

Back to talking

After more than a year of turning up noses at one another, the United States and the Soviet Union have finally come back to the bargaining table and agreed to continue their dialogue.

Neither has agreed to be cooperative or compromising, but the fact that they have agreed to talk is a modest step forward. The leaders in Washington and Moscow have taken the first step toward recognizing and admitting that there is a problem, that the nuclear arms race has to be gotten under control.

The tension and hostility that have been rapidly increasing between the two super powers is dangerous — dangerous for the entire world. The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. have got to talk; they have got to talk about the nuclear arms race instead of trying to keep each other in the dark. And if they really want to control the arms race they are initially going to have to ban at least certain types of testing.

The true test of the sincerity and concern of both sides is still ahead. Whether or not any progress will be made toward disarming the world remains to be seen, but at least there is a possibility now. At least there is some hope.

The Battalion Editorial Board

News service would hurt press freedom

Recently, a group of Mexican reporters left their jobs with Mexico City's *Uno Mas* newspaper because they felt the paper was too close to the government.

Loren Steffy

Mexico boasts freedom of the press, but the news media, which is closely linked to the government, rarely deals with controversial material or investigates public agencies. Although the media is technically free, governmental advertisements are its main source of income. The "free press" comes with strings attached.

In America, our news media prides itself on, among other things, being a watchdog of the government. Americans expect the press to be objective in relaying information from Washington.

Some people say the press isn't accurate enough. Even President Reagan has said the media distorts his views or fails to interpret his words correctly.

For this reason, Reagan has decided to bring the people "unfiltered" news by creating his own White House "news service." The service would provide transcripts of presidential speeches and announcements. It also flushes the ideal of a totally free press down the toilet.

The service would give the White House control over all press releases from the executive branch. In other words, we, the people, will be hearing exactly and only what the White House wants us to.

An unidentified White House official said Reagan's aides feel the president's

views can be presented more effectively if they are "unfiltered."

By "unfiltered" the official meant the press releases would bypass the independent media. Thus, public information on government activities would sidestep one of the essential parts of the checks and balances system. The press would be unable to fill its vital role of government watchdog.

Besides making the White House correspondent obsolete, the White House News Service would create a situation similar to the one in Mexico.

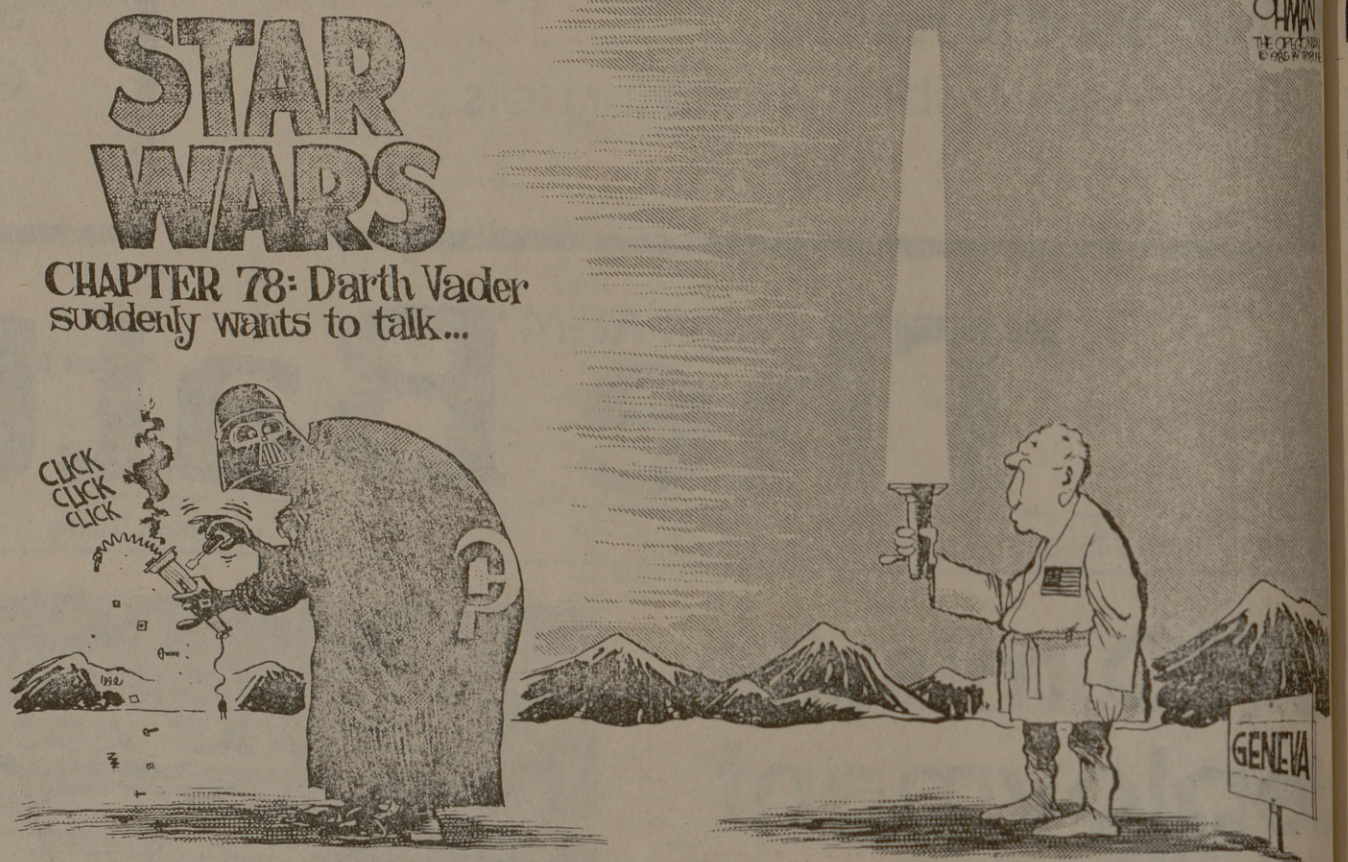
Obviously, a government-sponsored service will not investigate controversial actions of the government. Biting the hand that feeds you is not a common practice in Washington.

This lack of investigative reporting leaves the news service open for abuse.

If freedom of the press is to work, the media must be uninhibited in its monitoring of government activities, except, of course, where national defense is concerned. To issue press releases and other information through a government-controlled news agency is a step towards Orwellism.

Reagan should be admired for caring enough to want his words to be reported faithfully, and he should be commended for trying to do something about it, but starting his own news agency is not an appropriate answer. I can't help but think if Nixon had had his own news service, maybe he could have kept his job.

Loren Steffy is a weekly columnist for *The Battalion*.



U.S. AGENDA GENEVA, SWITZERLAND		CCCP AGENDA GENEVA, SWITZERLAND	
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Avoid Star Wars.	9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Badger about Star Wars.
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Evade Star Wars.	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Whine about Star Wars.
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Pretend Star Wars doesn't exist.	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Gripe and complain about Star Wars.
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Lunch	12:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Lunch
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Listen to monologue about Star Wars.	2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Harangue and bellyache about Star Wars.
5:00 PM	Appear on TV and say we're cautiously optimistic.	5:00 PM	Appear on TV and say we're cautiously optimistic.

Even vigilantes can't be right all the time

By ART BUCHWALD

Columnist for *The Los Angeles Times Syndicate*

After noting the positive reaction of citizens to the shooting of four thugs by a vigilante in the New York City subway, a bunch of us in Washington decided to form our own vigilante organization to see that justice was served in the nation's capital.

There are tough gun laws in the District of Columbia so we drove over to Virginia where you can buy anything you want, from a .22 Saturday night special snub-nosed revolver to a Uzi semiautomatic machine gun.

I chose a .38 Smith & Wesson revolver because it fits snugly under my coat and reminds me of the old westerns when the good guys constantly drove the bad guys out of town.

Our vigilante group didn't have long to wait. Schneider had been mugged the night before and he said he could identify the guys who did it. We went with him to a Georgetown bar and he pointed them out to us.

"Are you sure they're the ones?" I asked him.

"Of course I'm sure," he said. "The big guy is wearing a raincoat just like the one I owned."

That was good enough for us. So we took the three men out of the bar and shot them.

The police were furious that we had done their jobs for them. But the public was delighted and we became folk heroes overnight.

The next time we went out was when a 7-Eleven in the neighborhood was held up.

The clerk in the store said the stickup man wore a Halloween mask, but he had a hunch it was a taxi driver who lived down the street.

We routed the cabbie out of bed and brought him down for identification. The clerk said, "It could be him."

"Wait a minute," Pester said. "We have to be certain because as vigilantes we don't want to hurt an innocent man."

You said the guy was wearing a Halloween mask. What kind of mask was it?"

"It was a Darth Vader mask."

We sent Pittman to get a mask at the costume shop. Then we put it on the cab driver.

The clerk said excitedly, "That's the guy."

"You're sure?"

The clerk replied, "I never forget a face."

So we took the cabbie out in the alley and broke his legs.

After that we were dubbed "The Magnificent 7-Eleven" and more people were rooting for us than they were the Redskins.

The liberal press wrote bleeding heart editorials accusing us of being nothing more than hooligans, and the mayor went on television to condemn us. It didn't matter, because the criminals were now more afraid of us than they were of the police.

Christmas night Alvin told us, "I just got a tip that there are a bunch of drug dealers holed up in a house in Northwest Washington. Let's burn it down to teach all the drug dealers in town a lesson."

We hopped in our van with 10 gallons of gasoline and drove to the address the tipster gave Alvin. We threw the liquid all over the house and set it on fire. A father and mother and three children came pouring out of the front door. The father screamed, "What the hell are you doing?"

"Teaching you drug dealers a lesson."

"I'm not a drug dealer! I'm a postman."

"Is this your address?" Alvin asked, showing him the one the tipster had written down.

The postman looked at it and said, "No you dumb SOB's. That's in Southwest Washington, not Northwest. You guys burned down the wrong house!"

"Don't get all shook up, pal," I said. "Even vigilantes make a mistake once in a while."

LETTERS:

Liberal worried about 'moral relativism'

EDITOR:

I am a liberal, and as such I believe that the sources of society's ills are not laziness, lack of piety or absolute acceptance of some official dogma, having it too easy, etc., but sick views and sick aspirations. One cancerous ideological ailment that worries me at the present is moral relativism.

Moral relativism makes the following assumptions: that everyone's morals are limited to their culture (time, nationality, ethnic group, socioeconomic rank), therefore no one is qualified to say whether an action is good or evil when committed by someone from another culture. What's evil in our culture may be good in theirs — how would we know? Would we want him from another culture to pass judgement on us? Another implication of moral relativism is that we cannot condemn other people for doing something that we did before ourselves, even if we now regard what we did as evil and would not repeat the act if the situation occurred again. We had our day of imperialist glory, so now it's their turn!

How is anyone who makes these assumptions going to fight evil? Yet moral relativism is the lesson of nearly all social studies classes today. As a liberal, I

also believe that men do not make their own qualities and powers, but are created by God and molded by the environment in which they grow up. This means that our social studies classes are turning out passive, apathetic acceptors of organized hate and destruction, of which Communism is one giant example.

Neo-conservatives, come out of your shells! Before the student revolt everyone knew you and admired you as liberals! I was born just three years before that tragic event reached its climax and grew up thinking of you as conservatives like all my peers, until some outside reading of Robert A. Heinlein, H.G. Wells, Whittaker Chambers, Robert Owen, et al exploded the lies I had been forced to memorize.

Richard William Burden
Class of '88

'World class' parking: parking across globe

EDITOR:

I finally figured out what this world-class university's vision means. I guarantee any student will know what 'world-class' means when he is forced to park 7 continents away from his class.

Roger Pearce
History major

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Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the Editorial Board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

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

Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. 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 be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

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