

# VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

## Carter against windfall tax 'plowback'

By HELEN THOMAS

WASHINGTON — President Carter believes his message on the need for seeking it to the oil industry with a windfall profits tax on revenues from the decontrol of oil is hitting home with the public.

But he also believes the fix may be in with Congress to take care of the big oil companies.

The people who are paying higher prices at the gas pumps are unhappy. Many question whether Carter's thesis that high prices will reduce oil consumption is valid in today's society. There will be growing pressure on oil companies such as Standard Oil and Exxon, which this week reported whopping increases in their profits, to pay their fair share of the new bonanza.

Speaking to the National Academy of Sciences, Carter said the industry has given up the battle to kill the tax and has adopted a new strategy — to get their many, and powerful, friends on Capitol Hill to draft legislation with loopholes providing kickbacks to the tune of billions of dollars.

"Many of those who only a few weeks ago were dedicated to killing outright the windfall profits tax have now given up on that fight," Carter said. "But the battle is far from over. Their new strategy seems to be to try to hoodwink the American people by passing a windfall profits tax that is in fact a charade — a tax designed primarily to provide loopholes so the oil companies will get another \$4 or \$5 billion in unearned

profits on top of the \$6 billion they would get under decontrol with an honest windfall profits tax."

The fight centers on the proposal to include a "plowback" provision in the bill that would allow the oil companies to deduct from their taxes any profits that are reinvested in exploration and production.

In announcing that he would allow oil prices to rise as of June 1, Carter also proposed new taxes that would recapture 50 percent of the resulting revenues. He said

the revenues would be put in an Energy Security Fund to subsidize the search for new sources of energy.

Speaking of the plowback provision, Carter said, "They will try to pass this charade off on the American people," and allowed that in reality it is a "kick back" to the oil companies.

Although the president did not mention oil companies in his speech, press secretary Jody Powell later told reporters the president's remarks were directed against the

industry.

There is some suspicion that Carter may have already thrown in the towel by showing too much flexibility by deciding to send to Congress only the "specifications" that outline a windfall profits tax bill and letting the lawmakers write their own legislation.

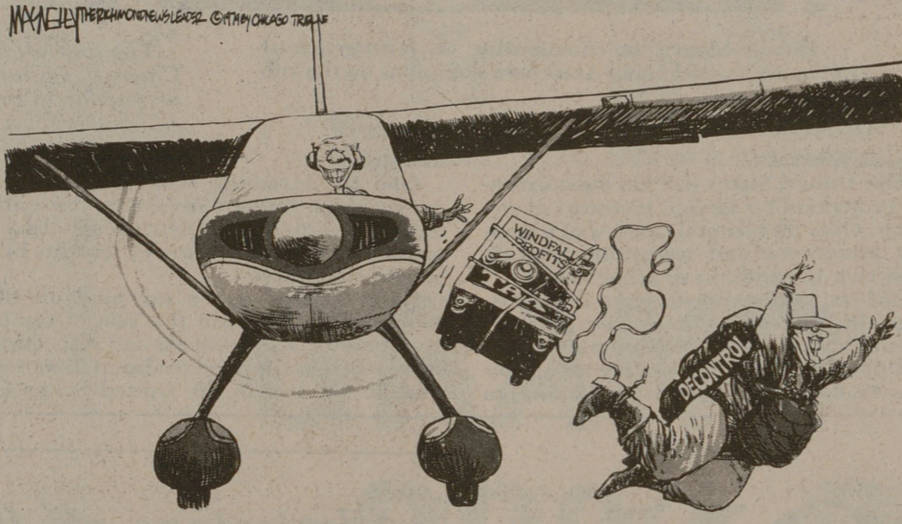
Veteran reporters say that is not an unusual way of doing business, but it does appear to give a heavily lobbied Congress broad leeway in writing its own ticket. The administration cannot complain as much when it did not detail its own demands.

A key figure in the battle will be Sen. Russell Long, D-La., chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and strong supporter of the oil industry. Long is on record as favoring more "incentives" for the industry to develop new oil resources. He has a lot of clout in Congress, and the awe of the White House. Other Democrats in leadership positions feel the same way as Long.

All of which puts Carter in the position of having to decide whether at some point he is ready to take on his own party members. He has been very reluctant to do that in the past.

With the re-election campaign coming up, there is a question of whether Carter is willing to alienate the men whose political support he needs. Therefore, if the public is willing to buy Carter's argument about "charade" legislation, is he prepared to take on the real perpetrators?

Helen Thomas is the UPI White House correspondent.



## TV, radio interfere with court decorum

By CHERYL ARVIDSON

WASHINGTON — The Senate begins its disciplinary hearings of veteran Sen. Herman Talmadge, D-Ga., next week, but it's still up in the air whether the public will be able see and hear the proceedings or merely read about them.

The action against Talmadge marks the first time in 12 years that a sitting senator has faced the prospect of discipline by the Senate for wrongdoing. Like the 1967 investigation and subsequent censure of the late Sen. Thomas Dodd, D-Conn., Talmadge's case involves charges of financial malfeasance.

The ethics investigation of Talmadge has been going on for a year, but only recently have the television networks shown any interest whatsoever in joining the print journalists who have been covering each step of the probe.

The committee last week made a wise preliminary decision that television and radio coverage of the hearings would be inappropriate. But after shouts of protest from the networks, the members have now decided to review — and possibly reconsider — the decision.

The networks argue that if the hearings are open to the press, they should be open to every type of media. However, it is only cameras and recording devices that

are affected by the original ruling. Nothing would stop the television correspondents from sitting through the hearings and covering them as every other reporter will be doing.

The major reason for prohibiting television and radio coverage is the court-like nature of the Talmadge hearings. In most courtrooms, the television cameras and recording devices are banned but their correspondents can still be present.

The ethics committee essentially will be sitting as judges of Talmadge, and the hearings will resemble a trial. The case against Talmadge will be presented by two lawyers who have conducted the committee's investigation and will be calling various witnesses to give testimony.

Ethics chairman Sen. Adlai Stevenson, D-Ill., said the decision to keep the cameras and tape recorders out of the Talmadge hearings was made in an effort to preserve "decorum" of the proceedings. Even those committee members who favor television cameras agree that their presence can frequently cause a "disturbance."

Sen. Robert Morgan, D-N.C., said if the Talmadge hearings go on "nationwide television, every person will be worrying about the image they project."

But Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., a former television commentator, says, "If you have any media, you ought

to have all media." The "fundamental, overriding consideration is fairness" to Talmadge and the other individuals who will be party to the proceedings, he said.

"What I'm concerned about is the effect of a large television exposure on the witnesses," said Special Counsel Carl Eardley. "A lot of the witnesses are already nervous when they get here and when they see the television cameras, they become so worried about the camera that they start forgetting."

There's a lot of logic in Eardley's comment. Anyone who has been present at a televised proceeding of any sort can't help but notice the incredible glare of bright lights. And there's something tremendously disconcerting about a television camera when suddenly it is you that is being filmed.

The six senators on the committee — and Talmadge himself — are all public figures who are used to publicity and used to the cameras. But most of the would-be witnesses are private citizens who naturally might shy away from that sort of exposure.

And if the television reporters need some illustration of the Talmadge proceedings, they can employ artists to sketch the main figures and capture the flavor of the proceedings. This is not a revolutionary idea. The networks employ artists specifically for this sort of work and they use them almost every day in courtrooms across the country.

# TOP OF THE NEWS

## CAMPUS

### Dees picked as new drum major

James Dees of Houston has been selected as head drum major for the 1979-80 Texas Aggie Band. Dees will be responsible for conducting the band at all drills and performances, and will hold the rank of cadet lieutenant colonel. The size of the band requires two additional drum majors: Phil Gougler of College Station will be Artillery Band drum major, and William Byers of El Paso will be Infantry Band drum major. The senior-booted bugle rank for the band has also been selected. Bugle rank members are Greg Dew, Tom Rheinlander, Jeff Presnal, Rob Ferguson, Michael Harp, Bruce Fain, Greg Brewer, Kim Taniguchi, Bruce Cummings, Paul Preslar, Wig Graves, and David Vanderbilt.

### Hart Hall wins RHA award

The Residence Hall Association awarded its first "Hall of the Year Award" to Hart Hall for most outstanding programs and leadership Tuesday at the RHA awards banquet. Hart Hall won national recognition for its Halloween haunted house for children, its Christmas tree and its educational programs.

### 3 get Outstanding Senior Award

The Liberal Arts Council chose three students Tuesday to receive the Outstanding Senior Award. Dr. Diane Strommer, associate dean of liberal arts, said the winners were Jamie Aitken, a journalism major, Roberta Fay, a sociology major, and Elaine McClurkin, an anthropology major. She said they were chosen on the basis of their contributions to the University.

## STATE

### Murder conviction reversed

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Wednesday reversed a seven-year sentence against Judith A. Lindsay, convicted of conspiring with three others to have her husband murdered. The court said the indictment failed to adequately inform her of the particular acts for which she was tried. Evidence at the trial indicated the Arlington woman wanted to collect on her husband's \$15,000 insurance policy.

### Priscilla not satisfied with divorce

Priscilla Davis, former wife of one of the state's richest men, may appeal her recent divorce. "It's a woman's prerogative to change her mind," Mrs. Davis said. Late last week the Davis divorce court judge awarded her \$3.4 million in cash, property and stock. Texas industrialist T. Cullen Davis received the \$6 million mansion Mrs. Davis had been living in since the couple's estrangement five years ago. "Really, my mind hasn't changed per se. We just want to go over everything," she said. "I feel real good about things. There are some minor details we're going to take a look-see."

### McConn denies extortion charge

Houston Mayor Jim McConn has denied he had anything to do with an alleged extortion request made to a tire-repair contractor by a city official. Suspended city purchasing director Jack Key has been charged with violating federal extortion laws.

## NATION

### Cronkite says readership down

Broadcaster Walter Cronkite Wednesday warned the nation's newspaper publishers that they are continuing to lose readers to television. Cronkite told the annual convention of the American Newspaper Publishers Association that, according to ANPA studies, newspapers were read by 86 percent of the population in 1971, but only 69 percent in 1977. The reading young aren't reading newspapers, he said, was that "people aren't being taught very well — either to read or to think." Also, he said television news is only a headline service. "You are going to have to flush-out the news," he said. "The job isn't quite getting done."

### 'Police' robbers take \$100

It was embarrassing enough for New Orleans police to have a department car stolen right outside headquarters, but it was even worse when they found out two gunmen "playing police" used it in a robbery. Police spokesman Gus Krinke said two men pulled up to a pedestrian near the French Quarter Monday night with the siren blaring and the blue light flashing. They robbed him of \$100. "If we ever catch these son-of-a-guns, we're going to hang 'em for all the world to see," Krinke said.

## WORLD

### Mexican gas smuggling suspected

Mexican customs officials were ordered to keep a close watch on fuel smuggling along the U.S. border Wednesday in the wake of rising prices at American gas pumps. Customs chief Oscar Reyes Retana said checkpoints near and along the U.S. frontier were instructed to inspect all vehicles.

### Former ambassador sentenced

A Jordanian military court has sentenced Jordan's former ambassador to Britain to six months in prison at hard labor for selling the embassy's furniture and pocketing the money, the Jordan news agency reported.

## 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.  
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.  
United Press International is entitled exclusively to the use for reproduction of all news dispatches credited to it. Rights of reproduction of all other matter herein reserved. Second-Class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.  
Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editor or of the writer of the article and are not necessarily those of the University administration or the Board of Regents. The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting enterprise operated by students as a university and community newspaper. Editorial policy is determined by the editor.

## Letters to the Editor

### Middle East facts ignored, twisted

Editor: After reading Mr. Tal Nahir's April 24 letter to the Battalion, I feel the obligation to point out several facts about the Middle East crisis which he tried to ignore.

Mr. Tal claimed that the U.N. Security Council's resolution 242 did not call for "complete" withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Arab occupied territories. He quoted the English version of the aforementioned resolution which said "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from occupied territories in the present conflict," but ignored that the official French version of the same resolution said "retrait des forces armées israéliennes de tout territoire occupés", and the translation of this version means "all occupied territories."

Furthermore, Mr. Tal claims that if the Arab countries follow the example of Egypt by signing a peace treaty with Israel, then Israel "would gladly give the money and return occupied territories." I wish to remind Mr. Tal of hundreds of Israeli official

statements which categorically refuse even to consider such withdrawal. Mr. Begin even says that these are not occupied territories but "liberated territories." The fact is that Israel has already established hundreds of settlements on these occupied territories since 1967 in a systematic colonization process, and the last two of these colonies were only approved by the Israeli Cabinet on April 22.

Finally, Mr. Tal claims that Palestinians enjoy the right of free expression under Israel's democracy, but violent movements like the PLO can never be trusted or dealt with. He seems to forget the excessive cruelty with which Israeli forces broke down Palestinian protests in the occupied territories, in which tens of thousands of unarmed civilians were shot to death in cold blood. He ignores the fact that 25,000 Palestinian homes have been blown up since 1967 by Israel's army to make way for Jewish immigrants from Russia and various places. And what about all the reports on

cruel tortures in Israeli jails? Israel is a state that was achieved through terrorism (Menachem Begin was the leader the Irgun, a terrorist group), and it was maintained through state terrorism which led to the death of thousands of Palestinians in Israeli air raids against their refugee camps. Israel's condemnation of terrorism is hypocritical and senseless. Didn't Mr. Tal ever hear of the prophecy which said "he who lives by the sword will die by the sword?"

—Maher Awwad

### A&M no different

Editor: This letter is in response to Mr. Barnard's letter of April 23 in which he states he is fed up with TAMU and is going to leave. Since you took it upon yourself to write in and pass judgement on something I

cherish, I decided to pay you the same courtesy. Although I don't know you Mr. Barnard, I can sympathize with you in many ways. I too have had car problems. I too have had umbrellas stolen. I too have been misled by the University records. I've had a professor stand up and tell the entire class they ought to switch majors. Many was the night I went to Huntsville looking for something to do that College Station did not offer. I've gripped about the town, the pros, the lines and the parking. Sure, it's very disillusioning to find out that not everybody says "Howdy" on campus anymore. Believe me, they used to.

But not all of your college education is obtained in a classroom. Part of it is coming to the realization that life isn't a bowl of cherries. It's a rocky road. Sure A&M isn't perfect, but do you expect anything different in the rest of the world? With 30,000 people in one place you're going to have mishaps and people who steal umbrellas and don't have insurance.

Please don't take this as a "Highway 6 runs both ways" letter because it's exactly the opposite. I wish you would stay. I've been around to different schools and I challenge you to show me one that has the facilities, organization of procedures (registration, for example) and staff that can be found here.

In June I'll be starting a fantastic job made possible because of my education at Texas A&M. Yeah I'm proud I'm an Aggie. I'm also proud I'm not a quitter.

—Mike Sellers, '79

### Correction

The professions of Alton J. Banks and William Rundell were reversed in the Campus Names section of Wednesday's Battalion. Banks is an assistant professor of chemistry. Rundell is a mathematics lecturer. The Battalion regrets the error.

### 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

