

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

TUESDAY
APRIL 3, 1979

Carter closes up door on the press

By WESLEY G. PIPPERT
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Bit by bit, reporters' access to news is being chipped away at the White House.

For instance: President Carter's thoughts about opening Cabinet meetings to direct coverage early in his administration never took form and department secretaries now rarely speak to reporters at all after their biweekly meetings. Despite a long tradition of talking to reporters after their weekly meeting with the president, congressional leaders now enter and depart the White House through the south gate where reporters have no access to them.

Ropes and chains often are put up to restrain reporters and photographers from getting close to persons entering or departing the White House or from approaching the president at a function inside the mansion.

Most seriously, press secretary Jody Powell's daily briefings have deteriorated as a source of news and he is holding more and more private "background" sessions, meaning his comments may be attributed only to an "unidentified official."

And worse, Powell frequently speaks on "deep background," meaning that his remarks may not be attributed to anyone. This puts reporters in the position of having to make statements on their own.

The White House sought to impose almost total news blackouts during the Mideast summit at Camp David last September, and during the energy summit at Camp David on March 19. And Powell had only one formal briefing with re-

porters during Carter's six-day trip to the Middle East earlier in March.

During the campaign and early in his administration, Carter stopped and chatted almost every time a reporter asked a question. Now, more often than not, he smiles and strides by. During his campaign, Carter supported opening of meetings of federal groups; revealing immediately errors or malfeasance and "giving an explanation to the public;" broadening access by the public to government files; and holding at least 20 full-scale news conferences a year.

Carter quickly discarded the idea of having reporters present for Cabinet meetings. For the first several months, deputy press secretary Rex Granum attended the meetings and briefed reporters on what took place.

Soon that ended. Then reporters talked to Cabinet members when they stepped outside the White House. Now, even that has ended.

Access in the White House of any recent president has been tight. Reporters need a special pass to gain entry to the White House grounds, and once inside, they need special clearance or an escort to go to any office other than that of the press secretary.

Reporters themselves bear some responsibility for the decline in the substance of the daily briefings, which are designed to let them ask the press secretary anything they wish. Some reporters play the role of an advocate rather than an information-seeker and use the briefings as a forum for their opinions.

Equality — not quite

By BETSY KELLEY

I found Ms. Sandra Englert's article "Women or Men First," demonstrative of misinformation and extremely presumptuous. In the first place, I find it hard to believe that "having lived on the quad for two years" makes her an authority on the status of women members of the Corps.

In the second place, her statement, "The question has come to whether or not women can use their hard-earned equality to totally disrupt and alienate a predominantly male organization, thus reducing their equality and trying to express some type of superiority — which is nonexistent," illustrates her ignorance of women's rights and the status of women. Contrary to her statement, women are not equal on this campus or anywhere else.

Statistics illustrate the inequality of women. In the Jan. 19 issue of U.S. News and World Report, United States Department of Labor statistics were reported. In 1977, the median earnings for women was 58.9 percent of the median earned by men.

Also, this figure has been declining — not rising in recent years. Only 6 percent of all women workers were managers and administrators — 10 percent were other professionals. Women workers for the most part are concentrated in low status and low pay jobs. A total of 35 percent of all women workers were clerical workers and 21 percent were service workers.

These statistics have serious implications for women workers and their families. A woman working for "extra" money is rare. Most women workers are working to support their families.

Statistical information on the inequality of women on this campus is also available. Undergraduate and graduate women comprise 34.49 percent of all students or a total of 10,435. However, women faculty comprise only 9.82 percent of the total faculty. These are four professors, 19 associate professors, 61 assistant professors, 26 instructors, and 74 lecturers that are women.

As any one can see, more than one-third of the revenue from tuitions is from women

students, but these same women are denied viable role models of professional women. How can women students be expected to evolve into responsible, professional contributors to society without examples?

There are numerous other documented examples of women's inequality within our society. However, some persons may dismiss these facts for various reasons. One argument that is commonly given is that women do have equal status within our society, but this status is of a different nature.

These persons maintain women are of equal importance in their traditional roles of wife, mother, and homemaker. However, this argument is not substantiated by society's view of the homemaker. These women provide an essential job of child bearing, child raising, homemaking, etc., but they have no protection of their economic status.

An example is the lack of social security provisions for homemakers that are exclusive of their husbands' social security. Homemaking is not even a valued and respected occupation. Homemaking is one of the lowest ranked occupations by the Department of Labor.

Women are not equal and probably will not be equal until they have the same opportunity, status, responsibility, and privileges as men. This certainly applies to Texas A&M.

Women on this campus will not be equal until they have the chance to share in some of the responsibilities and gain some of the privileges. I do not know whether Ms. Melanie Zentgraf's actions are aimed at improving women's status or not.

I do not believe Ms. Englert knows this either. The real issue far surpasses Ms. Zentgraf and her actions. The central problem is the assumption that women are automatically equal once they gain admission into a male-dominated structure. This faculty reasoning, in turn, actually hinders women from striving toward true equality. Only when opportunity, responsibility, wages and status are the same for both sexes can equality prevail.

Betsy Kelly is a senior marketing major at Texas A&M.

Slouch

By Jim Earle



Decontrol oil price guides

President Carter is to announce soon what aides call "bold steps" to deal with the energy crisis, and is considering lifting price controls from domestic crude oil and placing new taxes on oil company profits.

There is much to be said for freeing oil producers from the web of ceilings in which they have been enmeshed since President Nixon imposed wage and price controls in 1971.

By artificially holding down the price of domestic crude, the program has discouraged production in this country and subsidized imports. By artificially shielding consumers from the real price of gasoline and heating oil, it has promoted use, not conservation.

The result has been to put the country at the mercy of the OPEC price gougers. Inflation, deficits in the balance of payments and weakness of the dollar are due in part to our muddle-headed oil policy.

On June 1 Carter will gain the power under law to continue, modify or end oil-price controls. He should immediately remove price ceilings from newly discovered crude, which would cause a surge in exploration.

Carter ought to be more cautious in the case of oil now flowing. Domestic oil sells on average for \$9.61 a barrel, against \$15.25 for imported oil. Eliminating that difference at once would give an inflationary jolt to the economy. The president should let domestic crude prices rise to world prices in stages over two years.

The tax on crude oil at the wellhead which Carter is considering again is a bad choice. It would shift about \$15 billion a year from people who could use it to search for more oil to bureaucrats in Washington, who are already lining up for it.

It would be far better to devise a plan to encourage oilmen to sink their higher profits from decontrol into stepped-up exploration. An excess profits tax could be levied against those who do not seek additional energy sources.

Scripps-Howard Newspapers

Letters to the Editor

Destructive criticism

Editor:

I am writing in response to the two local Civil Liberties Union's statement in The Battalion March 28.

There has been plenty of change at Texas A&M in recent years. Women and other groups previously shunned from this school have been able to come to this university for well over a decade. Compulsory membership in the Corps of Cadets ended in 1963.

The curriculum offered here is no longer mainly agriculture and engineering, for we now have expanded and highly recognized Colleges of Business Administration, Architecture, and Geosciences, among others, a new College of Medicine. Our enrollment has nearly quadrupled in the past 15 years. These and other changes at A&M were brought about with constructive criticism by well-meaning people who had an eye for A&M's future needs.

I believe the local Civil Liberties Union (C.L.U.) were alluding to the kinds of change they would like to see at A&M, which are brought about by what I call destructive criticism. These change would destroy A&M as we know it, and are changes that most Aggies neither want or need.

We don't need a student body in which the Corps of Cadets is left out. We don't need special rights for fags. We don't need female yell leaders. We don't need people who won't hump it and stand up at football games.

We don't need campus organizations that can overnight decide that certain traditions will no longer be observed. We don't need university-recognized fraternities and sororities.

So what I'm saying is listen up, C.L.U.s, Aggies can take criticism any time, but we won't stand for changes we believe to not in the best interest of A&M and its traditions. Just because most Aggies oppose the things I mentioned above does not make A&M a bastion for the suppression of expression.

—Chuck Sullivan, '80

Hot review OK

Editor:

I just finished reading Duke Watson's "unbiased" review of the latest UFO album. I would personally like to commend Mr. Sylvia on his taste for good music.

I recently borrowed a copy of the UFO album "Strangers in the Night," and I must admit that I was not impressed by their drawn out guitar solos and shoddy lyrics like, "Only you can rock me" or "Too, too hot, too hot to handle. Too, too hot, too hot to handle."

However, in my review of the LP, I went one step further than Mr. Sylvia, in that I listened to the whole record. It appears to me that the musical repertoire of this group is quite limited. Therefore, thank you, Mr. Sylvia, for your great review that was "too hot" for Duke Watson and company to handle.

—Jim Closmann, '81

Wanted: Books

Editor:

Dear graduate student 23886042. I am an undergraduate student trying to do some research work for a term paper. You have some books (overdue) that I need. Please be a responsible "Ag" and return them. Isn't that the way the system is supposed to work.

—Rick Price, '80

TOP OF THE NEWS CAMPUS

Dan, Coley play at A&M Friday

Pop musicians England Dan and John Ford Coley will play in G. Rollie White Coliseum 8 p.m. Friday. Their hits include "I'd Really Love to See You Tonight" and "Gone Too Far." Tickets are on sale in the Memorial Student Center box office in Rudder Tower.

STATE

Court to review police sentences

The full membership of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has agreed to consider the government's request that three Houston policemen receive harsher sentences than were imposed by a federal judge in the 1977 drowning of Joe Campos Torres. Policemen Terry Wayne Denson, Stephen Orlando and Joseph James Janish were convicted of beating Torres and shoving him into Buffalo Bayou. U.S. District Judge Ross N. Sterling of Houston last year gave the officers one-year prison terms for misdemeanor "wrongful death" convictions and five years' probation in lieu of 10-year sentences for felony civil rights violations.

NATION

25 killed in nursing home fire

At least 25 people were killed today and several others injured in a fire that swept through the Wayside Inn Nursing Home in Farmington, Mo., authorities said. Capt. Matt Haug, commander of Company D of the 1140th engineer battalion at the National Guard Armory, said a temporary morgue had been set up at the armory. Haug said some of the bodies at the armory were not badly burned and the cause of the deaths apparently was smoke inhalation. Relatives of the victims were coming to the armory to identify the dead.

Striking mechanics to negotiate

Representatives of United Airlines and striking mechanics and ground crew workers have agreed to resume negotiations before federal mediators Tuesday. The strike was called at midnight Friday after members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, representing a third of the airline's 54,000 employees, announced they had rejected a second tentative contract agreement. The IMAW's last strike against United was in December 1975 — a 16-day standoff. A union spokesman in Chicago said members are prepared to stay out even longer this time, possibly carrying the strike into Easter. Union spokesmen in Chicago said the second tentative agreement was "overwhelmingly rejected" and that money was the union's main gripe — particularly the cost of living package.

Carter election audit complete

The Federal Election Commission Monday completed its audit of President Carter's 1976 primary campaign and did not mention the bank loans to the Carter peanut warehouse being investigated by a special prosecutor. The FEC ordered the Carter campaign to repay the government \$5,872.60 in federal funds spent on the campaign for which proper documentation could not be furnished. In addition, a penalty of \$1,950 was imposed because the committee improperly had designated bank accounts used for campaign funds. The FEC concluded that, except for these minor matters, "the audit disclosed that the Committee for Jimmy Carter conducted its activities in conformity with the Federal Election Campaign Act in all material aspects."

WORLD

Begin makes historic Cairo trip

Menachem Begin arrived in Cairo Monday and Egypt gave a subdued but proper reception for the first Israeli prime minister to set foot in an Arab capital. The welcome for Begin's 28-hour visit was routine for visiting heads of government and indicated that his overnight stay in the most populous city in the Middle East will be kept low-key. Begin's first official function after his arrival was to lay a wreath on the Unknown Soldier monument on the parade grounds at Nasser City, on Cairo's eastern outskirts. The monument, a towering, hollowed-out sandstone pyramid with a black marble block on a pedestal below the apex, is a tribute to all soldiers killed on the battlefield, but especially those who died in the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

Refugee boat sinks; 104 drown

A boat carrying 223 Vietnamese refugees who were refused permission to enter Malaysia sank and 104 people aboard drowned, a United Nations official said Monday. The official said 119 people aboard the craft survived the sinking Saturday and the 119 survivors, rescued by islanders, were housed at a refugee camp where about 5,000 other Vietnamese await resettlement in other countries. The U.N. official said the boat landed Saturday near Mering, 250 miles southeast of Kuala Lumpur on Malaysia's east coast, but authorities refused to allow the refugees to land and a Malaysian navy boat towed it out to sea. Other sources said police opened fire to scare away the refugees. They said navy launches forcefully towed the boat 40 miles out to sea where it overturned in rough waters near Pemanggil Island.

WEATHER

Mostly cloudy with a flash flood watch. High today 60 and a low of 50. Winds will be South Easterly at 10-15 mph. 60% chance of rain today and a 70% chance of rain tonight.

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 confirmation.

Address correspondence to Letters to the Editor, The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

Represented nationally by National Educational Advertising Services, Inc., New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday from September through May except during exam and holiday periods and the summer, when it is published on Tuesday through Thursday.

Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester; \$33.25 per school year; \$35.00 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request. Address: The Battalion, Room 216, Reed McDonald Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

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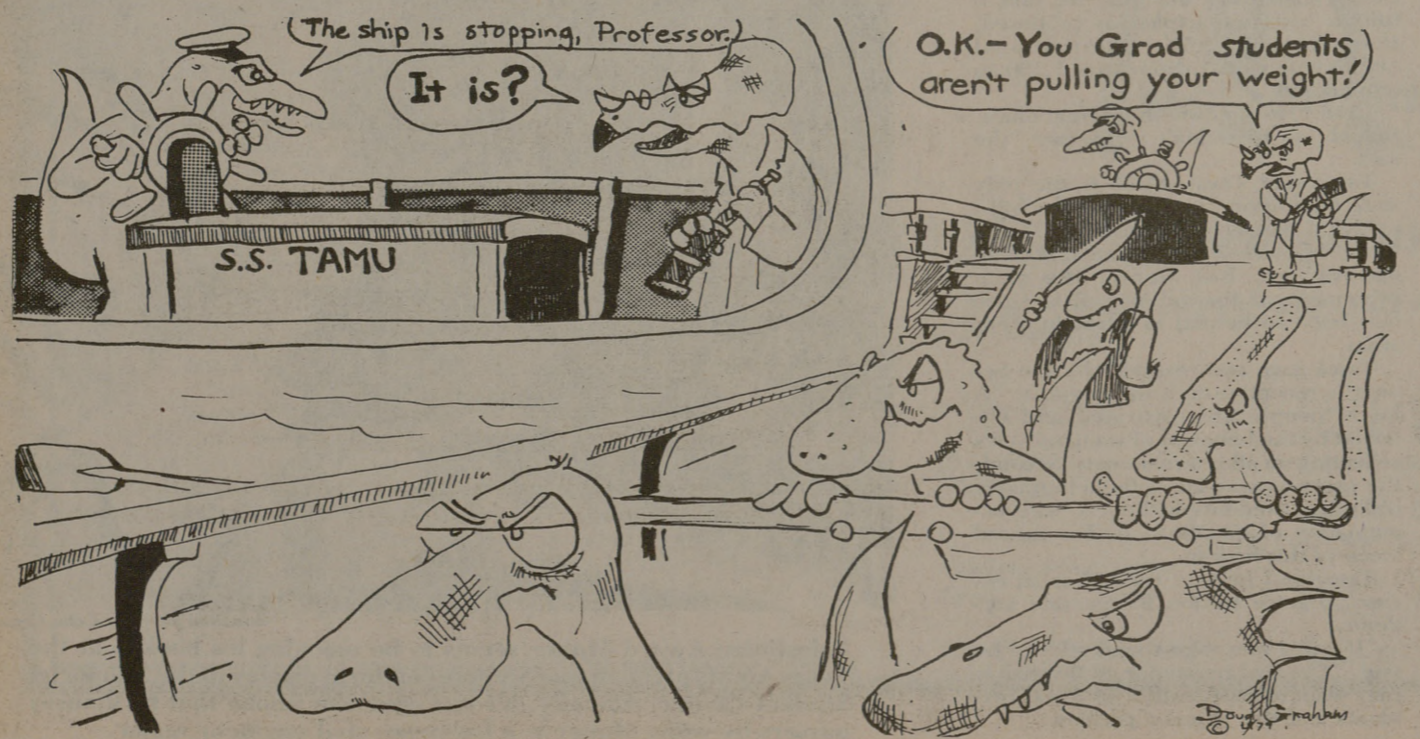
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Thotz



By Doug Graham