

# Reagan is unconcerned about poor poll ratings

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — President Reagan said he is not really concerned about his drop in public opinion polls.

"I don't think those people (polled) voted for me anyway," said Reagan with a smile during a picture taking session in the Cabinet Room before the start of the meeting with GOP lieutenants from Capitol Hill.

"Are you concerned about your drop in the polls?" a reporter asked.

"Not really," the president replied.

Two polls released Wednesday

reveal Reagan's standing with the American people has plunged to a new low.

A Washington Post-ABC News survey taken Jan. 18-23 found that 54 percent of those questioned disapprove of Reagan's handling of the presidency and 42 percent approve of his performance — a negative shift of 17 points since October. And for the first time, a majority of 54 percent said he is going too far in plans to boost military spending, and 52 percent said he is going too far in cutting back social programs.

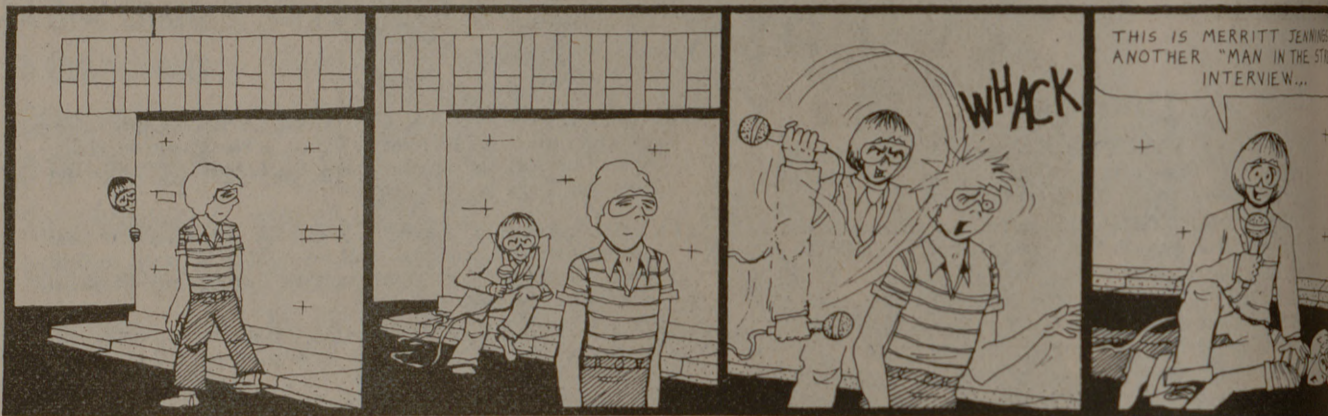
And a New York Times-CBS

poll, conducted Jan. 16-19, show 47 percent disapprove of the way Reagan is handling his job and 41 percent approve.

Deputy press secretary Larry Speakes noted lower mid-term ratings for presidents are a "historic trend" and predicted they will rise. He said Reagan's personal popularity remains high and said he did not think the speech will have much impact on the polls.

He also said Reagan intends to stick with his economic plan and to defend his military buildup despite attacks on high military spending by key Republican leaders.

## Warped



by Scott McCullough

## Nigerian "swap" proposed

# U.S. barter: grain for oil

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — The bumper stickers inspired by the oil and gasoline shortages of the 1970s presented the idea in its simplest terms: "a bushel of wheat for a barrel of oil."

Today, a trade concept being advanced by one Farm Belt congressman is similar, but the mechanics are more complex.

Rep. Cooper Evans, R-Iowa, just back from a week-long visit to Nigeria, is trying to help arrange a modern barter system to boost U.S. grain sales to the African nation by building up American purchases of Nigerian oil.

"What we're talking about is not an exchange per se — so many bushels of corn for so many barrels of oil," Evans said.

Instead, he said, the proposed project calls for the United States to buy about \$35 million of oil from Nigeria. In return, the Nigerians would spend \$35 million to import American grain.

The arrangement would offer mutual benefits, Evans said, noting that the United States would use up some of its vast grain surpluses and generate more income and better prices for American farmers.

At the same time, Nigeria would earn the money needed to buy more food for its citizens, he said.

The role of the federal government in the arrangement would be minimal, Evans said. He said that private businesses would arrange the sales.

The idea is still under discussion, and no decisions on whether to proceed are likely for several more months, Evans said.

"There are considerably more details to be worked out," he said. "They will have to decide whether they want to do this. Companies here want to, but the Nigerian government must decide whether they want to go ahead."

He said the barter arrange-

ment could be applied in other parts of the world, especially in developing countries.

Agriculture Secretary John Block has added his endorsement to the concept, describing barter as an acceptable method of helping expand exports of American agricultural products.

"Any way that we can move grain and get reasonable compensation for it, we certainly would not be opposed to that," Block said.

"I've talked to many members of co-ops and some industry people, private industry, that have been working on different barter schemes of grain for oil or grain for some other minerals," he said. "There's some hope for it. It's very difficult, this bartering process; but where it can be done, it should be done."

Evans characterizes Nigeria as well-suited to participation in a barter arrangement with the United States.

"Nigeria is the most promising nation in Africa for our agri-

cultural markets," he said, adding that its 90 million people make up one-quarter of the entire African population.

"It is going to need some in feeding its people in the ahead," he adds. "But they're stricted now in what they take from us."

Efforts to arrange a change of U.S. grain for Nigerian oil have been accompanied by a Nigerian grain firm's commitment to buy 2 million bushels of Iowa corn, Evans said. In the past, that firm has not bought corn imports.

The Nigerians also are to arrange a venture with Iowa cooperative to expand facilities in their capital, Lagos as part of an effort to modernize grain-handling methods, he said. By making more grain available to the country's farmers, the modernization also could expand the Nigerian poultry industry.

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## System helps find lost kids

United Press International  
LINDEN, N.J. — Union County ordered its sheriff's deputies to county schools for mass fingerprinting of schoolchildren. The kids had done nothing wrong, but they were undergoing frightful punishment by the looks on their faces.

A crying Luke Brophy, 3, cringed and tried to wipe his eyes with ink-stained hands after a uniformed sheriff's officer pressed the child's tiny fingers to a printed form.

His mother, standing beside him, tried to reassure him, but the tears continued. Betty Ann Brophy, 34, of Linden, hoped, along with hundreds of other parents, that having a record of her child's fingerprints might help track him if he ever disappeared.

"This program really doesn't make me feel a whole lot safer," she said. "But it is comforting to know that I've done something to ensure his return if something does happen."

Union County officials, who began the voluntary program Tuesday at St. Elizabeth's School, said most of the county's 44,000 students will have their

prints recorded by spring. "Too many children are missing and never identified," John J. Troiano, a deputy sheriff, said. "Too many parents go through life not knowing what happened to their children."

More than 10 percent of a million youngsters who appear each year are not found, and more than 6,000 identified bodies are buried each year.

Troiano, who devised the identification system last year, said the prints will be kept in files and entered in computers in Washington. "If the child is abducted, or run away, the state has asked for information and indicated they're considering similar programs," he said.

At the first fingerprinting session, Tracy Bramante, an eighth grader at the school, she thought the program "very important."

"There have been a lot of kidnappings and rapes and kids on the street will feel safer," she said.

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