

Opinion

Reagan hoping gulf policy diverts attention away from Iran scandal

Foreign policy is often used as the remedy for bad domestic policy. That explains our recent actions in the Persian Gulf.

To hear President Ronald Reagan talk, the trouble in the Persian Gulf is the kind where our guys can just walk in and clean things up. All we have to do is put our flags on Kuwaiti oil tankers and escort them through the gulf. Reagan hopes that by presenting crisis and solution in the Persian Gulf, the American people will forget about a crisis at home, namely the Iran-*contra* scandal.

Lt. Col. Oliver North did a good job of distracting the people's understanding of the entire mess. North ran the flag so far up the pole that few people noticed the worms that were eating away at its base — worms with names like Ronnie and Ollie and Poindexter. Worms who think the best way to protect the laws of the land is to break those laws. Worms who think that the best way to save this country from communism is to subject it to fascism.

Now that Ollie has left the stand and gone on to pursue a career in Hollywood, Ronnie has had to find something else to distract the public. Poindexter was not a good enough actor and didn't have the right uniform to play the part of the loyal, patriotic soldier. Things are even worse now that Attorney General Ed Meese has taken the stand. Meese has shown such a blatant disregard for this country's laws



Karl Pallmeyer

that he can't make anyone believe that he was trying to do what was right. Now Meese is playing a part he knows well. He claims he doesn't know anything.

Reagan has found a cause that can be advertised as being more patriotic than illegally giving money to a band of terrorists to help overthrow the formally-elected government of Nicaragua. Who cares if our highest government officials lie to us? We have to send our boats to the Persian Gulf to protect our oil, and if those dirty heathens pick a fight, kick some butt.

The situation in the Persian Gulf is a dangerous mess. The war between Iran and Iraq has been going on in one form or another for most of history. For years we have been selling arms to Iraq and have taken that country's side in the war. More recently, we have been supplying arms as well as hostages to Iran. For the most part we have succeeded in alienating most of the continent.

Kuwait might benefit by having its oil tankers protected, just like we protected the supertanker *Bridgetown* last week. But Kuwait, like most of the other Arab states, is not willing to take sides in the Iran-Iraq war. Few of the Arab states are willing to side with the U.S. in fear that Iran would strike against them. That's why no Arab government, including Kuwait, will allow any U.S. military force on its soil.

Things are gearing up for a conflict in the Persian Gulf. Currently there are eight U.S. warships in the gulf but more could be on the way due to last week's incident with an underwater mine. None of the ships presently in the area are able to accommodate the helicopters equipped for mine-clearing. As the

number of warships in the gulf increases, the chance for a conflict also increases.

Who's going to stop Reagan if he decides he wants his own little war? With his dealings in Grenada and Libya, Reagan has found several loopholes in the War Powers Act and is able to send troops almost anywhere he wants before Congress can act. By the time Congress gets around to making a decision, it could be too late.

Reagan also knows how to deal with the armed forces. Our armed forces are led, for the most part, by the gung-ho Ollie Norths who are just waiting to do the President's bidding. Our military hasn't seen a real war in a long time and is somewhat anxious to put their training and multi-billion dollar toys to the test.

The biggest loser in the war will be the common soldier. Their deaths will go unnoticed and will have little effect on Presidential policy. During the Vietnam War, every American male age 18 to 25 was eligible for the draft, at least in theory. Now the immediate threat of war faces only the few who already serve in the military. Most of them come from families that don't have the education or financial power to make their voices heard in Washington when they start to lose their sons in a useless war.

Reagan is capitalizing on the trouble in the Persian Gulf to make people forget about the troubles at home. Two wrongs never make a right but, instead, tend to add up to bigger and better wrongs.

Karl Pallmeyer is a journalism graduate and a columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

New furniture being wasted on Corps

EDITOR:

OK, I've sat idly by long enough. I've watched A&M raise our tuition and fees as they waste money left and right.

In the fall, we are being "kicked" out of Briggs, Spence and Gainer dorms. They are going to be occupied by the Corps while the University remodels the dorms on the quad two at a time.

Today I looked out my window and saw new furniture being moved into Spence. This is the most incredible waste of money I have ever witnessed. The "new" furniture that was put in dorms four and six last fall is already torn up and falling apart. The "old" furniture that was taken out of Spence would have been just fine until they remodeled the dorm.

Let's see if this makes sense. They are spending incredible amounts of money to remodel the dorms so the rooms will look nice. However, at the same time, they are putting new furniture in an old dorm. By the time they remodel Spence and Briggs (which also has new furniture), the furniture will be incredibly trashed by the Corps. In the end, instead of having trashed rooms with nice furniture, there will be nice rooms with trashed furniture. Makes sense to me.

Susan Sedgwick '89

Muleshoe is a real town

EDITOR:

Yes, Ms. Pickard, Muleshoe is in Texas. It is 60 miles northwest of Lubbock on Hwy 84 to be exact. Muleshoe is a bustling town of just under 5,000 residents. It has 29 volunteer firefighters of which four went to fire school last week. No, unfortunately, Buckley, Lucky, Billy Joe and Billy Boe and Flack did not get to go this year, but J.O., Charles, Jimmy and Alton did. And rumor has it, the town did not burn down while they were gone. Just think for a moment, "What if volunteer firefighters didn't volunteer?" Support your local fire department.

Cheryl Seils '89

The facts are just a call away

EDITOR:

Yes, it is true: the thoughts that still linger on are silly ("What if they had a fire..."). I have lived here for 17 years, and I welcome the firemen with a big "Howdy."

Ms. Pickard maintains that we will never be the same. She also maintains that many municipal fire stations were lonely places last week. Let me present a few facts. First of all, fire departments are not stupid enough to send all of their firefighters away for a week. Volunteer departments usually have a minimum of 25 to 30 volunteers. According to Jack Sneed of the Engineering Extension Service, there are about 2000 such organizations in the state. If every department sent only two firefighters, the number enrolled for the week would by far exceed the number that were actually here. These departments send firefighters on a rotational basis, so that there are new people being trained every year.

Let's talk about Muleshoe. Ms. Pickard confessed her ignorance of the size and location of Muleshoe, when all she had to do was flip through an almanac or even open a road map. One can easily learn that Muleshoe is located 65 miles northwest of Lubbock on Hwy 84. It is the Bailey County seat, and with 4,842 residents, holds more than half the county's population.

A lady whom I took to be Mrs. Jack Dunham, the fire chief's wife, said that there are about 35 volunteers in Muleshoe's volunteer fire department. That is 30 or 29 more than Ms. Pickard's assumed "five or six at the most."

Remember, Muleshoe is just one example. Perhaps Ms. Pickard was able to find a department of five or six that came to Brayton Field and left one firefighter behind, but that is doubtful. Out of 35 volunteers, Muleshoe sent three.

It is surprising to find that one in such a prestigious position as Ms. Pickard's would flaunt her ignorance in hopes of being cute or funny (or "silly"). It is also surprising that this ignorance did not compel her to use two very accessible tools: the telephone and the library. I hope she is as embarrassed for herself as this journalism major is for her.

Creighton Bailey '89

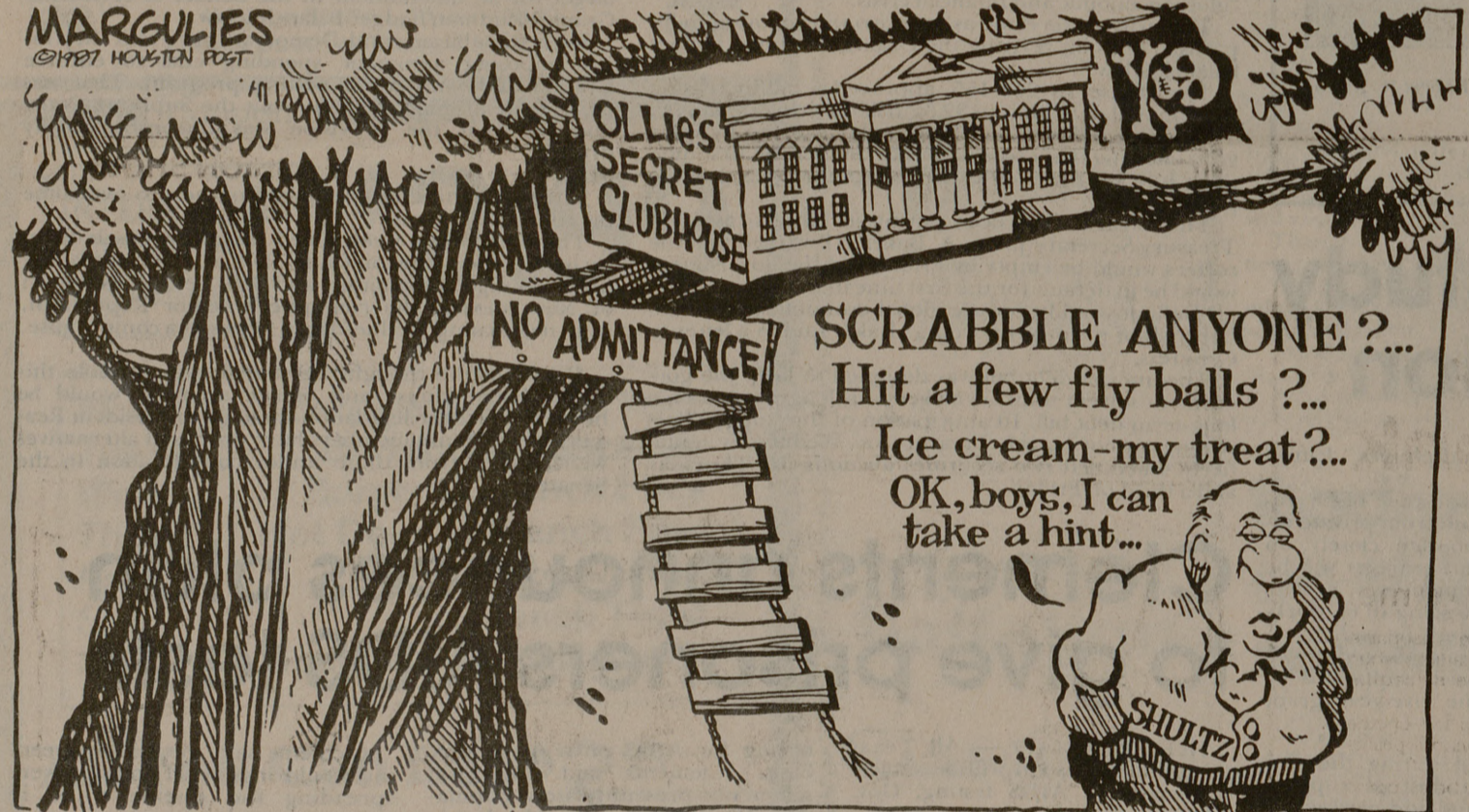
Foreign students should pay their fair share

EDITOR:

I'm writing in response to the numerous foreign students at our campus. This letter is not directed toward them, but toward our own system. I would appreciate it if someone would please answer my questions.

Why is it that Texas A&M charges the same tuition for foreign students as it does for out-of-state students? A&M is a publicly-funded institution, which means that Texans pay for it through taxes. If it wasn't, then tuition would be like SMU's. The point is, Americans work hard to earn a living and as a result are taxed so that their money can be used to educate foreigners. There would be nothing wrong with this if they would settle down in the U.S., but a large majority of them don't. They go back to their countries and use the education against us, in the form of product competition. For years people have complained about the trade deficit; well aren't we just digging our own graves deeper? Since when has it been America's job to educate the world? Or is this what it takes to become a world class university?

Frank Fay
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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer.



Going nuts over squirrels

My dog, Catfish, the black Labrador, has been trying unsuccessfully for some time to catch a squirrel in the backyard, and I am concerned this failure eventually will lead him to a nervous breakdown, or even worse.



Lewis Grizzard

thinking he has caught one. I bought a stuffed squirrel and put it in the yard. Catfish spotted it and attacked. When it didn't run away, he became suspicious. He wasn't dealing with a bona fide squirrel here and brought it into the house and laid it at my feet, as if to say, "Nice try, Dad, but if it's not the real thing, I'm not interested."

Even if the frustration of coming up empty time and again doesn't make Catfish loony, there is also the problem of what happens when my dog is inside my house and sees a squirrel on the outside.

The back of my house is a series of glass doors, which remain closed most of the time. Catfish has not figured out the theory of glass. He sees a squirrel outside and goes dashing for it and runs into the glass at approximately 65 mph.

"You can't run through glass," I tell him after he has regained consciousness. He gives me that pained, disappointed look again, along with his flattened now and crossed eyes.

I'm torn here, as one might imagine. I want my dog to live a

happy, healthy life and not become brain-damaged. Perhaps, I have thought, if he were to catch just one lousy squirrel, he would be free of this obsession.

On the other hand, I don't want any harm to come to any of the squirrels who live in my backyard. They're cute little boogers, and I enjoy watching them run around in the grass and straw looking for whatever it is squirrels look for.

This experience — and dilemma — has taught me to have a great deal of appreciation for the order of nature.

Dogs naturally chase squirrels, but squirrels are naturally faster than dogs. They scamper up trees to get away from dogs, who have no earthly idea how to climb a tree.

Glass doors, on the other hand, are not a part of the natural order of things.

I simply hope that if one day Catfish crashes headfirst into another one in hot pursuit of a squirrel and suffers a fatal injury, he will somehow know it was the door, not the squirrel, his avowed enemy, who killed him.

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