

OPINION

Good Friday: is it a holiday or not?

Three top experts on U.S.-Soviet relations speaking at Texas A&M, moderated by former newsmen Edwin Newman: a wonderful opportunity to hear Soviet experts talking about a topic of importance to all of us.

An opportunity many A&M students, working for the Wiley Lecture Series program, spent several months and nearly \$97,000 to bring to this campus.

And then the governor declares a holiday and less than 1,000 people take advantage of this educational experience. There is no way of knowing just how many of the empty seats in the less-than-half full Rudder Auditorium were due to the unexpected holiday and how many to simple apathy, but the extended weekend certainly didn't help the attendance Thursday night.

Pat Wood, president of the MSC Council, said his group thought about Good Friday last October when they started organizing the program. But they decided since Good Friday was not a holiday last year, it probably would not be this year either.

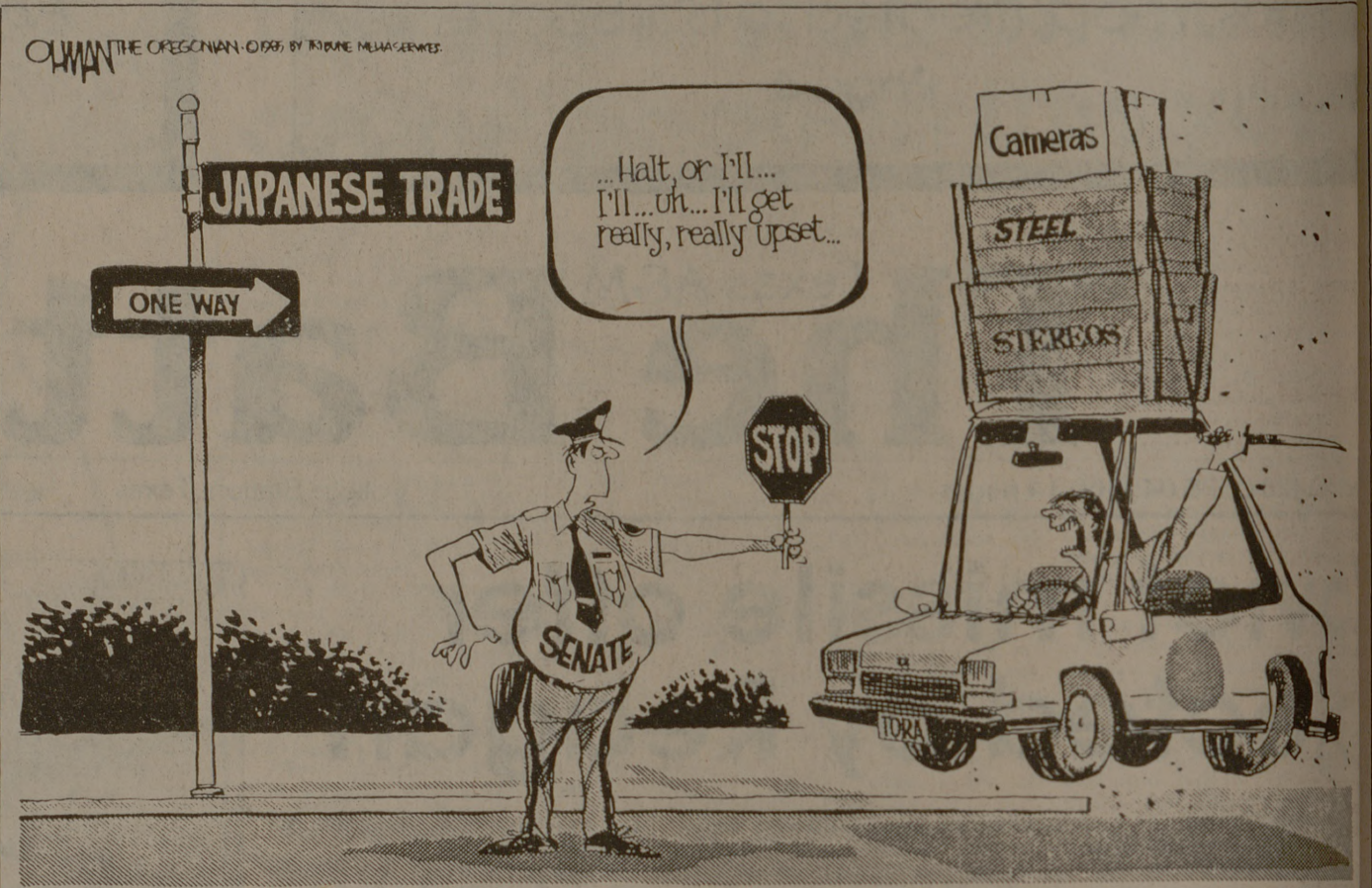
Unfortunately, Gov. Mark White had different ideas. On Wednesday he signed legislature proclaiming Friday a holiday. It was too late to change the date of the lecture program, or of the seminars the following day. And months of hard work and planning were rewarded by an embarrassingly empty Rudder Auditorium.

The Texas Legislature needs to get its act together and decide if Good Friday is going to be an official holiday or not. This year the decision was made two days before Good Friday. Two years ago the decision for a half-day holiday was made on Good Friday itself, which was met with skepticism because it fell on April Fool's Day.

Last minute decisions for a holiday throw many people's plans out of whack. Holiday plans, which might have been made with previous knowledge of the holiday, remain unplanned.

The Legislature's indecision is an unnecessary inconvenience and downright inconsiderate. C'mon gang, it's not that hard a decision to make. Yes or no. All we ask is that you make up your minds. And not at the last minute.

The Battalion Editorial Board



Americans underestimate Japan

WASHINGTON — On the whole, William Manchester enjoyed his 63rd birthday more than his 23rd, during which he thought, reasonably: How unlikely I am to have a 24th. He was born April 1, 1922, and on April 1, 1945, he was among the Marines who began the last great battle of the war, on Okinawa. One of his memories of that experience is relevant to something occurring in Washington today.



George Will

The Marines were amazed by the extraordinary proficiency of Japanese artillery on southern Okinawa. Every road and other vital point was brilliantly targeted. So amazed were the Marines that a surmise became widespread: The Japanese must have German artillery advisers. Similarly, the brilliance of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had caused some American officials to suspect that the planes had been piloted by Germans. There were other explanations.

Prior to the war, Japan had an artillery school on Okinawa. A standard exercise for fledgling officers was to answer this question: How would you defend the school against attack? A generation of officers had thought hard about fighting on Okinawa. And beginning in 1931, every graduate of Japan's naval academy had been required to answer one question: How would you execute a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor?

In the 1940's many Americans had a racist impulse to assume that the "yellow peril" could not be such a peril without Caucasian assistance. However, the Japanese were good warriors because they were what they still are: a great disciplined people, tenacious in pursuit of their interests as they saw them.

In his marvelous history, "The Glory and the Dream," Manchester recalls the complacent, condescending American attitude immediately after Pearl Harbor, as jukeboxes blared "goodbye

Mama, I'm off to Yokohama." Scoffers said that a Japanese soldier on parade "resembled a poorly wrapped parcel of brown paper — soiled, crumpled, and threatening to come apart." But Japanese sharpshooters were accurate at 1,000 yards, infantrymen carried 400 rounds of ammunition (twice what U.S. infantrymen carried) and five days' rations of fish and rice. In 1941 their ships were faster, their guns bigger, their torpedoes better and they had more and better aircraft than the United States.

It has been asked: Who in 1945 would have believed that, a generation later, Japan and a Jewish state would be considered a great trading nation and a great warrior nation, respectively? But great nations do what they must do. In 1985 it cannot be said too frequently that Japan, a densely populated nation dependent on imports, would be a formidable commercial competitor even if it respected the rules of free trade.

Free trade ranks just below Christianity and just above jogging on the list of things constantly praised but only sporadically practiced. As a cause of the U.S. trade deficit, Japan's protectionism, although significant, is less so than the U.S. deficit, which drives up the value of the dollar and the prices of U.S. exports. Another factor is U.S. restrictions on such exports as oil and lumber.

Today, Japan is seen not merely as commercially aggressive or candidly protectionist. Rather, it is considered disingenuous, and contemptuous about U.S. readiness to retaliate. Well, Japan is disingenuous: It uses dilatory negotiations as distractions, and keeps its markets closed with maddening regulations, such as until recently the stipulation that American cigarettes cannot be advertised in Japanese.

But Japan's disdain for U.S. resolve is not unreasonable, give the years of U.S. tolerance of Japan's tactics. Besides, a nation that has no response when its soldiers are hacked to death with axes (Korean DMZ, 1976) or shot and allowed to bleed to death (East Germany, 1985) should expect tougher nations to doubt its determination.

If Japan wonders why retaliation at last occurs, Japan should listen to race Busby, a Washington consultant. He notes that as long as the focus of contention was automobiles, U.S. sentiment was regionally concentrated, primarily in the Great Lakes states. No attention is focused on electronics, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, forest products and other goods, so the base of congressional resentment is correspondingly wider.

Congress can in good conscience prod the administration to push Japan toward a more open market. But Americans should not make the mistake of assuming, as was done 40 and 45 years ago, that Japanese successes are to be explained — explained away, really — without reference to this fact: The Japanese do many things very well. Sometimes they, and we, may be amazed to learn how little they needed the commercial trickiness that has become a big problem.

George Will is a columnist for the Washington Post.

more letters:

shevik revolution), world peace can only be achieved if a balance of power is maintained. This can only be achieved if the U.S. is willing to match the Soviet Union in both nuclear and conventional hardware.

Now, before all of you nuclear freeze advocates get out your pens and paper to reply to this editorial, let a mere fact be known: Power increases the odds of survival. We agree that defense spending could be used in better ways — for schools, hospitals, roads, etc. However, in a world in which chemical warfare is currently used or non-combatants (Afghanistan), a nation must be willing to protect its interests by developing its defenses. (But, in the event of nuclear war, look on the bright side: maybe the editorial board of this "high school" paper will get nuked!)

Since we can't realistically change some facts of life, maybe we should try to change those things over which we have some control. Although these small changes may seem to have no lasting or earth-shaking implications, together they do add up.

Some of us do worry about the direc-

tion that this University takes, although this may seem immaterial to you. So try to understand that people take stands on issues (i.e. GSSO, Greeks, Women in the Band, the Board of Regents, Tuition increases, etc.) because they are concerned about this University, its traditions and its future. If you're not concerned about the future of this University, just remember Highway 6 runs North.

Mike Head
Mike Nebel
Clay Paulos
Class of '87

Will Aggies ever accept gays here?

EDITOR:

Before Aggies would accept gays, the Pope would have a harem.

Bart Braden

LETTERS:

A&M students used as 'fifth wheel' again

EDITOR:

Well, it seems that once again students have allowed themselves to be used as a "fifth wheel" at Texas A&M. By electing Sean Royall Student Body President, the students have elected a person who has a history of representing the administration, not the students.

Sean voted for finals for graduating seniors last year because he believed that we have to keep "respectability" with the administration.

As a member of my committee, Academic Affairs, Sean was repeatedly told to question the core curriculum and find out its effects on students. Sean wasn't concerned about students, but rather about the administration and his letters of recommendation.

These "sins" could have possibly been forgiven, but Sean's more recent sins cannot. I firmly believe that the way a person runs a campaign is a direct reflection of what he will do in office. Based on his campaign, Sean's administration will be filled with deceit and pettiness.

What kind of person allows his campaign workers to stress the GSS resolution? One who is intolerant of others and desperate to get elected.

Sean could not get elected on his own merits so he and his campaign workers had to resort to a dead, knee-jerk issue. Mike Cook could have resorted to campaign tactics based on Sean's votes on senior finals and core curriculum, but instead he decided to concentrate on his own record and past achievements.

When Sean was asked about these controversial votes he evaded the question or put blame on people no longer at Texas A&M. When Mike Cook was asked about the GSS he answered frankly.

Sean is not the man of integrity he claims to be. One of Sean's campaign workers, Eric Thode, has been bragging that he had "seeded" every part of the Corps with people to ask questions about the GSS.

Nixon would have been proud; Texas A&M should not be. We should hang our heads low that we allowed ourselves to succumb to a level of politics at Texas A&M that lingers in the gutter. Sean Royall is responsible for his campaign workers and he owes Texas A&M and Mike Cook a sincere apology.

The "fifth wheels" at Texas A&M will be watching closely.

Tom Urban
Former Vice-President Academic Affairs

Why keep kicking Corps of Cadets?

EDITOR:

In your April 3 edition, you printed an opinion expressing your resentment held for certain members of the Corps of Cadets concerning their action taken against a photographer who was taking pictures of exhausted or unconscious cadets. While I hold your belief in the idea of protecting the photographer's right to be taking pictures in a public area, I fear I must question your motives involved.

I wonder if your motives were not directed towards stirring up controversy. Clearly, there are few topics around this campus as controversial as the Corps of Cadets. I'm sure you realize there is a large population of students here that enjoy hearing of the Corps demise. In addition, with all the events of this year, this population has had an incredible harvest.

My question for you is this — Why keep kicking the Corps of Cadets? Bloody Cross is a tradition held very close to many cadets. It is a chance for them to show their unity as individual outfits. I would hate to label The Battalion with Theodore Roosevelt's term — muckrakers.

In the future, remember the story of the little bird who fed off the insects that gathered around cow chips on a field — after awhile, he got his beak dirty.

John Andrew Kiser
Class of '87, non-reg

Texas A&M's future important to Aggies

EDITOR:

Dear Michael "The know-it-all-yankee"

We are sincerely thankful for your enlightening editorial. We had never known of the existence of nuclear bombs, let alone their dangers (but hey, we're only unenlightened southerners, not a northerner of infinite wisdom)! You mentioned that you wanted a serious editorial on such issues as nuclear arms: Well, here it is. We've got 'em, they've got 'em. It's a fact of life.

Based on the recent Soviet history of military aggression (i.e. since the Bol-

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