

ernment. This means that in the next conservative administration, conservatives can go to the higher echelons. Reagan has been criticized for drawing his top people from outside the conservative ranks. But previously, there was not a single soul in the conservative movement who had been postmaster of Dogpatch, Kentucky. How can you have a reasonable agenda for redesigning the Environmental Protection Agency when no conservative has ever served there? Reagan has been like Columbus. He has led us ashore on a continent many of us have never seen or been on.

Since Reagan took over, not a single square inch of territory has been lost to the Communists, unless one counts Qaddafi's takeover of portions of Chad. The contras are stirring up trouble in Nicaragua, Afghan freedom fighters are getting equipment, South Africa is making raids into Angola and Mozambique, there is activity along the Thai-Cambodian border. This is not in my mind just a series of coincidences. What we have is a president who gets up in the morning, brushes his teeth, and asks his staff, "what shall we do to them today?"

Reagan made the right choice to lower taxes, rather than raise them. Not one dime raised in taxes would be applied to the deficit, for you can be sure that Tip O'Neill would spend every one of them, passing them out to his party's constituents.

The best criticism I've heard of Reagan, although I disagree with it, was that he was a little too victory-oriented in the fall of 1981. I think the administration would have been better off if it had asked for far more domestic spending cuts than it could get and then blamed Congress for not giving them. However, nothing succeeds like success, and I'm not sure this would have been as successful an administration if it hadn't won those early victories in 1981.

Reagan did the statesmanlike thing on Social Security; solving this problem requires bipartisan support. You can say he didn't completely solve the problem, but he deserves credit for postponing the system's collapse.

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national media, but I think that's a mistake.

Reagan has been fine on the moral issues. He has never waffled on his opposition to the ERA; he's against drafting women.

People are better off economically than they were under Carter because inflation is licked. I like the way Reagan stood absolutely firm on the air controllers' strike.

Reagan's principal problem is that he's not a tough enough administrator. He's such a nice guy. He should have fired disloyal people, and he should have fired Carter holdovers earlier, such as those on the Civil Rights Commission. He wouldn't have got as much bad press.

Social Security was mismanaged by the White House. Reagan shouldn't have talked about the subject at all. Loose talk created a fear in people who are dependent on Social Security, especially older women, and enabled Democrats to be absolutely unscrupulous in exaggerating those fears. The bipartisan commission was a good move to defuse the subject as a Republican-Democratic issue.

One of Reagan's problems is that his closest advisers don't understand politics. They aren't pragmatic politicians. They don't understand what produces votes at the precinct level.

Reagan won in 1980 because he brought in voters who had never voted before, because they don't care about politics. The advisers don't understand how Reagan's stand on such issues as abortion and gay rights and the ERA and drafting women strongly motivated so many people who normally don't vote at all. Many people pay too much attention to polls. But Gallup and Harris can't predict *who* is going to vote.

Something else the White House advisers don't understand is the need to motivate and enthuse your activists. Elections are not determined by 25 million Democrats and 25 million Republicans; they are determined by a few thousand activists on both sides who bring out the vote. Reagan's activists haven't been getting the tender loving care they need in order to duplicate in 1984 what they did in 1980.

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Reagan always says the right things when he talks to

conservative leaders, but he doesn't follow through relentlessly. He ought to pursue Legal Services, to defund the Left. He ought to take proabortion senators down to the abortion clinics to see what really happens.

Economically, Ronald Reagan has done more than any president since Roosevelt in turning around the country's thinking about government spending. Even liberals are now talking about spending less. Psychologically, this has been an incredible change.

The beginning of a buildup in our defense capabilities has been something only Reagan could do. He should make the point more forcefully that those who are strong don't have to use weapons. He's going to have to get off his commission kick—you don't need a commission to tell you the Soviets and their surrogates are trying to take over Central America. The president has also missed a magnificent opportunity to disrupt the Soviet economy: Our big club is to deny them bank credits.

Despite a great deal of derision, Reagan has focused attention on moral issues, such as abortion. His attacks on the Soviet government as the incarnation of evil are right on target.

The most decisive action of Reagan's that stands out was the air controllers' strike. He said he would fire them if they went out on strike, and he did it. That had a tremendous ripple effect on other employees, like the postal workers. The president needs to show swift and decisive action more often.

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*"The radical surgery that was required in Washington was not performed. Ronald Reagan made a pledge not to touch entitlements programs, and that's one of the few pledges he has kept absolutely."*

*Paul M. Weyrich*

The radical surgery that was required in Washington was not performed. Ronald Reagan made a pledge not to touch entitlements programs, and that's one of the few pledges he has kept absolutely. But until we come to grips with entitlements, no amount of tinkering with tax increases is going to get the budget in order.

The correct strategy for Reagan would have been to take the "Economic Dunkirk" approach outlined by Kemp and Stockman. He had an unprecedented opportunity to say you don't understand what a mess Jimmy Carter left us in, to say radical surgery was required and I'm ordering something that will hurt but will save the patient's life. He could have cut much more if the program was fair to everybody, in the sense that everyone's

benefits were cut. Instead, he was seen as cutting out benefits for poor people, while still subsidizing the International Monetary Fund, the Ex-Im Bank, and businesses like Chrysler.

Reagan was correct to stress tax cuts and defense, but not to the exclusion of everything else. According to the Gallup poll, 82 percent of the public supports voluntary prayer in schools. If Reagan had come out and said that this would never again be a great nation if we don't return to our religious principles, there would have been no downside risk.

Reagan got his tax cuts and Gramm-Latta passed before the August recess in 1981. By the time the administration came back in September, it was out of ideas. Its agenda was too limited. There were a lot of ideas it could have pushed but didn't—from vouchers to enterprise zones to tuition tax credits. But there was no comprehensive reform agenda comparable to that of the brain trust under FDR. The Republican-controlled Senate could have held hearing after hearing about all the disasters of the Carter administration, but Orrin Hatch's hearings on the Legal Services Corporation are the first hearings to be held on the failures of the Great Society.

In September 1981, Reagan made a big mistake when he listened to the Senate leadership, whose view was that you couldn't have any confrontations. You should be prepared to lose battles in committee but take votes to the Senate floor. Reagan should have insisted that votes be taken on the floor, but instead he was convinced that he had to win everything. The real problem was this non-confrontation policy. Even Gerald Ford was smart enough to use his veto.

Reagan blew a historic opportunity to shake up the leadership of the black community. He could have and should have appointed several conservative blacks to some very key positions. That would have started a dynamic in the black community that couldn't have been stopped. It would have broken the monopoly of the current black leadership: Now there is no internal debate within the black community. It was essential to take issues out of the context of racism, to argue that attacks on food stamps, housing subsidies, and so on were not issues of racism but issues of socialism.

Reagan can point to the turnaround of the armed forces, particularly the navy, as a concrete accomplishment. After the terrible morale problems and neglect under Ford and Carter, reenlistments are up, drug problems are being eliminated, and ships are being built. Reagan selected good people for the military and permitted them to do their job. Militarily we are decidedly better off than before his inauguration.

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