

nation

Congressional office: unemployment will rise

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Congressional Budget Office predicts unemployment levels will average about 7.5 percent this year and may top 8 percent by the end of 1981, a slightly more pessimistic assessment than the administration's estimate.

The forecast is part of the office's economic message presented to the House Budget Committee Tuesday. The president's budget message released Monday projected employment would be about 7.5 percent this year and decline to about 7.3 percent in 1981.

The congressional office, which develops economic projections to assist Congress in its legislative decisions on such matters as the federal budget, expects a mild recession in 1980, followed by a relatively weak recovery later this year and in 1981.

The administration made a similar projection Monday.

Also consistent with President Carter's budget message, the office assumes there will be no tax cuts in 1980. Consequently, it said rapid inflation will push wage earners into higher tax brackets, thereby further reducing spendable income.

Personal savings, which fell to record low levels in 1979, are expected to recover somewhat this year, further restricting household spending, the congressional office said.

The congressional office assumes tight credit restrictions will continue to reduce automobile and residential home sales resulting in layoffs in the automobile and construction industries with depressing ripple effects on the rest of the economy.

But some offsetting factors will buffer the effects of the recession.

Export growth is expected to be strong.

Current inventory build-ups are not significant, so business can continue normal production schedules without trying to work off stockpiled supplies. And federal expenditures — particularly defense purchases — may provide a small positive thrust to the economy during 1980.

Inflation is not expected to show any significant improvement this year as rising energy, food and labor costs continue to put pressure on the economy.

However, a recovery is expected to begin sometime around mid-1980, the congressional office said. It said it expects after-tax income to begin rising in the second half of the year; mortgage rates to decline, thereby spurring new housing; and business investments to rebound.



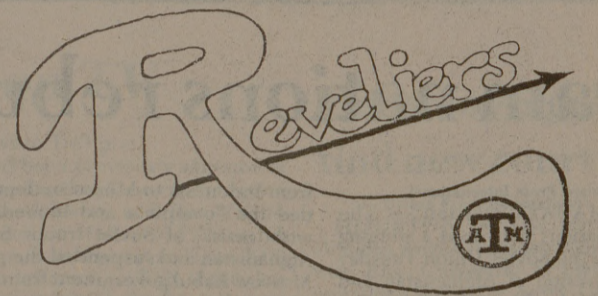
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Defense secretary defends projected budget increase

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Harold Brown Tuesday defended the projected \$15.3 billion increase in defense spending against charges that much more is needed, and spoke out again in favor of the controversial SALT II pact with the Soviet Union.

"It (SALT) serves our national security interests — even more so when the Soviets are aggressive — but the timing of its ratification must defer to the urgent need that we assess and respond to Soviet actions

in Afghanistan," Brown told the House Armed Services Committee.

"Although the Soviets have shown little restraint in their defense decisions, they have been willing to negotiate arms control agreements that promote strategic stability," he said. "SALT II is such an agreement."

Defense sources said Gen. David Jones, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would warn Congress in his presentation the chances of a U.S.-Soviet military conflict "will increase significantly" in the first half of the

1980.

Brown said SALT should be approved because it puts a ceiling on the strategic bombers and missile launchers of both superpowers, it allows U.S. intelligence to monitor Soviet weapons programs better, and it does not put constraints on any U.S. weapons development programs.

In advance of Brown's appearance, key Republican and Democratic legislators criticized the proposed 1981 fiscal year's \$142.7 billion defense budget as insufficient.



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Experimental facility used to test making oil from coal

United Press International
BAYTOWN — Engineers Tuesday showed off an experimental facility that will test a way to make oil from plentiful American coal and might launch a new industrial revolution ending America's need for Arab oil.

The \$200 million, 20-acre maze of pipes and multi-story cylindrical towers — to the untrained eye a refinery with a coal chute — will be finished in March after two years of construction on the edge of Exxon's largest oil refinery.

ly said a commercial plant — making refinable oil and gas by mixing coal with hydrogen at very high pressures and temperatures — could be in operation before 1990.

Emphasizing the ifs and maybes, Exxon's Bob Larkins said gasoline from coal might cost as little as \$1.50 a gallon in 1978 dollars, or about 40 cents more per gallon than the current national average.

Epperly said many questions remain unanswered.

"Personally I'm optimistic about solving all the problems, but I have been working on process technology for 20 years and I think this is the most difficult technology I've ever worked with," Epperly said.

Plant manager Robert E. Payne said an example of the potential problems is the untested wear and tear on pumps and valves.

They never have been subjected to sustained handling of semi-solids at pressures as high as 2,000 pounds per square inch (psi) and temperatures of up to 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit — conditions required for coal liquefaction.

One valve used to downgrade pressure on the liquefying coal from 2,000 pounds to 72 psi was wearing out every 20 minutes two years ago. Engineers now have it lasting a

month and hope they can triple that.

That one valve costs as much as \$32,000.

A major factor is the relative cost of building a coal liquefaction plant. Payne said, Projections indicate a coal liquefaction plant could cost five times as much as the \$3,000 per barrel of production an oil refinery now costs.

A commercial coal liquefaction facility could cost \$3 billion.

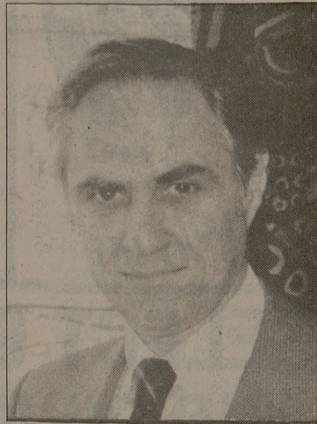
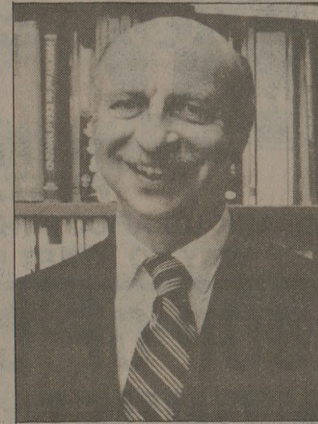
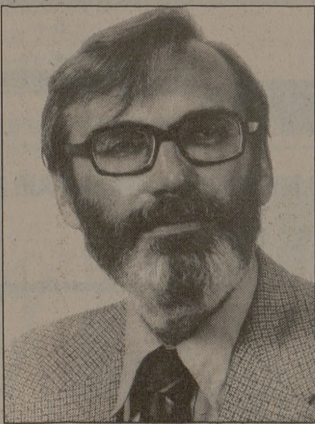
Another key in determining whether coal liquefaction becomes a major factor — it has been technologically feasible since World War II — is the relative price of oil which has risen as high as \$41.30 per barrel on spot markets.

Larkins said oil from the coal plant could cost \$30 to \$35 a barrel.

"If it (the relative cost) were outrageous, we wouldn't be working on it," Epperly said. "It is an option which is going to be considered seriously in the future, assuming this program is successfully completed."

Exxon's W. Robert Epperly said that if the project goes as hoped, scientists and engineers will have enough data by 1982 to decide whether to build a commercial-size plant capable of handling thousands of tons per day.

If they decide to go ahead, Epper-



TECHNOLOGY: TOOL or TYRANT?

MSC SCONA celebrates its 25th conference this year. From February 13-16, over 200 student delegates from nearly eighty colleges and universities from the United States, Mexico, and Canada will convene at Texas A&M to discuss this year's topic, Technology.

Guest speakers will include (pictured from left to right) Joseph F. Coates, president of think tank J. F. Coates, Inc. which deals in future research; Tom L. McCall, environmental protection advocate and former governor of Oregon; and Langdon Winner (not pictured) professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and author of *Autonomous Technology: Technics-out-of-Control* as a theme in *Political Thought*.

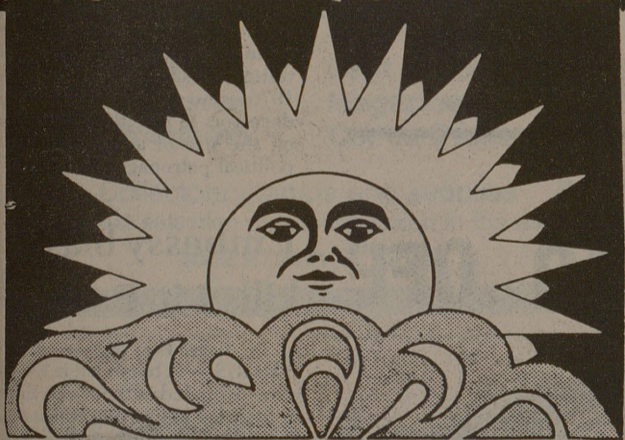
Also speaking will be large technology advocate, Samuel C. Florman, principal and vice-president of Kreisler Borg Florman Construction Company and small technology advocate, Hazel Henderson, an independent futurist. Melvin Kranzberg, a pioneer in the history of technology, will serve as wrap-up speaker.

Texas A&M University will have 25 student delegates at this conference.

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