

# Chronological: HGEA 4th Biennial Session, Honolulu

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news from

# Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

**topic:** HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION  
FOURTH BIENNIAL SESSION  
SHERATON WAIKIKI HOTEL

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In recent weeks political commentators and so-called professional politicians have been extremely critical of President Carter. They have derided him as being amateurish; some have called him foolish and others, outright stupid. And I suppose the reason for these harsh assessments relate to the President's strong involvement in three major and very critical issues -- all of them very controversial. The first--Energy; the second--the Panama Canal Treaty; and third, the most recent -- the Middle East Arms Sale. And many of those who have been critical have been in disagreement with the President on some of these issues, so let's discuss these three issues briefly because I think they are all very important to us. And let's see if President Carter is deserving of good grades or flunking grades.

First, the Energy Bill. Every President since Lyndon Baines Johnson, Richard Nixon and Jerry Ford--all of these Presidents were well aware that this country of ours was in the midst of an energy crisis. It was no secret. All of us knew that in a few years the supply of fossil fuel was going to be depleted; that someday we'll have to come up with alternate energy sources. These Presidents gave eloquent speeches. I can still remember President Nixon presenting his State of the Union speech spending over half of his speech on energy. But none of these Presidents, whether Democratic or Republican, did much more than giving speeches. Finally, one came along and he said "I will not duck the responsibility. I will not sweep this problem under the national rug." The professionals all said, "Look, why don't you let the next guy take over. Why mess around with all the oil interests, the uranium interests, the natural gas interests, the automobile manufacturers. These are big, powerful people. Why don't you just forget about this issue for the time being and let it roll along. We'll still have gasoline; it won't be too bad. Let the big guys make their profit and everyone'll be happy." Well, President Carter was fully aware of these powerful interests. But he decided that something had to be done--notwithstanding the advice of professional politicians--the fellows who figure they've got all the political savvy.

Thank God, we have an honest politician--one who is willing to face the facts, and I think as a result of this honesty he has had to suffer at the polls. And whatever you may say about him, whatever disagreements you may have about his policy on crude oil taxes, the way he treated natural gas, no one has ever accused President Carter of being a tool of special interests.

And so when the dust settles on the energy crisis -- and I would think that within a month we should have a bill on the President's desk -- President Carter should be deserving of a good mark, not a failing mark. I think he should have an "A" for the way he handled the energy problem, for the way he faced up to the problem, the way he refused to sweep it under the rug.

Now let's turn to the second issue -- the one that divided the country; where the emotions were the highest; where as a result, the President of the United States was hung in effigy. As a result, he was called a "traitor." As a result, some of us who supported him on this Panama Canal Treaty are now being sued in Federal Court for having failed to live up to the Constitution of the United States -- that's how bitter this issue was! Well, here again, since the Administration of Lyndon Johnson, through that of Richard Nixon and Jerry Ford -- all of these Presidents instructed their Secretaries of State to negotiate with the Panamanians. They gave beautiful speeches on our belief in human rights, in equity, in the dignity of man. Well, that's all they did. They gave good speeches. The politicians in Washington told President Carter, why don't you give a nice speech and be done with it. Just give a nice speech, tell the Panamanians, "We love you, brother, we love you, sister. And forget about it. Let the next guy handle it. It's been going on since LBJ's days." No, President Carter chose to act and on September 7, 1977, he as President of the United States in behalf of the people, signed this Treaty with Panama, and he called upon the United States Senate -- and believe me, most of the Senators did not want this to come before them -- to ratify these treaties. And he personally did whatever he could to bring about this ratification. Every Latin American country and our neighbor to the North supported the treaties.

Now, what's the issue in Panama? In a capsule, it's something like this. In 1903, there was a province of Panama; there was no country called Panama. There was a country called Colombia. President Roosevelt, the man with the big stick, sent his personal envoy to Colombia with a treaty to build a canal through Colombia. "The U.S. is ready to sign this and we want you to ratify it." said the American envoy. The Colombian Senate took a look at that treaty and said "no" unanimously. They turned it down. And they said, we don't want this because this is colonialism. We don't want European colonialism, we don't want American colonialism. So what did we do? We immediately left and went to the officials of the Province of Panama and we told them, why don't you have a revolution here. We will support you with arms; we will support with troops. And we sent the United States cruiser, Nashville, to Panama to demonstrate our military muscle power. And we told the Colombian government: "If you send one soldier across the border, we're going to blast you." That's how we created Panama! Within two weeks, in the dark of night, in the home of our Secretary of State, we signed the treaty that we we drafted, and the person who signed it for the Panamanians was not a Panamanian. He was a Frenchman. He was the man who was the chief engineer for the French government when they tried to build the canal. For this we gave him \$40 million; we gave the Panamanian \$10 million. And we promised them, nine years from the signing that we will give them \$250,000 a year rental for this piece of property. It is almost impossible to lease 10,000 square feet in Waikiki for \$250,000 a year. That's how we got Panama -- a 10-mile strip right consisting of 533 square miles right in the middle of this country. If a Panamanian living in the south wanted to go up north, he had to cross this zone, this little strip, subject to American-made laws. Human rights and human dignity were empty phrases. We forced them to sign this treaty. But, some wise politician said, so what, we stole it fair and square.

Well in the face of all this opposition, Jimmy Carter decided to go ahead. He said, how can we go throughout the world and proclaim our belief in the dignity of mankind -- that whether he be black, brown, yellow, or white we're all equal, and while at the same time maintain a American-made colonial system in Panama?" And, ladies and gentlemen, if this treaty had not been ratified, our relationship with all the other Latin American countries would have been horrible.

Right now, I think we would be faced with virulent demonstrations all over Latin America; our diplomats would be having a difficult time; and our standing in human society would have gone down. But that's history now. Jimmy Carter was successful, but he was successful at a very significant political cost.

The professional politicians told him he could have waited and swept this matter under the national rug. He decided not to. So the question is -- was he stupid to go ahead with the treaty or did he do the right thing? I think he did the right thing! He did what we as Americans can be proud of. Because there was no other choice. So I think he deserves an "A+" for what he did in Panama Canal. Not to be hung in effigy. Not to be spat upon.

And finally we come to an issue that has not only divided our country, it has split the Democratic Party! The sale of the sophisticated aircraft to three countries in the Middle East -- Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. 50 less sophisticated F-5E's, the last generation-type fighters to Egypt; 60 F-15s to Saudi Arabia; and 35 F-15s and 75 F-16s to Israel. As you may know, we promised the Israelis to provide them with these sophisticated aircraft as part of the Sinai II agreement and to make up for the loss they may have suffered in defensive strength as a result of the withdrawal from the Suez. President Ford also promised to Saudi Arabia, the same type of aircraft. And recently, because of the plea and the request made by Anwar Sadat -- he was getting concerned about the activities in Ethiopia and Libya -- President Carter agreed to sell Egypt these F-5Es all of us can differ on the judgment as to whether these promises should have been made or should not have been made. But the fact remains these promises were made in the name of the people of the United States and the question came before us -- what do we do about it? Well these are some of the facts: As far as intelligence experts are concerned, it is unanimous that at this moment, the State of Israel can enter into battle with any and all Arab countries and they will come out victorious -- whether it's a combination of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, or adding to this, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Kuwait, Oman. Some people say, how can that be possible?

There are more Arabians than Jews. But in this type of situation, numbers alone do not bring about the significant result. On one hand, you have the training, the sophisticated weaponry, the outstanding leadership, the motivation -- and the motivation is a history of 4,000 years of holocaust after holocaust. With that type of motivation, you're not going to be sitting around trying to be comfortable. And that is what is decisive here. And there's also general agreement among all the experts that the sale of these arms to Saudi Arabia, and to Egypt, and to Israel will not bring about this change in the balance of power in that part of the world. Now what is the bottom line here? The bottom line is simple -- the national interest of the United States. We should always keep that in mind. It should not be the national interest of Saudi Arabia, it should not be the national interest of Egypt or of Israel but the national interest of these United States. The national interest of the United States call for the following: Peace in the Middle East for very practical reasons. It just happens that the major source of fossil fuels -- that precious sticky thing, oil -- is located in that part of the world. Western Europe is almost totally dependent upon the Middle East for its oil. Japan is about 92% dependent upon oil from that part of the world. And we are dependent by nearly 50%. Our national interest calls for stability and peace in the Middle East. Now you would say, how does this type of package bring about this stability and peace? Well, let's assume that we went against the President and decided to sell the Israelis 110 highly sophisticated jet aircraft -- the F-15s and F-16s -- but not to the Saudis or the Egyptians. Well, it just happens that at this present time, the best interest of Israel is served by having Anwar Sadat as President of Egypt and King Khalid as King of Saudi Arabia. These are moderate rulers.

They are not like the radicals you find in Iraq. These are not the ones who are rattling their swords. These are people who are pretty sensible. These are leaders who know that eventually they must all live together as the good Lord intended.

Because after all, if you study the history of that part of the world, they're all from the same group -- they're all semitics. They all trace their ancestry to Abraham. They want to get together but they have emotional differences at this time. And so let's say we decided just to take care of Israel only. Would you expect King Khalid and Anwar Sadat to just sit by and smile and say, "Well Jimmy Carter, we know you've got problems so we understand." First, I think it would be safe to assume that Saudi Arabia, who has been in the forefront, who has been the leader in OPEC, to keep oil prices down is going to say, okay, boys, let's raise 'um. And then the radicals in Khalid's administration may take over and say, "Your Majesty, I think it's about time we did what we have been suggesting -- cut the exports in half and save the oil so we can hold on to our fortune. Why dump it all now?" You know, wise people agree, why should the Saudis sell all the oil now and find themselves without their treasure in a few years. Just imagine what the economy will be like in the United States. Imagine what it would be like in Europe. And guess what happens in Japan. And who is going to be the scapegoat? Who will the people of the United States pick on? I am certain you know who they will pick on. And we don't want that to happen. And so the President decided -- notwithstanding the advice of all the professional politicians -- in spite of the opposition from the most powerful and effective lobby in the United States -- despite the fact that it may split the party in half -- decided that the national interest of this country was foremost! And he took that step. And thank God, we have a President who is willing to face up and meet these challenges head on.

I am privileged, as one of the leaders of the United States Senate, to meet with the President weekly -- every other week we have breakfast with him in the White House. It's a very private meeting, just about 10 of us -- five from the Administration and five from Congress. And we discuss problems in a very intimate fashion. Assessments are made. It's refreshing to see a President -- I don't care whether you call him foolish, whether you call him amateurish or stupid, it is refreshing to see a President who is able to see the problem and face up to it.

It is refreshing to see a President who puts first and foremost, the national interest of these United States. But as a result, the first 17 months of the Administration of Jimmy Carter have been turbulent ones. No tranquility. It has been full of controversy -- never a dull moment in Washington! And they have been filled with controversy because, as I said, he was willing to face up to our problems -- energy, Panama Canal, the Middle East. And today we're faced with increasing problems from the Soviet Union, the activities of Cuba. What our response will be is still to be determined but after having observed Jimmy Carter in office for 17 months, I have confidence in that man. Because I know whatever he does, it will be an honest decision. It may be a painful one--very likely it will be a controversial one--but it will be an honest one. And he will not sweep it under the rug.

And so while many political pros delight in taking pokes at Jimmy Carter, I remain reassured on the basis of his performance on the big issues. And as one American, I am very thankful that we have a President who is willing to stand up to these tough decisions. And I say to you, not only as a Democrat but as an American, Jimmy Carter is deserving of good grades for his first 17 months. And I think his grades will continue to be good.