

Opinion

Bill's not good enough for SMU, but he's OK by Texas

He is only 41 days into his new term and already the man has set two records.



Mike Sullivan

Gov. Bill Clements claimed his first record — the record for breaking campaign promises the soonest — back when his new term was a mere babe of 14 days old.

While on the campaign trail in October, Clements told a group of college students at Texas A&M, "It's absolutely wrong to cut higher education. That is 180 degrees from what this state should be doing."

Five months later, Clements has proposed tapping the Permanent University Fund and other areas of education funding as a solution to the state's budget crisis. The man is serious about his proposals.

When he testified to the House Committee on Higher Education, Jess Hay, chairman of the University of Texas System, said he denounced Clements' plan as a "betrayal of our trust to higher education."

Clements responded by telling Hay in

a phone conversation that he will do anything he can to see that Hay is replaced as chairman.

And of course, there's Clements' campaign promise not to raise taxes — an absurd promise considering the state's financial problems. Nonetheless, he made it.

As Clements said Feb. 3, "I have the know-how and the commitment to tell Texans that I will veto any and all tax or fee increases. Bill Clements stands absolutely firm on this."

Recently, he proposed an increase in sales and motor fuels taxes in a continuation of "temporary taxes" passed by the Legislature under the Mark White administration.

But enough on his record-breaking speed for breaking campaign promises. Anyone with a bit of foresight could have seen his double talk coming.

Last week, however, Clements caught many Texans off guard as he stole his second record since taking office. With snake-like dexterity, Clements slithered up and claimed the record for being recognized the fastest by the public as a liar.

Of course, I'm talking about his shenanigans with Southern Methodist University — a situation that earns him the title of liar, where his broken campaign

promises only merits him the title of politician. After all, campaign promises are meant to be broken.

But along with his newly earned title of Liar, Clements' involvement with the payoffs to SMU football players should earn him the title of Impeached Governor.

From 1983 until January when he took office, Clements served as the chairman of SMU's Board of Governors. By hiring him, SMU had hoped Clements would help restore credibility to the board.

When the NCAA investigations of SMU began to heat up during Clements' campaign for governor, he said in interviews that if the allegations against SMU proved true, he would seek the harshest penalties for the university. Little did the public know what a sickening hypocrite the man is.

On Mar. 3, Clements announced that, while serving as chairman, he and other board members had decided to "phase out" the payments to student athletes after the NCAA put the school on its sixth probation in 1985.

Apparently, that was news to the other board members who denied knowledge of any payments, according to board member William Hutchison. He said an external committee was be-

ing set up to investigate Clements' claims.

Clements isn't making the investigation any easier, as he refuses to give the names of his fellow conspirators to the board of governors or the NCAA. Following in the footsteps of big brother Reagan, Clements apparently is confused about the specifics of the situation.

Robert H. Dedman, SMU board member and friend of Clements, said, "The governor is trying to get together in his mind the sequence of events and under what circumstances the agreement was made — in a car, or at a party, or what."

But Clements, in his campaign fashion, said, "There's no question about what I've said. I've never varied and I'm not going to vary. What I'm saying, I stand behind."

Regardless of the questionable claims Clements makes about the deals — including the claim that NCAA officials approved the payments — there is no questioning that Clements himself was in on the scandal.

An interesting note is that SMU is calling for anyone involved in the scandal to "publicly disclose such information and . . . for the sake of the university resign from any position within the university."

This means that because he's involved, Clements makes the black list on SMU's Board of Governors, but he's honorable enough to govern the state of Texas.

I can't help but wonder about the integrity of a man who, after only 41 days in office, already has a track record that would make Ferdinand Marcos take notice — a man whose sole duty is to see the best interest of Texans for another three years and 10 months.

If Clements, as chairman of SMU Board of Governors, wasn't concerned about breaking the rules, the reputation of SMU, and the hearts — and possibly the futures — of SMU students, faculty and staff, why should he be so concerned about the welfare of 17 million faceless Texans?

Considering his recent proposal cut into just about everything except business, Clements isn't concerned with anything but his big-business buddies and perhaps his ego.

I'm not big business, and neither are most of you. So where does that leave us?

Barring an impeachment, it leaves 1,419 days away from a new governor.

Mike Sullivan is a senior journalism major and the Opinion Page editor of *The Battalion*.

What about the ideology?

The Tower Commission report lines up a rogues' gallery of fools and incompetents to blame for the Iran-contra fiasco, sparing no one, including the president. (He lacked managerial acumen.) But as analysis, the report falls short: It does not question the ideology that shaped Reagan Administration foreign policy and led to the current debacle.



Richard Cohen

But as surely as the Watergate scandal had its genesis in the suspicious and hostile personality of Richard Nixon, so does the Iran-contra affair stem from the ideology of Ronald Reagan. He holds a troika of fundamental beliefs: The Soviet Union really is the "focus of evil"; there are simple solutions to complex problems; and government, given its head, will only do both things up.

The report trips all over evidence of that line of thinking — but its authors, respectful of a popular president, shied away from ideological questions.

The Tower report cites Secretary of State George Shultz's June 1985 response to a National Security Council memo about the Soviet threat to Iran. The NSC had just painted a "grim" picture of the Russian bear extending a paw to the south and concluded that the United States needed to "blunt Soviet influence" by allowing American allies to sell arms to Tehran. At that point Shultz, in effect, hollered "Wait a minute!" Shultz said the memo "appears to exaggerate current anti-regime sentiment (in Iran) and Soviet advantages over us in gaining influence." He reminded the NSC that "Iranians have a deep historical mistrust of the USSR" and noted that under the Shah, Iran's relations with Russia "were closer and more cooperative than they are now." Having made these necessary points, Shultz unfortunately then proceeded to take a long nap as the Iranian arms initiative took hold.

The Shultz memo is one of the few examples cited in the Tower report where someone with standing challenged the knee-jerk anti-communism of the Reagan White House. Although

the arms sale to Iran quickly became an attempt to free American hostages, its intellectual justification was that this was an effort at Soviet containment or, anyway, could always be explained as such.

The virulent anti-communist rhetoric of Iranian leaders, the decimation of the Iranian communist party (the Tudeh) and, for that matter, the lessons the Soviets have learned in Afghanistan, seemed not to matter to the White House. If it could not assemble evidence to support its ideology, it proceeded anyway. When you're right, you don't need facts.

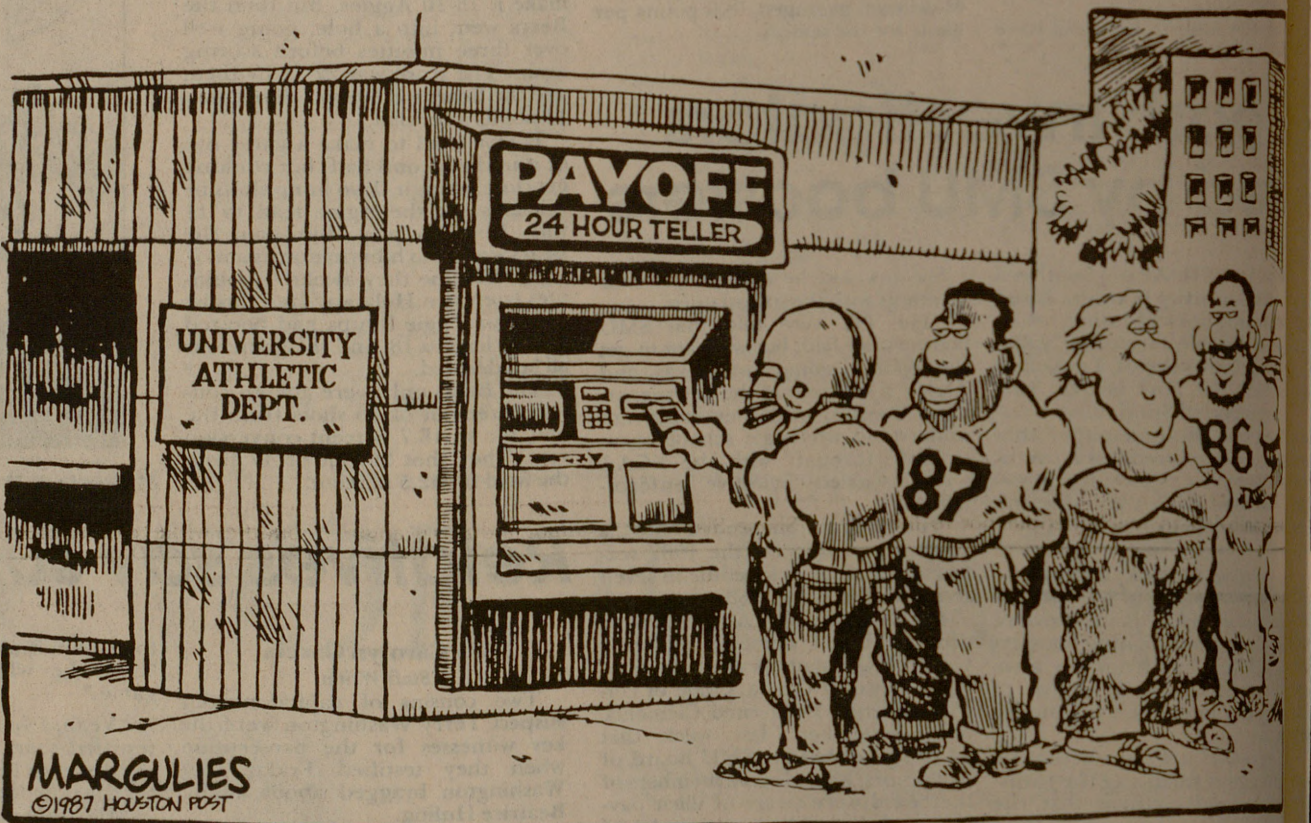
The tendency to reduce regional and discrete foreign-policy challenges into the old East-West struggle really started in Nicaragua. The secret diversion of funds to the Contras — maybe illegal, and possibly hidden from the president himself — is the direct consequence of Reagan's rhetoric. He endowed regional struggles in the Middle East and Central America with an historic East-West dimension they lack. As a result, the cast of characters who made war on the sneak may be pardoned for thinking their first obligation was to history — and not to a congressional law cutting off funds. The president himself had established the stakes.

In tone and substance, the Tower Commission report reads like a management study. It faults the president for being disengaged, for not knowing and not caring what his subordinates were up to. All that is obvious, and even incredible. But the larger problem is not one of management, but of Reagan's peculiar and simplistic ways of seeing things.

Just as the president believed military spending could be dramatically increased, taxes reduced and the budget balanced, so he believed in Iranian "moderates" and Nicaragua freedom fighters. The ability to simultaneously sell arms to terrorists, while at the same time condemning others who do so, is no more remarkable than calling for a balanced budget after depriving the government of funds. With Reagan, the wish is not just the command; it is the entire program.

The Washington wisdom is that the president needs to pay more attention to detail and rely less on his staff. That's folly. It was a keen staff — vilified by conservatives as pragmatic — that saved him in his first term. And it was a staff that let Reagan be Reagan that has, in second term, brought the president so low. What ails the White House is not just bad management — that can be fixed — but the ideology and mindset of Ronald Reagan. For that, there is no remedy.

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Mail Call

What's censored?

EDITOR:

Will Kenneth Brobst please present some of these "giant strides" and "evidence" found by creationists and present the methodology used in these experiments? I've received creationist information from "the horse's mouth." A friend and co-worker of mine taught scientific creationism at a small and undistinguished fundamentalist "college" in Shreveport, La.

His entire tenet for rejecting evolution as an explanation for speciation rested on rejecting the efficacy of carbon-14 dating, with no testable evidence for that rejection. I asked him why he felt so negative about evolution. He replied, "It doesn't fit in with my interpretation of the Bible." This is a religious justification for creationism and his only justification.

As for bigotry and censorship in this arena, let's not forget the Scopes trial and the many attempts of fundamentalists (i.e., Mrs. Frost of Tennessee) at censorship. Nobody objects to the teaching of the biblical story of creation, but it should be taught in religion classes, not in science classes. Should medical schools teach shamanism? No, it is taught in anthropology classes, where it belongs. The only danger in teaching creationism would be in teaching it as science and the precedence this would set in allowing so-called religious zealots to apply double-think to our educational processes.

I am sure the entire intellectual community is very tired of fundamentalists spouting out with their claptrap they try to pass off as "truth" and "evidence." Distortion of facts to fit one's own world view is at least as immoral and unethical as any other misdeed, Brobst. Do you really believe that God would set up a world governed by natural laws which he himself would just ignore? Brobst, the "mumbo jumbo" is actually all in your corner.

Ramsey L. Sealy, graduate student

State funds?

EDITOR:

Assuming that *The Battalion* quoted Bob Wiatt correctly in his response to my letter to the Eagle, I must comment on his remarks.

I am perfectly well aware of the source of funding for the parking garage, and that it will be paid for by revenues

that the garage itself generates. However, I disagree with his contention that this is not "state money," which is patently absurd. Funds collected by state agencies, or their subdivisions (e.g., the University's police department) are "state funds," even though they are not appropriated by the legislature, and it is nonsense to pretend that they are not. They are in fact taxes imposed by the state without legislative approval; calling them "user fees" or "parking revenues" does not change their nature. If the current law prohibits monies collected as parking fines or permit fees from being used to support academic activities, then it is time for the law to be changed. Any surplus funds produced by the police department (or for that matter, the athletic department) should be diverted into the general University budget, and used for enhancing the academic programs that are (or so we are told) the real reason that Texas A&M exists. They should not be used for empire-building on the part of the administration, nor for the personal aggrandizement of members of the Board of Regents. If the parking people can generate \$12.3 million for a parking garage, they can also generate that amount for more worthwhile purposes, such as improving the collection at the library or for student aid, and for retention of quality faculty members. Parking is not the University's prime function: education is. Any revenue-generating activity which could enhance education, and which is not so used, is obstructive of the University's mission.

President Vandiver, in an address to the Faculty Senate, has expressed his distaste for the garage project, and his inability to do anything about it. I, and seven other faculty members from my College, have sent a letter to Governor Clements about this scandalous waste of money on yet another unnecessary building. I urge all students and former students who are concerned about the quality of educational opportunity at A&M now and in the future to do the same. The Governor has publicly announced his commitment to supporting higher education, and we believe that only he has the power to prevent the Board of Regents from forcing this additional burden on the University. The facts are clear: the parking garage is a waste of money that could be used for better things. It is "fat" in the University's budget that should be eliminated.

Mr. Wiatt's opinion to the contrary notwithstanding.

Thomas Cacceti, Ph.D.

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

Because several members of the *The Battalion* editorial board will be attending the Columbia Scholastic Press Association Conference in New York City from March 11-14, some of the columns this week will not appear on their regular days.

The Battalion

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