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Reagan stresses economy

United Press International
WASHINGTON — President Reagan says "nothing is more painful" to him than the slow progress of his economic recovery program, but insists "we are working our way back to prosperity."

At his nationally broadcast news conference Wednesday, Reagan requested patience and vowed to stick with his plan despite mounting criticism and rising deficit projections.

"We've begun to rescue this economy, but it's only the beginning," he said. "I think we're going to see an improvement in the second half of this year." He declined to predict how much, however.

Economic questions dominated the 12th news conference of Reagan's presidency, but he also was touched on a number of other topics — most

of them involving foreign policy.

He said he remains optimistic about Middle East peace efforts; expressed "no second thoughts" about his ban of U.S. technology to the Soviet Union; said he would soon announce whether a grain export agreement with the Soviet Union would be extended, and said he wants to foster relations with China without abandoning Taiwan.

The news conference followed by one day a projection by the director of the Congressional Budget Office the federal deficit is likely to swell to between \$140 billion and \$160 billion for each of the next three years — even if Congress makes all the spending cuts and tax increases it is considering.

Reagan said deficits cannot "be laid at any one person's door," but if the

Congress had passed his "full supply-side economic program" of sharp budget and tax cuts last year, the deficits would be smaller now.

House Speaker Thomas O'Neill, D-Mass., in a statement after the news conference, charged Reagan "is trying to hide from his own record."

He said Congress last summer "passed the Reagan tax bill, the Reagan budget, and the Reagan reconciliation bill."

"He promised to balance the budget by 1983. Instead he has presided over the highest federal deficits in history," O'Neill said. He said the president's program "has thrown 3 million more Americans into unemployment."

Reagan reeled off a string of economic statistics — a rise in real personal income, increase in retail sales

and a slight drop in interest rates — to buttress his assertion recovery is knocking at the nation's door.

And he told reporters, "I'm not through with cutting in spending — I'm going to ask for more, I'm going to ask for more cuts."

Said Reagan, "Slowly, surely we are working our way back to prosperity."

He said, "Some of our people are still suffering and nothing is more painful to me than the slowness of our progress."

He called for support and patience and said, "We must have the courage to believe in ourselves."

On another matter, Reagan said he will announce his decision shortly on whether the U.S. will extend for one year the grain sale agreement with the Soviet Union.



staff photo by Octavio Garcia

The disasters of war

Margaret Hansen, a junior premed major from Dallas, observes the details in one of the Goya etchings on display in the Rudder Tower. The etchings are part of a 50 to 60 piece Goya collection. The etchings show Spain during Napoleon's invasion. The exhibit ends this week.

Evangelist, 11 others killed

Plane crashes in east Texas

United Press International
VAN — The sudden, violent death of Keith Green rocked the evangelical enclave northwest of Tyler in east Texas where he and other nationally prominent evangelicals moved for a tranquil alternative to big cities.

Green, 28, two of his children, and nine others died Wednesday, seconds after a twin-engine plane, leased to his organization, Last Days Ministry, crashed into a towering stand of trees 500 yards beyond the end of the ministry's airstrip.

Eight of the victims were members of the John Smalley family of Simi Valley, Calif. The family was visiting the ministry compound when the crash occurred.

In a recent interview, Green said the Last Days Ministry fled what they considered the hostile environment of Los Angeles for the rolling countryside near Van, 20 miles northwest of Tyler.

"Texas is like another country compared to that," Green said.

Green, also one of the country's top contemporary Christian music composers and performers, said he was attracted by the fellowship of his friends in the other ministries, and the lack of big city headaches like zoning, building codes, and the high cost of living. The central location was also a lure.

Though spacious and equipped with modern amenities, the Last Days

Ministry compound reflects the spartan, evangelistic resolve that drove Green and other charismatic leaders to choose northwestern Smith County as their staging ground.

The 2,640-foot dirt airstrip leads to a lodge which together with two dormitory-style buildings gives the facility the appearance of a summer camp.

About 80 people staff the base which turns out 150,000 Christian pamphlets weekly on its computerized, \$1 million typesetting, printing and folding system. A mission training school also is operated.

Near the Last Days Ministry compound are other bases of such groups as The Agape Force, World Challenge, Calvary Commission, Youth

with a Mission and the organization of evangelist Dave Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade."

In a recent interview, Green said all the groups, from those that publish to those that perform, share a desire to see large numbers of people converted.

"All have an intensive desire in seeing the world come to Jesus Christ," said Green. "While many have this desire, we are very intensive about it. We are fed up with the failure of church as a whole to represent Christ. We feel God has called on us to do some shaking. We want to do more than just the fellowship. We want a 24-hour burning desire to serve the people."

Cease-fire ends week of fighting in Beirut

United Press International
U.S. envoy Philip Habib worked today to get a firm commitment that cornered PLO guerrillas will leave west Beirut where a U.S.-mediated cease-fire stopped a week of deadly Israeli air, land and sea bombardments.

As the cease-fire began late Wednesday, police and security sources said at least 18 people were killed and 200 others wounded in what Lebanese newspapers called the "13 hours of inferno" that immediately preceded the truce.

Habib arranged the cease-fire after returning to Beirut Wednesday at the end of a week-long tour which took him to Syria, Israel, Egypt, Britain and Italy.

Reports from Israel said Habib's most pressing objective was to obtain an unequivocal pledge from the Palestine Liberation Organization saying it would leave Beirut. The reports said Habib was hoping to get his pledge by the weekend.

But Abu Saleh, a member of the Central Committee of PLO leader Yasser Arafat's Al Fatah group, said his men will not leave Lebanon until the Israeli army withdraws.

"We will continue our struggle and will not drop our weapons until Israeli troops leave Lebanon," Abu Saleh told his men during an inspection tour of guerrilla positions in besieged west Beirut.

Just before Habib arranged the war's seventh cease-fire Wednesday between Israel and the remnants of the Palestine Liberation Organization, an Israeli rocket hit a deserted wing of the Makassed Hospital in west Beirut.

Other late shelling set parts of the city ablaze as an Israeli official warned that if the guerrillas attempt to stall and use the lull in hostilities as a cover to launch attacks, "They are going to get hell."

Habib met Lebanese President Elias Sarkis and Prime Minister Cheikh Wazzan on arrival from Israel, where he promised to tell Prime Minister Menachem Begin by Friday whether the PLO will make an "unequivocal commitment" to withdraw.

A senior Israeli official said Israel "was setting no deadlines and issuing no ultimatums. The two days was Habib's own initiative. But no one is going to watch Philip Habib with a stopwatch."

In a televised news conference Wednesday, President Reagan said he was "optimistic a solution is going to be found." The alternative was an Israeli invasion to take west Beirut by force, despite a predicted huge cost in lives.

Wazzan, after meeting with Habib, agreed with Reagan's assessment.

"There are some positive signs a solution may be possible," he said.

But Hani al Hassan, chief political

adviser to PLO leader Yasser Arafat, indicated there would be no evacuation of the 6,000 guerrillas trapped in west Beirut until Israel pulls back its forces.

Spokesmen for the PLO said Habib appeared to have nothing new to offer them.

The first attempt Wednesday to silence the guns that traded fire without respite for 35 hours in Beirut was ignored.

In one burst of shelling, Israel struck the empty doctor's section of Makassed hospital, the city sports palace and several locations in suburbs west and south of Beirut.

The rightist Phalange Radio reported numerous fires had broken out and said in the northern city of Zogharta, a booby-trapped car exploded, killing three people and wounding 35.

By late evening, however, the blacked-out western half of the city was quiet.

Lebanese government officials reported Habib had received conditional pledges from Syria, Jordan and Egypt to grant asylum to PLO guerrillas.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak told a U.S. congressional delegation Wednesday Egypt will give refuge to as many as half of the guerrillas in exchange for U.S. support for a Palestinian homeland.



staff photo by Octavio Garcia

Sweet anniversary

Blue Bell Ice Cream celebrates its 75th anniversary with an old-fashioned birthday party. Their celebration came complete with kids, a picnic lunch, a clown/magician and, of course, ice cream. The party was held at Sul Ross Park in Bryan.



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forecast

Partly cloudy with highs near 100; low in the upper-70s. Friday's forecast calls for more of the same.

Fire equipment consultant dies

John W. Vermillion of Sulphur Springs, a 67-year-old equipment consultant attending the world's largest firefighting school as a guest, died early Wednesday morning after suffering a heart attack in his dormitory room on the Texas A&M campus.

Vermillion had regularly attended the annual Texas Firemen's Training School as a representative of companies which manufacture firefighting and rescue equipment.

Officials emphasized that Vermillion had not taken part in any of the strenuous firefighting drills that are conducted in the afternoons as part of the training.

Col. Thomas Parsons, director of traffic and security at Texas A&M, said Vermillion was pronounced

dead at St. Joseph's Hospital in Bryan at about 3:20 a.m. Parsons said rescue personnel were summoned to Hobby Hall by Vermillion's roommate.

Vermillion's death is the first that has occurred during the program in several years, said Chief Henry Smith, head of the organization which conducts the school. Smith said there have only been about three deaths during training since he joined the Fire Protection Training Division more than 30 years ago. The organization now trains about 20,000 firefighters a year, including more than 4,000 during the annual three-week fire school now under way.

Funeral arrangements are being handled by the Tapt Funeral Home in Sulphur Springs.