

Bush speech focuses on domestic policy plans

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush proposed more money for domestic programs and restraint of the Pentagon budget Thursday night as he summoned the Democratic Congress to work with him to "ensure a better tomorrow."

In a well-received, 50-minute address to a joint session of Congress, the president vowed to proceed with caution in his dealings with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Still, he added, "We will not miss any opportunity to work for peace."

Bush devoted most of his speech to domestic issues, as he sketched the outlines of a \$1.16 trillion budget. He called for \$2.6 billion in reductions from President Reagan's Pentagon spending plan and modest increases in selected domestic programs such as education and the environment.

He repeated his longstanding vow of no new taxes.

Less than one month on the job, the new president echoed the campaign of 1988 with his declaration that he wants to be an education president, wants the death penalty for drug kingpins and favors a cut in the capital gains tax.

He made a notable bow to the environmentalists with a call to suspend three oil leases; and another to the anti-abortionists with his call for an increased tax break for parents

who adopt a child.

He called for a society "free from discrimination and bigotry" and threw a bouquet in the direction of Democrat Jesse Jackson when he said — as Jackson did to kids in the inner cities — "Keep hope alive."

Above all, he summoned the Democratic Congress to join with him in solving the deficit problem.

"The people didn't send us here to bicker," said the new president. "It's time to govern."

Bush also voiced his personal support for making Puerto Rico the nation's 51st state and called on Congress "to take the necessary steps to let the people decide in a referendum."

And he said he would set up a new Task Force on Competitiveness, chaired by Vice President Dan Quayle. Saying, "The most important competitive program of all is one that improves education in America," he traced a number of schooling initiatives.

The Bush speech was not a State of the Union address — but it stood for one, touching upon key foreign policy issues as well as a wide range of domestic concerns.

"I don't propose to reverse direction," he said. "We are headed the right way." Nonetheless, he proposed a string of initiatives that signaled an end to some of the re-

straints set by the Reagan administration.

Bush received a standing ovation when he entered the House chamber, packed with members of the heavily Democratic Congress, the Supreme Court, his Cabinet and staff and guests. Barbara Bush joined in the applause from her seat in the gallery.

The president shook hands with several lawmakers as he made his way down the center aisle on his way to the speaker's rostrum. Among the guests seated prominently on the floor were John Tower, his confirmation as Secretary of Defense in jeopardy.

The president's budget plan, which features a one-year freeze on scores of federal programs, calls for roughly \$5 billion more spending than the budget submitted by Reagan last month and carries out Bush's oft-stated vow of not seeking any increase in taxes.

The freeze on these non-military programs is tougher than the Pentagon freeze. The non-military programs are frozen at current spending amounts, but the Pentagon budget rises to take inflation into account.

He said his offer to freeze Pentagon spending was conditioned on reaching an overall agreement with Congress that included budget re-

Bush budgets oil industry incentives

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush proposed three tax incentives to revitalize the struggling domestic oil industry in his budget recommendations, Sen. Phil Gramm announced Thursday, hours before the budget was to be released.

"This represents an important package aimed at enhancing our ability to find and produce oil here at home," the Texas Republican said. "It's an important first step toward establishing a national energy policy."

While welcomed by an industry official, the measures must still clear a Congress wrestling with a budget deficit and not known for rushing to the industry's defense.

"It's going to take work," said Barney White, a vice president of corporate affairs at Zapata Corp. in Houston. "You've got a budget deficit that's a black hole, and it's difficult to give tax incentives to J.R. Ewing. That's how it plays in the public mind."

Gramm said Bush's package includes a tax credit to

enhance tertiary recovery — a research and development tax credit aimed primarily at stripper wells, or those with low production, or where it is difficult to extract the oil from the earth and takes the injection of steam or fluids to make it flow.

It also contains a tax credit on intangible drilling costs, those not directly associated with drilling a well — such as hauling equipment — which will be exempt from the minimum tax.

The final element is a tax incentive package to encourage independent producers to find new oil.

Gramm said the measures would encourage domestic production of oil, enhance national security, and help "preserve the vitality of the oil and gas industry."

White said Bush's proposals would "certainly help" the foundering industry, which has been battling low prices for several years.

Aging brains get new life from drug

WASHINGTON (AP) — A drug approved for some stroke patients also may reinvigorate sluggish, aging brains with the quick-witted learning ability of youth, a group of Chicago researchers reported Thursday.

In tests on groups of young and middle-aged rabbits at Northwestern University Medical School, researchers said that a drug called nimodipine was able to correct age-related mental slowness so that the older rabbits could learn as well as the younger ones.

"They (older rabbits receiving the drug) actually learned at the same rate, if not a slightly faster rate, than the young rabbits," said John F. Disterhoft, an associate professor of cell biology at Northwestern, who directed the study. "Two-thirds of the control group (older rabbits not receiving the drug) never did learn the task."

He said although the experiment used only a laboratory test of learning, there is every reason to believe the results also would apply to human learning skills.

The Northwestern experiment, reported in Friday's edition of the journal *Science*, was conducted using four groups of rabbits. Two of the groups were about 30 months old, about middle age for rabbits. The other two groups were young adult rabbits.

Nimodipine was administered to one of the older groups and to one of the younger groups. The others were kept free of the drug to provide control, or comparison, groups.

To test learning ability, all of the rabbits were exposed to the sound of a tone, immediately followed by a mild burst of air against the eye. The air burst causes the eye to blink.

This process was repeated 80 times a day. The researchers measured how soon and how often the rabbits learned to anticipate the burst of air by closing their eyes at the sound of the tone. Each group received 15 training sessions.

Disterhoft said four of the six older rabbits who did not receive nimodipine never learned to blink at the sound. The other two did learn, but at a slower rate than the older rabbits receiving the drug.

"All of the aging nimodipine animals learned the task in less than eight days of training," he said, and this was very slightly faster than the learning rate shown by both the learning rate shown by both the groups of young rabbits. Disterhoft said nimodipine, however, did not make the younger rabbits any smarter. The drug appears to help only the aged brain.

Disterhoft said the experiment was suggested after German doctors noticed that stroke patients seemed to recover some learning losses when they were treated with nimodipine.

The drug, manufactured by Miles Inc., was approved by the Food and Drug Administration last December to treat impairment among patients who have suffered a ruptured vein in the brain, which is a type of stroke. Bob Quick, a Miles spokesman, said the drug is marketed under the name Nimotop. It is approved for use now only by some types of stroke patients.



"The Big Thaw"

The recent trend of warmer temperatures relieved more than just people. Like the students, the renovated fountain outside the

Clayton W. Williams Alumni Center, being cleaned here by campus worker Walter J. Tubbs, thawed out Thursday.

Photo by Frederick D. Joe

Bryan bank reopens under new ownership

WASHINGTON (AP) — First Bank & Trust of Bryan was one of three Texas banks reported closed Thursday. The bank, at 1716 Briarcrest Drive, will reopen today under new ownership.

The Board of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation approved the assumption of deposits and fully secured liabilities of two Houston banks as well, bringing the state total to 12 failures so far this year.

First Bank's deposits and liabilities will be assumed by First American Bank, a subsidiary of Adam Bank Group Inc., Bryan. Citizens Bank and Citizens Bank-Houston will reopen as Deposit Guaranty Bank, Dallas.

All depositors automatically will become depositors of the assuming banks subject to approval by the appropriate court.

First Bank & Trust, a subsidiary of United Bankers, Inc. of Waco, was found to have engaged in aggressive lending practices and an over-concentration in real estate loans. The depressed economic conditions in real estate values and inadequate supervision by the board contributed to the bank's failure, Texas Banking Commissioner Kenneth W. Littlefield said.

Littlefield attributed the Houston bank failures to insider abuses.

Education leaders stress equity funding needs

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas Education Agency Commissioner William N. Kirby said Thursday state lawmakers need to raise at least \$500 million in new funds to begin to address the problem of unequal funding in public schools.

Several State Board of Education members backed Kirby with remarks aimed at lawmakers and state leaders.

"There has been absolute silence from the legislative leadership and state leadership. I mean you could go over there and hear a pin drop,"

on the issue of equity funding for poor school districts, board member Will Davis of Austin said.

Kirby said the Legislature must take steps to help poor school districts reach equal funding with wealthy school districts.

"The board ought to do everything it can to encourage the Legislature to exercise their prerogative and to see that, in fact, we take a step forward in equity," he said.

The state's method of funding public schools is being challenged in the courts by poor school districts.

Public schools are funded largely through a combination of local property taxes and state aid.

School districts with low property values filed suit in 1984, saying their students do not have the same educational opportunities because the districts are unable to raise as much in local funds as wealthy districts to enrich school funding.

A state district court judge ruled in favor of the poor districts, saying the state's education financing system was unconstitutional, but the 3rd Court of Appeals reversed that

decision, saying the Legislature should decide the issue. The case has been appealed to the state Supreme Court.

"We've got to move forward with equity," Kirby said after outlining the public school budget, which calls for about a \$5 billion increase in funding. This includes \$500 million for equity funding and \$300 million to take care of increasing student enrollment.

Board member Carolyn Crawford of Beaumont said the education budget proposal "is not a pie in the

sky. It is not a wish list. It is a realistic budget about what it will take to have quality in all our schools."

Kirby said that without the additional equity funding, lawmakers must make the decision to redistribute money that is already in the system.

Under such a plan, some school districts would lose millions of dollars in state funding. The Dallas school district would lose \$21.8 million; Houston, \$21.5 million; Austin, \$9.7 million; and Plano, \$4.1 million.

Black History Month sheds light on old foe

By Richard Tijerina

STAFF WRITER

At a time when they are reflecting on their accomplishments, blacks also are faced with the same stumbling block that has plagued them throughout American history.

Racism.

February is Black History Month, and it gives blacks across the country an opportunity to enjoy the achievements they have made in American society.

For blacks at Texas A&M, it is a time to reflect on the progress they have made during the past 20 years. Through events hosted by organizations such as the Black Awareness Committee, A&M students are able to learn more about the contributions blacks have made.

Wendell Gray, chairman of BAC, said Black History Month gives all students a chance to learn about the significant impact blacks have made on America.

"It's going to be as phenomenal for me to see my kids and the strides they're going to be making as it is for my parents to see the strides I'm making."

— Wendell Gray,

chairman,
Black Awareness Committee

"I think it brings accomplishments into the limelight," Gray said. "I think it enlightens

some of the people to some of the things they don't know. Hopefully, it gives the whole student body a sense that blacks have contributed more to America than just being slaves."

"Hopefully, it brings to all the black students on campus a sense of pride, because we have done several important things. If they had the same public school history that I've had, they don't know the achievements blacks have made throughout history."

Gray said the month gives him time to enjoy the progress blacks have made in fighting for civil rights — a fight that started in the 1960s and continues today.

"Being a black American means several things to different people," he said. "To me, it means being proud of who you are and being proud of the obstacles we overcame. It's a prouful time. We've made enormous strides, but we've also got so much further to go."

Ruth McMullan, adviser to BAC, said Black History Month offers a chance to learn more about black culture. She said black culture is not taught properly in school, and the month helps in fixing that.

"I think it showcases the beauty and intelligence of the black people that mostly is hidden," McMullan said. "You're not taught well in the white history classes that you attend. It shows how in-depth the black culture really is. It makes black people more proud of themselves."

Gray said being a black youngster was not easy because of the many incidents of racism he faced. However, he said his father's generation suffered more than his.

"It's going to be as phenomenal for me to

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