

STATE AND LOCAL

MSC SCONA begins Wednesday

By ANN CERVENKA
Staff Writer

The Memorial Student Center Student Conference on National Affairs will begin its 30th annual conference Wednesday with the topic "The Emerging China."

Over the years, the emphasis of SCONA has changed, says Joe Hyde, vice chairman of public affairs. "As SCONA has gotten bigger, we've taken a more international scope," he says.

Choosing the Soviet Union for the 1980 SCONA conference was the first major shift to an international topic.

Hyde says the conference issue is chosen each year after participants in the previous conference return topic suggestions. This year, the top

three issues were the emerging China, world terrorism and the world financial network.

"China is not in the forefront of the news yet," Hyde says. However, people are beginning to notice that the country which became communist in 1949 under Mao Tse-tung is a "communist lure to capitalism," he says.

The purpose of SCONA is not necessarily to attract well-known speakers, but to get a variety of knowledgeable people to discuss the issue. "We want to get experts in the field to examine world issues," Hyde says.

SCONA began in 1955 when the president of the MSC visited West Point Military Academy to attend a similar conference on United States

affairs. He was impressed with the program and brought the idea back to Texas A&M.

Last summer, four members of SCONA went to China to prepare for the conference.

"We wanted to get a basic understanding of the culture, history and current situation," Kent Goeking, vice chairman of speakers, says.

Goeking, who went to China, also visited Houston to talk with Consul General Kingbo Tang, who has helped with the conference. Tang is responsible for getting a commitment to attend from one of the main speakers, Ling Qing, China's ambassador to the United Nations.

Other speakers include Dr. Ross Terrill, a professor of government at Harvard University, and Dr. Harry

Harding, author of several books and articles on Chinese domestic policy and relations between China and the United States.

This year student delegates will come from many countries, including Taiwan, China, Japan, Guatemala, Mexico, Canada and the United States. European delegates will be from France, Germany, Switzerland and Scotland.

The conference will be in Rudder Theater and is free to the public. The opening address is Wednesday at 1:40 p.m. Speeches are at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Thursday. Friday, speeches are at 9 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. The closing address will be at 10:30 a.m. Saturday.

Mattox pleads not guilty in trial over commercial bribery charges

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Attorney General Jim Mattox went to trial Monday on charges of commercial bribery claiming he was a victim of big business politics who would be proven innocent by a jury.

"I am extremely confident in this matter," the first-term attorney general told reporters shortly after entering an official plea of "not guilty" before State District Judge Mace B. Thurman.

Thurman accepted pretrial motions from attorneys Monday and presided over selection of a 92-member jury panel that will report Wednesday morning for jury selection.

The state will present its first witness, Houston lawyer Thomas R. McDade, when the presentation of evidence begins Friday.

Roy Minton, Mattox's top attorney, said an agreement was made Monday with Travis County District

Attorney Ronnie Earle and his assistants over defense demands that records of the law firm of Fulbright & Jaworski, of which McDade was a member, be made available. However, Minton said the details of the motion and the agreement were sealed by the court and were not available to the public.

Minton said a defense request that Fulbright & Jaworski's files on a case it handled for Mobil Oil Co. be made available was still under consideration.

A grand jury indictment returned Sept. 13, 1983 after 2½ months investigation alleged Mattox threatened in a telephone conversation to block state-required approval of public bonds submitted by Fulbright & Jaworski. The indictment said Mattox offered not to delay approval of the bonds if the firm would order McDade to stop trying to question Mattox's sister, Dai's attorney Janice Mattox, in connection with a

lawsuit involving the state, Mobil Oil and South Texas rancher Clinton Manges.

"I did not threaten them with the bonds," Mattox told reporters outside the courtroom Monday. "The conversation in which they said I did something wrong is not there, they conveniently can't find it."

Commercial bribery is a third-degree felony punishable by a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

Mattox also told reporters Monday state law says if he is finally convicted of the charge he could not run for re-election in 1986. However, he would not have to resign the job even if convicted.

Mattox's attorneys have claimed for more than a year that the indictment was faulty and should be voided. Thurman has turned down 15 separate motions to dismiss the indictment, and the 3rd Court of Appeals also refused to dismiss the indictment, 2-1.

History today

Today's highlight in history:

In 1554, Lady Jane Grey, who had been Queen of England for nine days, was beheaded after being charged with treason.

In 1733, English colonists led by James Oglethorpe landed at Savannah, Ga.

In 1870, women in the Utah Territory were granted the right to vote.

On Feb. 12, 1809, the 16th president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, was born in a log cabin in what is now Larue County, Ky.

In 1908, the first round-the-world automobile race began in New York. It ended in Paris the following August, and was won by the team of George N. Schuster, George J. Miller and Montague Roberts.

In 1909, America's oldest civil rights organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was founded.

In 1973, the first of the American prisoners of war from the Vietnam conflict were released.

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