

## Slouch By Jim Earle



"Of course I might be wrong, but a strap-on TV doesn't turn me on!"

## Reagan ready for new priorities

By HELEN THOMAS

WASHINGTON — President Reagan has a new set of priorities now that he has had smashing success in passing the bulk of his economic recovery program through Congress — defense, foreign affairs and the war on crime.

Reagan's personal lobbying — he hates to have it called "arm twisting" — defeated Democratic leadership to obtain a \$35 billion slash in federal spending and a 3-year, 25 percent, across-the-board tax cut.

His super salesmanship and television appeal turned the tide for him. He did not mind "listening" to the private interests and accommodating them where he could to win votes. He has satisfied the oil industry, the milk industry and those who sought peanut and tobacco subsidies.

His top adviser, Edwin Meese, says Reagan will now turn his attention to a full agenda that will include major and controversial Pentagon decisions on whether to go ahead with the B-1 bomber that former President Jimmy Carter rejected.

He also has to make up his mind on an MX missile basing system with Nevada and Utah opposing the so-called "race track" system for rotating the missiles to keep the Russians guessing. Defense Secretary Cas-

par Weinberger is reported to be leaning toward a system of keeping the missiles airborne in specially built cargo planes.

Unlike most presidents, Reagan has kept foreign policy on the back burner but is defensive when critics say he has none.

Nevertheless, Reagan himself has said that he will be devoting more time to foreign affairs in the months to come and the Middle East tinderbox is expected to be at the forefront.

The Israelis and the Arabs are obviously waiting to see what Reagan has in mind to bring about what his goals for "a lasting peace." His predecessors had the same goals to no avail.

He is committed to maintaining the Camp David peace process, but so far there has been little movement in that direction.

The president also may face a battle to sell five AWACS, sophisticated surveillance planes to Saudi Arabia that has strong opposition on Capitol Hill.

Reagan also must make moves to bolster the NATO alliance with West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, already serving notice that high U.S. interest rates will force his country to reduce its defense spending.

The drive for independence among Afri-

can nations and the so-called north-south dialogue between the industrial nations and developing countries is another policy issue Reagan will confront in the months ahead.

On the domestic front, Meese says Reagan will initiate new tougher laws to curb crime and to step up enforcement of the narcotics laws.

He also hopes to establish the "enterprise zones" which he promoted during his campaign as part of his urban economic development program.

But the most controversial issues are abortion, school prayer and busing, what Reagan is hoping he can keep off the spotlight for awhile.

He managed to keep them off the burner in Congress during the current session. But how long it is questionable whether he can keep these touchstones from reaching national debate levels.

Clearly he hopes that he may keep them at bay while he pursues some of the other issues which will be less explosive.

At any rate, he has his work cut out for him and he cannot rest on his laurels with his economic recovery program in place.

## How Japan can survive without alien workers

NEW YORK — Nearly all advanced industrial nations depend on alien workers, mainly to perform unskilled tasks. But the exception is Japan, which functions with remarkable success without immigrant labor.

The presence of Turks in West Germany, Algerians in France and Mexicans in the United States, though valuable to the economy, causes ethnic and cultural tensions as well as competition for housing, education and medical care. The Japanese avoid these social conflicts by keeping out foreign workers — and yet their economy flourishes.

During a recent trip to Japan, in which I interviewed some 50 executives, scholars and officials, I reached the conclusion that the Japanese cope without foreign workers because of their extraordinary system of labor-management relations, which mobilizes indigenous employees.

Despite different institutions, history and values, therefore, the Japanese may be able to offer some lessons in this respect to the United States and other modern industrial societies.

In Japan, as elsewhere, there is clearly no shortage of menial work to be done such as cleaning, laborious construction jobs, janitorial duties, and the like. But those tasks are not badly paid or held in low esteem, as they are in other countries — and they are often not dead-end assignments.

Indeed, salaries among occupations in Japan do not differ as much as they do in America. Wage levels and pay raises there are governed mainly by age, seniority and sex.

They are promoted regularly and given pay raises. But their tasks are rotated within the firm, and some of these tasks are menial.

Young Japanese employees accept these jobs, largely because there is no stigma attached to them. They have learned to do manual labor from childhood at home and in school. Thus industry in Japan has been able to integrate a "low-level" work ethic into the nation's social behavior, and employees benefit in welfare terms that go well beyond their wages.

As a consequence, Japan holds little attraction for foreign workers, since job

vacancies there are rare. Registered aliens, most of them Koreans, represent only 0.7 percent of the entire population.

Should labor be needed, the Japanese can always count on poor Asian countries nearby to provide it. But Japan itself can draw on large labor reserves, especially among retiring middle-aged workers, from employees being laid off from declining industries, or from services being mechanized and enlarged in scale.

It would be simplistic to suggest that the Japanese system could be easily imported into the United States. For one thing, Japanese labor unions are geared to individual companies, while those in America are independent and antagonistic toward management. Nor would American workers accept the Japanese concept of unequal pay for equal work according to the worker's age, sex and seniority.

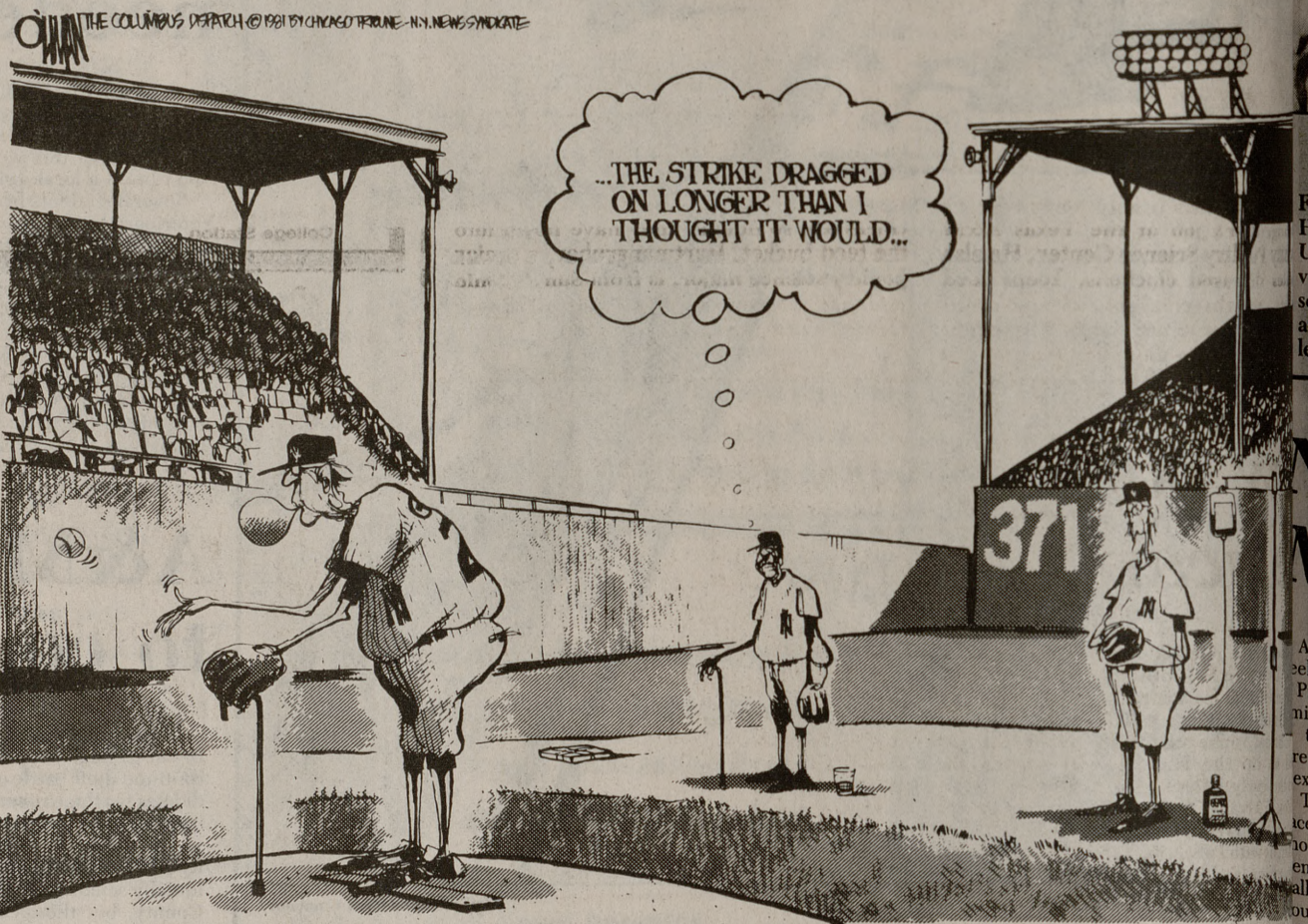
But the United States might consider further extending the ideas from Japan of contracting out low-grade tasks to specialized firms, notably in cleaning and repairing services, which would provide for improved regularity, productivity, pay and social status.

A more complicated and controversial lesson to be drawn from the Japanese experience might be the introduction of youth wage differentials, a possibility that is already being debated in America.

Advocated of this approach promise increased employment for youth, especially for minority youths suffering from severe joblessness. Its opponents say it would exploit youths through low pay as well as impair employment and labor standards for adults.

But what the Japanese do — and what might be applied in America — is to make up the low wages initially paid to young workers through a seniority system that raises their salaries as they ascend into adult salary brackets, and are kept in the firm thereafter.

It may be that the United States, which lacks Japan's sense of social responsibility and national cohesion, can only introduce such an innovation through protective legislation. But it could contribute to resolving an American dilemma, which has certainly not been settled by current U.S. immigration policies.



## Thanks for the mammaries

By DICK WEST  
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Me and ol' Jimmy both grew up in small southern towns, so I had no trouble figuring out what he was trying to get at while he was president.

But Ronald and I have such disparate backgrounds I can't always be sure I am tuned in on his wave length.

It was for orientation as much as anything that I recently spent a couple of weeks in Reagan country, observing the famed California life style. Here are a few of the things that caught my eye:

Temporal mores — Teenyboppers, if that is what they are called nowadays, everywhere. Mini-micro-bikinis plastered to residues of baby fat. And that was in the drug stores. No telling what the beaches were like.

I asked one of my hosts why so few older people were about.

"They mess up the image we are trying to project," he replied. "For that reason, we have a law preventing them from being seen in public."

"Occasionally, some of them may wander out on the street but every so often the Golden Age patrol comes by and herds them back into the geriatric ghettos where they are confined."

"I sure hope they don't get you," he added, mischievously rolling his eyes.

I think he was putting me on, but it was the kind of legpulling a glib easterner could easily believe.

Architecture — In one area I visited I saw a genuine architectural innovation — a

house that was neither neo-Spanish, quasi-Spanish nor pseudo-Spanish.

It had a small porch with a single Ionic column. Or maybe it was a Doric column. Dilapidated rather than rustic. I used to pass it as I was walking to a neighborhood shopping center to pick up a morning paper.

Another thing I noticed was that I was the only person in the area who used feet for anything except getting to and from automobiles.

One morning as I was walking past the non-Spanish house, I saw a small boy on the porch.

"Look, Momma!" he cried. "There's a man out here who is walking."

His mother quickly reached out the door and yanked the kid inside. Then she pulled down the blinds.

I'm pretty sure it was the same kid I encountered in a health food store a couple of days later.

"Look, Momma," he hollered. "There's a man wearing long pants."

Water rights — Apparently, there is some sort of dispute between Southern California and Northern California over water diversion.

When I asked a Southern Californian about the issues, he blamed the whole thing on Northern California petulance.

"They resent sending us water for our swimming pools, hot tubs and Jacuzzis," he said.

I think he was putting me on, but I feel closer to ol' Ronnie already.

## the small society by Brickman



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