



VIEWPOINT



THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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TOP OF THE NEWS

STATE

Erosion of confidence

By DAVID S. BRODER
WASHINGTON — Although he is a product of one of the most disciplined educational institutions and career specialties in contemporary America, Jimmy Carter is not much for laying down the law to others. A high degree of personal tolerance is built into his personality, which is probably part of his political appeal.

During his campaign for the presidency, Carter managed skillfully to suggest that his personal adherence to a set of old-fashioned religious and moral beliefs (which millions of Americans found reassuring) did not incline him to impose those standards on others (for which those other millions were also grateful.) He took pains to show that the internal discipline he has acquired at the U.S. Naval Academy and in the submarine service under the hard-

no-longer-cute little brother Billy to keep his antics off the air; he advised his trustee Charles Kirbo to sell the family business that has been, from the instant he was elected, a potential conflict of interest; and he told his senior aides to keep their policy to themselves once he has decided where his administration is going.

It was an overdue show of strength by a President who has been more celebrated for being amiable and accommodating than for being effective. But it is not enough — not nearly enough.

On every side, the evidence is mounting that voluntary measures and if-you-please requests are not getting the job done. The volunteer system is not supplying the number of recruits any of the armed services need; voluntary restraints are not cutting energy waste; and voluntary guidelines are not breaking the ruinous inflationary psychology.

What is worse, the nasties in the world are getting the dangerous notion that the United States is easy picking. They saw Carter halt the carrier task force he had first ordered from the Pacific to the Persian Gulf. They saw the Marine security guards hold fire when a mob stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. And they saw the U.S. ambassador kidnapped and gunned down in Afghanistan.

It is not chauvinism, but sheer realism, at this point to say that there is an overriding necessity to halt the rapid erosion of confidence in U.S. leadership at home and abroad. It is time for the United States to show the flag and Carter to show some backbone.

For the first time in a long time, people in this capital are reading and quoting Machiavelli on the duty of a ruler to avoid "those things which will make him hated and despised." Carter is in no danger of being hated, but he must avoid being "rendered despicable by being thought changeable, frivolous, effeminate, timid and irresolute."

He must, Machiavelli's voice says across the centuries, "so contrive that his actions show grandeur, spirit, gravity and fortitude. And as to the governing of his subjects, let his sentence be irrevocable, and let him adhere to his decisions so that no one may think of deceiving or cozening him."

That advice cannot be improved.
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Commentary

nosed Adm. Rickover had not deprived him of his enjoyment of all kinds of diversions from softball to social dancing.

While his efforts to walk the line between probity and priggishness sometimes lapsed into the awkwardness of the Playboy interview, Carter as President managed for the most part to suggest a rather relaxed attitude toward the tribulations of life. Whether it was the escapades of some of his aides or the vagaries of Congress, he tended — at least in public — to suggest his disapproval with a gesture no more emphatic than a shrug.

He perceived that voters had become fond of the live-and-let-live style of Jerry Ford, after suffering through the policy hammerlocks of such hard-driving Presidents as Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. So Carter gave them smiles and strolls and soft talk, and bragged about how he was deregulating this and lightening the burden of that.

But now the world is closing in fast on Jimmy Carter, and he will either have to prove himself a tougher President than he has been — or he will find himself not President again.

Last fall, for the first time, the rigors of inflation forced him smack Congress across the nose for its excesses in military and public works spending.

Last week, it was learned, he told his

Energy shortage — only takes being right once

Once again they're crying Schlesinger at the Department of Energy. This time the secretary is warning that if Iranian oil production is not back at full capacity by spring, the country is in for an energy crunch.

Secretary Schlesinger says he will decide whether to allocate oil, shorten gas station hours or impose other mandatory controls to offset the loss of Iranian production.

Unfortunately for the country, Schlesinger has gone to the dire prediction well once too often. Even a concise analysis of his backtracking, overstatements and common variety mistakes would occupy most of the space allocated to this editorial.

Simply put, America has lost faith in its Energy secretary. His seeming inability to efficiently manage his own department's showcase project, the oil storage depot in Louisiana, colors the country's opinion of his performance in other areas.

The irony is that he may be on target this time. The country does need Iranian oil. Its loss will put both the United States and equally dependent Israel in an energy bind. But Schlesinger's credibility is so low that little may be done before the situation is critical.

Which is where the secretary has us at a disadvantage. Chicken Little only has to be right once.

The Dallas Morning News

Davis trial possibly this summer

The prosecutor in the first murder-for-hire trial of T. Cullen Davis said in Fort Worth he believes the Texas millionaire could be retried as early as this summer. Jack Strickland, 35, also said he could convince a jury this time beyond any doubt that Davis attempted to hire a hit man to kill his divorce court judge — Joe Eidlson. Davis' first trial ended in a hung jury Jan. 22 in Houston. A new site and date has not yet been arranged.

Chavez promotes union in state

Cesar Chavez said Sunday he is optimistic his United Farm Workers of America can form a successful union in Texas and force growers to sign contracts, but that it will take time and hundreds of thousands of dollars. Chavez told a convocation of 1,000 farm worker representatives in San Juan, Texas, that there were two routes to forming a Texas union, through legislation or "by applying economic sanctions to such an extent it will be more economical for the growers to recognize the union than not to recognize it."

Dallas firm files suit against Iran

Electronic Data Systems Inc. of Dallas has filed a \$23 million suit against Iran, claiming the government defaulted on a contract to pay \$1.4 million monthly for computer services and provide safe working conditions. EDS Friday also obtained a temporary restraining order preventing removal of Iranian assets from the United States or Great Britain. U.S. District Judge Robert Porter scheduled a hearing for Friday to determine if the order will be made permanent.

British are a 'long and suffering race'

by THOMAS DAVIDSON
Thomas Davidson is the 80-year-old grandfather of senior journalism major Colin Crombie. Davidson lives in the Scottish coastal town of Leven and in a recent letter wrote his grandson of the state of affairs in Great Britain — of the weather and of the national wage dispute that is presently being settled. Excerpts from his letter follow.

Reader's Forum

"And now the home news — The weather — simply atrocious, hellish. Britain has been and is still suffering the worst

weather for years and years. Arctic conditions prevail from Lands End to Caithness Point.

Oh dear! If winter comes, can Spring be far behind!

Christmas day seen (sic) us snowed up to the eyebrows, and New Year's Day was exactly the same. In fact I tell you that I was so browned-off that we went to bed on New Year's Eve at 11 o'clock and that on New Year's Day I didn't even have a drink. It wasn't until Jan. 2nd when I had a dram ...

Well I have told you about the awful weather we are having, but when I mention the industrial unrest now prevailing I can only say — bloody wicked and inhuman. Antisocial. Strikes at one time was (sic) caused because of bad working conditions and starvation wages; but not now, my boy. Strikes are caused by bloody mindedness.

It has come to pass that the dead are no longer being buried — owing to pickets at cemetery gates. The authorities are storing coffins in cold storage and are recommending that the bodies should be buried at sea.

Oh! I'm not making all this up. Hospitals are being closed due to industrial action, likewise schools. During the 6 week strike of the lorry (truck — ed.) drivers, food supplies went short in the shops and stores — bread, sugar, salt, vegetables, meat etc. No doubt things were aggravated by panic-buying on the part of some members of the public. But still, the docks were bursting at the seams with merchandise and still no one would allow the lorries or vans in or out.

I saw on the TV these bloody little tin Hitlers on picket duty swaggering about at the control points turning lorry drivers away. And on one occasion when questioned by a female reporter of the television they were positively rude to her and told her to clear off.

And another union leader with a smug smile on his ugly dial said that the strike would continue. Good job I only seen (sic) it on TV or otherwise I would have lost my cool and lashed out.

And still despite all this unrest the Prime Minister blandly states after arriving home from a conference out east that a state of emergency did not exist. The British are indeed a long suffering race.

Frost, snow, ice, blizzards, floods, strikes of rail, road, ambulance men, teachers, civil servants, local authorities, dustmen (garbage collectors — ed.) — some cities have just now at this time of writing (sic) huge piles of garbage 10 feet high in some cases and still the men won't move.

Hospitals are asking patients to lend a hand if possible. Nurses are scrubbing out wards. In some cases cancer patients were turned away from entering hospitals for treatment.

These little tin gods had the decision over surgeons — Bastards!

Now the miners are girding their loins for a showdown of 108 pounds per five-day week (About \$210).

Of course, the case for the fixed-income group of which I am one in a million or two (i.e. the old age pensioners — ed.) have no voice — no redress — but we all have to go to the same stores or markets and pay the same for fuel, food, clothes etc. . .

Clarification

In the Thursday, Feb. 22 Battalion article about the upcoming casino night indicated the casino is sponsored by the Memorial Student Center. Casino '79, which will be April 20, is a project of the Residence Hall Association.

Readers' Forum

Guest viewpoints, in addition to Letters to the Editor, are welcome. All pieces submitted to Readers' forum should be:

- Typed triple space
- Limited to 60 characters per line
- Limited to 100 lines

Name that chorus

Editor: The newly formed women's vocal music group has no name. Yes, believe it — a chorus with no name.

This letter is a plea to all those good A&M out there to help out a few (37) women by thinking of a great name for our group.

If we use your suggestion to name our group, we'll help you out with a \$25 check. Bring your suggestions by the vocal music room number 003 in the Memorial Student Center basement before March 1.

If you have any questions call the music office at 845-6942. Thanks to everyone who participates.

—Mary Jane Jackson

Editor's note: this letter was accompanied by 21 other signatures.



Letters to the Editor

Nuclear power fears unbased

Editor: In response to Charles Cody's letter concerning nuclear power (Battalion, Feb. 21) we would like to clear up some of the misconceptions of the fears of this "deadly" energy source.

It is true that no level of radiation is safe, however the radiation emitted is not as dangerous as earlier presented. On the weak side, one form of radiation can be stopped by a sheet of ordinary paper and of the more potent forms, they can be diverted by several inches of concrete or lead.

Also, concerning nuclear waste, all that need be done is store it underwater. This

prevents any form of radiation from escaping to the environment.

Contrary to the popular belief, a nuclear explosion is impossible for there is far too little fissionable material and not the right conditions in a nuclear reactor. The only possibility is a "meltdown" which is far from likely to occur because of very stringent safety systems.

As for the chances of fatality of a person, they are only one in five billion each year. The natural radiation emitted by our environment far outweighs the radiation received from nuclear reactor.

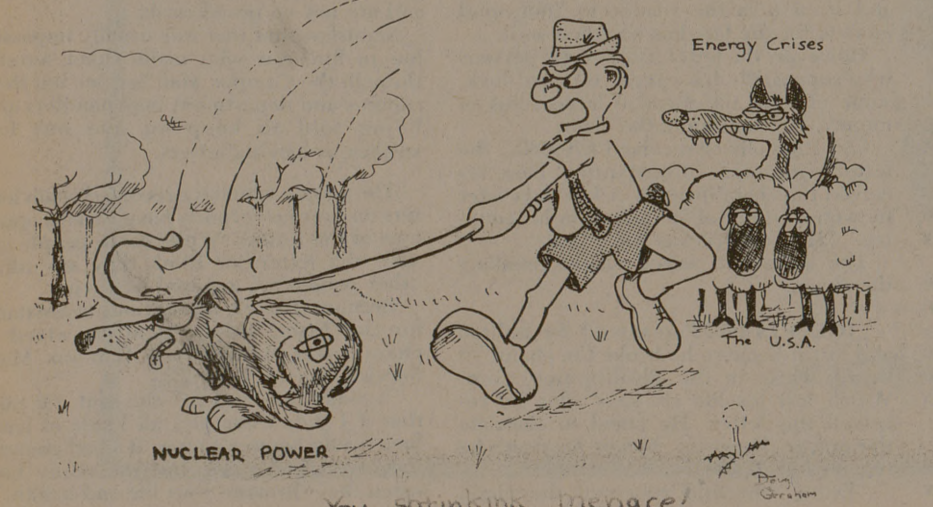
Nuclear wastes must be protected from the environment, however not for 500,000

years. "After about 500 years, the wastes have decayed to the point that one would have to swallow about one half pound to ingest a lethal dose."

All power plants (nuclear, oil, coal, etc.) are cooled by water. However, the cooling water that is discharged never comes in contact with the nuclear matter. Also, it is not "piped boiling hot to the ocean" for it is only 15 to 25 degrees warmer than the surrounding waters.

So, Mr. Cody, if you're so worried about nuclear radiation, you better put on your lead suit because you live only a few miles from the Texas A&M nuclear reactor.

—Greg Jacobs, '80



WORLD

IRA not responsible for bombings

Police investigating five bomb blasts that rocked a busy shopping center denied reports that the attacks were the work of the outlawed Irish Republican Army. Investigators of the Friday afternoon blasts at Yeovil, 115 miles southwest of London, said the bombs were not politically inspired and were the work of one man. They uncovered a bomb factory in western England Saturday.

WEATHER

Fair skies and mild temperatures with a high of 67 and a low of 34. Winds are north-northeasterly at 7-12 mph.

THE BATTALION

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.

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