

Opinion

One small step

Libya has spent a long time building its reputation as the hub of world terrorism. Countering Libya's underhanded political activism is a complex problem, but President Reagan's economic sanctions against Libya are a step toward a solution — a small step.

Since his rise to power in 1969, Libyan leader Col. Moammar Khadafy has had an intimate relationship with terrorism. He frequently has provided a haven for terrorists such as those who murdered 11 athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972 and the gunmen who seized hostages at the Vienna OPEC meeting in 1975. In 1973 and in 1981 U.S. jets were fired upon by Libyan fighters. Khadafy has plotted against kings and presidents. Now he is believed to have harbored and armed the terrorists who attacked airports in Rome and Vienna late last year.

Action must be taken, but not violence. Military retaliation would create vicious attack/counterattack circles. U.S. Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum's suggestion that we assassinate Khadafy would only lower us to the Libyan leader's level and make him a martyr.

But economic sanctions, if properly enforced, could send a powerful anti-terrorist message to Libya and its allies. America's \$336 million is chicken feed compared to Western Europe's \$12 billion economic involvement in Libya. Libya's trade exchange with West Germany and Italy alone amounts to billions of dollars.

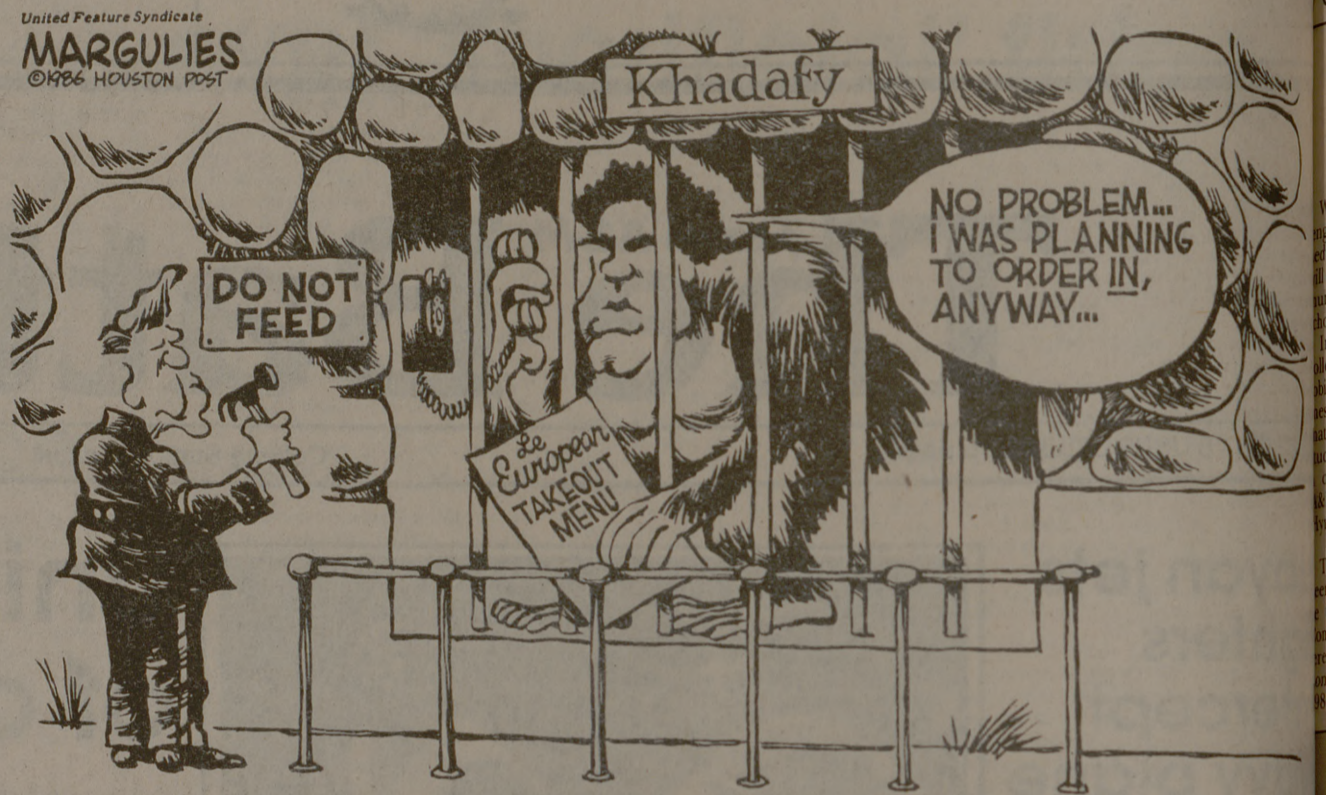
An American boycott of Libyan goods will mean little unless our European allies cooperate. But many European countries fear reprisals against their citizens in Libya or military retaliation from Khadafy-backed terrorists.

Ironically, Europe, the new-found, stomping ground of terrorists, seems less anxious to retaliate than the United States. European nations must not allow themselves to be intimidated by a psychotic zealot.

A cooperative network of economic sanctions similar to the ones Reagan has instated must be implemented to effectively combat terrorism. Inaction is an admission of defeat.

Military action against Libya might seem more gratifying in the short run, but in the long run, this haven for terrorists can be uprooted only through a cooperative effort of hard-line sanctions by all nations of the Free World.

The Battalion Editorial Board



From King's dream to reality

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born 57 years ago today. Although Monday is the day that has been set aside to honor King, today was the day he was actually born.



Karl Pallmeyer

The federal government thinks it would be better to remember King on a day when they can take a long weekend. George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Jesus are three other great men who have birthday/holidays on days that aren't actually their birthdays. For some reason we can't remember these great men without taking off from work.

King was the most important figure in the fight for Civil Rights in American history. King, a Baptist minister, advocated the use of passive resistance and other non-violent methods to put an

end to the unfair way blacks were being treated in the United States.

King's fight for Civil Rights began in 1955 when he led a boycott against the segregated city bus lines in Montgomery, Ala. In Montgomery, as in most of the South, blacks were allowed to sit only at the back of the bus and were forced to give up their seats at the command of a white. When nearly every black in Montgomery refused to ride the buses, the city began to lose money and was forced to desegregate its bus lines.

In 1963 King led over 200,000 people in a march to Washington D.C. It was on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial where King made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. The next year King was given the Nobel Peace Prize.

King's protests were non-violent in nature, but many people were hurt and some were even killed due to over-reactive police and hostility from people who opposed King's work. When the

1960s exploded with riots and violence King refused to change his policy of peaceful protest. Even so King was arrested on numerous occasions.

In 1968 King was in Memphis showing his support for a sanitation workers strike. King was shot and killed by James Earl Ray in Memphis April 4.

King was a man who spoke out against injustice and tried to put an end to it. King spoke out against racial discrimination in America and the way American money was being used to support the apartheid system in South Africa.

King only asked that blacks be allowed to live like others. He wanted to see a day when men were judged not by the color of their skin but on the quality of their character. Now, 57 years after his birth and 18 years after his death, King's dream has almost become a reality.

Karl Pallmeyer is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Holiday shopping insanity cured by computer madness

The envelopes with the little cellophane windows have been pouring in the house for three weeks. They're the computer bills from our Christmas binge.



Art Buchwald

Before computer billing I never doubted the charges. But now I feel differently. Computers lie. I'm not saying all computers lie, just as I'm not saying all credit managers tell the truth.

Take this bill from the Donation Department Store: "Six golf club mittens — \$50.00."

Do you see anything wrong with that

statement? Well, what would you say if I told you I have never bought golf club mittens in my life?

I called the Donation Department Store and was turned over to the credit division.

"I'm phoning about a set of golf mittens I didn't buy."

"You forgot you bought them. Most people do."

I wasn't going to let him bully me. "I didn't buy them and no one in our family bought them, because we don't play golf."

"What did your family buy in the sports department?"

"As far as I know, a tennis sweatband for my wife."

"Your wife plays tennis?"

"No, but it helps her to see better when she's working around the house."

"It's your word against the computer's. Who do you think I believe?"

"You have to take my word. I'm a customer."

"All you people who threw your money away like drunken sailors this Christmas would love to blame a computer. Ours never makes a mistake, but let's say for argument's sake it did. Our hands are tied. You can't expect us to go back into the system and rectify the error."

"Give me an alternative."

"We might let you have the mittens for \$25."

"I never received any golf mittens. Why should I pay for them?"

"Because our computer says otherwise."

"Why don't you find the person who bought the golf club mittens and charge him?"

"We would if we could find her. But our computers are not programmed to separate the golfers from the tennis players."

"Do you admit this is the Donation Store's problem?"

"It is now yours. If you fail to pay, our computer will notify every computer in the world what a slimy credit card holder you really are. My advice is send in the \$50 and be grateful you're not the victim of a serious mistake."

"Why can't you just pull my name and transaction out of the memory?"

"Our computer can't spend all that time tracking what a customer bought for Christmas."

"What's the solution?"

"We've found when a computer makes a mistake by charging for an item you didn't buy, it forgets to bill you for something you purchased. So it all evened out at the end of the year."

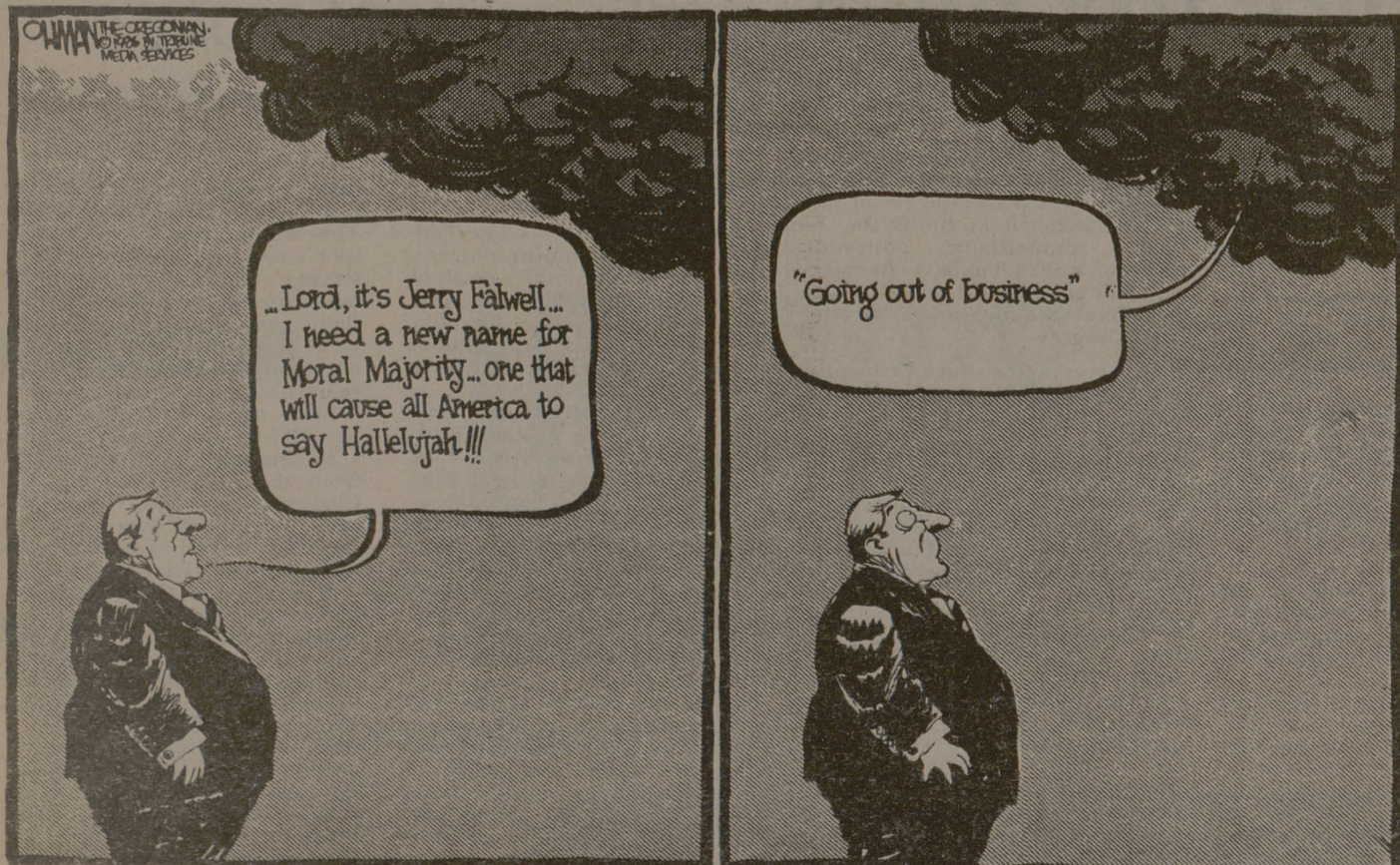
"For me?"

"No, for the computer. The only thing I can suggest is that you bring the golf mittens back and we'll give you \$50 credit."

"I don't have the mittens."

"No problem. I'll transfer you to the sports department and you can order them over the phone."

Art Buchwald is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate.



The Battalion
USPS 045 360
Member of
Texas Press Association
Southwest Journalism Conference

The Battalion Editorial Board
Michelle Powe, Editor
Kay Mallett, Managing Editor
Loren Steffy, Opinion Page Editor
Jerry Oslin, City Editor
Cathie Anderson, News Editor
Travis Tingle, Sports Editor

The Battalion Staff

Assistant City Editors Kirsten Dietz
Scott Sutherland
Assistant News Editor Brad Whittier
Assistant Sports Editors Ken Surr
Charean Williams
Entertainment Editors Bill Hughes, Tricia Parker
Photo Editor John Maki
Make-up Editor Richard Williams

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

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.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$65 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.