

opinion



It's plain, Reagan is running

by Helen Thomas
United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Reagan's top aides do not know how to say it louder or more clearly than they have: "He's running."

But the timing for Reagan's announcement to the world that he wants a second term in the White House is what is confusing. He has made all the moves of a candidate, and yet maintained his presidential demeanor.

In a recent interview, pointedly limited to how he views the age factor and how he enjoys his job, Reagan made it plain he will seek re-election, and feels that he is physically up to the job.

Much as he seeks the seclusion and solace of his mountaintop ranch for renewal, he feels he would be bored if he decided to opt for retirement at the age of 73.

When brought into the White House, Republican leaders have been pacified with broad hints from Reagan that they will be happy with his decision.

When the president goes to his Santa Barbara ranch for a vacation in August, he is expected to meet with various GOP state chairmen who will fly in for a chat. He also will huddle with his top political advisers at that time.

But even then, aides are expecting Reagan to hold off his formal announcement until around Thanksgiving.

Vice President George Bush has been told by Reagan that he wants him in the

No. 2 spot on the ticket, and Bush seems to be happy about that.

In recent weeks, the president has been highly visible on the road and has picked a topic his aides believe will be a hot one in the campaign — promoting excellence in public schools.

There are other signs in the wind. The administration is suddenly moving in the direction of more affirmative action in

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the civil rights field with the school desegregation suit against Alabama. The proposed amendments to fair housing laws also create a new aura for the administration.

With the economy on the upswing, Reagan feels he has a springboard to seek re-election. Hence he and other administration officials are strongly urging that there be no increase in interest rates, which they feel could inhibit economic recovery.

Reagan still has a problem with the so-called "fairness" issue and the wide perception that he is a "rich man's presi-

dent." But he is trying to overcome that and feels that his personal acquaintance with the Great Depression make him well aware of economic hardship.

Reagan also has some fence mending to do with women voters. The polls show that women do not feel that he is sympathetic to their concerns, and his opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment has hurt him with women activists.

Although he has appointed two women in the Cabinet and one on the Supreme Court, he has a hard time convincing women that he has given the same break as some of his predecessors.

So far, none of Reagan's political supporters feels that he has been hurt politically by the investigation of how President Carter's campaign briefing book and other documents landed in the hands of the Reagan team in 1980. Reagan has taken the high ground in demanding a "full and complete and total" investigation by the Justice Department.

The president has some aces up his sleeve that could raise his political stock before November 1984. By that time, he could achieve an arms reduction treaty with the Soviet Union and claim that it is much better than SALT II, the pact that Jimmy Carter and Leonid Brezhnev signed in Vienna in 1979.

A summit meeting between Reagan and Soviet President Yuri Andropov also could go a long way in enhancing Reagan's image as a statesman and a peacemaker.

Bigwigs indulge in corny jokes, too

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Backstairs at the White House:

Presidents and the bigwigs in government indulge in chit chat just like anyone else — especially if they are trying to keep occupied when reporters and photographers are permitted into the Oval Office to record those historic moments.

The meetings are usually important. But the president, of course, does not

want to be asked any substantive questions. So there is "dead" air time to fill.

This is the way it went when Reagan met with Max Kampelman, the U.S. representative to the Madrid Conference on East-West issues with Secretary of State George Shultz and Vice President George Bush chiming in.

As the press was ushered into the room, Reagan turned to Shultz and said:

"Isn't it amazing. You might have 50 ties in your closet but then you only wear a half a dozen of them."

Picking up the ball, Shultz said it reminded him of a time when there was a move for a new library at the University of Chicago where he was the dean of the school of business. He said a librarian friend told him a study showed 55 percent of the books in the library are not read.

Shultz said he suggested these unused books be stored some place safe and be replaced in a smaller building with books that are read more often. "Well, that went over like a lead balloon," he told the president.

On that cue, Reagan said he was "trying to remember about a time when one of the schools in California had a problem in moving its library. And all of a sudden I learned that the kids had set up a bucket brigade and literally moved the books, passed them all and got it done."

When a reporter then interjected with a question about the Madrid conference, Bush ran to the rescue, saying this business about asking questions reminded him of the "old question and answer story."

"The question is, I mean the answer is Eddy Nelson," Bush said. "Well," he then asked the president, "do you know what the question is?"

Reagan said, "No," to which Bush smilingly informed him: "How does Nelson Eddy put his name in the phone book."

At that point, reporters and cameramen were ushered out amid the loud laughter of the nation's statesmen.

Letters: Pedestrian bike traffic conflict

Editor:

An open letter to Robert E. Wiatt, director of University Police Department:

There is a serious safety problem developing on the Texas A&M University campus. The use of the sidewalks by motorcycles, mopeds, and bicycles is conflicting with pedestrian traffic for which they are designed. The operators of these vehicles travel too fast and are inconsiderate of the people on foot. It is only a matter of time before someone is hurt.

If my interpretation of the Motor Vehicle Regulations is correct, it is unlawful to operate a motor vehicle on any sidewalk, mall, or lawn; this also includes mopeds. Why is this not enforced? Lack of manpower cannot be the reason — a casual look to any parking lot answers that. It would be reassuring to see an officer patrolling heavily used areas and stopping this dangerous and unlawful practice, making the sidewalks safer for pedestrians.

The next move would be to remove the bicycles from all but selected sidewalks. The updating of the bicycle lanes, which is near completion, provides ample facilitation for bicycle use; however, I realize that negligent bicycle use is difficult to enforce.

Wheeled traffic and foot traffic are clearly incompatible, and at other recognized universities they have been segregated. This is a move worth taking for the safe and efficient movement of people across campus. If you, as Director of the University Police Department, choose to ignore this problem some innocent pedestrian is likely to be hit from behind resulting in serious injuries and legal conflicts. Also, past letters and opinions in *The Battalion* display some latent hostility, which if allowed to develop any further may create violent conflicts between pedestrians and vehicle operators over the right to use the sidewalks.

Please respond to this letter in a timely fashion. You have plenty of time to plan strategies for the fall and I'm sure the increased safety, not to mention revenues from citations, will justify the effort.

Steven E. No

Critical of letter

Editor:

I like reading letters from people. Stephen Weiss because it doesn't seem to detect the type of mental handicap. Mr. Weiss immediately goes into a defense of affirmative action and disparages prejudice and the audacity to castigate others for being right vs. wrong judgments.

Mr. Weiss, are you the hypocrite of the century or don't you have the faculties to know you're making wrong judgments yourself?

Steve's support for a government which espouses "freedom and equality for all" yet "has to ensure... the minorities are treated fairly" shows the duplicity common among people of his ilk. You cannot ensure things he advocates without using some form of governmental coercion, taking away someone's freedom.

Basically Mr. Weiss doesn't care about anyone's freedom; he only wants to see his oppressive social philosophy imposed on the public by some level of government while telling lies about how he believes in freedom.

What Mr. Weiss really wants is a type of freedom and equality they have in Russia; the freedom to do what they tell you and the right of all people to be treated equally, like dogs.

Richard H. Foster

Obnoxious music threatens to our national defense

by James O. Clifford
United Press International

SAN FRANCISCO — There's real danger that nuclear weapons will become America's Maginot Line, giving us a false sense of security while the enemy perfects a weapon that will render us powerless.

Believe me, I am committed to a strong national defense and would never, never do anything to aid the U.S.S.R. or undermine our moral fiber, if there's any left.

However, my sources, which I can't name, tell me Soviet scientists are well on the way to perfecting a device that will render our youth incapable of movement, freezing them in place like so many statues.

The weapon is devilishly simple: a beam that silences any radio playing loud music.

Just open your ears the next time you walk down any busy street and you'll know how the Russians got the idea.

Teen-agers carrying radios as heavy as a machine gun plow through crowds blaring songs that drown out police sirens. Cars roar by with windows down and horrible sounds flowing out in all directions — driven by future tank drivers who one day could become as immobile as Hitler's Panzers stuck in Russian mud.

One is not even immune on buses that here have signs reading: "No smoking, eating or radios." Smokers are thrown off but I've yet to see anyone tell somebody to "turn that &?!\$&½? thing off."

I catch my bus at 5 a.m., the same as a young man opens a gas station near a depot. The first thing he does is turn on a radio that wakes the neighborhood before the roosters crow. It's as regular as the flag raising at Fort McHenry.

I have teen-age sons who can't take a shower without a radio on. I asked the oldest how he could hear it with the radio running and he answered: "I don't know. I feel it."

When they mow the lawn, so many portable radios are placed at strategic spots so no matter where they are, they won't miss a beat.

And study without a radio on? You got to be kidding.

Remember the scene in "Guadalcanal Diary" where Marine William Bend Sin comes frustrated because the radio he lugged ashore breaks down just when the announcer's about to broadcast the score of the World Series? He wanted to know something, not feel something.

Contrast that with the radios blaring from helicopters as they attack in the Vietnam War movie "Apocalypse Now."

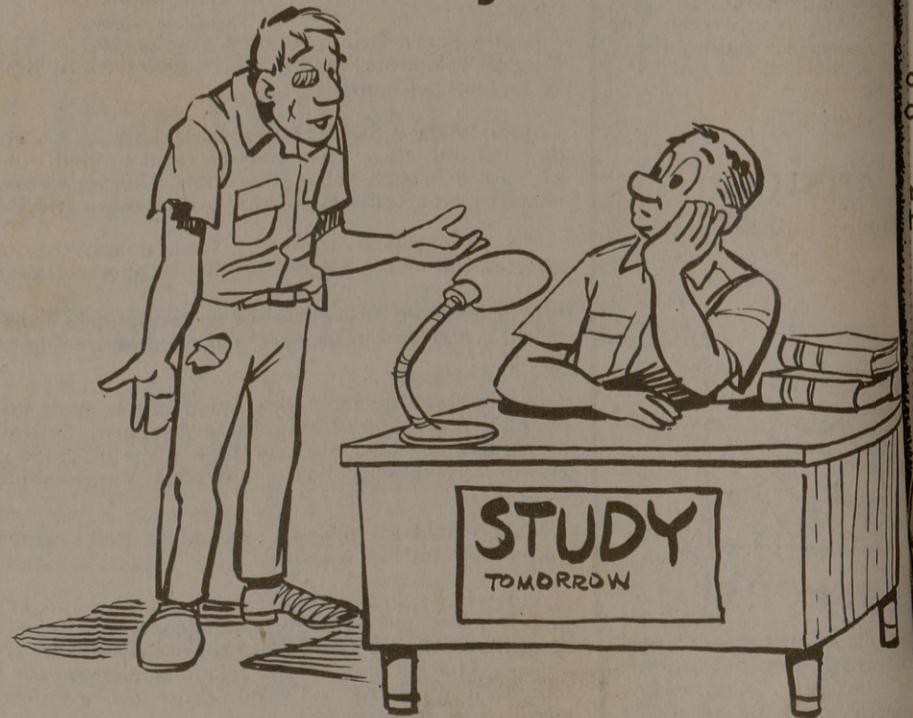
If the enemy had the weapon that silences radios, they wouldn't have had to fire a shot.

We may just have to end up fighting the next big one with people over their ears and pulling crabgrass — and where will national defense be then?

On the other hand, maybe the enemy has the same problem.

Perhaps someday SALT will stand for Strategic Audio Limitation Talks.

Slouch By Jim Earle



"I've learned one thing in political science already — class participation will be risky this year!"

The Battalion

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

Questions or comments concerning any editorial matter should be directed to the editor.

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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 and show the address and telephone number of the writer.

Columns and guest editorials also are 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, or phone (409) 845-2611.

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