

OPINION

Cuban retaliation an obvious one

Radio Marti, the President Reagan-inspired news service for Cuba, fired up its 50,000-watt transmitter in the Florida Keys Monday and began broadcasting the latest world events into Cuba. The "most important news" of the day was Cuban President Fidel Castro's retaliation to the station. Castro suspended all Cuban-American immigration proceedings.

What does the Reagan administration possibly hope to gain by aggravating the Cubans with an American radio station forced onto Cuban airwaves? Obviously, Havana was going to retaliate to such an action, and the freeze on Cuban-American immigration prevents the United States from deporting 2,700 Cubans with criminal records who are still in this country. In 1984, Cuba had agreed to take the criminals back in exchange for 3,000 Cuban political prisoners.

But not only has the Reagan administration bungled the opportunity to have the "undesirables" returned to their native country, it has also caused Cuba to think twice about aiding America in plane hijackings.

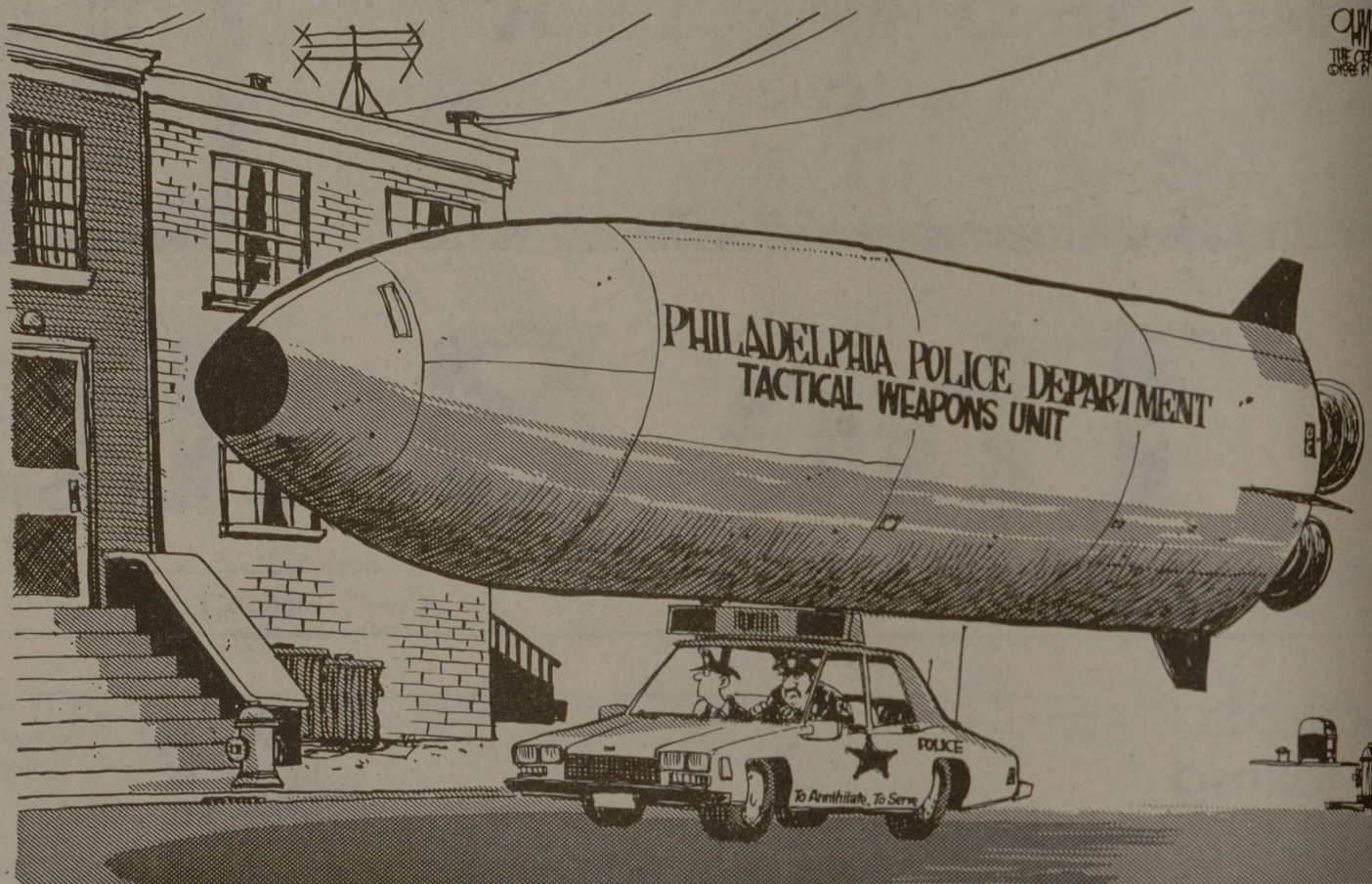
Aside from the political complications, Radio Marti poses a threat to American broadcasters as well. Two years ago, while Radio Marti was still being debated in Congress, Castro boosted the power on Cuban radio stations and forced his way onto American airwaves as far away as Salt Lake City.

Charles Z. Wick, director of United States Information Agency, which oversees Radio Marti, said, "The Cuban reaction doesn't seem appropriate."

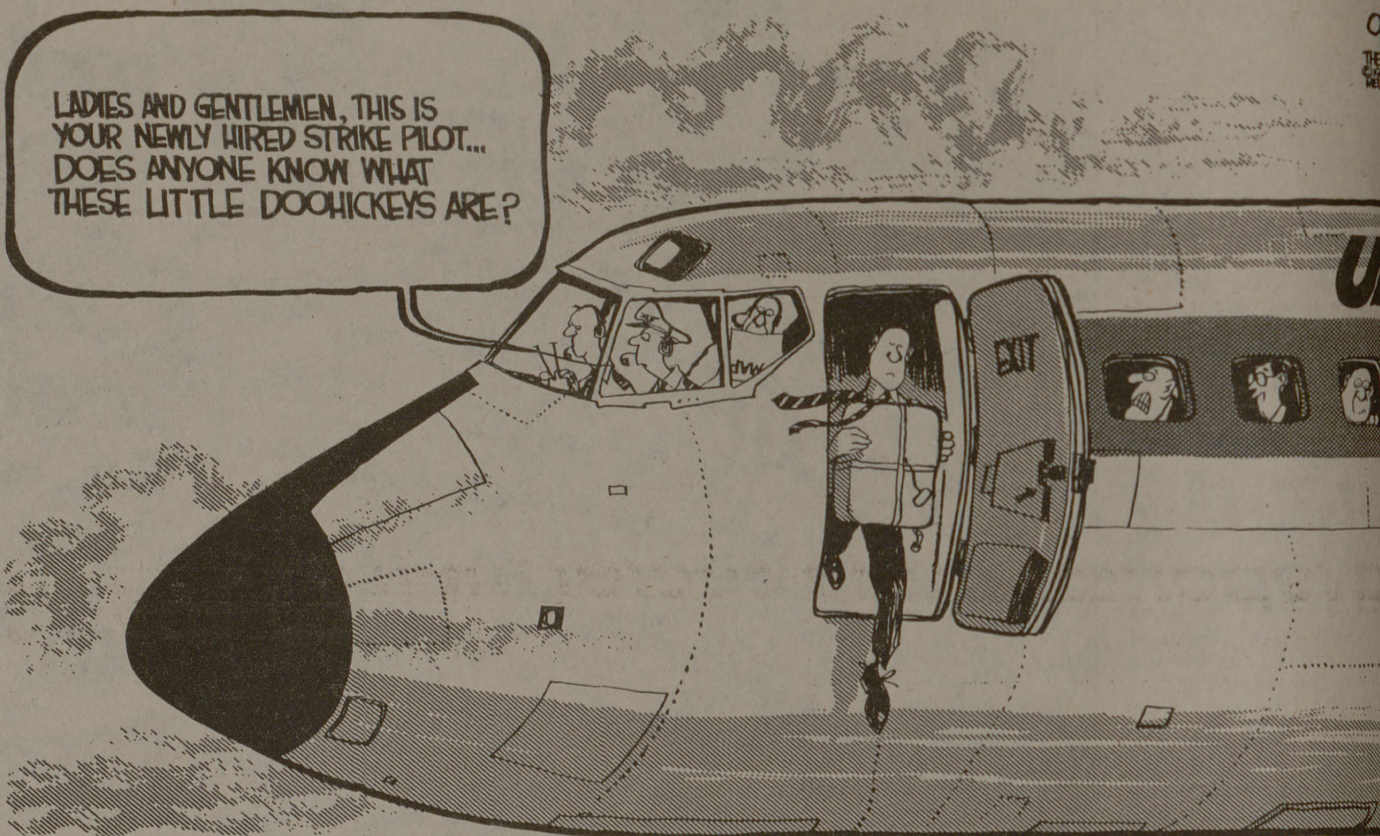
Sure, everything Radio Marti is doing is perfectly legal (and a Cuban power boost would be too), but how could the administration believe such a move wouldn't result in a negative Cuban reaction?

It's time to pull Radio Marti's 50,000-watt plug. A \$10-million-a-year radio station may be the administration's idea of a nice new toy, but with the added cost of being stuck with 2,700 Cubans with criminal pasts, and the risk Cuban broadcast interference and lack of cooperation in hijack dealings, Radio Marti hardly seems worth the cost.

The Battalion Editorial Board



"The media always blows everything up..."



Did smaller companies expect Ma Bell to quit?

Cheryl Clark

I have learned in my history and business classes that monopolies are a bad thing. The monopoly prevents free enterprise and open competition and the Horatio Alger Dream. The government must intervene and break up a monopoly, so the smaller competitors stand a more equal chance of remaining competitive.

AT&T has been used as the classic example of a monopoly. But my professors never stated whether it should be broken into smaller pieces.

Before the Supreme Court broke up Ma Bell, the FCC permitted smaller competition to pay less for long-distance connections with the local companies than AT&T did. The discount allowed the companies to gain a toe-hold against AT&T. It also offset the fact that customers of the smaller companies had to dial lengthy access codes to make long-distance phone calls.

Then the Supreme Court decided that AT&T was a monopoly and in January 1984, broke the local companies away from the parent company while allowing AT&T to keep its long-distance business.

Enter the competitors to the long-distance telephone business. MCI Communications Corp., GTE Sprint, Satellite Business Systems and others all jumped for the open market and the right to compete with each other and AT&T.

The commercials were clever about big, bad Ma Bell. The service was touted to be better, the rates less expensive, and the competitors became dragon-slayers.

But with the breakup of AT&T, the FCC established a plan that gives both the competitors and AT&T equal access to the local companies at an equal cost by 1987.

In other words, no more discounts for the smaller companies after 1987 with a gradual decline between now and then.

The competitors have decided they don't like the rules of the game. In fact, the competitors have asked just about anyone possible to intervene on their behalf. The FCC, Congress and the Department of Justice have all been turned to for assistance for the smaller competitors.

AT&T says competitors are getting what they asked for — equal competition. The competitors say that Ma Bell is running them over with competitive pricing.

"Welcome to the world of big business," said a spokesman for the FCC.

Did the competition really think that Ma Bell would give up its market share in long-distance phone service? Didn't the competition realize that AT&T would come rolling across like Sherman's march to the sea?

I guess not.

I subscribe to one of the smaller competitors. My phone service is not Ma Bell. I am not pleased with either one of them. My roommates and I were recently informed of our third increase with our long-distance phone service in the last year. The company still maintains it is lower than AT&T.

The company also has the audacity to inform us that if we spend more on

their long-distance service, we can save even more money than we are saving now. Explain that one to me.

The smaller competitors want the rules of the game changed. They don't want to phased in to equal access by 1987. The competitors would like to be subsidized until they can stand on their feet.

That doesn't cut it, folks. Welcome to the big time.

Cheryl Clark is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

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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.

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LETTERS:

Edifice versus man's educational future

EDITOR: Tom Malos writes in the May 2 Battalion that the views expressed in my April 1 letter the editor criticizing the Albritton Bell Tower are wrong. I concluded that April 1 letter by asking, "When will this university ever learn that brains are more important than bricks?"

I asked the question mainly because seeing the bell tower for the first time this past March reminded of a roommate I lived with during my sophomore year. I'll refer to him as "Joe."

Joe was intelligent, hard-working, studious, athletic, personable, a ladies' man(!), a pre-med major, and black. He was one of the finest individuals I've ever had the privilege of knowing.

However, Joe had one problem: he was dirt poor. He was so poor, in fact, that even with the help of student loans he had to drop out of school.

I haven't heard from Joe since we roomed together. For all I know, he may still be struggling financially, or he may be in med school now. I don't know.

But I do know this much: Joe loved Texas A&M and would have been a fine representative of A&M in the medical community.

Yes, I agree with Mr. Malos when he writes, "you get out of an education what you put into it."

But, you see, Joe's problem was that he simply did not have enough money to put into his education.

Yes, Mr. Malos is correct in arguing that Mr. Albritton should be allowed to choose how his hard-earned money is spent at Texas A&M.

But my objection is to how Mr. Albritton chose to spend his money, not his basic freedom to choose how his money is spent.

Look, the bell tower is built. Enjoy it! Let's thank Mr. Albritton for his gift, and appreciate his desire to augment the beauty of the Texas A&M campus.

But poor Joe. I think about him now, and I think about the bell tower, and I ask myself, "Which is more important: an edifice that tells us the time of day, or a young man's future?"

Richard Braastad '83

Missing The Battalion

EDITOR: I was most gratified to have a friend deliver The Battalion commending Wendy Costa, whom I admire greatly. I was also pleased to read Trayce Berling's delightful discussion of Professor Terry Anderson, whose influence should bring much joy to many students.

I have found it very distressing to no longer find the delightful publication tossed into my yard.

Eliza Gardner Tax

A bad Aggie joke

EDITOR:

How many Aggie maintenance workers does it take to change the time on a clock in the Evans Library? Answer: Four. One to hold the glass casing while another changes the hands of the clock. Wait, just a minute, that's only two! What about the other two? Ah, yes, the other two. The uninvited workers sit at a nearby table and watch, while at the same time, allowing their walkie-talkies, strapped to their immobile hips, to burst out loud, static-filled maintenance man lingo (as opposed to C.B. lingo), disturbing everyone in the library.

When the incredibly painstaking task was completed, the three-man, one-woman team marched out in line to face yet another job to make our university a safer and less efficient place in which to live.

That was the scene on the third floor of Evans Library which caused myself and a friend to grip the brutal reality that we were paying these extremely specialized (unless, of course, they fixed the clock on the fourth floor, the two workers sitting traded places with the other two) personnel \$6 per semester hour in building fees to saunter around in force. Only then to plop down in a chair provided for students and watch as the real work was done.

I must say that this is not the first time I have seen inefficiency in this University's maintenance system. Sure, the campus is beautiful! Any good Ag will vouch for that. But, just how many service persons and University dollars are required to make our naturally beautiful campus look "just so?"

I ask that the Board of Regents research the amount of funds expended for maintenance of our campus before accepting next year's budget.

However, being the optimist that I am, the positive side of the situation on the third floor cannot be overlooked. Maybe, when our tuitions increase two-fold or more, instead of paying four lazy maintenance workers, we will have eight to do the job of two.

And now for the punch line: Two hours later the time on clock was once again WRONG!

Miles Bradshaw '88

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.