

9/27/79 'And Until Russia

By Art Buchwald

Many representatives and senators who have to run for office next year are in serious trouble. Their constituents are unhappy and they feel that somehow Congress is to blame for a lot of their woes.

Therefore, we may see them campaigning on foreign issues rather than domestic ones. This could be a dangerous time for Americans and the world. In order to win an election many sane legislators are willing to get the voters riled up about different parts of the world which only seem to be a threat to our national security during an election year.

I attended the strategy meeting of Rep. Larry Bilge and his campaign staff the other day and it was enlightening.

"Larry," his manager said, "the poll results just came in and the people in

your district are sore as hell about energy, inflation and unemployment, not to mention the price of coffee. We got problems."

"Don't tell me," Bilge said. "I was home last weekend and my own mother told me she doesn't think I should have a raise. And I support her."

The manager said, "The thing we have to do is avoid the issues that are bugging the voters and bring up new ones that they haven't thought of."

"Give me the scenario," Bilge said.

"Okay, you're going to a town meeting in Daisy County next week. The first thing they're going to ask you is why they have to pay 90 cents a gallon for heating oil."

"What's my answer?"

"You can't do anything about heating oil until the United States gets the Soviet troops out of Cuba."

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"Do I want to go to war with Cuba?" Bilge asked.

His press secretary replied, "That decision is up to the president, but the time has come to stand up to the Soviets and say, 'No withdrawal—no SALT.'"

"I got it. Now what happens when

they ask me what Congress intends to do about inflation?"

"Tell them," his speechwriter said, "that the real danger to this country is not inflation but the Panama Canal Treaty, which you voted against. Say that you are not going to allow a two-bit dictator in a banana republic to

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push this country around. The time has come to fish or cut bait."

"I like that phrase," Bilge said. "Let me write it down."

The campaign manager referred to his yellow pad. "Okay, now we have a large unemployment problem in the district ever since the Cannibal Radio Co. pulled out and moved to the Sun Belt. Some wise guy is probably going to ask you what you intend to do about jobs."

"There's one in every crowd," Bilge said.

"You tell him the reason they don't have jobs is because we have a missile gap with the Soviet Union, and by 1985 we will be a second-class power. Unless the United States wakes up to the military threat from Moscow the unemployment rate will soar in this country and the economy of the Free

World will collapse without the Communists firing one shot."

"So much for the unemployment problem. What do I do when they ask me about the high cost of medical care?"

"You bring up the Cuban troops in Angola. There are now 50,000 Cuban troops in Angola pointing a dagger at the entire African continent, and if Castro doesn't pull them out soon you intend to see that Congress does."

"I know they're going to complain about food prices."

"Your answer to that," the press secretary said, "is that if the Vietnamese don't do something about the boat people you are going to urge the president to wipe Hanoi off the face of the earth."

"That should do it," Bilge said. "If this doesn't prove I'm concerned with their problems, nothing will."

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