

Opinion

The Battalion

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Talking on thin ice

A secluded house in a secluded country apparently wasn't enough to sow the seeds of peace into the superpower non-summit last weekend. Although no concrete compromises were reached, significant concessions were made that could bode well for future meetings — if the two nations can speak the same language when it comes to space weapons.

While President Reagan is being accused of shucking hopes of world peace to keep his Strategic Defense Initiative alive, Reagan needs to be credited with the most promising concessions.

The president agreed to keep his fledgling defense program from leaving the nest for another 10 years. The Soviets, opposed to any continuation of Star Wars development, naturally didn't want to accept the Reagan proposal. That the president would even make such a suggestion is a sign of his seriousness about reaching an agreement with the Soviets.

At the same time, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's proposal that the United States confine Star Wars to the laboratory for the next 10 years is unreasonable given Reagan's enthusiasm for his pet weapons system.

The reason the president can make his offer without a wince, yet find the Soviet proposal so deplorable, is nothing more than simple logistics. It will be at least 10 years before Star Wars technology has developed to the point of deployment. Only then will the actual feasibility of the project come to light. At the moment, even SDI scientists can offer only speculation about the project's capabilities.

But to accept the Soviet offer would cripple Star Wars into near-extinction. Field tests already have been done on some elements of the Star Wars technological labyrinth.

While SDI will almost certainly not live up to Reagan's expectations, it will continue to be a stumbling block for arms negotiations until the Soviets understand the significance the Reagan administration places on it. Perhaps the president's stubbornness in Iceland will help them get the message.

SDI may turn out to be a total flop, but that won't solve arms negotiation deadlocks now. Both countries, for economic reasons if not for world peace, need to reduce weapons spending. Reagan's willingness for another summit is encouraging. Keeping negotiations going is the first step to reaching an agreement. But the superpowers are not communicating on the same channel.

As long as the president stands firmly behind Star Wars, the Soviets are going to have to come up with more realistic compromises. Until they do, they're certain to find the U.S. reception colder than the Icelandic winter.

Students' attitudes threaten yell practice

The violent clash between members of the Aggie Band and students who tried to run onto Kyle Field at yell practice Oct. 3 has aroused the entire campus to the controversy. After reading the Opinion Page on Thursday, I was determined to respond to some of the insulting insinuations.



Mark Ude

But such a crusade was easier said than done. With all that's happened over the past three years, the Corps has developed a phobia of the press that prevents the effective use of investigative reporting to decipher fact from fiction.

After the unfortunate death of Bruce Dean Goodrich and the introduction of women into the band, cadets are wary of saying anything to the press for fear that they will be misquoted. This has been reinforced by the unfortunate contributions of some band members, who spoke before thinking and produced inaccurate statements and ammunition for "the opposition."

To prevent further damage, the upper crust of Corps leadership decided to enforce a policy of not talking to anyone from *The Battalion*. This is nothing new, I was told the same thing when I was in the Corps. What I didn't suspect was that now I was included with the "Yellow Journalists."

I also understood the subtlety advocated by the Corps leadership. It would rather have this incident blow over and not contest allegations. This effectively stops any attempt to exonerate the band on charges of undue maliciousness.

But the question still remains of what will be done at future midnight yell practices. It is my understanding that the Corps, as a result of tyranny of the minority, will not contest the field

against drunkards or Gandhi impersonators trying, through "passive resistance," to show the brutality of the so-called "fascist fraternity in uniform."

The Corps (actually the junior class) will not play their game. Instead it will ignore them, hoping they will be too ashamed to attempt such a feat in front of all those in attendance again.

Now I don't know about anyone else, but when a bully extorted lunch money from some unfortunate soul, the advice to "just ignore them" didn't quite work.

If the Corps cannot guard Kyle Field against such people, how is it to guard the band? With armchair lawyers running around checking actions and traditions against the University Archives, I am waiting to hear the argument that there is nothing to stop anyone from occupying the same space as the band at any given moment. So why bother with the juniors at midnight yell if they are not allowed to guard Kyle Field and the band from invading infidels?

To carry the argument to the fullest extent, why do we have Officers of the Day at football games? Why not let everybody run onto the field if the Corps is just going to roll over and die on this tradition?

The conflict at yell practice arose after a number of people refused to peacefully surrender the field and started swinging. The hypocrisy is evident. These innocent students whine of being hit with fiberglass helmet liners while ignoring the broken fingers and dislocated shoulders sustained by cadets.

If students no longer see members of the Corps (specifically the band) as extensions of official O.D.s, and no longer accept their authority in upholding that tradition, then we should expect midnight yell practice to join other dead traditions, such as saying "Howdy!" on the roll at Silver Taps.

Mark Ude is a senior geography major and a columnist for *The Battalion*.



Government disinformation on Nicaragua flows freely

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the daily State Department briefing. If I look familiar to you, it might be because you've seen me in the Isuzu commercials. I play the outrageously lying car salesman. I now have a new job. I have replaced Bernard Kalb.



Richard Cohen

The first order of business is the downing of a cargo plane that the lying Sandinistas say was ferrying arms to the Nicaraguan Contras. Two Americans were killed and a third, Eugene Hasenfus, bailed out, yelling CIA involvement instead of the traditional "Geronimo!" His statements notwithstanding, our government maintains it was not involved. After all, it is illegal for either individual Americans or — for the moment — the CIA to engage in such activities.

This government, of course, knows nothing about the plane. Although it was loaded with rifles at Honduran airbases that the CIA uses, Americans were at that time looking down at the ground to avoid the glaring tropical sun. As for radar and all such technology, it was directed towards Boston where the first of the playoff games was in progress. As you know, "Beisboll" is very popular south of the border.

Just to make this government's task ever harder, it appears that the plane belonged to no one. I know that that's hard to believe, but you have our word

on it. It was not on a CIA mission. Not was it being flown for the largest of the civilian anti-communist groups that — scout's honor — provides the Contras with only medical supplies and clothing. Retired Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, although dismissed in disgrace by President Carter for being a zealot, would be the last person we should suspect, nor, for that matter, should we suspect this administration of either cooperating with him or looking the other way.

What then, you ask, are we to make of this incident? Some, of course, will point a finger at this administration, but then these people have become wearily predictable and, anyway, are soft on everything — communists, drugs, criminals, pornography and the source of all that, Jane Fonda. They might say that such an incident was inevitable, that this administration, convinced of the imminent danger posed by 4 million undernourished Nicaraguans to Texas and Arizona, not to mention Virgin Gorda, would stop at nothing — certainly not a silly law — to press the anti-communist fight. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We have heard reports of previous incidents in which the CIA allegedly got out of hand, mining a Nicaraguan port and blowing a dent into a Soviet ship. These cynics, of which, thank God, there are only a few in Congress, say they even detect what they call a pattern. They insinuate that, as with Libya, the administration defines a certain goal as so important that (in the interest of national security, of course) it will either bend the law or whisper sweet disinformation into the ears of the press. This is

just another version of their Leninist doctrine that the end justifies the means and we, of course, represent the Honest Indian.

This administration recognizes Hasenfus' wife says he worked for the CIA. We have no desire to compromise private, family discussions and do not care who do. We recognize that Hasenfus and the other crewmen were sent to the CIA in the past, but we assure that either these allegations are untrue or that they are meaningless. This action is not yet fully developed and will alert you when it is.

In the meantime, and far more importantly, we condemn in the strongest possible terms the refusal of the Nicaraguans to allow U.S. Embassy personnel to immediately see Hasenfus, threaten to break off diplomatic relations with a nation with which we really at war. As for Gen. Singlaub, praise him for whatever he is doing even though we don't know what we like him, as the president says, Americans who fought in the Great Lincoln Brigade even though they were leftists and, in some cases, communists. They should be condemned for what they were, not for what they did. We think, is the American Way but, again, we are working on that point.

This government takes serious obligation to tell the American people the truth and keep it informed. Otherwise would mean that the government is lying in support of an unstable policy. This was the case in Vietnam, and it will never be repeated. One final piece of business: Is anyone interested in a really terrific cartoon?

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Mail Call

Reliving childhood

EDITOR:

A thousand thanks to Loren Steffy's column on Oct. 7. I tried to rattle the memory of a fellow student last week about "I'm only a bill," but was only given a look that suggested I'd lost my marbles. Funny how certain things run through various minds in the same time frame!

I can't tell you how many times I catch myself singing "a noun is a person, place or thing" or "conjunction junction." I can even close my eyes and see the cartoons that accompanied these educational ditties.

How sad it is that we are raising around us a generation who will never know these or many other cherished cartoons of our own childhood — which isn't really that far behind us!

Again, thank you and Steffy for vindicating me with my classmate and for letting me return to my cherished, non-rushed Saturday mornings — along with many I've never met.

Carol Ann Duke

Hit the road, Pallmeyer

EDITOR:

The Corps of Cadets is the safeguard of tradition and the source of uniqueness here at Texas A&M, or so I have always felt. So when civilians ran onto the field Oct. 3, I was glad to see that the cadets tried to take them off the field. I thought that I might be biased, so I (a civilian) asked my friends (also civilians) how they felt. They agreed that the cadets acted properly.

So why are the cadets to blame? According to Karl Pallmeyer (*Thursday's Battalion*), the cadets used excessive violence. But he does not mention the fact that several cadets also were injured. Maybe that was because the civilians were provoked into

using violence as well. But which was the first provocation?

Maybe the cadets are to blame because Kyle Field is officially a memorial. But since when has tradition been dictated by the University Archives? Tradition stems from what the student body decides to do or not to do, and most of these is to remain off the field. Anyone who challenges that tradition will have the whole student body to deal with, not just the Corps. I (and those I have spoken to) see the whole event as an indictment of traditions at A&M.

I am and always will be proud of the Corps of Cadets and I am happy that A&M still possesses some people who are determined to preserve tradition.

If Pallmeyer is unhappy with the Corps, then the phrase says not only that he is free to leave, but that he must leave.

John David Bondy '90

Play by the numbers

EDITOR:

In response to the article concerning midnight yell practice (Thursday), let me clarify some vital points:

1. If one steps in front of a moving bus, one will get hurt.
2. If one jumps off the top of the World Trade Center, one will get hurt.
3. If one runs out onto Kyle Field at midnight yell practice, one will get hurt.

Why is Number 3 so much harder to understand than numbers 1 and 2?

Joel Kelly Flavin '88

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The 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 typed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.