

Weinberger's defense cuts

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

Much has been said recently about that stubborn defense secretary, Caspar W. Weinberger. Some of it has been unprintable, and almost all unsympathetic. Even one of the Pentagon's increasingly important beneficiaries, the U.S. electronics industry, has delivered a stinging attack on a Weinberger effort to control cost overruns. But the industry's offensive does more to highlight the secretary's limitations than his excesses.

The story actually predates Weinberger and Ronald Reagan's \$1.6 trillion military buildup. It begins with a 1976 request by Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.) that the Pentagon's contract auditors investigate the Washington operations of the Boeing Co. and nine other major defense contractors.

Outraged at the unabashed hustling by defense contractors and their lobbyists, Proxmire wanted to determine the extent to which contractors included lobbying expenses in weapon price tags.

As expected, the auditors verified the worst of Proxmire's fears and recommended that the executive branch disallow the use of taxpayers' money for lobbying expenses. Negotiations ensued but had reached no working rule by the onset of the Reagan era.

In the spring of 1981, however, Gordon Adams of the respected Council on Economic Priorities in New York revived the controversy with the publication of

"The Iron Triangle," a widely-read study of defense procurement practices. After an imperfect attempt in 1981, Weinberger ruled last October against the inclusion of lobbying costs in contracts even when requested by Congress.

Enter the American Electronics Association (AEA), which claims to represent about 2,000 companies. It's warned that the Weinberger rule will only discourage smaller companies from the military market, leaving Congress at the mercy of big contractors (and the Pentagon) for data and opinions on a wide range of products and issues.

"(Though) we concede that private-sector lobbying is untidy and sometimes exasperating, we believe it is the essence of what this country is all about," wrote association president E.E. Ferrey in a Jan. 18 letter to Weinberger. "The small amount of money you may save by disallowing these costs is far outweighed by the nation's overriding interest in a free flow of information."

The industry's concern seems legitimate. Big companies will lobby no matter who picks up the tab; smaller firms likely won't. Rather than undercut their commercial competitiveness with government-related costs, many small companies might be inclined to give up government lobbying and sales altogether.

No one would want Congress to receive its information from a narrow field of sources. Nor would the nation benefit from a smaller, less diversified base of

Pentagon suppliers.

Yet the industry's worries may be stated. Befitting their size, small companies spend relatively limited amounts on lobbying. Congressional aides report that the presence of company lobbyists on Capitol Hill is minimal; arms procurement expert J.S. Gansler characterizes the expense mostly as trade magazines.

Indeed, when asked how the Weinberger rule would hurt small defense firms, Ask Computer President S.L. Kurtzig, who publicly endorsed the association's complaint, didn't know.

The industry's tactics, however, are less important than what this squabble suggests about Weinberger's stomach for cost-cutting. After all, President Ferrey admits that a "small amount of money" is at stake. Effective enforcement, moreover, not mean an end to the multimillion-dollar wars for congressional favor supposedly sparked Weinberger's rule in the first place.

The electronics industry has helped to confirm what has infuriated liberals and conservatives alike: Cap Weinberger applies his knife to defense expenditures, he works with a dull blade.

But had Weinberger shown the cost-cutting penchant for tanks and missiles that he has for drinks and cigarettes, wouldn't need to tell this micro-story.



Two of a kind: Dole and Udall

by Arnold Sawislak
United Press International

WASHINGTON — People who hang around politicians don't do it for laughs. As a class, politicians rank with Marine sergeants and assistant principals in the sense of humor department.

But there are exceptions, and politician watchers treasure those few who can lighten the somber landscape of government.

One such is Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas, who may possess the sharpest wit, not to say tongue, in the Senate. Dole has two prime prerequisites of successful humor: timing and brevity.

Thus, when his wife, Elizabeth, was appointed secretary of transportation, Dole was ready with a comment, the full text of which follows: "Excellent appointment."

But there is another member of Congress whose wit is equal to Dole's and whose store of political anecdotes approaches that of the late Alben Barkley.

Rep. Morris Udall of Arizona, the gangling ex-basketball player and dyed-in-the-wool liberal who has served 22 years in the House, was at his best last week when he announced he would not seek the 1984 Democratic presidential nomination.

Udall was talking to a room full of his friends and associates, many of whom had worked with him in a 1976 campaign that, despite the final victory of Jimmy Carter, several times came within an eyelash of success.

Those people, and Udall himself, had considerable reason to be bitter about 1976. But as he talked about the snake-bitten campaign of "old second place Mo," Udall had the audience roaring with laughter.

"We arrived in Sacramento, and there was no crowd to greet us, not even an

advance man," he recalled of a trip to the California capital.

"We had landed at the wrong airport, and Sacramento doesn't have that many airports. Then, when we got to the hotel, they gave me the 'Gerald R. Ford suite'... the room he stayed in when Squeaky Fromme tried to shoot him.

"I called for an appointment with Gov. (Jerry) Brown and they said, '11:30.' That was p.m., not a.m. After I talked to the governor for a while, he asked to be excused, but he had another visitor waiting. At midnight.

"It was Governor Carter. I said to myself, 'Udall, you may be a longshot, but that is one fellow who is going to be out of it quickly.'"

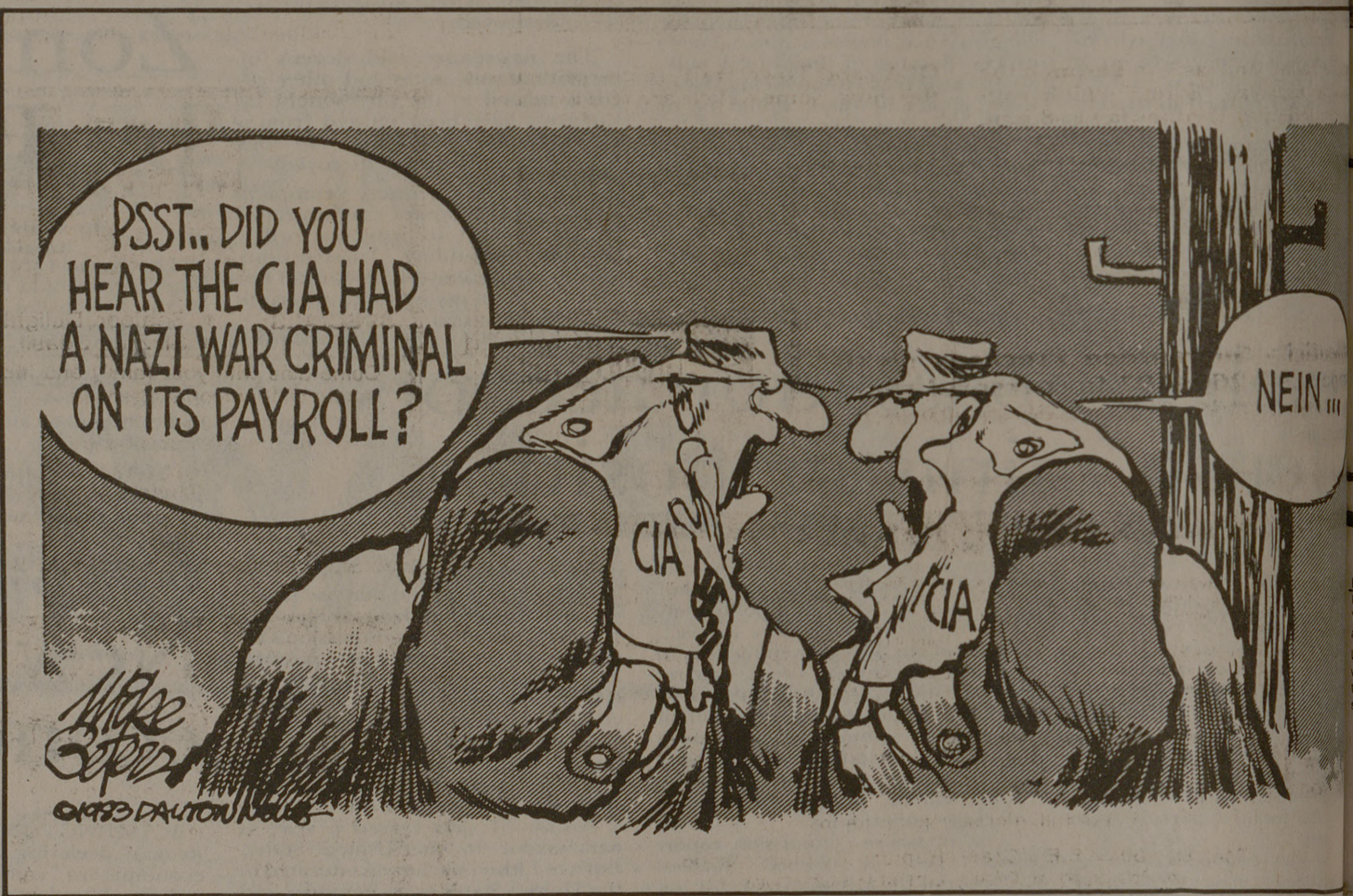
Udall said things haven't changed that much. When his decision not to run somehow was reported before his speech, Udall said he thought "I was up to my kiester in leakers." Then he discovered that he had let slip the news himself — "Typical of a Udall campaign."

But his arrows weren't all pointed toward himself.

He said the Reagan administration had "done for the environment what Bonnie and Clyde did for banks and Claus von Bulow had done for the Diabetes Foundation," and summoned up a classic story about another famous political humorist to illustrate his own assessment of the president's associates.

"Will Rogers was visiting the White House and Calvin Coolidge asked him, 'What are the latest jokes?' Rogers replied, 'Why, Mr. President, you've appointed them all to the Cabinet.'"

Mo Udall won't be running for president next year, which will make that enterprise a duller affair all around. But he still will be in Washington, and that alone is something the rest of the country can thank Arizona for.



Letters: Poetry on the effects of war

Editor:

I originally intended this letter for the Corps, but I think now I'll leave it open to all interested persons. The poem you see below started out as just four lines that came to me one night.

At first I didn't know what direction I wanted to go with these first lines, but after a while I thought I would like to express some of my ideas on war. Not that I've ever experienced war, as the poem's superficiality in that dimension probably readily shows, but most members of the Corps probably haven't either.

And that brings me to what I've been wondering about for some time, basically why are the people in the Corps in the Corps? I mean beyond the relatively trivial economic and my father — my grandfather — my etc. — were-in-the-Corps-so-I-am reasons and into more

philosophical ones. I mean are the members of the Corps prepared to die in service, kill on the word of their superiors, and then live with themselves afterwards? Anyway, like I said, the poem expresses some of my feelings on the subject and I would like to see how others react to it.

Rhythm Aces

I play my machine gun like I do my drums
but, alas, only deadly rhythms come.
How I fear their frightened faces

I twist inside, yeah, they call us the rhythym aces.

We fight all day, we fight all night
Life is death and death is life
It's not what I'd choose to do
I have to do it because they tell me to.

Those terrible sounds of battle still ring in my ears
echo the days and rekindle my fears.
Orchestration by Remington,
choreography by the brass.
No chance for any heroes in the whole satanic cast.

I hope that someday we'll be able to leave this place
Hang up our guns and rejoin the other race.
How hard it will be to forget about all the lives left behind
But no doubt the power to rationalize it all away lies within the common mind.

T. Bannon
Dunn Hall

Lost calculator

Editor:

On Feb. 12, I left my TI 58C calculator in the student lounge area of the library. I don't need to tell you how important it is to me. If any honest Ag found it, please call anytime, 693-7195.

Charlie Henn '83

Big Event

Editor:

Howdy, Ags! I'd like to take a minute of your time to talk about something great: THE BIG EVENT volunteer project gives you the chance to enrich the lives of others, while you enrich yourself in the process.

Now as far as I'm concerned, the willingness to serve those who are in need is a great example of what being a volunteer is all about. If you agree, and I do, I hope that you do, I want to challenge you to take advantage of this opportunity to put your good intentions to work. Don't even begin to think that others will care of it, and that it won't matter if you don't participate. Whether or not you join in will make a difference, and how many others contribute.

The cost? Just four hours of your time on Sunday. The benefits to you are enormous: Aside from seeing the good you've done for someone else, you'll experience a great feeling from within. Ziglar, one of America's greatest motivational speakers, put it best, I think, when he said, "short, you will stand tall in your own life, which is the bonus you get because you took what you had and unselfishly gave it for someone else's good."

You don't have to be a member of a student organization to participate. It's a call at the Student Government Office at 845-3051 for information on how you can get involved. Gig 'em!

Charlie St...

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USPS 045 360
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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 and show the address and phone number of the writer.
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The Battalion is published daily during Texas A&M's fall and spring semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.
Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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