

President Reagan met in the White House living quarters with Secretary of Defense Casper L. Weinberger to make a decision on the multi-billion-dollar MX missile plan, a key component of his national security strategy. Weinberger, sensing the president's weariness, did not spend much time on the merits of the alternative deployment schemes the Pentagon and Congress had been debating for years.

Instead, Weinberger hauled out a cartoon drawn by Mike Keefe of the Denver Post which showed Uncle Sam playing a shell game with a Russian, inviting him to guess which shell con-

I am a prejudiced party, because both books were written by journalistic colleagues and friends. Before "retiring," Bob Donovan was the Washington bureau chief for the old New York Herald Tribune and the Los Angeles Times. Lou Cannon is the White House correspondent for The Post.

Donovan and Cannon have managed to cross the bridge from daily newspapering to history and biography without losing their balance, and that is a rare enough kind of event to be celebrated by all of us in the business.

From the reader's standpoint, the great attrac-

tions were Reagan's campaigns and his tenure in Sacramento and Washington. He has talked with every insider at the White House and almost every living person who played a significant part in shaping Reagan's show business and political careers.

You come away from reading these books with the feeling that you understand these two presidents in a way you never did before. And when you have finished, you have been persuaded that these are two presidents who have mattered.

Donovan concludes his book this way: "Probably more than he realized, Truman cast a lot

## A Reply

On Sept. 6, Merrie Spaeth, director of the Office of Public Affairs of the Federal Trade Commission, took issue with a description of FTC Chairman James Miller as "a Reagan Visigoth busily sacking Washington." It was unfair, she felt, to use the name of these "peaceful, agricultural people" as a term of political opprobrium. "Happy souls, they knew no government or regulation in the modern sense."

We received some letters contesting this. Here is one Miss Spaeth received and was willing to share.

Mongolia  
September 7, 1982

Merrie Spaeth  
Federal Trade Commission  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Ms. Spaeth:

Read piece in paper you do on Visigoths. OK work. Visigoths get bum rap. Me too. How you like take on big job? My reputation been flooey for years. All Plutarch's fault, or mebbe Gibbon. One of those guys. Anyhow, mebbe you do piece for me for Washington Post or really big time paper like Grit. Explain how unhappy childhood made me unhappy guy too. Explain how pillaging merely effort to make world take notice of me. Explain how scratchy Mongolian clothes make anybody irrational. You get idea? Howzabout picture too? Mebbe me with little kid on knee going tickle tickle, or with little dog or kitty? I smile big for picture. Get that Raleigh guy to take it. Not too big smile though cause back teeth all gone. Fatty foods bad for teeth. What you say? Mebbe we meet in FTC cafeteria for a tall and frosty sometime soon. See guy in Marketing Practices division for address and phone number.

Yours for a better tomorrow,

Atilla

Looks like I write in blood, huh?  
Just ink. Ha. Ha. (Old Han joke)

## Jack Anderson

# Earthling Chron

Suppose that extraterrestrial creatures land on Earth 1,000 years hence—long after all life has been obliterated and only a few crumbling stones remain to mark mankind's former habitation. Like the archaeologists who stumbled upon the temples of Angkor Wat under the jungle growth, they try to reconstruct a picture of the civilization that once flourished where now only gigantic mutated kudzu and dandelions grow.

One of them, idly picking amid the ruins of a grand, domed edifice on a slight hill, discovers a miraculously preserved paper document, 212 pages of fine print titled—as the visitors' antiquarian language scholars quickly determine—"Congressional Record." The date: Wednesday, June 16, 1982.

What incredible luck! Here is the key to unlock the secrets of this long-departed society. The E.T. historians can now paint a vivid portrait of the vanished civilization.

From the fact that each house of Congress began its day's deliberations with a chaplain's prayer, the space explorers would conclude that this was a devoutly religious society. But they might wonder at the Senate chaplain's invocation that day and his call to arms against an unidentified "common enemy."

Against this background of violence and struggle, it would surely arouse admiration among the E.T. visitors to observe how calmly Congress found time to discuss aesthetic and philosophical matters of no discernible urgency. Such as:

"Mr. WYLIE. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of National Orchestra Week, which runs from June 13 through 19, I would like to take this opportunity to salute the Columbus Symphony Orchestra."

Or this:

"Mr. GINGRICH. Mr. Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of attending the dedication of the new corporate headquarters for Chick-fil-A in my district. Chick-fil-A is quite possibly the best boneless breast of chicken sandwich I have ever had."

It would be obvious to the historians that the august gentlemen and gentlewomen in Congress were not only society's leading intellectuals, but were renowned for their physical prowess as well. This would be clear from the space in the congressional chronicle devoted to internal athletic events—apparently championship contests of surpassing skill on which