

# opinion

## Media decides political issues

by Art Buchwald

Larry Speakes, President Reagan's press secretary, has blamed the media for the administration's disastrous defeat on military spending in the Senate Budget Committee. Speakes said Congress was responding to a public informed by a press that was not giving the administration's defense program a "fair shake."

Larry, for once, knows what he's talking about.

As soon as the president announced he wouldn't budge from a 10 percent increase in military spending, a group of opinion makers met at The Class Reunion restaurant to discuss what action to take.

Sam Donaldson, of ABC, said: "I think the president has gone overboard on defense, and I am not prepared to give him a dime until he tells me how he's going to spend it."

Leslie Stahl, of CBS, agreed with Sam. "I oppose sticking a lot of MX missiles in the ground until the Joint Chiefs of Staff assure me that they are not vulnerable to Soviet attack."

"Is this your personal opinion?" I asked.

"It is not only mine, but Dan Rather's. Dan feels 'Dense Pack' basing is unfeasible and a waste of money."

"So do Tom Brokaw and Roger

Mudd," Chris Wallace, of NBC, told us. "They're for cutting the president's military request in half."

Helen Thomas, of United Press, said: "I've read the defense budget from cover to cover and there is a lot of waste and fraud there. Why should I support Weinberger if the Pentagon won't clean up its act?"

Rowland Evans and Bob Novak, media hardliners, who speak with one voice, said together: "If we don't give the president what he's asking for, we will be sending a message to the Soviets that they can get anything they want in the Geneva disarmament talks. We say Reagan isn't asking enough. You ultra-liberals are tying the president's hands, just at the time when the Soviets are starting to realize we mean business."

We all ignored Evans and Novak, as we usually do, when the question of national security comes up.

I said: "No one wants a stronger defense than my readers do. But I must know what our defense policy is. If the military will just tell me what they plan to do with the money, I would be the first to say, 'Go get 'em boys.' But as long as the president has his feet in concrete, I have to be a nay-sayer."

Tom Wicker, of the New York Times, said: "I couldn't agree with you more. I

want to know if we are preparing to fight a limited nuclear war, a prolonged nuclear war, a two-ocean war, a one-ocean war, or a police action in space."

David Brinkley said: "What gets me is that the military will come to the media and tell us they only need \$10 billion for a new weapon, and once they develop it, they're going to return next year and say it will cost us four times as much as they originally thought. I got badly burned on the F-18 fighter plane, and I'm not going to get sucked in again."

Columnist James Kilpatrick said: "I think you're all talking a bunch of claptrap."

We waited for him to continue, but apparently that's all he wanted to say.

Sarah McClendon said: "I can't justify a \$2 trillion military expenditure over five years when there isn't enough money to take care of the sick and the poor. I say cut."

"Then the consensus is," I said, "that the Reagan-Weinberger military budget is totally unacceptable, and they're going to have to go back to the drawing boards and come up with something the media can live with."

"What's our next step?" Mary McGrory asked.

"We start a steady drumbeat of negative thought about defense expenditures, and let Congress take it from there."

## Slouch By Jim Earle



"We appreciate the fact that all of you have agreed to not give tests during dead week, but this puts a real load on the week prior to dead week. I wonder if we could propose that ..."

## Radio to Cuba: lost in the waves

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

HAVANA — Does the State Department need to beam 14 hours of daily radio programming to this Caribbean island to inform Cubans about the wonders of the United States and the evils of Fidel Castro?

Most level heads in Washington think not. But after spending the better part of a work week here, even the most rabid anti-communists could see (and hear) that the Reagan administration's Radio Marti project, now awaiting congressional approval, would be redundant, dangerous and fiscally wasteful.

When first introduced last year, Radio Marti was to be an independent radio operation, broadcasting from Washington via four 250-foot antennas in Key West, Fla. Programming was to include news, rock music, weather reports, American baseball game broadcasts and time checks — all for \$12.9 million in the first year.

But the proposal, passed by the House, eventually died in the Senate. U.S. broadcasters had complained that Radio Marti would share its frequency with WHO-AM in Des Moines, Iowa, and the Republican majority wasn't about to leave Ronald Reagan's old employer vulnerable to interference from the Key West station or Cuban jamming.

This led the State Department to propose three alternative frequencies: one already used by Voice of America in its Spanish broadcasts to Cuba; "off band" slots at either end of the AM dial; or short wave. All three possibilities have been incorporated in a bill sponsored by Sen. Paula Hawkins (R-Fla.) that would also allow the U.S. to rent air time from privately-owned stations. Unless U.S. broadcasters succeed in adding expensive provisions to compensate stations disrupted by Cuban interference, the Hawkins bill would cost a modest \$6 million this year.

Though Americans know little about

this island nation, Cubans already have a great deal about the States. Because they reside only 90 miles south of Florida, residents have no trouble tuning in American TV and radio programs.

For instance, we've been able to hear National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" on the Armed Forces Radio Network; Southern U.S. commercial stations such as Miami's all-news WWSB give us 22 minutes, we'll give you the world"; and the two major world voices from the Voice of America and British Broadcasting Corp.

At the same time, however, the Reagan administration wants Radio Marti to be all that available offerings are not anti-Castro propaganda tool. It would like to counter the admittedly biased views of the state-controlled Cuban radio with additional stories about U.S. adventures, Latin American affairs and Cuba's economic troubles, while projecting a better image of the United States.

All of this could get out of hand, says Ricardo Alarcon, vice minister for foreign affairs, would be declared "hostile" and prompt Havana either to jam or to "counterbroadcast" the U.S. (an action to which the Pentagon planners would respond by knocking out Cuba antennas).

Radio Marti (named after Jose Marti, 19th-century Cuban patriot still revered here) would be a sorry way to reach Cuba's well-educated (by Caribbean standards) population. Ronald Reagan would be better advised if his policies were understood that most Cubans long differentiated between the U.S. government and the American people. Remarkably, a long history of embargo, harassment and propaganda by Washington hadn't kept the Cubans from a deep admiration for Americans.

But all-hype radio, run by Uncle Sam, will only further Cuban disrespect for our government.



## Letters: Tuition hike opposition

Editor:

Recently, a group of Texas A&M students testified in favor of a new tuition increase bill now in the legislature. In 1981, I testified against a similar bill — and in that year over 700 students from all over the state of Texas filled the galleries of the Texas Senate in support of that opposition.

When I faced the Senate Education Committee, I was representing students who were desperately in need of financial aid to remain enrolled at A&M. These students spent many hours trying to balance loans, part-time jobs and school. The minority, who testified in favor of an

increase were the very students who responded yes to questions like, "Did your father buy your car, pay your gas, finance your housing, etc.," but then replied, "but I work in the summer to pay my tuition." These are not the people who are going to suffer from an increase in tuition.

If you are one of those who need help with financial aid, my advice to you is to have yourself duly represented. Contact Kent Caperton and tell him you need their help. Or write Tim McCormic, c/o UT Student Lobby, who is coordinating the statewide student effort that I was a part of in '81. The effort was successful for two years but you need to help yourself now.

Tom Schwartz '81

added to the flag pole for Silver Taps or to the roll call at Aggie Muster.

Andy Jones '83

### Slave sale

Editor:

When I stated in my letter to the editor April 13 that I didn't care to see slave sales reenacted, I didn't mean that I didn't want them to be reestablished (although it is true that I don't want this). What I meant is that I did not care to see what I consider to be an imitation of that system by which human beings are bought and sold reenacted (i.e. staged as in a play) on campus.

I apologize for the confusion this may have caused.

As far as freedom goes ... It is a bit ironic that minorities are minorities when it comes to students and administrators at this school, whereas they become majorities when it comes to our custodial and maintenance crew. It is equally ironic that you did not even comment as to the virtues of excluding women from our "Fightin' Texas Aggie Marching Band."

Kevin Johnson '84

### Watch found

Editor:

I found a lady's watch outside Zachry Engineering Center about two weeks ago. I've been looking for a letter, but there hasn't been one. If you're interested in getting your watch back, call Ted at 260-7007 and tell me what it looks like.

Ted Callahan

## Berrys World



"Don't fret! Now, we wait for the Soviets to make a missile reduction proposal and we reject it!"

### Speeding cars

Editor:

Well it happened again. As I was riding my bicycle to class on East Main Drive, I was nearly run over by one of those fine outstanding Ags who drives a car. As most of us can imagine, a 2,000-pound car is no match for a bicycle and rider and probably more easily imagined is the consequence of the two in an accident. The cyclist would obviously lose.

With that in mind, I think it's high time that the people in charge of planning at TAMU should consider the removal of the "parking lot" on East Main Drive. Once this is done it would be a good idea for those Ags who drive to campus to realize that East Main Drive is no longer a two-lane thoroughfare and to drive on it accordingly.

As long as the "parking lot" exists on this street there exists a higher than average chance that another name will be

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory for students in reporting, editing and photographing within the Department of Communications. Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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Columns and guest editorials are also welcome, but are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843, or phone (409) 261-2611.

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