

Opinion

A step forward?

South African President P.W. Botha proposed several reforms Jan. 31 which could be a crucial step toward ending apartheid. The proposals are far from a breakthrough in social reform, but taken in the context of South Africa's civil rights record, it is a step in the right direction.

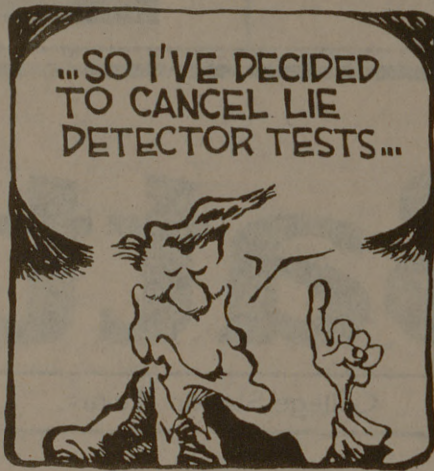
Botha proposed an advisory council for apartheid reform legislation which would include blacks. He also suggested doing away with passbooks that restrict blacks' freedom to travel. The passbook would be replaced by a common ID for all races. Botha also called for more jobs in poorer sectors.

Botha's promises fall far short of black demands, and the president obviously was attempting to pacify the recent surges of racial unrest and raise other nations' views of South Africa.

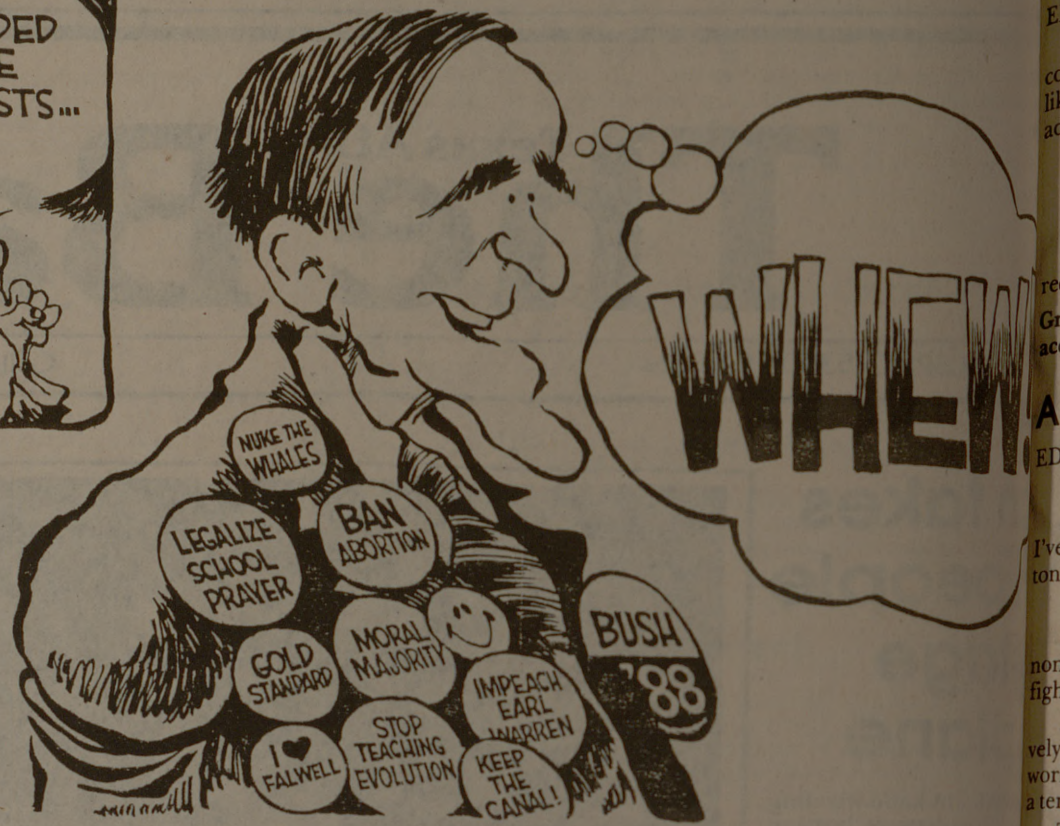
But for now Botha's proposals are just words. The South African government will have to take action before Feb. 20, when foreign creditors decide if the country is stable enough to support their loans.

The next few weeks will reveal whether Botha's proposals really are a step forward or just another attempt to shuffle around racial reform with empty rhetoric.

The Battalion Editorial Board



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Filipino election shows desire for freedom

Tomorrow the people of the Philippines will have a chance to free themselves from the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. Unfortunately the odds have been stacked against them.



Karl Pallmeyer

In 1965 Marcos became president of the Philippines. He had close ties with the United States and began using U.S. money for land reform and social programs. Marcos also began using U.S. money to build his presidential mansion, buy condos in Manhattan and invest in America businesses.

Because Marcos had such an "illus-

trious" war record and displayed such a fondness for America and hatred for communism, the U.S. government never questioned his governmental policies.

With the rise of civil protests, which Marcos attributed to communist insurrection, Marcos assumed total dictatorial control of the Philippines in 1973.

Since 1973, Marcos has imposed strict censorship over the media. He has had thousands of people jailed simply because they have spoken out against his government. Marcos' more vocal opponents have a habit of winding up dead. Benigno Aquino, whose widow is now running against Marcos, was killed when he tried to consolidate political opposition against Marcos. (Marcos has denied any involvement in Aquino's

death saying: "I'm not the type who assassinates his opponent.")

Protest from the Filipino people has become too big to ignore. News of Marcos' oppression has reached the outside world and Marcos has been forced to hold elections. But good fascist doesn't give up that easily.

Marcos has been slinging mud like any good politician would. He has been flooding the media with his campaign promises and attacks on Aquino. Since Marcos controls the media, Aquino hasn't had been allowed much air time for her views.

Marcos says that Aquino is too inexperienced to be in charge of the government. How can anyone get experience in a government that has been under control of one man for the past 20 years?

Marcos' biggest weapon against Aquino is calling her a communist. It is true that Aquino's campaign against Marcos has the support of some of the communist factions in the Philippines, but didn't Allies have the support of Communist Russia in the campaign against Hitler?

Since the time the elections were announced, Marcos has placed Manila, capital of the Philippines, under complete military control. The government's Commission on Elections has deputized many of the nation's military leaders to ensure security during the elections. With Marcos' soldiers at the polls Filipinos might feel obligated to vote in a certain way.

Several groups have been formed by the government and the opposition to watch over the elections to insure

fairness. Ronald Reagan has a group of his own election observers in the Philippines. But Marcos has that only his group be allowed 150 feet of the polling booths.

According to Aquino's supporters the New Society Movement, a party, may have spent as much as a million to bribe voters and those are supposed to watch over polls in Angeles City, a small town near Manila. Residents said they each had been offered \$5 if they would vote for Marcos.

The odds seemed to be stacked in favor of Marcos. Despite the outcome of the election will show that the Filipino people want freedom.

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

Some big, wet birthday kisses for Ronald Reagan

By the time you read this, we will be fast approaching the birthday that Ronald Reagan shares with me or, as everyone else sees it, the one that I share with him. Either way, I have a gift for him and it is this: XXXXX. That's newspaperese for some wet kisses.

Richard Cohen

Don't read too much into that. The gift kisses are meant as tokens of appreciation, even of awe, for the president of the United States. Where he is wrong, he is wrong and I have never passed up the chance to point that out. But where he is right he is supreme and that, it seems to me, ought to be pointed out, too.

Nowhere was that clearer than the other day when the space shuttle Challenger blew up, killing seven astronauts and traumatizing the nation. Almost immediately, someone asked me if Reagan

would cancel the State of the Union speech scheduled for that night. No, I said, he would do nothing of the sort. He would incorporate the day's events into the speech and somehow bind the nation, make it feel better — provide a sense of purpose on a day when that sense, like the shuttle itself, seemed to have shattered into a million pieces.

I was wrong, technically. The president postponed the State of the Union. But the sort of speech I was expecting — we all were expecting — he gave anyway. You could quibble with a word here and a word there, even perhaps note that the words were written by someone else. But the president accomplished his purpose. I quoted him that night to my son. "The future doesn't belong to the fainthearted. It belongs to the brave. The Challenger crew was pulling us into the future and we'll continue to follow them." Yes, my son said. We have to reach for the stars.

There is a term I use in a speech I

give — "the movie expectation." I use it sometimes in reference to Ronald Reagan himself. It means that you expect life to conform to the movies or television — that, for instance, a punch is all sound and no impact. I grew up with movies in which big men hit each other very hard and did no damage. It came as a rude surprise to me to learn the hard way that a punch in the mouth can hurt something awful.

Reagan is the master of that movie expectation. He has personalized it. He brings with him the expectation that things will turn out all right. This is the expectation that kids have for daddy — that he can make it better, make the pain go away, explain things that really can't be explained. He did precisely that with his speech to the nation after the death of the seven astronauts.

This is a talent. This is a gift. And in a television age it is as important as military leadership once for the kings of old. It is what a leader must do.

Good old history will have to decide whether this talent makes Reagan a great President, a good President or something lower down the scale. It will have to take into account the deficit, the lack of progress in arms control, an ossified unemployment rate, the withering of the national infrastructure, the poor getting poorer, the amorality of constructive engagement, the coming debacle in Central America — the lack of leadership in almost every area other than leadership itself. We really are standing tall. We just ain't going anywhere.

But this is a kiss. And so I must note the recent *New York Times* poll which showed, incorrectly, that the president enjoyed a 56 percent approval rating among blacks. (With a much larger sample, *The Washington Post* put the figure at 23 percent.) The *Times*' figure would have been a stunning finding since not quite three years before, his approval rating was 18 percent. Yet only polling

professionals voiced skepticism. The rest of us — and by "us" I include columnists — thought that this was Ol' Ron Reagan doing his magic. He had even been able to win over the ing group that has showed the most tipathy. The Reagan Expectation work again.

When Gary Hart vamoosed to blesses Gulch to announce that he would not run locally, he allowed that if Ronald Reagan had one thing it was the importance of ideas. Hardly. If he has taught anything it is the importance of character and leadership, of standing tall when you're in a hole, of making one smaller by being so much taller. For these qualities — for being Reagan at moments when, really, one else would do — he gets a wet served kiss.

Now, can we talk about Nicaragua? Richard Cohen is a columnist for the Washington Post Writers Group.

Mideast peace

'Incremental progress' made in negotiations

The Reagan administration has fallen back on secret, step-by-step diplomacy to try to get Mideast peace talks started in 1986.

Barry Schweid AP News Analysis

The outlook may be only marginally brighter than last year when American, Egyptian and Jordanian leaders all confidently predicted negotiations would be started, but turned out to be wrong.

This year's effort is different. It involves low-profile efforts by Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy and his deputy, Watt Cleverius, modest claims of "incremental progress" and virtually no public announcements about their meetings and the details of their agenda.

Murphy, a tireless envoy, met separately last week in Europe with King

Hussein of Jordan and Shimon Peres of Israel, two of the three key players in the Middle East.

The third, Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, is being kept abreast of developments by Hussein, while Cleverius and other U.S. diplomats meet regularly with Palestinians in the region.

Apparently, the Reagan administration is remaining true to the U.S. pledge to Israel not to deal with the PLO until it accepts the legitimacy of Israel and U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

Arafat, however, retains a veto over the Palestinians who would sit across the negotiating table from Israel as part of a joint delegation of Jordanians.

Last May, Secretary of State George

Shultz tested the highwire with his own on-site diplomacy after seeing Hussein in Aqaba and Peres in Jerusalem. Shultz reported he had found "a genuine sense of movement."

But as the year wore on, it became clear the issues of Palestinian representation and a proper forum for peace talks could not be resolved.

Israel simply refuses to sit down with Palestinians linked to the PLO or to permit the Soviet Union, with which it has no relations, to play a key role in the negotiations. Hussein and Arafat insisted on both conditions.

The question now is whether Murphy and the other American diplomats can bridge the differences or come close enough to get peace talks started.

Pending is an administration arms

package for Jordan that includes 40 advanced jet fighter planes and mobile missiles. Faced with a likely congressional veto, the administration withdrew the purchase last year when opponents said they wanted more proof that Hussein was willing to hold peace talks with Israel.

Murphy made another pitch for the sale before a congressional subcommittee, and the administration is preparing to ask Congress for \$135 million in military and economic assistance to Jordan — an increase of nearly 50 percent over this year.

Rep. Lee Hamilton, D-Ind., the subcommittee chairman, indicated Congress will have to know more about Jordan's intentions before going ahead.

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