

U.S. government suffers from fiscal bulimia

Cullen Hightower once said: "We may not imagine how our lives could be more frustrating and complex — but Congress could." Following President Bush's State of the Union Address Tuesday night, the 102nd Congress will set out in earnest to prove him correct.

Our country is, of course, beset by many problems — not the least of which is our elected officials. Congress will face a mind-boggling plethora of domestic and foreign spending legislation when voting resumes and will attempt to deal with the usual assortment of social, military and economic lobbyists.

What Congress needs most of all, however, is something not on the legislative agenda — a trip to the doctor.

Uncle Sam is bulimic. As with all other people who suffer from this malady, he is forced by the specifics of this illness to consume much more sustenance than is necessary to perform the governmental functions

Larry Cox
Columnist

assigned to him by the Constitution. This bulimic consumption is manifested by the spiraling taxation and deficit spending to which Congress subjects the American public every session.

A bulimic person might consume several times as much food as is necessary to survive and then disgorge him or herself several times a day. Uncle Sam's method of disgorgement is the U.S. Congress and its "spend 'til you can't spend no more" philosophy.

The federal government attempts to uphold its facade of thinness amidst this illness by epidemic pork-barrel spending and the never-ending

perpetuation of the notion that government should be everything to everybody.

This is by no means a new concept. I recently came across a commentary on this situation which was anonymously presented to the Cambridge University Medical Society in 1957. I thought it worthy of reprinting.

The essay, titled "Hymn to the Welfare State" is as appropriate now as then. Perhaps more so.

It states: "The Government is my shepherd, therefore I need not work. It alloweth me to lie down on a good job. It leadeth me beside still factories; It destroyeth my initiative. It leadeth me in the path of a parasite for politics' sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of laziness and deficit spending, I will fear no evil, for the government is with me.

It prepareth an economic Utopia for me, by appropriating the earnings of my own grandchildren. It filleth my head with false security; my inefficiency runneth over. Surely the government shall care for me for all the days of my life! And I shall dwell in a



fool's paradise forever."

The rhetoric going around Washington promises a cure for the government's ills, of course. The Great Society of the 1960s is supposed to be replaced by the "New Paradigm" and the "New World Order" of George Bush's 1990s.

Before any serious attempt can be made to significantly alter the role of government in American life, however, our Congress must recognize and attempt to remedy Uncle Sam's voracious appetite while recognizing the limits which must be set on governmental consumption.

This admission of overindulgence is not any closer to fruition now than it was 30-plus years ago because such an admission calls for an attempt to remedy the problem, which would require each Congressman's constituents to give up a small portion of their all-important government services — a move which might endanger the job security which Congress enjoys.

An old saying states that you are better off not knowing how sausages and laws are made. Until the voting public pays more attention to the way laws are made and loses its appetite for fiscally irresponsible government, Uncle Sam's fiscal bulimia will continue unabated.

Larry Cox is a graduate student in range science.

Richards, Bullock use unfair political tactics

I realize that everyone is closely watching and waiting to see what is going to happen in the Middle East, but I wanted to remind people we have some domestic troubles that shouldn't be ignored.

While not much attention has been directed toward the state legislature in comparison to the gulf crisis, there has been quite a commotion since the new governor and lieutenant governor took office.

Last week, committee appointments in both the House of Representatives and in the Senate were announced and Lt. Gov. Bullock assigned every chair to Democratic senators with no regard to experience or seniority — something that no one has ever done before in the history of the Texas legislature.

Lt. Gov. Bullock and Gov. Ann Richards also might have coerced House Speaker Gib Lewis, who usually



Ann Richards

is conservative, into changing his planned appointees to the House committees.

Although it may not seem to be of much importance, when people in powerful positions have to use unsubstantiated threats to influence another person in a powerful position, it disturbs me.

It seems to me that the two who proclaimed they will start a "new

Teresa Moore
Reader's Opinion

Texas" and "retake the capital," would want an effective and intelligent man to exercise his influence on the law-making process. From the information that I have received, they are doing all they can to widen the rift between Republicans and Democrats.

Instead, they should be trying to bring all the people together to make Texas a better place. Instead of promoting the fairness to everyone that they stressed so strongly in their campaigns, they are picking and choosing who is and is not deserving of fair treatment.

Since the beginning of allegations against House Speaker Gib Lewis by the Travis County district attorney, neither one has tried to get the truth of the matter.

On the contrary, they have used the unproven accusations and the Lewis family's unfortunate situation as a means of controlling the things Speaker Lewis says and does.

There has been much publicity on the scandal, but not one of the major newspapers in the state has given any attention to the Lewis' point of view or the fact that none of the allegations of unethical conduct has been proved correct.

The point I am trying to make is somebody should be paying more attention to what is going on in the Texas capital and less to sensational stories that may just be a form of subterfuge.

The fact is Richards and Bullock did not gain power over the "old" government — they are the ones who have been in Texas government for almost 10 years — and while there is a need for change in Texas, underhanded political tactics and extreme, liberal legislation are not the most positive ways to achieve those changes.

Teresa Moore is a junior biology major.

MAIL CALL

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers and welcomes all letters to the editor. Please include name, classification, address and phone number on all letters. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length. Because of limited space, shorter letters have a better chance of appearing. There is, however, no guarantee letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

Find a peaceful solution

EDITOR:

Contrary to widespread propoganda, People For Peace and other peace activists do support the American service-people presently stationed in the Middle East. We support them with our full hearts.

We demand that our government find a less violent way to resolve the present conflict so that all of the military personnel that are still alive may return unharmed.

We have endured much hardship for taking this unpopular stand including harassment both in public and at home. Nevertheless, we will continue to work for our troops' safe return.

It should be clear to the open mind that one need to support Bush's foreign policy in order to fully support the Americans that must execute the policy. For over a decade, Bush, first as CIA director, then as vice president and president, piled weapons, military technology and diplomatic support into Saddam Hussein's arsenal.

As Bush helped make money for arms manufacturers, he seemed to be thinking that if Saddam ever caused trouble for America with the arsenal Bush helped him build, then American troops could be sent to kill and die.

Our troops are not inanimate objects to be used and abused at the President's convenience. They are human beings and we love them as brothers and sisters.

Faith Short '89
accompanied by 30 signatures

We said 'yes' to capitalism

EDITOR:

As Americans, we have grown to expect and demand a certain share of the world's oil reserves. We have built our cities and our economy around cheap and plentiful oil. We have brushed aside the doomsayers and the environmentalists who have been claiming for decades that the world is about to run out of oil, or that our Cadillacs and Lincolns are going to turn the planet into a greenhouse.

Since we are now killing and dying for our present way of life, I would like to reassure any doubters that it is our duty to continue to drive cars, and big cars at that. As Ronald Reagan said: "This is America! We don't have to conserve!"

Here in Aggieland, we are providing a model for the country. By living in a suburban sprawl that requires everyone to own a vehicle, we have said "yes!" to capitalism and industry. By expanding our roads, building more parking places and scrapping our bike lanes and sidewalks, we are forcing everyone to drive. I have to admit that when I first got here, I was tempted to ride a bike myself. Fortunately,

the bike lanes here are so awful that I soon abandoned them.

What we have to keep in mind is for a strong economy everyone has to consume. What's good for GM is good for America.

We need to continue to subsidize more freeways with our taxes. We need to continue to open federal lands for subsidized oil exploration. We need to continue subsidizing our auto industry with tariffs on small foreign cars. And most importantly, we have to unite in this war and protect our oil companies. After all, we need the free market, even if we have to subsidize it!

Joseph Kachmar
graduate student

Why are we really at war?

EDITOR:

As we wage this war against the madman in Iraq, I cannot help but wonder why we are so morally obligated to do so.

If our country is so adamant about ending tyranny and outrage, then why did we fail to send troops into South Africa long ago? Or how about Lithuania? Haven't the people in those countries been oppressed and denied their inalienable rights assumed under democratic dogma? Why then is our government so vehement about this particular situation?

After cutting through all the rhetoric and rallying behind the flag, one is left with money and oil as the basic reasoning behind this entire ordeal. Is human life so cheap these days that we are willing to send American men and women to their deaths — regardless of whether it is their job or not — in order to pay less for a tank of gas?

I am shocked and disgusted with the American public's blind faith in our government's decision to make war.

War is ugly and costly. As a sophisticated nation, we should not have to sink to such a rudimentary form of retaliation. As an American citizen, a voter and a conscientious individual, I am protesting this war.

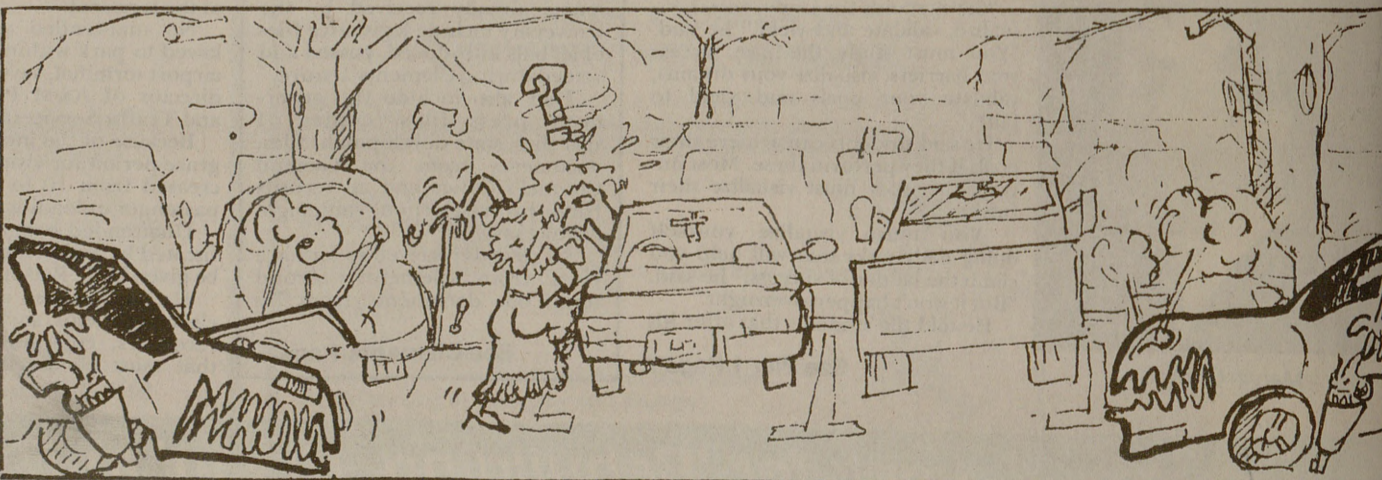
My fight is not with the troops in Saudi Arabia and Israel. They did not start this, and they have no control over the situation. I wish them the very best of luck and all the support I can give to bring them home.

My fight is with the government of the United States of America. Remember the power lies in the hands of the people. Are you willing to hand this power over to a government that is sending Americans to their deaths for the oil industry? Personally, I would rather spend more money for a tank of gas.

Julia Chaffe '93

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by Nito



The Battalion

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