



The Middle East: Peace or Powder Keg

April 12, 1989

His Excellency

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar

United Nations Secretary-General

The Honorable

Robert C. McFarlane

former National Security Advisor

Admiral

Stansfield Turner

former C.I.A. Director

Ed Bradley

Co-Editor "60 Minutes"



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8 p.m. Rudder Auditorium

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Smith blasts Caperton's workers' comp proposal

AUSTIN (AP) — The House plan for overhauling the workers' compensation system received a rough welcome from several senators Monday, as one key legislator promised the Senate would not "roll over" before an army of lobbyists trying to push the bill through.

Several senators said sweeping changes to the workers' comp law passed last month by the House do nothing to correct the problems of rocketing insurance costs and low benefits to injured workers.

"It seems to me that we're being asked to buy a pig in a poke," said Sen. Kent Caperton, D-Bryan.

The issue pits powerful special interests — insurance, business, doctors, trial lawyers and labor — in a fight over compensating workers injured on the job.

Businesses say they have been hurt by employer-paid workers' comp insurance rates, which have

risen 149 percent since 1985. Meanwhile, labor groups say Texas working conditions are notoriously unsafe, and workers' comp benefits are low. Texas ranks first in the nation in job fatalities among industrialized states.

With the Senate meeting as a committee of the whole, which allows lobbyists and others access to the Senate chamber, Caperton blasted

"I hope that message comes clear to the lobbyists that we are going to be heard on this and we are not going to roll over."

—Sen. Kent Caperton, D-Bryan

the intensive lobbying efforts surrounding the issue.

Conroe man protests vault for toxic soil

HOUSTON (AP) — A man who is protesting the construction of a burial vault for contaminated soil in his Conroe subdivision said he heard horror stories during a Washington D.C. meeting from people living near wood-treating operations, which produce toxic materials similar to those in the tainted soil.

"I'm a hard person, but I found myself crying for these people," said Darrel Jackson, one of 30 people from around the country who sought action on their common pollution problem in an emotional meeting arranged by Greenpeace and the Environmental Defense Fund.

Jackson said he met a California man who is dying of cancer, a Kansas woman whose baby was born with brain damage, and a Texarkana-area woman who told of neighborhood children with skin ailments and breathing problems. All live near present or past wood-treating operations.

Jackson is protesting the construction by his subdivision of what he calls a "horrible monument" — a burial vault, 8 feet tall, 300 feet long and 50 feet wide. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would use it to store contaminated soil collected from around the Tanglewood East subdivision.

The EPA plans to buy six homes in the subdivision and demolish them to get at some of the most contaminated soil.

The subdivision was built on land occupied until 1972 by the United Creosoting Co. It used toxic pentachlorophenol (PCP) and creosote laced with low levels of dioxin as wood preservatives.

Jackson, who runs a janitorial company and is president of the Tanglewood East Homeowners Association, said he is a conservative Republican and not a member of Greenpeace. However, he said he was impressed by the activist group's efforts in Washington.

He spent part of the weekend meeting with health and pollution scientists along with others in the group.

Jackson said he also visited the office of his congressman, Rep. Joe Barton, R-Ennis, and was surprised by the attention he received. Instead of the quick brushoff he expected, two of Barton's top aides spent two hours discussing his concerns.

The entire group spent last Monday afternoon meeting with a delegation of EPA Superfund officials.

"At one point they asked for a show of hands of people who trusted the EPA," Jackson told the Houston Post. "One person held up his hand — and that was an expert, not a waste site resident."

He said Tanglewood East residents have been told at times that there is no health hazard in their neighborhood, and at other times that dioxin is one of the deadliest substances known.

"They are sending us mixed signals," Jackson said. "And somewhere, they are lying to us."

"Those lobbyists who are suggesting that we adopt House Bill 1 as it is without amendments . . . insult us individually, insult the institution and do a serious disservice to the process."

"I hope that message comes clear to the lobbyists that we are going to be heard on this and we are not going to roll over," he said.

Although House Bill 1 was criticized in the Senate, the bill's author Rep. Richard Smith, R-Bryan, said, "I'm happy we're moving forward."

He predicted, however, the Senate bill will not be acceptable to the House and a conference committee will be picked to hammer out the differences in the two bills.

"We're going to write the bill in conference committee," Smith said.

House Bill 1 would change administration of workers' comp claims, and eliminate the right to a jury trial over disputed claims.

The Senate version of the bill would retain the right to a jury trial and require employees to implement stronger job-safety guidelines.

Although retaining the right to jury trial, Sen. Bob Glasgow's bill would allow the record of the previous Industrial Accident Board ruling into the trial. Currently, the IAB's decision is excluded from the trial.

But Smith said that was not an acceptable compromise because it was the "threat" of a jury trial that fueled out-of-court settlements and drove up workers' comp premiums.

In earlier testimony before the Senate, Peter Barth, a consultant to an interim committee on workers' comp, said, "Texas is not necessarily a low-benefit state."

In Advance

Lecture series goes on without Perez de Cuéllar

By Fiona Soltes

STAFF WRITER

MSC Wiley Lecture Series will present "The Middle East: Peace or Powder Keg" at 8 p.m. Wednesday in Rudder Auditorium.

United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has canceled his scheduled appearance due to the unexpected crisis in Namibia. He will be replaced by Dr. James Jonah, assistant secretary-general. Also participating in the panel discussion are former National Security Advisor Robert C. McFarlane and former CIA Director Stansfield Turner. Ed Bradley of CBS' "60 Minutes" will moderate.

Tom Rand, co-director of this year's Program Symposia, said the panelists were chosen because of their international significance and knowledge of the Middle East.

"We're hoping people will get a

greater sense of the Middle East and its potential for peace," he said. "This is an issue of past, present and future importance that needs to be addressed by the Bush Administration."

Rand said the panelists each will give an address before the discussion begins. Audience members may submit written questions for the panelists to a table located on the first floor of Rudder from 7:30 to 8 p.m. the night of the program. Questions will not be taken from the floor.

The lecture series is privately funded from an endowment by James and A.P. Wiley. One-half to one-third of the interest from the endowment is given for the series each year. Other funding comes from individuals, corporations and foundations.

Tickets are \$6, \$8 and \$10 for students and \$8, \$10 and \$12 for nonstudents and are available at the MSC Box Office.

Child welfare group holds general meeting

C.A.R.E., the Child Advocacy Resource and Education Coalition of Brazos County, will have its first general meeting Wednesday at 1 p.m. in the College Station City Council Chamber at City Hall.

Presentations will be given by Wendell Teltow, program director for the Texas Coalition for the Prevention of Child Abuse, and Mary Kay Smith, president of the C.A.R.E. Coalition.

C.A.R.E.'s purpose is "to support advocacy and prevention efforts in the area of child abuse and neglect."

CDPE sponsors Health and Wellness Fair

"Good Health: A Lifestyle You Can Live With" is the theme of the 1989 Health and Wellness Fair, which takes place today in the MSC walkway from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The fair, sponsored by the Texas A&M Center for Drug Prevention and Education, will present representatives from community and campus organizations to stress health-related topics for students, faculty and staff.

Among the sponsors with booths in the fair are the American Cancer Society, which will provide information about skin cancer, and the Brazos Valley Aids Foundation, which will hand out pamphlets and provide information about AIDS.

Alcohol awareness, smoking cessation, drug abuse prevention, highway safety, rape prevention and stress management information also will be available.

Deborah Doyle, a graduate assistant in the center, said health screening may be provided by HCA Greenleaf Hospital of Brazos County.

"Everyone from the campus emergency care team to the campus police department will provide information at the fair," she said. "It'll be interesting and it'll be informative. There'll be something for everyone."

For additional information about the fair call the center at 845-0280.

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