

Editor
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Barry Kissin is quite correct in noting (6/4) that the single unauthorized White House staff helicopter trip to Holly Hills is insignificant compared with the waste of tax money in the abuses of the use of helicopters by our generals. He is also correct in pointing out the many enormous costs in so many areas of military wastefulness.

But when he says we "should all be thankful to our representative in Congress, Roscoe Bartlett, for complaining about" that trip to Holly Hills, I disagree. Either Congressman Bartlett is ignorant or is less than honest in ^{what} that got him all that fine national publicity because such and more costly joyriding has been the practice of all the administrations once the use of air transportation became possible.

With regard to helicopters alone this kind of misuse has been common, particularly to our area. That is recorded, among other places, in the disclosed Nixon tapes.

~~as~~ IN making something of nothing at a time the administration is ripe for criticism Congressman Bartlett, in increasing its unpopularity, is further reducing the prospects of a national health program that will protect all. And as I've not seen mentioned, such a program will reduce the burden on local governments all of which are supported by tax money in eliminating the large sums spent on those ~~in~~ in need of medical care and unable to get it other than from public assistance.

I am not saying this was the Congressman's intent. I am saying it is one of the results of his uninformed or misinformed complaint.

There were no public complaints about the ^{enormously} ~~nevertheless~~ more cost ^{ly} use of ~~military~~ military appropriations for aviation when, as ^{was} ~~our~~ local papers to their everlasting credit were alone to expose the Reagan administration's flying of countless persons each weekend ^m from Washington to ~~the~~ Nicaragua in an effort to create political support for his policies.

Without the many other costs to the taxpayer involved, those regular weekend jet flights were enormously ~~costly~~ costly and over so much more numerous.

Bartlett got a face wide of the cost of all of ~~us~~. Harold Weisberg

Harold Weisberg

Helicopter use

I suppose we should all be thankful to our representative in Congress, Roscoe Bartlett, for complaining about the helicopter ride some of President Clinton's aides took from Washington, D.C. to the Holly Hills Country Club. But where was Roscoe Bartlett (and the press for that matter) when only about six weeks ago the General Accounting Office (GAO) reported that generals and other lords in our military habitually use helicopters to get from the Pentagon to Andrews Air Force Base?

The GAO report pointed out that ground transportation would hardly take any more time and that this helicopter travel continues to cost taxpayers thousands and thousands of dollars. The fact is that Mr. Bartlett, as well as much of the press, are incapable of questioning any military expenditures. Failure to confront military excesses and waste is abject failure to seriously deal with our tax burdens and the massive amount of national debt.

BARRY J.C. KISSIN
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