

# Editorial

## Kerrey's resolutions pay off

Polls conducted during the 1982 gubernatorial campaign indicated that, in the eyes of most residents, Nebraska's dismal financial situation was the single most important issue facing the state.

Now, after Gov. Kerrey has been in office for a year, seems like an appropriate time to look back on how that problem has been handled.

When Kerrey took control of the state last January, it was, in his own words, broke. Taxes were reaching record-high levels and officials had resorted to intra-fund borrowing just to keep the state going.

The state budget Kerrey put his signature on last



Gov. Bob Kerrey

spring included several tax increases and did not allow pay raises for any state employees, including NU faculty and staff members.

Kerrey promised to run state government like a business, and, just as in his private interests, he has been quite successful. Granted, the state's improved fiscal picture can largely be attributed to the nationwide economic recovery, but Nebraskans also should be thankful for some wise decisions made by their chief executive.

He has made some mistakes and taken some political risks, but as a whole, Kerrey's handling of the state's finances has been magnificent.

Thanks to a temporary half-cent sales tax, the state has been building up a \$30 million reserve fund which should help it avoid future intra-budget borrowing.

Less than two weeks ago, Kerrey proposed an \$848.6 million budget for 1984-85 which shows just how much progress has been made in getting the state's finances back in order.

The budget, which no doubt will face many alterations before it is approved by the Legislature, calls for an 8 percent increase in state salaries and a 2 percent reduction in the state income tax. It also allows for the temporary half-cent sales tax to expire April 1, as scheduled.

Perhaps more than any other part of the budget, the proposed salary increases show Kerrey's determination to improve state government.

Unlike previous across-the-board hikes, the governor is calling for pay increases ranging from zero to 10 percent, depending on how state employees score on evaluations. Finally someone at the Capitol has the common sense to relate pay with performance.

Kerrey has things well in hand. Taxes appear to be heading downward, and for the first time in several years there seems to be optimism about the state's financial future. The Legislature would be wise to take that into consideration when it votes on the governor's proposals.

## Report gives Reagan everything he wants

Last week President Reagan's puppet Kissinger Commission on Central America produced, as a result of its hair-brained skip through the region, a report calling for exactly what Commander-in-Chief Reagan wanted them to call for — huge increases in military aid to the region, El Salvador in particular.

The report calls for \$250 million in military aid to El Salvador for this year, with a larger



Christopher Burbach

increase slated for years to come. The commission's findings were announced amid a spate of rhetoric from the president, who claimed the United States was allowing the Salvadoran government to "slowly bleed to death."

Reagan has also attempted to look like he is crusading against El Salvador's right wing death squads lately, although he refuses to make continued military and economic aid to that country's brutal government contingent on civil and human rights progress.

Administration officials claim their goal is protecting El Salvador from both leftist guerrillas and right wing death squads.

But the Reagan administration is interested in keeping the current Salvadoran government in power, despite that institution's abominations. If the U.S. government were as concerned as it claims to be over human rights violations in El Salvador, it would make economic and military aid contingent on progress in that area.

The administration claims the number of violent deaths in El Salvador has decreased, basing that claim on Salvadoran press reports. However, three politically independent human rights groups in El Salvador produced statements last Saturday which make it clear that the regime has not followed those orders.

A United Press International article in Sunday's *Omaha World-Herald* quotes a joint statement from the independent Human Rights Commission, the Roman Catholic Church's legal aid organization, and the Mothers' Committee of the Disappeared as saying, "The death squads continue to be active, the bodies of the young, workers and the kidnapped continue to appear."

That same rights statement cited the El Salvador regime's continued unwillingness to deal with civilians active in the death squads.

That unwillingness should not surprise anyone. The death squads, whether under direct employ of the regime or not, are doing its dirty work. They kill political opponents of the regime. As long as American dollars and guns keep pouring in no matter what they do, El Salvadoran government officials cannot see the dissolution of the death squads as being in their best interest.

Until the United States becomes more prudent about who it sends advisers, guns and money to, and applies real pressure on the Salvadoran government to rid itself of rightist thugs, the whole country of El Salvador, not just its government, will continue to "slowly bleed to death."

## The price of being on top: Everyone's shooting for you

I was in Texas a few weeks ago visiting the news director of a Dallas radio station. As I waited in the reception area, I noticed another man waiting with me. Dark-haired and extraordinarily handsome, he was dressed casually and seemed to be in no particular hurry.

The news director came out to the waiting area. He said hello to both of



Bob Greene

us; then he said, "Do you two know each other?"

We didn't. The news director said, "Bob, this is Danny White."

Danny White, of course, is the quarterback of the Dallas Cowboys. There are any number of prestigious and glamorous jobs in America, but being the quarterback of the Cowboys has to rank near the very top. We all fantasize about what it would be like to do certain things; I imagine that a few million American males, during any given football season, let their minds drift while they consider how it would feel to be calling the signals behind the Cowboys' offensive line, while much of the nation watches on network television.

It turned out that White was at the radio station to take part in the taping of a roundtable show with some of the station's newsmen. The news director said that if I wanted to join in on the questioning, I was welcome.

I wasn't due at my next stop for another hour, so I took him up on it. The three of us went into one of the studios, where we were joined by other station personnel; the tape machine was turned on. I'm not really an expert on the intricacies of the National Football League, so when it was my turn to ask a question, I didn't ask anything about the NFL's playoff series, which was just about to start.

Instead, I asked White something I had always been curious about. I said, "When you throw the ball, do you know if it's going to be a completed pass right when it leaves your fingers? Can you feel that you've thrown it exactly right? Or do you have to watch the rest of the play unfold just like the rest of us before you know?"

White said that he knew right away. He said that something totally unexpected might happen — the receiver might slip and fall down, for example, or run into another player by mistake — but on a typical pass, he knew whether it was going to be a completion or not even before his arm had finished its forward motion after releasing the ball.

I stayed around for a while, then headed off for my appointment. Everywhere I went in Dallas I heard people talking about White and the upcoming playoffs; every time I picked up the newspaper or turned on the television, he was a topic of conversation. In an earlier generation there was a phrase: "great to be young and a New York Yankee." That sentiment is undoubtedly still true, but I kept thinking that it must be even greater to be young and the quarterback of the Dallas Cowboys.

White, it is being pointed out, has not taken the Cowboys to the Super Bowl in the four years he has started at quarterback. The fans in Dallas are looking back to the days of Roger Staubach — and some of them are looking ahead to what they think will be the days of Gary Hogeboom, who is Danny White's understudy. During the Cowboys' season-ending defeat, the people in the stands booed White loudly as he threw three second-half interceptions. After the game Hogeboom was not shy about his own eagerness to take over.

"I feel like I should have started this year," the understudy said after the game. "I've been ready for three years. We have leadership problems on this team."

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## Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials represent official policy of the spring 1984 Daily Nebraskan. They are written by this semester's editor in chief, Larry Sparks.

Other staff members will write editorials throughout the semester. They will carry the author's name after the final sentence.

Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees or the NU Board of Regents.

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