

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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MAY 2, 1979

Bad time for draft

The era of our involvement in Vietnam was one of the most divisive in American history. The nation became more cynical and suspicious of its leaders than during any time since the Great Depression. Fifty-thousand pointless deaths can do that.

The youth of the era, mistrusting the military and all other "establishment" institutions, dropped out of their parents' culture and created their own. The focus of their discontent was the draft: "Hell no, we won't go," students chanted at protest rallies across the country, and the message got through.

SIX YEARS AGO THE DRAFT ENDED and the all-volunteer army began. Yet now Carter and other politicians want to start the draft again. If they do, they will very likely trigger the same earthquake that divided the country in the sixties.

Because nothing has happened since then to improve the military's image. Accurate or not, the idea of a selective service still conjures the image of warlords sending innocents to be butchered without purpose.

AMERICA DOES NEED AN ARMY, and a competent one. It needs high-quality enlisted men in larger numbers than are joining the volunteer army, just as it needs high-quality political leaders who can make intelligent use of such an army.

Without such an army, the country's flexibility to respond to individual situations is diminished. But a return to mandatory military service could do America more harm than good.

THE NATION IS STILL FEELING THE EFFECTS of alienating a generation of its citizens. Public confidence in all institutions, not just the military and the government, is extremely low. In terms of the potential social consequences, there couldn't be a worse time to resurrect the draft.

The last thing the country needs is a dropped-out, turned-off counter-culture to contend with. Which it will have, if it restores the draft before restoring public confidence that we'll have a damn good reason the next time we send in the Marines.

—Scott Pendleton



Australians divided on drilling at Barrier Reef

By JOHN SHAW

SYDNEY — Australia's Great Barrier Reef is the most remarkable coral formation on earth — a 1,200-mile stretch of islands and lagoons containing a fantastic variety of colorful marine life. It is fast becoming the focus of a fierce controversy here.

Drilling companies are currently seeking the right to prospect for offshore oil in the region, which lies off the northeast coast of this continent, and their efforts have triggered a debate between advocates of conservation and partisans of economic development.

The debate over the Barrier Reef is assuming dramatic proportions because of the area's fame as one of the world's natural wonders, but it symbolizes a broader conflict growing here over the issue of development versus conservation.

The other controversies have arisen as a result of attempts by oil, mining and timber interests to tap the country's immense re-

sources. In several instances, these disputes involve Australia's aboriginal population, which is striving to defend its lands against intrusion.

In the case of the Barrier Reef, the oil companies are being backed by the state government of Queensland, which exercises local authority in that region. The Reef itself comes under the responsibility of the federal government, which has been somewhat equivocal on the subject.

Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and other federal leaders are promising to protect the Barrier Reef, but their pledges do not specifically include a ban on drilling in its tropical waters.

Two kinds of pressures are therefore colliding over the question. The pro-development faction argues that energy needs and economic growth deserve priority, while the conservationists contend that disrupting the Reef would ruin a unique national treasure.

The conservationists have mobilized a vocal segment of public opinion as well as much of the media, and a "Save the Reef" campaign has been launched to declare the area out-of-bounds to everyone except tourists, fishermen and scientists.

The Barrier Reef is actually a misnomer, since it is made up of an enormous number of separate reefs, islands and keys covering 90,000 square miles. The formations are the creation of tiny marine creatures called polyps, which secrete calcium, whose reef-building process may have begun 30 million years ago.

The tropical waters wash over a brilliant submarine landscape of coral cliffs and valleys inhabited by vivid fish, huge clams and giant turtles.

The Barrier Reef is considered to be vulnerable to ecological cycles. Not long ago, for example, a small part of it was destroyed by a species of starfish known as the "crown of thorns," which preys on the polyps that

build and sustain the coral formations.

Some experts believe that the phenomenon was natural, but others blame it on a tilt in the ecological balance caused by over-fishing a tasty crustacean called the triton, which feeds on the starfish. Whatever the reason, the situation seems to have returned to normal and many damaged reefs are now being reconstructed by the polyps.

Opponents of development assert that a major oil spill from an offshore well, such as occurred off California a few years ago, is the kind of hazard that the area faces if it is exploited.

The Barrier Reef is only about 20 miles from the Australian coast at its northernmost point and reaches out some 200 miles in the extreme south. Though the Reef was declared a national underwater park in 1976, the oil companies want to drill between the mainland and the outer barrier, and the debate has been complicated by uncertainties over where the seabed begins and the coral formations end. It is not going to be resolved easily.

Meanwhile, similar fights are surfacing in other parts of Australia as mining companies lobby to dilute legislation that they claim inhibits the exploration and production of the country's mineral wealth. A target of these companies is the National Heritage Commission, which defines and regulates protected regions.

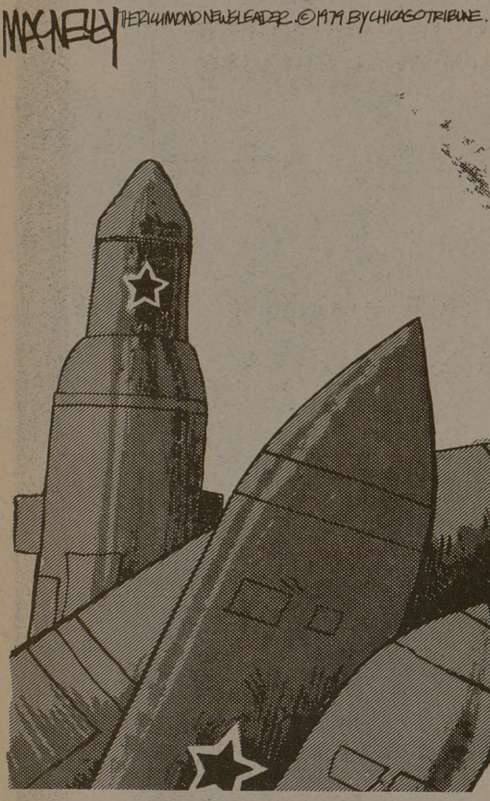
One firm preparing to mine uranium, for instance, has raised objections to the fact that a piece of the territory it leased was recently carved into a new national park.

In the west, farmers and real estate interests concerned with water supplies are resisting a company aiming to cut down forests in order to begin mining bauxite.

Still another dispute is between a mining outfit and aborigines hostile to the commercial contamination of lands that they regard as sacred. Aborigines also tangling with an oil consortium in northern Australia for the same reason.

It may seem exaggerated that this wrangling is going on in a country that is as spacious as the United States and has a population of only 14 million. But it mirrors the sensitivity of Australians to the significant contemporary issue of whether priceless areas, like the Great Barrier Reef, ought to be jeopardized for the sake of short-term economic gains.

Shaw is an Australian journalist who writes on political and social issues.



Letters to the Editor

Stop the draft

Editor: In 1973 the draft was eliminated as a method for the armed forces to acquire troops. Now, just six years later, the U.S. government has begun taking the necessary steps for its reinstatement.

President Carter would like to spend \$5 million to overhaul and improve the selective service system, while in Congress five draft-related bills have been introduced and are pending consideration. The proposed bills range from plans to facilitate registration of draft-age persons to plans for mandatory government service, military or non-military, for all 18-year-olds. Even the least offensive of these proposals must be viewed as refiguring the complete revival of the draft.

The Pentagon is not content with a hired army capable of defending national borders and allocations totaling over one-half of federal tax revenues for its budget. It now appears intent on acquiring the ability to increase its strength by forcing persons into its ranks. With an increased size and the ability to call more men into service, the probability of a U.S. military intervention (like the one in South Vietnam) becomes more likely.

This latest manifestation of militarism needs to be addressed and stopped before

the machinery is once again set in motion. The consequences of allowing its revival go beyond forced labor and the increased chance of military action. Even now proposals exist to allow the selective service access to information on draft-age persons without their consent. Further government spying on citizens and the continued erosion of civil liberties also seem likely results.

On May 1 groups across the nation planned to rally against the attempted reinstatement of the draft. After that date it will be necessary for those who oppose these actions to be active in a campaign to prevent these bills from being enacted into law. It is still possible to prevent a return of the draft.

—John Oswald

Editor's note: This letter was accompanied by nine other signatures.

Misleading head

Editor: The Battalion of April 25 carried a story headlined "FBI sued by accused communist." The headline excited my curiosity: what nefarious radical was suing the Bureau this time? Was it, perhaps, Gus Hall of the American Communist Party or

some member of the litigious Socialist Workers' Party? No, it was John Henry Faulk, a nationally-known humorist who appears on the television show "Hee Haw" each week.

The "accusations" (Faulk) was a communist" were made well over 20 years ago by right-wing elements in the entertainment field supporting the witch-hunts of the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy. Faulk subsequently won a suit against these people and recovered substantial damages from them.

The headline, however, makes it seem as if the accusations against Faulk (which were groundless to begin with) are still relevant. A man whose main cause is the defense of the Bill of Rights and who gives frequent guest lectures to journalism classes here at Texas A&M is still, decades after the fact, an "accused communist." If this label is to be applied to John Henry Faulk, then perhaps it ought also to be applied to others whom the McCarthyites denounced as communists or persons "soft on communism": people like Gen. George C. Marshall, architect of the Marshall Plan; President Harry Truman; Secretary of State Dean Acheson; and J. Robert Oppenheimer, developer of America's hydrogen bomb.

When The Eagle carried a similar story, its headline referred to the plaintiff in the

suit simply as "John Henry Faulk." Why could not The Battalion have done the same?

—Robert R. Green, '82

Equus: excellent

Editor: I would like to congratulate all of those involved in the production of "Equus." It was excellent. I enjoyed it immeasurably. "Equus" was the most impressive encounter I have had at Texas A&M this year. Thank you so much for the culture you have added to this school.

—Karen Fernbach, '82

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

TOP OF THE NEWS CAMPUS

Editor named top junior at A&M

Liz Newlin, editor of The Battalion, was named the top junior in the University by the Texas A&M chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, a national academic honor society. The award, which includes a \$500 scholarship, was made Tuesday night at the society's initiation banquet. Invitation to join the inter-disciplinary society is based on grade point average and personal character. Each of the ten colleges used recommendations from their departments in nominating a junior. The candidates were interviewed by a panel of judges in the society last month. The other juniors, the top in their colleges, are Mark Stern, science; David George Norman, veterinary medicine; Valerie Jane Ryan, agriculture; Hal Stuart Buesing, education; Michael T. Godinich, Moore College; Rebecca Sue Boemer, architecture; Matthew M. Hammer, geosciences; Stephen M. Jones, business administration; and Ray M. Scholl Jr., engineering.

STATE

Texas youth survives capsizing

A Pasadena teen-ager was rescued from the sea and a Coast Guard search begun for his missing family Tuesday after their 16-foot sailboat capsized. Coast Guard spokesman Bob Baeton said Ronald Price Jr., 14, was picked up by the shrimp boat Little David about three miles west of the John F. Kennedy Causeway at Galveston. He told his rescuers that his mother, father, brother and sister were in the anchored boat before it capsized. Two helicopters searched for the missing family members.

Forced default faulted by court

Six Beaumont high school girls have won a court battle with the University Interscholastic League to allow them to compete in a tournament. U.S. District Judge Joe Fisher ordered the University Interscholastic League to allow the Forrest Park High School girls to enter the state class AAAA tournament in Austin. He said the girls were denied their constitutional rights when they were not allowed to compete in an April 20 regional qualifying tournament. They defaulted because of recent flooding.

City seeks divorce from Houston

Two years ago Houston annexed Clear Lake City but the smaller city's residents want that action rescinded. Citizens of Clear Lake City claim they are taxed twice for water and sewer services and receive little police and fire protection from Houston. Houston's lobbyist, Steve Oaks, said that if Clear Lake City were successful, "You'll see other areas around Houston peeling off simply because they don't want to pay their fair share for the services." That would endanger Houston's bond rating, he said. A proposed law may help the small community by allowing Houston to rebate 65 percent of the property taxes paid by Clear Lake residents if its water district will provide fire protection, emergency medical services and garbage disposal.

NATION

Train has two accidents in a day

The Montrealer passenger train slammed into a small truck before sunrise Tuesday, killing five members of a Charlestown, N.H., family, and had, once it got going again, another accident in Vermont 20 miles away. No one was injured in the second collision, between the train and a tractor-trailer loaded with lumber at a private rail crossing near Sharon, Vt.

Man kills doctor, self over care

A 21-year-old man in Lockland, Ohio, apparently dissatisfied with his doctor's treatment for his skin problem, shot and killed the doctor Monday and then turned the gun on himself. Police said Joe Derminio walked into the house-office of Dr. S. Gregory Miceli, pulled out a .357-magnum revolver, and shot the doctor in the chest and then apparently shot himself in the chest. Derminio, who lived about a block from the doctor's house, had been treated — but not cured of — a skin problem.

Sears, where inflation stops?

Sears, Roebuck and Co., the nation's largest retailer, is reducing all prices in its current catalog by 5 percent, effective today. Chairman Edward R. Telling announced the rollback Monday, saying "the action is being taken in cooperation with the president's program to fight inflation." The Sears' announcement was its second in less than a week in support of President Carter's voluntary wage and price guidelines. Last week the giant retailer announced selective rollbacks in prices of items sold in its stores.

WORLD

SALT talks nearing completion

Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance met Tuesday for the 22nd strategic arms limitation negotiating session this year. U.S. officials said Dobrynin brought his government's response to an American proposal that was presented last Wednesday. The officials said they believe one or two more sessions will be required on the final issue, the definition and rules governing the development of new types of missiles, and how to make sure that both sides adhere to the guidelines. They said that the final agreement could come as early as this week, with another meeting needed to set up arrangements for a summit meeting at which the treaty would be signed by President Carter and Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev.

WEATHER

Partly cloudy and warm with a 20% chance of rain. High today of 80 and a low of 60. Winds will be S.E. at 10-15 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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