was doing fairly well by increasing the initial \$3,000 to \$10,500. This amount was worthless at the auction since so many people were pooling it or begging in order to buy. I finally gave up and ended up giving my money to a cute saloon gal so she could pool it herself.

This seems to defeat it's purpose as it is a question of who you know and not how well you can gamble. Another problem is how

are you going to divide a bicycle between a whole dorm and who finally gets it without making someone feel cheated?

Like I said, this function was still a blast but it would be even more fun if the pooling was somehow stopped.

—Bruce Kalapach, '79

Things go wrong

Editor:

I would like to talk about two things. First of all I wish to thank Connie Burke for the apologetic letter on the misprint in Monday's Battalion concerning the Corps awards given Sunday. I fully understand the difficulty in organizing a newspaper and mistakes do happen very easily.

Now my second item. This concerns the letter in Tuesday's Battalion "class un-

sealed." I think Mr. Looper has no right to complain about the gift. First of all, I know he was not in the committee that developed the project. I have plenty of background working with construction and I think everyone should understand that there are times when things just go wrong.

I think the most important point is that our class tried to give a gift which reflected well upon the school and I am sure that we are going to do something about it. However, these things take time and cooperation from the students.

—Clark A. McMurtry, '78
Commanding Officer SQ. 10

Editor's note: David Looper's letter complained about the mosaic University seal the Class of '78 bought for the floor of Academic Building rotunda.