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Administration may ask Congress to pass SALT

WASHINGTON — Despite the intense meeting in Congress about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the administration is preparing a new campaign to push ratification of a SALT II agreement this year, United Press International has learned.

Sources, who asked not be identified, said the chief compelling reason for renewing the campaign for SALT ratification in 1980 is that chances for Senate approval would be close to zero next year, after a new Congress is installed.

Under Senate rules, the treaty would have to be submitted again for committee hearings once a new Senate is sworn in in 1981. Several key senators have indicated they will insist on some amendments to the complex treaty, in light of the delay in ratification.

If the amendments are tacked on to the treaty, it would reopen the whole negotiation process and, the sources said, "The Soviets have their own wish list of changes they would like to see."

It is believed the Soviets, now that they have seen the United States is coupling the SALT treaty with new increases in defense spending, have become indifferent about an agreement they once supported with passion.

The Soviet attitude presumably means they would not easily accept any changes in the laboriously negotiated treaty package. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which has oversight over the treaty, has approved the treaty by a narrow vote, but President Carter had requested the

floor vote be held up, as a means of making the Soviets pay a price for their invasion of Afghanistan.

One other reason cited by the sources for reviving the treaty is a time of cold war makes an arms limitation agreement even more valuable and an increasing number of senators who have been polled by the executive branch have agreed with this view.

Although both Soviet and American officials have said their countries will act as though the signed treaty already was ratified, that informal agreement is not expected by the Americans to hold when it comes time for the Soviets to actually begin dismantling some of their missiles in 1981.

The United States, which has a lower number of total missiles, would not be required to dismantle any weapons because of the treaty.

The sources said the administration is prepared to move ahead on the SALT treaty, even if the Soviet troops remain in Afghanistan, if several other conditions are met.

— The American hostages would have to be freed in Iran, thus removing a major distraction to Senate consideration of any international agreement.

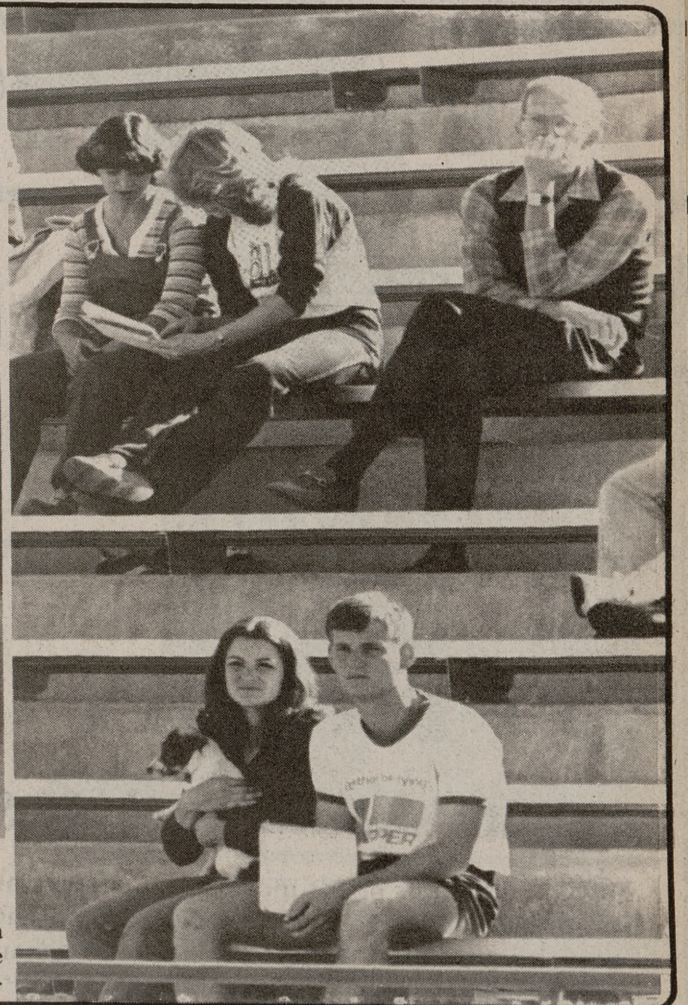
— Sen. Edward Kennedy would have to be overwhelmed by President Carter in the primary election process, thus freeing the president of the need to be actively campaigning for re-nomination. The president could use ratification of SALT as one of his campaign points against a Republican opponent in the general election.



Eyeing the court

A loyal group of tennis fans (right) watch the Texas A&M team during its meet here with Louisiana Tech on Wednesday. Obviously, the spectator pictured above is keeping his eyes on the ball. For more concerning the Aggies' victory, see page 14.

Staff photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.



Iran hostages

U.N. commission optimistic, but urging patience

WASHINGTON — The United Nations commission working for the release of the U.S. hostages in Iran has responded to word the captives may not be released until at least May by saying "patience is needed."

In Washington, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance shrugged off the latest pronouncement from Tehran.

The apparent setback in the release of the hostages — now in their 117th day of captivity in the U.S. Embassy in Tehran — came Wednesday from Mohammad Beheshti, chief justice of Iran's supreme court and secretary of the Revolutionary Council.

He told a news conference in Tehran the yet to be elected Parliament would not convene for six weeks and then would take another four weeks to discuss releasing the 50 Americans, reports reaching London said.

But a spokesman for the U.N. commission sent to Iran said panel members might meet soon with the hostages, and the mood at the U.N. headquarters in New York remained optimistic. "Patience is needed," he said.

In Washington, Vance called Beheshti's comments hardline "Delphic statements," and said he saw the U.N. commission on Iran as "a step forward" in the search for release of the hostages.

"It is difficult to say what is being said, especially since they (statements) are sometimes retracted," Vance said.

He said it was clear when the U.N. panel was formed one of the terms was the release of the hostages.

U.S. officials said it would be "a matter of grave concern" if Iran waited until May to take up the fate of the American captives.

U.N. spokesman Rudolf Stajduhar said, "The secretary general (Kurt Waldheim)

hopes the commission will see the hostages soon, if not very soon."

But, he said, "The situation is complicated; not all problems have been solved."

The commission members spent their second day meeting dozens of Iranians who said they were victims of the shah's torture. They also met with Foreign Minister Sadegh Chotbzadeh and visited Zehra Cemetery where many of the "heroes" of the Islamic revolution that deposed the shah are buried.

The commission expects to stay in Tehran investigating the alleged crimes of the shah for two weeks or more, and on Wednesday a spokesman denied news reports the commission would leave next Monday.

"The (U.N. commission) spokesman said the members of the commission are now looking for a firm basis for the continuation of their work," Tehran Radio reported in a

broadcast monitored by the BBC in London. "Apparently, some members of the commission believe this will necessitate a meeting with the hostages."

Tehran Radio said thousands of workers marched to the "U.S. espionage den," the embassy, shouting, "We workers follow the imam. We are ready to revolt against imperialism. The criminal shah will be punished here."

The militants holding the Americans hostage in Tehran held a news conference Wednesday and presented documents they said proved the CIA had interfered in the internal affairs of Iran, the Soviet news agency Tass reported from Tehran.

Some of the documents were partially burned, and the militants said members of the U.S. Embassy had tried to destroy them before the takeover last Nov. 4.

Check cashers have pet peeves

By DEBBIE NELSON

A little over \$6 million passed through their hands last year. Most Aggies know them, at least Aggies who cash checks. "They" are the people behind the check cashing window at the MSC.

As Jean Sawyer and Dottie Reed, employed by the service five days a week explained, check cashers have a couple pet peeves. "Do you know how many times a day we answer, 'Do you know what day this is?'" Sawyer asked.

A daily calendar is displayed prominently in the cashier's window, right in front of the noses of Aggies trying to fill out checks.

The second most frequent question is from students in quest of change. Sawyer explained there is no change in their cash drawers. Checks can only be written for

increments of \$5, up to \$25.

Arnold said for security reasons she could not reveal how much money passed through the window each day. So far this year more checks for greater amounts of money have been handled than last year, with its \$6 million end-of-year total. Arnold attributed this increase to inflation.

The window is busy most of the time. Hours are 8:30 a.m.-10:00 p.m., seven days a week, but supervisor Virginia Arnold said workers are at the window earlier many days. Busiest days are Fridays, although Thursdays are also busy, Sawyer said, if many students are going out of town for the weekend and need extra cash.

Cashiers use a bad check list compiled by the TAMU Fiscal Office, Arnold explained. Depending on how fast their banks get them off the list, Reed said, most students don't stay on the bad check list for long.

Arnold said the main desk has 13 student employees who help at both the check cashing service and at the guest room desk. A total of 20 people work at the two desks. Reed and Sawyer, at least, seem to enjoy what they are doing.

"Thank you, sir. Have a good day!" They sound like they mean it.

Former editor drops charges

By CAROL HANCOCK

Former Battalion sports editor Tony Gallucci decided Wednesday not to initiate his complaint of incompetency against editor Roy Bragg.

In a letter to Student Publications Board chairman Bob Rogers, Gallucci said bringing charges against Bragg would serve the interest of no one and he was therefore dropping the matter. Rogers said, in view of the letter, he considers the matter closed.

Gallucci's plan to place charges came after the board refused Tuesday night to hear his appeal asking for reinstatement of his sports editor job.

Five of the six board members present voted that the board did not have jurisdiction to hear Gallucci's case. Ronnie Kapavik, student body president, abstained. The board's by-laws provide for the appointment of the editor, but he or she then has complete editorial authority, including personnel decisions.

Gallucci had asked for board action after he was fired by Bragg on Feb. 13 for what Bragg described as not following orders.

Gallucci claimed his job was taken away unfairly and he felt he had no other recourse. After the board's Tuesday action Gallucci had asked to be heard again. He said he planned to respond to Bragg's accusations of not following Battalion policy at the next board meeting.

After the board refused to hear Gallucci, Rogers, head of the Department of Communications, explained to him the board could only consider Bragg's competency for the job. Even if Bragg were to be fired by the board, Rogers said, whether Gallucci would get his job back would be up to the new editor appointed.

Federal fraud, abuse and waste costing country billions in taxes

WASHINGTON — The General Accounting Office told Congress Wednesday there is widespread fraud, abuse, and waste totaling billions of dollars throughout the government — from bribery to theft — and not enough is being done to curb it.

Elmer Staats, director of the congressional auditing agency, told the Senate Appropriations Committee his agency found more than 130,000 cases of alleged fraud and other illegal activities over a 2½-year period.

"Based on information obtained by us to date, it is clear that a wide variety of federal programs and activities are affected," Staats said, adding that fraud has been found in areas such as federal payrolls, loan guarantees, education benefits, and use of government equipment.

The Justice Department has estimated that fraud alone is costing taxpayers anywhere from \$2.5 billion to \$25 billion a year.

Staats told the panel that Congress "ought to (take steps to) prevent it from happening in the first place rather than chasing it after it happened."

The committee also heard from John White, deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget, who said President Carter has undertaken a "governmentwide program" to combat fraud and abuse.

"We are confronted," White said, "with growing public dissatisfaction and confusion with the size, performance, and, in some cases, the basic role of government — the dissatisfaction is only compounded by

indications of fraud and waste."

Staats said the more than 7,500 fraud cases reported to GAO over a nationwide fraud "hotline" — under which private citizens and government employees can tip the government to illegal activities — have

come from every state in the nation.

He said California had the "highest rate of substantive allegations, 582, while Washington, D.C. had the second highest, 350, followed by Virginia with 265, New York, 247, and Texas with 245.

Proposed insurance rules reduce some premiums

AUSTIN — New rules that would permit life insurance companies to reduce premiums on some policies if the companies make higher-than-anticipated profits because of inflation or high interest rates have been proposed by the State Board of Insurance.

The board is expected to act formally on the proposed new rules March 27.

The proposed "indeterminate premium" whole life insurance policies would allow companies to pass on to consumers some of the benefits the company receives from the inflationary economy, board spokesmen said.

Currently, ordinary whole life insurance offers consumers a premium which is guaranteed for the life of the policy. Some policies include provisions for increasing premiums, but not for reducing them.

Under the proposed new premium structure, companies could state a policy

with a low premium and increase or decrease it according to the pressures of the economy. The premium could not exceed a maximum set in the policy, however.

Insurance Board Chairman Bill Daves praised the proposed new rules.

"The proposed rules set out strict advertising and solicitation standards for marketing these policies. In this way the consumer will clearly understand what he or she is purchasing," he said.

Daves said a major reason the board approved the indeterminate premium policies was that interest rates on money have become more important in determining premiums than have mortality rates.

"While companies cannot guarantee low premiums at today's inflation and interest levels, the policies offered when these rules go into effect will allow flexibility in determining premiums and keep them from being unnecessarily high," Daves said.

Shoe thief is no loafer

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — A thief with an apparent shoe fetish has attacked six University of Virginia coeds and stolen their shoes, say police.

"He's a strange dude," said Police Lt. James Haden. "He only takes clogs. He's got a fetish for clogs for some reason."

Late Wednesday, Lt. E.T. Cason said police had interviewed a suspect but had made no arrests.

"For that second, I was absolutely terrified," said a senior who was attacked and robbed of her shoes Jan. 12 near the university hospital. "I didn't know why this man was bothering me," she said. "I was absolutely terrified and no one has the right to do that."

Police said the women were attacked from behind by a young man wearing jogging suit who knocked them down or grabbed them by the legs. The man took only the victims' shoes, police said.

In one case on the Virginia campus, three students were attacked as they walked together.

Two women lost their clogs as the third struck at the assailant with a bag containing an order of hot chili.

Police, who said they consider the crimes robbery by force, also have searched a house.

"But we didn't find any clogs under his bed," a detective said.