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## Reagan admits deal with Iran 'a mistake'

### President accepts responsibility in speech

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan acknowledged Wednesday night that his once-secret Iranian initiative "deteriorated" into an arms-for-hostages deal and said, "It was a mistake."

Noting he had not said much about the affair since November, Reagan said, "I've paid a price for my silence in terms of your trust and confidence, but I have had to wait, as have you, for the complete story."

Declaring himself "angry" and "disappointed" with "some who served me," Reagan said: "As personally distasteful as I find secret bank accounts and diverted funds, as the Navy would say, this happened on my watch."

Reagan's remarks shed no light on the many mysteries of the Iran-Contra affair and said others will have to find out where the Iran arms proceeds actually went.

The Oval Office address marked Reagan's first response to the Tower commission's criticism of his detached management style and ignorance about the details and consequences of his arms-to-Iran policy.

Responding to the speech, Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd, D-W. Va., said, "It went part way" but that "the president should have recognized it was his orders that authorized arms sales to Iran."

Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole, R-Kansas, said the controversy "isn't behind him yet, but it's a start." He said future aid to the Contra rebels is now "hanging by a thread."

In his 10-minute, nationally broadcast address, Reagan said, "a few months ago, I told the American people I did not trade arms for hostages. My heart and my best intentions still tell me that is true, but the facts and the evidence tell me it is not."

"As the Tower board reported," Reagan said, "what began as a strate-

gic opening to Iran deteriorated in its implementation into trading arms for hostages. This runs counter to my own beliefs, to administration policy and to the original strategy we had in mind.

"There are reasons why it happened, but no excuses," he said. "It was a mistake."

It wasn't clear if this statement would satisfy some leaders of both political parties who had urged in advance that Reagan frankly state

that he'd made a mistake in selling arms to Iran.

"I did approve it," Reagan said. "I just can't say specifically when."

Reagan said he did not ask enough questions of his aides about the specifics of the Iran initiative.

"I take full responsibility for my own actions and for those of my administration," Reagan said. "As angry as I may be about activities undertaken without my knowledge, I am still accountable for those activities."

## SMU student senate seeks legal action after scandal

DALLAS (AP) — The president of the Southern Methodist University Student Senate said Wednesday that anonymous telephone callers have told him to get out of town for speaking out against improprieties in the school's football program.

Trevor Pearlman, a naturalized U.S. citizen from South Africa, said some of the callers questioned his right to speak for the university, and that's one reason he asked the senate for a mandate to pursue legal action against anyone associated with the school who mishandled the scandal.

In an emergency meeting Tuesday night, the senate approved 19-5, with three abstentions, a resolution to explore legal action "against all responsible parties and individuals."

The action came after Gov. Bill Clements said Tuesday that he and some members of the university Board of Governors knew of illegal payments to student athletes. The Board of Governors denied Clements' claim Wednesday.

The NCAA last week suspended the SMU football program for one

year because of rules violations.

Pearlman said at a news conference Wednesday that he would consult attorneys this week and present his recommendations to the Senate for approval.

"I went to the Student Senate last night because I wanted a mandate from the students," Pearlman said, citing harassing telephone calls.

"Several mentioned that I'm not from Texas and I have no right speaking for the university," Pearlman said.

He said free legal advice is being offered by lawyers who graduated from SMU and who "have a love for the school."

"The student body is so angry, so hurt, so torn," Pearlman said. "We feel we have been lied to again and again. We are exasperated by the leadership of this university."

Pearlman said he was not referring to William B. Stallcup, the interim university president.

"My heart goes out to President Stallcup," Pearlman said. "This thing has been dumped on him."



Photo by Doug La Rue

## Make Me Laugh

This clown exhibit, presented by Popabilities Unlimited, was part of a hospitality fair held Wednesday in the Brazos Center. The Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce sponsored the fair.

## Local congressman pushes for end to trucking regulation

By Frank Smith  
Senior Staff Writer

State Sen. Kent Caperton is spearheading an effort to deregulate rate schedules for intrastate trucking in Texas, but a spokesman with a trucking trade association contends that deregulation will jumble carriers' revenue pictures and drive them toward unsafe cost-cutting practices.

Deregulation legislation co-sponsored by Caperton, D-Bryan, was introduced in the Senate on Feb. 16, and a companion bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Bill Hammond, R-Dallas.

Two basic aspects of motor-transportation service in Texas are regulated — entry into the marketplace and rate schedules.

Jerry Threet, legislative aide to Caperton, said the senator's bill doesn't suggest changing entry requirements; rates are the issue.

"Right now everyone pays the same rate for the same kind of transport of goods in the state, so there's not any competition on those rates," Threet said. "What our bill does is make the rate set by the railroad commission the maximum rate that could be charged, and it allows any carrier to charge under that amount."

But advocates of deregulation have their opponents. Tim Raven is one of those detractors.

Raven is the vice president of government relations for the Texas Motor Transportation Association, a trucking trade association representing the truck and bus industry in Texas.

Based on the consequences of the 1980 federal deregulation of interstate commerce, Raven fears the results that intrastate deregulation might have in Texas.

When interstate rates were deregulated, Raven said, the competitive forces shippers exerted on the system, combined with an influx of new companies into the marketplace, prevented carriers from securing any kind of stable revenue picture.

"As a result, what you've seen is a slow deterioration in the 'soft costs' that carriers get or develop as they operate over a period of time," he said.

He explained that fixed costs are those the carrier always must pay, those he can't change — such as his

drivers' wages, equipment, office force and insurance.

Soft costs can, and are, cut by extending the lives of the vehicles, Raven said.

"Before (interstate) deregulation, the average life span of over-the-road trucks was around four years," he said. "Now the data is showing that life span is approaching 10 years."

"The maintenance schedules have been lengthened. They're running the tires longer. They're running the oil and maintenance schedules longer. They're running brake schedule maintenance longer. And coupled with that, the carriers are substituting quantity hauls for quality hauls."

Raven cited Department of Transportation statistics that show the number of interstate carrier accidents with damages of over \$2,000 rose from about 30,000 in 1980 to more than 39,000 in 1986.

Threet, however, said there are a number of effects that result from the difference between interstate and intrastate shipping rates in Texas, and that a case can be made that deregulated rate schedules promote safety.

He said some shippers are making use of 'hot haulers,' independent truckers who haul illegally.

"They're doing something that's illegal anyway, so there's not as much attention paid to safety," Threet said. "We believe that, under the present system, the pressures that are on shippers are pushing them toward that type of thing."

"And although we also support increased safety, we think that increased competition will also lead to greater safety."

Raven conceded the existence of 'hot haulers.'

"There's a certain amount of utili-

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## Funding for state prison system to come from highway programs

By Jamie Russell  
Reporter

Lack of funding is causing chaos in the Texas prison system, and to relieve the problems in the prison units, Gov. Bill Clements is taking money from Peter to pay Paul.

Peter — the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation — understands the situation Texas is facing regarding Paul — the prison system. But the way in which the state is relieving the problem is a major concern for the highway department.

Adding to the prison system's financial problems is a court-mandated fine of \$800,000 per day, beginning April 1, if prisons remain overcrowded.

On Feb. 17 and 18, in a unanimous vote by both the House and the Senate, Clements successfully pushed a plan through the Legislature to divert \$32.5 million in highway funds to bail out prisons

and the workers compensation fund. The Texas prison system will receive \$20.5 million.

This controversial plan has raised questions over the legality of Clements dipping his hands into one fund to make up for the lack of another department's fund.

"It is not a matter of legality," said Eugene Robbins, president of the Texas Good Roads/Transportation Association, a lobby group. "It is a matter of morality."

"For the amount of money they are taking, the highway department could build 30 miles of new two-lane highway."

Don Clark, director of the highway department's travel and information division, also sees problems in the fund transfer.

"There is no way they can take \$32.5 million out of our program and not hurt the program," he said.

But Rosser defends the plan as a necessity.

"It was an exhaustive search to find funds needed to solve a major state crisis," he said. "One would hope the highway department would understand the serious problem Texas faces."

Still, Robbins is worried about the outcome.

"If they are successful in diverting funds, they could, and would, do it again," he said. "This is an important issue."

The state highway fund consists of state and federal funds divided into three categories:

- Revenue from state fuel tax and vehicle registration fees dedicated by state constitution to construction and maintenance of public roads.

- A federal highway fund held in trust by the state to spend only on highways.

- Money that the Legislature, by

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## Children don't realize consequences of truancy

By Janet Goode  
Reporter

The verdict: guilty. The crime: not wanting an education.

The judge's gavel strikes the bench with overpowering force. A wide-eyed child looks up from below in awe.

During the last school year, 42 truant children in Bryan-College

### Truancy among local children Part one of a two-part series

Station were referred by a judge to the county juvenile probation office for what is termed "informal adjustment."

If a justice of the peace determines a child has broken the law by not attending school, the child may be sent to a probation officer, not necessarily for detention, but for "adjustment," or counseling.

Gloria Collins, a juvenile probation officer for Brazos County, says because truancy and run-away cases are considered "status" and not criminal offenses, they can't keep truant children in detention.

"We can't force anybody to want an education, and we certainly can't lock up these kids with serious criminals," Collins says. "All we can do is talk to them."

"We can give them a set of rules to follow, but if they don't comply, the consequences will only come later in life."

Lora Powell, a counselor for the College Station Independent School District, says children who won't attend school don't understand they are forming attitudes, behaviors and ultimately a way of life.

"Kids believe in magic and indulge in magical thinking," Powell says. "They think that if they can just get out of school then everything will be all right."

But probation and school offi-

cial agree that in the long run, the impact on children who are truant from school is detrimental.

"Children who skip school to escape today's pressures are only setting a future trap for themselves — a trap of unemployment, disillusionment and despair," Collins says.

The juvenile services department tries to help children understand the importance of an education, Collins says, but if probation officers are unsuccessful after a six-month period, all they can do is discharge the juveniles and send them to another counseling agency.

Billie Douthitt, a counselor at the Brazos Valley Stepping Stone — a local agency that deals with status offenders — says when children are brought before a judge, they view themselves as criminals, which only makes the situation worse.

A judge is helpful only if the child's parents are found to be at fault, she says, and if this is the

case, they can be fined for failure to get their children to school.

Collins says the county may soon quit dealing with truancy cases because the State Board of Education has decided these children are not criminals — just kids with problems.

Lack of funds may also cause the county to stop dealing with these cases, Collins says. The juvenile services department has decided its top priority should be with the criminal offenses so it will be spending more money in this area, she adds.

In the future, truancy cases that can't be handled in the school will bypass the legal system and will be referred to counseling agencies such as Brazos Valley Stepping Stone.

Douthitt, who works at the agency, says by 1988 the agencies will take over completely.

Collins says House Bill 72 also has decreased their truancy referrals because schools are being forced by law to provide more

rules to help combat truancy problems.

Jerry Ellis, assistant principal of Bryan High School, says Bryan Independent School District uses the legal route only as a last resort.

Ellis says when HB 72 passed in 1984, it did more to curb truancy than school policy. In the past, attendance policies were set mostly by the school board, but are now pretty well set by law, he says.

According to section 21 of the Texas Education Code, a student shall not receive credit for a class if the student has more than five absences during a semester.

Also according to state law, a child must adhere to "compulsory attendance" and attend school until he is 16 years old. A student is considered truant if he misses even one class unexcused.

However, most administrators in both districts do not consider a

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