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Chernenko calls for steps in arms control

United Press International

WASHINGTON — The White House welcomed on Wednesday a fresh overture from Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko, but rejected his call for arms control steps by the United States as a condition of improved superpower relations.

"The United States stands ready to negotiate," White House spokesman Larry Speakes said. "But we cannot concur in the apparent Soviet view that it is incumbent upon the United States to pay a price so that the Soviet Union will come back to the nuclear negotiating table."

In a Washington Post interview

published Wednesday, Chernenko said U.S.-Soviet relations could improve if Washington moved to resolve "at least one of the essential questions" on the stalled arms control agenda.

The interview, the first granted to a foreign journalist by Chernenko since he became Soviet general secretary in February, came just four days before Sunday's televised debate on foreign policy between President Reagan and Democratic rival Walter Mondale.

Speakes said the administration found the timing of the interview "interesting." A senior administra-

tion official, noting the election was just three weeks away, said Chernenko appeared bent on fueling the campaign debate.

Challenging Chernenko's "version of recent history," Speakes denied the Kremlin leader's contention Reagan has failed to back up with "real deeds" an oft-stated commitment to arms control.

Speakes said the administration was pleased by Chernenko's emphasis "on positive possibilities for U.S.-Soviet relations." A senior official noted the interview was "absent a lot of the usual rhetoric" leveled

against the administration by Soviet officials.

"We consider the tone positive," Speakes said.

Nonetheless, Speakes blamed the Soviets for the breakoff of nuclear arms talks and aborted plans for discussions of weapons in space and asserted Moscow bears the burden for reopening the dialogue.

"President Chernenko has stated that improvements in the U.S.-Soviet relationship depend on deeds, not words," Speakes said. "We agree. When the Soviet Union is prepared to move from public exchanges to private negotiations and concrete

agreements, they will find us ready."

Chernenko, said by the Post to have appeared fit and in good spirits, contended Reagan, despite a softening of his anti-Soviet rhetoric and a recent meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, has provided "no ground" for a "serious shift in relations."

Of the four areas cited by Chernenko, administration officials hinted only two — negotiations on space weapons and ratification of the nuclear testing pacts — are possible areas for progress. The administration opposes both the freeze and a pledge, already made by the Sovi-

ets, to not be the first to use nuclear weapons.

A Soviet call for talks in Vienna this fall on weapons in space collapsed when Moscow charged Reagan had imposed "impossible" conditions — namely his determination to raise other arms control issues. Reagan has agreed to consider a moratorium on testing.

Reagan has resisted pressure from some members of Congress to submit the Threshold Test Ban and Peaceful Nuclear Explosions treaties to the Senate on grounds they are flawed by inadequate verification provisions.

GSS resolution passed

By SARAH OATES
Staff Writer

The Student Senate passed by one vote a resolution recommending that the Texas A&M administration officially recognize Gay Student Services, after nearly two and a half hours of debate Wednesday night. The initial vote resulted in a tie.

Speaker Diane Baumbach cast the deciding vote passing the resolution which now will be forwarded to Dr. John Koldus, vice president for student services.

"I believe that when you vote, you vote to represent your constituents' best interests," Baumbach said. "That's why I'm voting for it."

The Senate was divided during the debate as senators argued opinions about recognizing the organization. Several senators reminded the Senate of the importance of representing the opinions of their constituents.

"In a poll of 100 students in my district, only two out of 100 said vote yes on this issue," Eric Thode, speaker pro-tempore said.

Several senators pointed out that because the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals already has ruled Texas

A&M must officially recognize the GSS, the issue is not whether to recognize the organization, but whether senators should vote against their constituencies and against the administration.

But Vice-President of Academic Affairs Tom Urban argued that the fact so many students are against University recognition of the GSS shows that A&M needs to recognize the organization.

"The only way to destroy prejudice is through education," he said. "The GSS exists to inform people."

Representative Brian Hay, who introduced the resolution, said A&M's refusal to recognize the GSS is a violation of the group's civil rights.

"For too long we've looked inward," he said. "It's time to look outward. By recognizing a minority group, they are not enforcing their rule on you."

Much of the debate centered around Texas A&M's arguments against recognizing the GSS. The University argues the GSS is a social organization and that the University

does not recognize social groups.

"Many clubs on campus provide very few services besides social contacts," Hay said.

Hay also reminded the Senate that homosexual conduct is no longer illegal in Texas. The fact that homosexual conduct was illegal at the time was one of the primary reasons the University initially refused to recognize the GSS in 1976.

Hay also said the University does not have a right to say what is and is not immoral. He cited as an example the fact that alcoholic beverages are allowed in dormitories even though some people might feel drinking is immoral.

Marco Roberts, GSS president, urged the senate to pass the resolution.

"The GSS exists because there is a problem," he said. "The problem is that society does not accept gays. There is no proof that being gay hurts society. A&M does not have a compelling reason to not recognize the GSS."



Halfway there

Photo by MIKE SANCHEZ

Midterm grades were ready to be picked up beginning Wednesday. Students can obtain

theirs with an I.D. card. Grades will be distributed at the Pavilion until Friday.

Vietnam official testifies in Westmoreland-CBS libel trial

United Press International

NEW YORK — The head of the South Vietnam pacification program at the height of the Vietnam War testified Wednesday at Gen. William Westmoreland's libel trial against CBS that there was no conspiracy to distort enemy troop count.

Robert Komer was sent to Saigon in May 1967 to run the program as an ambassador operating under Westmoreland. The general is suing CBS for \$120 million over a 1982 documentary that accused him of ly-

ing about the strength of the enemy in South Vietnam.

Walt Rostow, President Johnson's national security adviser, Tuesday denied Westmoreland had been politically pressured into lowering enemy troop strength to bring "good news" to Johnson and gain 200,000 more U.S. troops in order to finish the war three years earlier than had been forecast.

The troop count, or order of battle, is a crucial issue in the landmark libel trial because of the accusations made in the CBS documentary "The

Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception."

"Did you ever suppress information on the strength of enemy forces?" Westmoreland attorney Dan Burt asked Komer in federal court.

"No, sir," Komer replied. "Did you ever conspire with anyone to suppress information?"

"No, sir. I did not sir."

"Were you ever under any orders not to report estimates of enemy strength?"

"At no time during my entire as-

sociation with Vietnam did anyone give me orders with respect to any ceilings or preconceived conclusions with respect to enemy strength in South Vietnam," said Komer.

His testimony focused on why the Self Defense and Secret Self Defense forces, or the "home guard," usually described as women, children and old men, were trimmed from the order of battle.

Komer explained the home guard was generally regarded as villagers who had the capability of planting mines and other booby traps in addi-

tion to assisting hard-core Viet Cong guerrillas.

"The SD-SSD was a vague and shadowy front," Komer said. "They were part of a standard control technique of the people by the communists. They were not soldiers. They were part time. They were not able bodied. They were a reservoir of sympathies from which one would recruit."

"We felt to take this vague and shadowy force and add it to the enemy order of battle ... would give a singularly misleading impression

of the enemy we were up against."

Tuesday he testified he asked for new enemy estimates after arriving in Saigon May 4, 1967.

Three weeks later, Komer said he was handed the updated figures, which pegged Viet Cong strength at about 185,000 troops which were forwarded to Johnson.

The CBS documentary used the CIA figures in its attempt to show Westmoreland distorted the troop figures. Westmoreland denies the accusation.

A&M loses millions if Prop 2 fails

By ROBIN BLACK
Senior Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This is the second in a three part series on Proposition 2.

Proposition 2 has University administrators biting their nails over what could happen if the proposed amendment to the state constitution does not pass in the Nov. 6 general election.

If the amendment does not pass, the University will stop receiving approximately \$50 million in annual revenue.

"The campus would become immediately overcrowded," says University President Frank E. Vandiver, "because we would not have the budget necessary to handle the number of students currently attending Texas A&M."

"The campus would not look as nice because we would not be capable of maintaining it the way we do now, and it wouldn't have the ambition it does now."

The proposed amendment provides for a restructuring of the Permanent University Fund, the primary source of building income for A&M and the University of Texas at Austin.

The PUF is an endowment of oil-rich land that the state set up in 1876 to provide a steady source of revenue for the two universities. Interest from bonds sold on the PUF makes up the Available University Fund, which provides the two schools with more than \$150 million each year in construction revenue. The money from the AUF is divided so that UT receives two-thirds of the annual revenue and A&M receives one-third.

The restructuring would allow other schools in the A&M and UT systems to receive money from the AUF.

Other provisions of the amendment would allow A&M and UT more flexible use of the money they receive from the AUF. The universities now can use the money only for building and renovation and matching funds for faculty endowments, but under the new amendment A&M and UT would be able to use the money for building maintenance and other academic programs.

"The PUF bond money (would) now be used for people programs rather than just building," Vandiver said.

A&M system Chancellor Arthur

G. Hansen said the new flexibility widens the whole scope of things the AUF money can be used for.

"It is in our long-range interest to have the PUF restructured this way," Hansen said.

The proposition originated almost two years ago in the State Legislature from concern about the funding of non-PUF schools. The funding the schools received from a special tax revenue was cut off when the tax was declared unconstitutional.

Under Proposition 2, \$100 million in the state's general revenue would be set aside each year for that particular purpose, and it's being called the Higher Education Fund.

If the amendment does not pass in next month's election, the non-PUF schools will probably file a lawsuit against the state stemming from the funding problem. The legal action would freeze all use of the PUF and the AUF, and A&M and UT would immediately stop receiving the funds.

In his state of the University address, Vandiver told the Faculty Senate earlier this month that he already has notified the University's budget office to be prepared to immediately

cut at least \$15 million from the A&M budget.

Vandiver said it's not something that's going to be fun or that's going to be easy to do, but it's a possibility the University cannot afford to ignore.

If the cuts must be made, he said, the matching funds for faculty endowments and the money spent on new equipment and programs would end.

"The difference between our being mediocre and surviving, or being excellent has been the AUF for us," Vandiver said.

This concern among A&M administrators has led to an extensive lobbying effort.

A special political action committee, the Education Assistance Committee, has been set up by the A&M Board of Regents and the governing boards of other universities to lobby for the proposition in Austin.

The A&M Student Government's Legislative Study Group also has been lobbying actively in Austin and working on a campaign promoting the amendment.

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In Today's Battalion

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- An Aggie football player encourages students to support the team. See story page 6.
- Two A&M professors say the best way to solve an economic crisis is to keep the government from intervening. See story page 6.
- A student mediating service will be available to resolve conflicts by February 1985. See story page 3.
- Professor's class notes evolve into a comparative anatomy text. See story page 7.

State

- A Dallas zoo is resorting to surgery for one of their elephants with a rare blood disease. See story page 6.