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Reagan to ask for Challenger replacement

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan Wednesday night blamed the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger on NASA's complacency and "a carelessness that grew out of success," and said he would propose construction of a replacement orbiter.

At his first nationally broadcast news conference in more than a month, Reagan said he has not yet decided how to pay for the new shuttle, which will cost an estimated \$2.8 billion. He said he is studying the Rogers commission report on the Jan. 28 Challenger accident before deciding whether to order the space agency to adopt its recommendations.

In blaming the nation's worst space disaster on complacency at the space agency, Reagan said he does not believe "that there was any deliberate criminal intent on the part of anyone."

Reagan also confirmed that earlier in the day the Soviet Union had offered to American negotiators in Geneva a new proposal to curb nuclear weapons. But the president also said he could not discuss its details.

He said his goal is a "fair and balanced" accord. He said Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev apparently is the first Soviet leader to voice interest in reducing nuclear weapons. Reagan said he still is hoping to arrange a second summit this year with his Soviet counterpart.

Reagan defended his decision to conclude that the United States should no longer feel constrained to abide by the limits of the unratified SALT II arms control treaty with the Soviet Union.

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Arms cuts proposed

U.S. considers Soviet offer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Soviet Union on Wednesday offered to U.S. negotiators a new proposal to curb long-range nuclear weapons, and the offer is under serious consideration, a knowledgeable administration official said.

Details were withheld under a confidentiality agreement between the two sides. But the official, who insisted on anonymity, said the proposal was presented formally at the site of the talks in Geneva.

Only two weeks ago, Soviet negotiator Victor Karpov informally suggested that his government would consider sharply reducing its arsenal of heavy land-based nuclear missiles if the United States promised to observe the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty for at least 10 years.

Privately, U.S. officials took a skeptical view but said they wanted to see more details. Reducing Soviet missiles is the primary U.S. goal in the Geneva negotiations. But Reagan administration officials have said they are wary of any overture that might impinge on the search for a U.S. space-based missile defense.

The administration has been urging the Soviets to follow up public statements by Gorbachev calling for anti-nuclear measures by putting concrete proposals before the negotiators in Geneva.

Reagan last month announced he was prepared to disregard the SALT II treaty's limits on long-range nuclear weapons because of what he claimed were widespread Soviet violations of the 1979 treaty's limitations on new missiles and testing in formation.

At the same time, however, he said he would take into consideration whether the Soviets changed their negotiating stance at Geneva.

Earlier Wednesday, a top-ranking administration arms control adviser told Congress that U.S. compliance with the SALT II pact "is extremely damaging" as long as the Soviet Union does not adhere to all aspects of the pact.

Reagan's decision that, starting later this year, the United States would not be bound by limits in the pact was the best way to force the Soviets to bargain seriously, Paul H. Nitze said.

Nitze, one of Reagan's senior arms control advisers, defended Reagan's May 27 decision during an appearance before the House Armed Services arms control subcommittee.



Over Easy Photo by Tom Ownbey
A member of the College Station Junior Olympic track team gives his all to get over the high bar at Wednesday's practice track meet against Brenham. On June 18 the College Station team will host Caldwell and Bellville at Kyle Field.

Senate refuses to restore deductible IRA's, 51-48

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate refused Wednesday night to restore deductible Individual Retirement Accounts for all workers, clearing away the biggest obstacle to passage of a sweeping plan to overhaul the federal income tax.

On a 51-48 vote, the Senate tabled, thus killing, an amendment by Sens. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., and Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., that would have granted all workers a tax saving of up to \$300 a year for contributions to IRAs. The \$15-billion, five-year cost of the amendment would have been paid by raising taxes on upper-income investors and profitable corporations.

Later, President Reagan told a nationally broadcast news conference that the tax revision bill before the Senate was "one of the best poverty programs, one of the best job-creation programs and one of the best pro-family bills this country has ever seen, all rolled into one."

The administration supports the measure approved by the Senate Finance Committee, including its proposal to eliminate full IRA deductions for many Americans.

Restoring IRAs for all, said Sen. Bill Bradley, D-N.J., "frustrates the goal of tax reform, which is (that) equal income pays equal taxes." IRAs favor saving for retirement over saving to buy a home or to educate a child, he added.

The IRA amendment, said Dodd, would boost the tax bill's benefits to middle-income Americans, many of whom could face tax increases otherwise. "This \$300 looms large for a family with \$20,000 to \$40,000 income" in determining whether they save for retirement, he added.

The Senate earlier in the day voted in favor of a non-binding resolution that expressed a desire that tax-deductible IRAs should be allowed as many workers as possible. The re-

solution, approved 96-4, did nothing to assure that will happen.

That left the bill untouched, denying IRA deductions for workers who are covered by company pensions. But because the tax bill passed by the House retains fully deductible IRAs for all, the final chapter on the issue will be written in a Senate-House conference.

With the non-binding resolution, said Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., "I believe we can handle the IRA problem later," in the conference.

But Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, D-Ill., who will head the House delegation to that conference, suggested the Senate face up to the issue instead of passing the buck.

The resolution instructs Senate delegates to the conference to "give highest priority to retaining maximum possible tax benefits" for IRAs but without raising the sharply reduced tax rates in the bill or tilting it toward any income group.

D'Amato called the resolution meaningless for many of the 40 million Americans who own IRAs. About three-quarters of IRA deductions are claimed by taxpayers with incomes under \$50,000.

"It can't be done, it's hocus-pocus," D'Amato said of the resolution. "The public should not be deluded. It's not good enough to come to the American people and say IRAs are great" without actually voting to keep them, he said.

"I will try to observe it (the resolution) in conference," Packwood said, but he repeated he will oppose any change that would increase the tax rates in the bill.

Bradley was among the four senators voting against the resolution.

The others were Sens. Max Baucus, D-Mont.; Gary Hart, D-Colo.; and Pete Wilson, R-Calif.

Dole predicted defeat of all major amendments to the bill, including the one by D'Amato, which would raise taxes on some wealthy investors and profitable corporations to pay for universal IRAs. All sides in the debate have said the IRA fight would pose the biggest test to the tax bill.

Flooding will cost SA \$2.5 million

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (AP) — Damage from last week's flooding, which ravaged streets, river channels, bridges and buildings, will cost the city at least \$2.5 million, according to a report.

The report, prepared by Public Works Director Frank Kiolbassa, says the drainage channels and the river walls supporting the River Walk along the San Antonio River, a popular tourist spot, suffered the most damage.

Damage to county roads and buildings has been pegged at \$230,000, pushing the total public cost to about \$2.73 million. The estimate does not include damage to private property.

The city has issued an emergency contract worth \$300,000 to shore up the walls of the River Walk in one section where officials fear the structure may collapse. Officials were expected to ask the City Council Thursday to approve the contract with the H.B. Zachry Co.

Assistant City Manager Alex Brisenio said the bulk of the flood damages likely would be covered by existing money in the city operating budget and the capital reserve fund.

"What that means is the normal work program will be delayed," Brisenio said. "So, citizens can expect the grass in the parks will be cut less frequently and less critical potholes will wait for repair over the next few months."

Brisenio said the \$2.5 million would be the most paid by the city for repairs in the aftermath of a natural disaster in recent years.

Racial violence

Cleveland shooting sparks FBI civil rights investigation

CLEVELAND (AP) — Months of racial tension in an overwhelmingly white neighborhood erupted with the shootings of eight whites by a black man, and the FBI said Wednesday it has begun a civil rights investigation into whether the area's only black family was harassed.

A 24-year-old black man opened fire with a shotgun late Tuesday night, aiming at a group of people who had earlier set fireworks outside the black family's house in the working-class neighborhood on the city's West Side, police said.

The man, a resident of suburban Parma who had been visiting the family, was arrested but not charged. None of the eight people shot was seriously injured.

The black family, which moved into a county-owned house in February, had been subjected to taunts by some neighborhood whites for

weeks, said city Councilman Jay Westbrook. In April, the letters "KKK" were spray-painted on their home.

Some whites said Wednesday the

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Conditions, morale improving for Dallas air controllers

GRAPEVINE (AP) — Air controllers critiqued after last year's crash of Delta Air Lines flight 191 now work under better conditions and morale is up, although many still believe they handle too much traffic at peak times, several officials say.

Since a General Accounting Office survey reported substandard working conditions for controllers at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, improvements have been made, officials said Tuesday.

Controller morale in the tower and at a traffic route center, which monitors regional traffic, also has improved, officials said.

In the GAO survey, the controllers' discontent at DFW was greater than that found at the nation's four other busiest airports.

The GAO reported nearly 80 percent of the controllers complained that they handled too many planes during peak hours last summer. More DFW controllers said they considered air safety "poor" or "very poor" than their counterparts at other airports.

But Norm Scroggins, DFW tower manager, said he believes the controllers' negative responses to survey questions about their workload and system safety were "an emotional response to quite a few things that were going on" last summer.

On Aug. 2, Delta Flight 191 crashed near the airport, killing 137 people.

Also during the summer, new policies were implemented including tripling of controllers' training hours, limiting vacations to only two weeks and banning smoking in the tower cab and radar rooms, Scroggins said.

Another policy change included requiring controllers to clear aircraft to take off and land on all four DFW runways, when previously two runways were used for takeoff and two others for landing.

The airport continues to have a problem with controllers being swamped with traffic at peak times, Scroggins said. But that problem

has been somewhat alleviated over the past year by the addition of 19 full-performance level controllers, he said.

With the additional manpower and more experienced workers, overtime has been halved. For the first time since the 1981 controllers' strike controllers will be able to take more than two weeks of vacation at a time without causing staffing problems.

At the air route center, the number of full-performance level controllers increased by 30 over the past year and the total controller staff increased by 15.

Don Hensley, deputy tower manager, said that despite complaints, a recent internal FAA survey of controllers shows marked improvement in their attitudes about their jobs.

Controllers surveyed by the FAA during the winter said managers showed support for them after the Delta crash and "brought the facility together," Hensley said.

Scroggins said, "Really what the Delta 191 thing did was let people see the best side of everyone else. It made them see management in a different light."

There have been no changes in procedure since the crash, he said.