

# Reagan has image problem

by Helen Thomas  
United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Reagan's early June trip to Europe may come just in time to give his falling fortunes a lift.

In the book of political cliches, it has been true that when a president travels abroad and his leadership qualities are displayed with great fanfare, the country rallies in support, and his stock rises.

Reagan's decline in popularity and performance ratings are viewed by some aides as a traditional drop as a president moves into his second year.

The president had warned of sacrifices that would have to be made to curtail the size of government and its services. But his proposals are hurting more than expected, and there is a growing doubt that there will be an economic turn around by early summer, which he and his aides have forecast.

The White House way of dealing with the problem is to isolate the president more and more. As the days go on, his public and official activities are being curtailed.

The perception that his top aides have extraordinary power remains, although there are more instances apparent now that Reagan is running his own show. His aides, who never hesitate to go on television to explain what Reagan means or intends, can be and have been wrong.

Reagan clearly is a man who wants to keep his campaign promises, and who is

determined to stick to his own ideology even when it comes under severe attack.

The media coverage of Reagan is now almost totally managed by his aides — obviously with the president's approval — with stringent new gag rules on reporters. All cameramen are welcome.

Meantime, the speeches that Reagan gives in his radio addresses and to sympathetic groups he gathers around him in the White House now have a noticeably bitter defensive edge. To religious leaders he had to repeatedly give assurances that his administration was not abandoning a "commitment to the poor."

The raft of social programs he has tried to reduce, or at least to realign, have aroused public concern, and on that score Reagan finds himself on the defensive. The subject of college student loans was particularly irritating and he used the unusual forum of a radio speech from Barbados to insist that there was no change in the thrust of the program.

As contacts lessen with the president — and on many days neither reporters nor cameramen see him — Reagan appears more and more to be an isolated and insulated president.

Even when he goes outside the White House to speak or travels outside of town, the security considerations make it impossible for the old give and take, contacts with crowds, and the human story of a president. If that persists he will become even more encapsulated, and more remote.

But in the coming months there will be increasing pressure on Reagan to campaign for Republican candidates, and his political strategists are playing hard ball to keep the troops in line.

White House political adviser Edward J. Rollins told reporters "the Republicans have to get back in line" behind the president. He also made it clear there would be penalties for Republican politicians such as Sens. Bob Packwood of Oregon and Lowell P. Weicker Jr. of Connecticut who have publicly criticized the president.

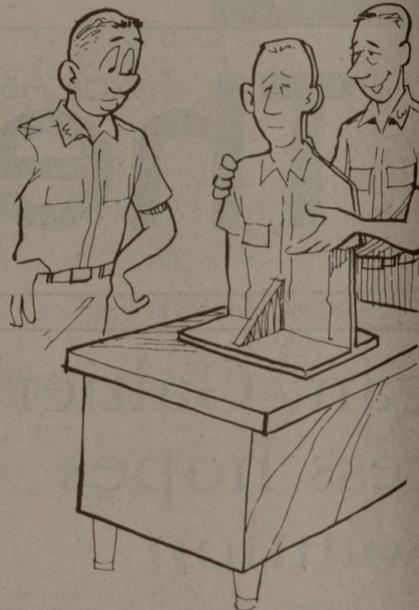
Rollins also chided administration officials who have done nothing to disabuse the public that Reagan makes mistakes. "We've done more damage to ourselves than anyone else has."

He stressed no Republican will get Reagan help unless he falls in line.

Rollins is urging Reagan to step up his travel schedule and to purchase broadcast time to broaden his audiences beyond the weekly Saturday five-minute radio programs. The radio speeches have commanded a wide audience and assure the president of coverage in the Sunday newspapers.

Reagan now has an image problem. All presidents get to that stage. He is trying to overcome it. The trip to Europe and the scheduled major nuclear disarmament at the United Nations later in June may help.

## Slouch By Jim Earle



"I intend to put it in my seat during the last week. I think all graduating seniors should have one!"

## Reader's Forum: equal Sec means freedom from fe

Editor:

I would like to compliment Phyllis Henderson on her excellent article which appeared in the April 7th edition of The Battalion on page 2. The article was headlined "Apartment Break-in Causes Unconscious Fears to Surface." But I would like to point out that the title is somewhat of a misnomer, as Henderson (correctly) indicates there is nothing "unconscious" (she uses the word "subconscious") in a wise woman's constant awareness of her vulnerability to harassment and assault, even in the reputedly conservative, mild-mannered environs of Texas A&M University.

Henderson's experience of fear (unfortunately not unique) corroborates a contention put forth by Susan Brownmiller in her book "Against Our Will," namely, that women in patriarchal cultures such as ours are held in subjugation by men through what may be an unconscious conspiracy on their part. Women are presented as the most ready victims of violence, as they proffer the least resistance in both mental attitude and brute physical strength. It is the popular orientation that it is up to the woman to secure her own safety and well-being, not up to society to assure her the same freedom of movement (during the day or the night, to any locale she wishes to frequent), or freedom of choice in her habilitment or even the neighborhood of her domicile, that many men enjoy. In conjunction with the attitude that it is up to the woman to protect herself, if a woman

should be violated, instead of giving support it is often claimed that she should "asked for it," or was not conscious enough. Read: It's her problem, ours. Just how much conscientiousness endured by women in this context fact frequently neglected; it is women are encouraged to approach a state of paranoia in order to erect a guard against attack.

This is not to say that in our society all members — man, child and the elderly, as well as women — not exposed to similar dangers, women as a sex are indoctrinated an early age that it is their responsibility to prevent and not provoke (even, obscure fashion) invasions to their privacy and bodies. This can be psychologically damaging and burdensome to female, as she is made to feel constrained and set against by society instead of society making her feel an equal member with full privileges.

I think a more peaceful and caring society would benefit every one. I think it would radically alter the status women, as in this regard it a problem they confront. Following a vote, birth control, and economic stability, I think the next big step towards equality in rights, expressed in respect between men and women is the resolution of this problem of women being to be where they want, with whom they want, in what they want, without intimidation.

Jude K. Swain  
Philosophy



## Letters: Students mean more than quotas for colleg

Today I attended a gripe session where the Deans of the College of Engineering tried to explain the problems they faced as the largest engineering school in the nation. Each administrator who spoke complained that there were too few instructors and too few funds to accommodate the 10,000-plus students in their jurisdiction. Yet, they continue to actively recruit more students by promising the use of excellent facilities (which the administrators admitted are not adequate for the number of students currently enrolled in engineering) and wonderful faculty (Texas A&M as a leading research institute).

According to their own statistics of competency levels in Mechanical Engineering 212, the quality of engineering students entering has risen, while the abilities of the students leaving the class has dropped considerably during the last 10 years. Dr. Page, the dean of engineering, said, "We are not trying to flunk out students." I believe he is telling the truth. Instead they are trying to meet quotas.

They are not dealing with students, they are dealing with enrollment numbers. Failure is recognized as part of any competitive system, but the false hopes given to prospective students regarding Texas A&M Engineering is fraud. When I asked Assistant Dean of Engineering Stan Lowy about methods the College of Engineering uses in recruiting, Lowy's reply was that they are "old enough to vote" and they are "old enough to drink," they should know that what we tell them (prospective students) is "PR" (propaganda).

Case in Point: Wednesday, I saw a computing science professor taking a pair of prospective students through

Zachry. He was expounding on the benefits of Texas A&M Computer Science, showing them the computer facilities on campus. He failed to mention that the approximately 30 terminals in the industrial engineering lab (about 12 MV 8000s, 3 Eclipses, 15 Wylburs) were being used by many of the 10,000 students enrolled in engineering courses. Nor did he mention that the waiting time for a terminal usually runs between 30 minutes and an hour at prime time. He even failed to mention that computing science majors are not assigned advisers during their first two years of study.

It is too bad that a glut of engineering students exists at Texas A&M, too many for the system to handle at the present time, but someone needs to warn these prospective engineers. Even though some students need to modify their degree plans, is it really necessary to banish students from the University because of low grades they receive in engineering? Couldn't the Engineering Department develop a program where students are treated as individuals, rather than parts of a 43 percent failure quota?

A former CS major turned journalist by choice rather than failure,

Donn Friedman '84

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Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length, and are subject to being cut if they are longer. The editorial staff

reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must also be signed, show the address and phone number of the writer.

Articles for Reader's Forum are also welcome, and are not subject to the same length constraints as letters. Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

### Write your representative

Editor:

As a concerned citizen, I am writing this letter to ask you (as a student at Texas A&M University) to write to your congressman to oppose House bill HR 5158. The legislation is not in the best interests of either the Bell System or the nation.

There are several important reasons why this bill must be opposed. First, there is no reason why Congress has to speed up this legislation. It is only an attempt to restructure the Bell System before the court has time to rule on the divestiture proposed by the Department of Justice. The bill disregards the interests of three million Bell System share owners, most of whom are individuals with small holdings. It is also a threat to the jobs of Bell System employees.

What is most alarming about this bill is that it is patently unfair to the Bell System, giving its competitors virtually every break. The bill would continue to saddle Bell customers with the burden of sub-

sidizing Bell's competitors. The constraints placed on AT&T's ability to compete would put in question this nation's continued leadership in telecommunications. In short, this bill will make telecommunications service in our nation poorer and ultimately more costly.

With this in mind, I urge you to join me in opposing this ill-conceived bill. Writing to Congressman Phil Gramm

Richard J. Gosselin

### The Battalion

USPS 045 360

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The Battalion is published daily during Texas A&M fall and spring semesters, except for holiday and examination periods. Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester, \$33.25 per school year and \$35 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

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