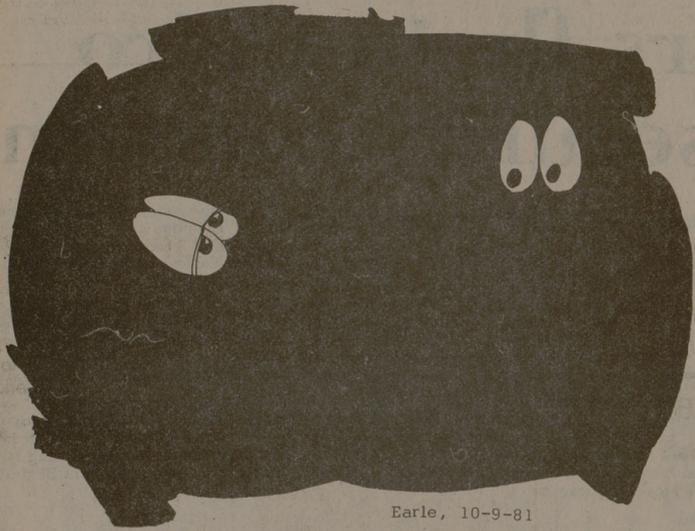


Slouch By Jim Earle



Earle, 10-9-81

"The power outage is over? I haven't gotten around to turning the lights on."

Change the name to a WACS

By DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Debate over the proposed sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia has been heavily laced with talk of compromise. Thus far, none of the modified plans has managed to ease Israeli qualms about an Arab country obtaining sophisticated radar planes, Saudi Arabian qualms about relinquishing its sovereignty over the aircraft, and congressional qualms about losing votes in the next election.

So now it is back to Square One. On the premise that one unacceptable compromise is as valid as another, I hereby offer one of my own.

Older readers may recall that women who served in the Army during World War II were known as WACs. Some of them were used as aircraft spotters and, I understand, became quite good at it.

Most WAC veterans, I'm sure, would welcome being recalled to duty. A few probably even could fit into their old uniforms, if the hips and waist were let out a

bit. It also is likely that some still can see pretty good, especially when wearing bifocal contact lenses.

Very well. Here is the scam: Congress puts aside the thorny AWACS issue and votes instead to revive the WAC organization as an aerial reconnaissance unit.

The Air Force could easily outfit an observation plane with a plastic bubble from which a WAC could see what was happening in the skies.

As the plane flew over the Middle Eastern deserts, a WAC would climb up into the bubble and peer around hostile foreign aircraft, missiles and satellites. Any sightings would be radioed back to the air base, which would send up fighter planes to intercept the intruders.

Such a flying machine could legitimately be called a WAC's plane. And it might be just the compromise that would be tolerable to Saudi Arabia, the Israel and Congress.

The main question might be whether a

WAC's plane could properly be described as having sophisticated surveillance capability.

Some of the WACs I knew during World War II were highly sophisticated. They seemed to a young recruit from Killeen, Texas.

It is quite possible that modern WACs in the Saudi Arabian capital, is some more sophisticated than Merkel. Nevertheless, I have no doubt a great many WACs have retained enough savoir-faire to meet most national standards.

As for Saudi sovereignty, any misgivings along that line probably could be assuaged by making the WACs honorary citizens of Riyadh.

I'm not suggesting that buying a WAC's plane would be precisely the same thing as acquiring AWACS. The latter stands for Airborne Warning and Control System, whereas the former set of initials comes from Women's Army Corps. But as long as the acronyms are homonymic, I can't see the Saudis quibbling over technical details.

System must be rescued from years of 'reform'

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — The rescue of the presidential nominating system from the wounds it has suffered in the last 10 years of "reform" is a task whose urgency has been recognized by both national political parties. The Democrats and Republicans have both chartered commissions empowered to recommend changes in public participation, delegate-selection caucuses, presidential primaries and nominating convention rules.

That effort to overhaul the procedures by which we choose the principal candidates for the most important office in the land has been powerfully stimulated and challenged by the report published last week by the Duke University Forum on Presidential Nominations, a bipartisan body including past chairmen and presidential aspirants of both parties and headed by Duke University President Terry Sanford, himself a two-time contender for the Democratic nomination.

The report is addressed to the political parties, and its chief message is that the parties themselves must accept the responsibility for the recent corruption of the presidential nomination process and for its necessary rehabilitation.

In a single paragraph, the report bluntly states why the present system (with its multitude of primaries feeding a mass-media hunger for the hero-candidate whose magical "momentum" will lock up to nomination long before most voters have the contest in focus) "ill serves the purposes of the nation."

"It saps interest, distorts choice, eliminates judgment, narrows the popular base, spans too long a period, and squeezes out of the deliberative process those peers whose evaluations and cooperation the choice of a president vitally requires," the Sanford report says. "Most significantly, the present system radically erodes the foundation of the one institution most necessary to its effective operation: the political party."

Of the five main recommendations Sanford and Co. make, only one is virtually certain to be adopted by the Democratic Party rules commission headed by Sanford's friend and neighbor, North Carolina Gov. James Hunt. That is the recommendation to make members of Congress and other major elected officials automatic voting members of their states' convention delegations.

There will be no great controversy in the Hunt Commission or its counterpart in the GOP, headed by Ernest Angelo of Texas, about two other recommendations from the Sanford group. They are to "revitalize the

local party caucus" as the locus for most delegate-choosing decisions, and to "remove every possible barrier to convenient participation" in those caucuses. Those recommendations are very much in the spirit of the rules changes in the last decade.

It is unlikely that the Democrats or Republicans will go as far in restricting primaries as Sanford and Co. would like. Their report suggests that all primaries be squeezed into a four-month period, with one day a month set by party rules for the voting.

That would not only shorten the primary season, it would discourage many states from even bothering to hold primaries. And it would provide the intervals needed to deny those early-primary plurality winners their cheap "momentum" victories the next Tuesday.

That change may be very desirable, but it required a more massive rearrangement of the election calendar than either party now seems ready to mandate. Still, it is less controversial than the last of the Sanford Commission's recommendations, the one it calls the most vital.

That is simply a call for ending the candidates' veto power over the choice of their own delegates and for freeing all the delegates from binding commitments of support for particular candidates.

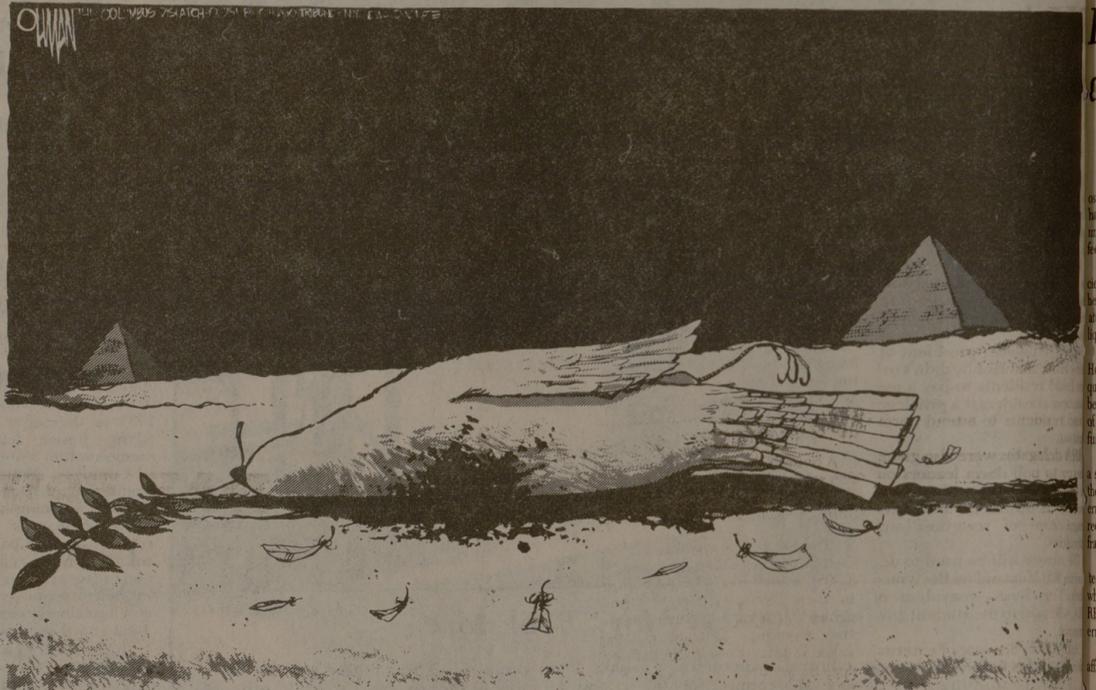
That recommendation poses, in the bluntest fashion, the fundamental question both parties must decide: What is the criterion for legitimacy in the nominating process?

The thrust of the "reforms" of the past decade has been to make the convention an automatic device for recording and ratifying the candidate choices already made by participants in the primaries and state conventions.

The Sanford Commission suggests a different kind of convention — one of credentialed representatives of party constituencies, deliberating among themselves on the choice of the best person to head the ticket.

The report says that "freeing the delegates is the key recommendation we bring," because "failure to free the delegates could mean the end of the national party convention as a deliberative body," and that, in turn, would "clearly signal the demise of political parties in this country."

Well, the 1980 conventions were anything but deliberative bodies. And somehow the parties have survived. But the issue the Sanford Commission raises is the fundamental one. And the closer the Hunt and Angelo Commissions come to addressing it head-on, the better off the parties and the country will be.



It's your turn

Message from 'Cougar High'

Editor:

Once more the powerful Cougars will rip your campus into millions of pieces as we destroy your pitiful football team Saturday. Everyone knows we own the road to Dallas and the Cotton Bowl, and now we'll take over Highway 6 and the Aggies' campus, too.

Call us Cougar High all you want. My two best friends play for UH and they know that every time they hear that "Beat the hell out Cougar High" it's time to score another touchdown. You guys are so stupid you never know when to quit with that infantile remark that degrades our university. Keep on saying it. We keep on scoring. It fires our guys up like nothing else does.

Besides, everyone knows there's no high like a Cougar High! A&M will be still dragging from barely lugging out over Tech, and the alumni will be firing their coaches and crying to the sky about how bad UH beat them come Saturday. Your coach doesn't know east from west and your offense

doesn't know north from south, that's why they never can find the end zone and beat a class team like Houston.

But we love to play you guys. The coaches relax and let your stupid Cougar High yell or whatever fire up our guys, then we roll over another SWC sucker and travel to our "Home away from Home," the Cotton Bowl. Or hadn't you seen our signs?

Good luck, farmers. You need lots of it. And a bigger hospital, too!
Eat 'em UP, COOGS!

Dan Garcia
Houston

Someone noticed

Editor:

I recently noticed an Texas A&M parking permit decal on the rear window of an automobile for "Freshman-Sophomore."

Don't you agree the University should issue an immediate recall and correct the spelling of sophomore?

Leonard Herrmann

THE BATTALION

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the address and phone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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Warped



By Scott McCullar