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Ronald Reagan: Conservative Statesman

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Ronald Reagan, the 40th President of the United States, is perhaps the second most popular and consequential Republican President after Abraham Lincoln. Like Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, Reagan's careful rhetorical style proved deeply persuasive to the American people and earned him the name of "Great Communicator."

Elected during a moment of national self-doubt and economic stagnation in 1980, he is credited with reviving the national economy, recovering the nation's optimism about the future, and taking the pivotal steps to end the long Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union. His background as a Hollywood actor before entering politics, his idiosyncratic conservatism, and his age (he was the oldest person elected to the presidency) mark him as an extraordinary figure among conservatives and among all of our Presidents, making him a model to be studied closely and emulated by conservatives today and in the future.

Early Life

Ronald Wilson Reagan was born on February 6, 1911, in Tampico, Illinois, the son of struggling salesman Jack Reagan, prone to alcoholism, and a devout mother, Nelle Reagan, who belonged to the Disciples of Christ denomination. Reagan moved frequently around small Illinois towns as a young child as his father struggled to find steady work, and he acquired much of his religious sensibilities from his mother. Several biographers have traced Reagan's personal reserve to his frequent moves as a youth as well as his difficult relations with his alcoholic father.

After settling eventually in Dixon, Reagan attended Eureka College, a Disciples of Christ-affiliated liberal arts college in Illinois, where he majored in economics and sociology. He also played football and took up drama, his future career. He had a reputation as a B and C student, prompting him to joke during his presidency that he was more interested in sports and drama than his classes and that "I often wonder how far I might have gone in life if I had only studied harder."¹

Following graduation in 1932, Reagan found a series of jobs in radio broadcasting in Iowa, where a stint as a Chicago Cubs broadcaster led him to accompany the team to spring training in California in 1937. While in California, he took a screen test and was signed to a contract with Warner Brothers.

Although known as a star of "B" movies, Reagan became one of the most popular actors with the public and starred in a few memorable or critically

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Ronald Reagan

Born

February 6, 1911, in Tampico, Illinois, to John Edward Reagan and Nelle Wilson Reagan.

Education

Graduated with a B.A. in economics and sociology from Eureka College (Illinois) in 1932.

Religion

Disciples of Christ.

Family

In 1940, married actress Jane Wyman (b. 1917), with whom he had two children: Maureen (b. 1941) and an adopted son, Michael (b. 1945). They divorced in 1949, and in 1952, he married Nancy Davis (b. 1921), with whom he had two children: Patti (b. 1952) and Ron Jr. (b. 1958).

Highlights

- Radio announcer, WOC radio, University of Iowa, and WHO radio, Des Moines (1932–1937).
- Army Enlisted Reserve (1937).
- Actor, Warner Brothers Studio (1937). Eventually appeared in 57 movies.
- First lieutenant, U.S. Army (1943–1945).
- Board member, Screen Actors Guild (1941).
- President, Screen Actors Guild (1947–1952, 1959).
- Host, General Electric Theater (1954–1962).
- Governor of California (1967–1975).
- 40th President of the United States (1981–1989).

Died

June 5, 2004, at his home in Bel Air, California.

Last Words

“I now begin the journey that will lead me into the sunset of my life. I know that for America there will always be a bright dawn ahead. Thank you, my friends. May God always bless you.”

acclaimed movies, including *Knute Rockne: All American* and *Kings Row*. He married one of the leading starlets of the time, actress Jane Wyman, in 1940.

World War II interrupted his film career. Reagan served as an Army lieutenant but was unable to assume a combat role because of bad eyesight. With his film background, he helped produce training films and conduct public relations for the military. Reagan later said his experiences in uniform in

World War II first opened his eyes to the defects of bureaucracy.

During these years, Reagan considered himself a liberal Democrat, having proudly voted for Franklin Roosevelt four times, and he supported liberal causes such as the Americans for Democratic Action after the war. He described himself later as having been “a near hopeless hemophilic liberal.”²

It was during this period, while Reagan served as head of the Screen Actors Guild—the trade union

1. Ronald Reagan, “Address at Commencement Exercises at Eureka College,” May 9, 1982, <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1982/50982a.htm>.
2. Ronald Reagan, *Where's the Rest of Me?* (New York: Dell, 1981), p. 160.

for Hollywood—that Reagan came face-to-face with Communist activism and became a staunch anti-Communist. Actor Sterling Hayden, an admitted member of the Communist Party, later said that Communism was stopped in Hollywood by “a one-man battalion of opposition named Ronald Reagan.” He also began to question liberal economic views, especially the 91 percent income tax rate, which he saw as a disincentive for work and investment.

Reagan’s increasing interest in politics coincided with his divorce from Jane Wyman in 1948. He subsequently married actress Nancy Davis, who ironically had contacted Reagan for help in extricating herself from the false accusation that she was a Communist sympathizer.

Reagan’s idiosyncratic conservatism combined forward-looking optimism with his deep regard for America’s heritage and the idea of American exceptionalism.

A major turning point for Reagan came in the 1950s when he signed on to become a spokesman for *General Electric Theater*. In addition to introducing the weekly television show, Reagan also traveled the nation for General Electric, speaking to GE employees at plants in 38 states. Reagan was an active reader of some of the early classics of modern conservatism such as Whittaker Chambers’ *Witness*, Henry Hazlitt’s *Economics in One Lesson*, Fredric Bastiat’s *The Law*, and F. A. Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom*. Drawing on books and conservative periodicals such as *The Freeman* and *National Review*, Reagan wrote his own speeches on current issues for his GE plant appearances, later explaining that:

Eventually what happened to me was, because I did my own speeches and did the research for

them, I just woke up to the realization one day that I had been going out and helping to elect the people who had been causing the things I had been criticizing. So it wasn’t any case of some mentor coming in and talking me out of it. I did it in my own speeches.³

Reagan’s contract with GE ended in 1962, the same year he finally switched parties. In 1964, Reagan made his first prominent national political appearance with a televised speech on behalf of Barry Goldwater’s presidential campaign. The speech, “A Time for Choosing,” was an overnight sensation. Although the speech was a bracing conservative attack on liberal policy, it also displayed Reagan’s manner of presenting his message in non-ideological terms:

You and I are told we must choose between a left or right, but I suggest there is no such thing as a left or right. There is only an up or down. Up to man’s age-old dream—the maximum of individual freedom consistent with order—or down to the ant heap of totalitarianism.⁴

Reagan’s Idiosyncratic Conservatism

This passage from “A Time for Choosing” displays Reagan’s idiosyncratic conservatism, which combined forward-looking optimism that could at times be confused with utopianism with his deep regard for America’s heritage and the idea of American exceptionalism. His favorite rhetorical image for America was modified from the classic John Winthrop sermon from 1630, “A Model of Christian Charity,” in which Winthrop adapted an image from the Sermon on the Mount to describe the promise of the New World as “a shining city on a hill.”⁵

Reagan also frequently quoted a line from Tom Paine, one of the most radical figures of the American Revolution and author of the famous revolutionary pamphlet *Common Sense*: “We have it on our power to begin the world over again.”⁶ George Will,

3. Quoted in Jules Witcover and Richard M. Cohen, “Where’s the Rest of Ronald Reagan?” *Esquire*, March 1976, p. 92.

4. Ronald Reagan, “A Time for Choosing,” October 27, 1964, Heritage Foundation *Primary Sources*, <http://www.heritage.org/initiatives/first-principles/primary-sources/a-time-for-choosing-ronald-reagan-enters-the-political-stage>.

5. John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity,” 1630, <http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/charity.html>.

6. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1776), <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/paine-common.asp>.

among other conservatives, criticized Reagan for this, calling Paine's remark "the least conservative sentiment conceivable.... Any time, any place, that is nonsense."⁷ Reagan explained in 1965 his reasoning behind quoting Paine: He thought modern conservatism was now the authentic champion of the best of the liberal tradition:

The classic liberal used to be the man who believed the individual was, and should be forever, the master of his destiny. That is now the conservative position. The liberal used to believe in freedom under law. He now takes the ancient feudal position that power is everything. He believes in a stronger and stronger central government, in the philosophy that control is better than freedom. The conservative now quotes Thomas Paine, a long-time refuge of the liberals: "Government is a necessary evil; let us have as little of it as possible."⁸

The "city on a hill" image and his fondness for Tom Paine are not the only signs of Reagan's optimistic streak. The inscription at his gravesite reads, "I know in my heart that man is good, that what is right will always eventually triumph." But Reagan was not a utopian; he never believed in the capacity to perfect human nature through political or bureaucratic interventions. In fact, he was deeply critical of "experts" and self-appointed "elites" that are the hallmark of modern bureaucratic government. In "A Time for Choosing" and many subsequent speeches, Reagan attacked the idea that "a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capitol can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves."⁹

Governor Reagan

Time magazine called Reagan's Goldwater speech "the one bright spot in a dismal campaign,"¹⁰ and columnist David Broder wrote that the speech was "the most successful political debut since William

Jennings Bryan."¹¹ Republican leaders in California approached Reagan shortly afterward and persuaded him to consider running for governor of California in 1966. Reagan won the election over incumbent Democratic Governor Pat Brown by more than a million votes, demonstrating his crossover appeal to Democrats and independent voters.

Reagan's two terms as governor of California from 1967 to 1975 were a practical demonstration of the possibilities—and limits—of conservative governance.

Reagan's two terms as governor of California from 1967 to 1975 were a practical demonstration of the possibilities—and limits—of conservative governance. Early in his first year, he agreed to a large tax increase to close the budget deficit he inherited when spending cuts alone were insufficient to balance the budget. He strenuously opposed President Richard Nixon's plan to federalize welfare and establish a guaranteed annual income and was the only governor who opposed a National Governors Association resolution in favor of Nixon's proposal.

After Nixon's plan was defeated in Congress, Reagan embarked on his own welfare plan in California, as California was confronting a welfare crisis. California's welfare rolls were growing by 40,000 a month by 1970. While California had 10 percent of the nation's population, it had 16 percent of the nation's total welfare caseload. Unless something was done, Reagan's finance department told him, a tax increase would be necessary to meet the added fiscal burden.

Reagan's plan required recipients to find jobs or engage in job training, and it tightened eligibility standards. Reagan's design worked: The welfare

7. George Will, "Getting the Liberal Out of Reagan," *The News and Courier*, November 2, 1985, <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2506&dat=19851102&id=AXxJAAAIBAJ&sjid=QAsNAAAAIBAJ&pg=2846,361915>.

8. Reagan, *Where's the Rest of Me?* p. 337.

9. Reagan, "A Time for Choosing."

10. "Early Career," *American Experience*, PBS, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/reagan-career/>.

11. Stephen Hess and David Broder, *The Republican Establishment: The Present and the Future of the G.O.P.* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 254.

caseload started falling by 8,000 a month. By July 1973, it was nearly 800,000 cases lower than had been predicted before reform, with a savings of \$1 billion (out of a total state budget of about \$9 billion at the time). Reagan's 1970 welfare reform plan became the blueprint for the widespread and successful state-based welfare reform experiments of the 1990s that culminated in sweeping welfare reform on the national level in 1996.

Reagan's governorship was also notable for his confrontation with student radicalism on California's university campuses and for signing a law liberalizing abortion (which he later regretted) and the nation's first no-fault divorce law.

In 1973, a recovering economy and Reagan's spending restraint created a large surplus, which Reagan wanted to rebate to taxpayers in the form of a ballot initiative, Proposition 1, that would impose permanent tax and spending limits on California government. "Prop. 1" would have limited total state spending to no more than 7 percent of personal income in the state (state spending was about 8.75 percent of personal income).

Public employee unions spearheaded the opposition to the initiative, arguing that a state tax and spending limit would lead to local tax increases, and the initiative lost in a special election in 1973. Exit polls showed that two-thirds of the "no" voters thought they were voting against higher taxes. "It was a victory for political demagoguery," Reagan said afterward.¹² In hindsight, it is easy to see that with Prop. 1, Reagan was once again ahead of his time. (He was also musing aloud at that time about the desirability of a flat-rate income tax, a leading conservative issue a generation later.)

Five years after Prop. 1, California passed Proposition 13 by a landslide. Proposition 13 cut property taxes in half, imposed Prop. 1's two-thirds majority requirement to raise taxes, and launched the "tax revolt" around the nation.

The 1976 and 1980 Presidential Campaigns

In 1976, Reagan decided to challenge President Gerald Ford for the Republican presidential nomination. Although Ford was the incumbent Republican President, he had been appointed rather than elected

to office, and Reagan felt Ford had not fought sufficiently against growing budget deficits and that his foreign policy of détente was too accommodating to the Soviet Union. After a hard-fought campaign that saw Reagan win the majority of votes in states with direct primaries, Ford narrowly edged out Reagan in the delegate count—the last major party nomination fight that was still closely contested going into the convention.

While Jimmy Carter and other liberals called for a renewal of wage and price controls, Reagan came to embrace "supply-side economics" as a cornerstone of his campaign's economic plan, along with deregulation, government spending restraint, and stricter monetary policy to bring down inflation.

Between 1976 and 1980, Reagan kept in the public eye through a syndicated newspaper column and daily radio addresses while remaining publicly undeclared about his plans for 1980. (Reagan wrote nearly all of his more than 1,000 radio addresses by himself, it was subsequently learned.) As Reagan would be 69 years old by election day in 1980, there was doubt whether he would be a candidate, but despite an early setback in the Iowa caucuses in January 1980, he soon emerged as the front-runner and breezed to the GOP nomination with little difficulty. He selected his most serious rival in the campaign, George H. W. Bush, as his running mate.

The economy had continued to deteriorate under President Jimmy Carter, with slow growth, high unemployment, and increasing inflation combining into a phenomenon known as "stagflation" that conventional Keynesian economic theory could neither explain nor cure. Inflation exceeded 13 percent, and interest rates topped 20 percent in some cases. In addition, turmoil in the Middle East roiled global energy markets, producing a spike in oil prices and gasoline shortages at the pump.

12. Ronald Reagan, "Reflections on the Failure of Proposition #1: On Spending and the Nature of Government," *National Review*, December 7, 1973, <http://old.nationalreview.com/flashback/reagan200406080927.asp>.

While Carter and other liberals called for a renewal of wage and price controls, Reagan came to embrace “supply-side economics”—specifically, the Kemp–Roth proposal for a 30 percent across-the-board reduction in income tax rates—as a cornerstone of his campaign’s economic plan, along with deregulation, government spending restraint, and stricter monetary policy to bring down inflation.

In foreign policy, Reagan attacked Carter’s weakness that had led to anti-American revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua, as well as Soviet adventurism such as the invasion of Afghanistan. He was also a strong critic of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II), which Carter signed in 1979 but was forced to shelve following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The seizure and prolonged captivity of 52 American diplomats in Iran in 1980 added to Reagan’s critique of Carter’s weakness.

Polls in 1980 found that a large majority of Americans thought the nation was on the “wrong track” and were pessimistic about the future. Reagan broke open a close race with a strong debate performance against Carter a week before the election, and he went on to score a 44-state Electoral College landslide.

Reagan’s Return to the Founding

In his inaugural address in 1981, Reagan said:

In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problems—government *is* the problem.... It is my intention to curb the size and influence of the Federal establishment.... It is no coincidence that our present troubles parallel and are proportionate to the intervention and intrusion in our lives that result from unnecessary and excessive growth of government.¹³

Reagan was the first Republican President since Calvin Coolidge to make a constitutional critique of the administrative state. In a 1979 letter to Ben Shaw, publisher of the Dixon, Illinois, *Evening Telegraph*

newspaper, Reagan argued: “The permanent structure of our government with its power to pass regulations has eroded if not in effect repealed portions of our Constitution.”¹⁴

As President, Reagan made reaffirming the founding a central concern, especially in his appointments to the judiciary and in the high-profile public campaign, conducted chiefly by Attorney General Edwin Meese, on behalf of restoring the understanding of the “original intent” of the Constitution.

Reagan also remarked in his inaugural address that he intended to reverse the growth of government because it “shows signs of having grown beyond the consent of the governed.”¹⁵ This was one of the few substantive references to the Declaration of Independence in modern presidential rhetoric, but this was not unique for Reagan. One analysis found that Reagan quoted the American Founders more often than his five predecessors combined. As President, Reagan made reaffirming the founding a central concern not only of his rhetoric, but also of many of his actions, especially in his appointments to the judiciary and in the high-profile public campaign, conducted chiefly by Attorney General Edwin Meese, on behalf of restoring the understanding of the “original intent” of the Constitution.¹⁶

In his farewell address in 1989, Reagan also included a heartfelt plea for passing along the heritage of the nation’s principles through a renewed emphasis on civic education:

An informed patriotism is what we want. And are we doing a good enough job teaching our children

13. Ronald Reagan, “Inaugural Address,” January 20, 1981, Heritage Foundation *Primary Sources*, <http://www.heritage.org/initiatives/first-principles/primary-sources/reagans-first-inaugural-government-is-not-the-solution-to-our-problem-government-is-the-problem>.

14. Ronald Reagan, letter to Ben Shaw, May 10, 1979, in *Reagan: A Life in Letters* (New York: Free Press, 2003), p. 273.

15. Reagan, “Inaugural Address,” January 20, 1981.

16. See, for example, Edwin Meese III, “Constitution Day Speech,” in “Returning to Original Meaning: Attorney General Meese Looks to the Declaration and the Constitution,” September 17, 1985, Heritage Foundation *Primary Sources*, <http://www.heritage.org/initiatives/first-principles/primary-sources/returning-to-original-meaning-attorney-general-meese-looks-to-the-declaration-and-the-constitution>.

what America is and what she represents in the long history of the world? Those of us who are over 35 or so years of age grew up in a different America. We were taught, very directly, what it means to be an American. And we absorbed, almost in the air, a love of country and an appreciation of its institutions....

But now, we're about to enter the nineties, and some things have changed. Younger parents aren't sure that an unambivalent appreciation of America is the right thing to teach modern children. And as for those who create the popular culture, well-grounded patriotism is no longer the style. Our spirit is back, but we haven't reinstitutionalized it. We've got to do a better job of getting across that America is freedom—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of enterprise. And freedom is special and rare. It's fragile; it needs protection.¹⁷

President Reagan: Rebuilding America's Economy and Winning the Cold War

Reagan's first priority upon taking office was reversing the nation's economic slide. After a protracted political battle in Washington that stretched late into the summer—and that was interrupted by an assassination attempt in late March, in which he was gravely wounded—Reagan achieved modest spending reductions for one year but also succeeded in passing a 25 percent across-the-board income tax cut phased in over three years. (A bidding war with Democrats in Congress who were determined to block the income tax cut produced a bill with revenue reductions much larger than Reagan proposed. This fact led to much subsequent misunderstanding when Reagan agreed to eliminate deductions and raise some excise taxes the following year in what was then the largest tax increase in history. Reagan held the line, however, against raising income taxes.)

Reagan accelerated the deregulation of domestic energy production and launched significant regulatory reform in several other areas, including

transportation, telecommunications, and finance. Following a severe recession in 1982, during which unemployment reached nearly 11 percent, the economy began a sustained boom that lasted for nearly a decade with falling inflation and interest rates. A second round of tax reform in 1986 lowered individual rates further, to 14 percent and 28 percent (subsequently undone by Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton). By the time Reagan left office in 1989, the nation had created 20 million new jobs.

Just as Reagan broke with orthodoxy to fix the economy, he also broke with the conventional wisdom on foreign policy. He summarized his basic strategy as "peace through strength," but there was more to it than that.¹⁸ Unlike even previous Republican Presidents, Reagan thought the United States could *win* the Cold War against the Soviet Union. "My theory of the Cold War," he told his national security adviser, Richard Allen, "is: we win, they lose."¹⁹

Reagan intuitively concluded that the Soviet Union was weak and potentially brittle, despite its formidable arsenal of nuclear weapons, and that an aggressive strategy of applying pressure might bring the Cold War to an end.

Reagan intuitively concluded that the Soviet Union was weak and potentially brittle, despite its formidable arsenal of nuclear weapons, and that an aggressive strategy of applying pressure might bring the Cold War to an end. But even above material and strategic considerations, Reagan also conceived the Cold War as ultimately a *moral* conflict—a central dimension that had been subsumed by the *détente* policies of the 1970s.

Reagan's policy toward the Soviet Union had four moving parts: an arms buildup to demonstrate to the Soviets that they could not compete in an arms

17. Ronald Reagan, "Farewell Address," January 11, 1989, <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1989/011189i.htm>.

18. Reagan, "A Time for Choosing."

19. Quoted in Richard V. Allen, "The Man Who Won the Cold War," *Hoover Digest* 2000, No. 1 (January 30, 2000), <http://www.hoover.org/publications/hoover-digest/article/7398>.

race; arms negotiations that sought *reductions* in arms rather than limiting further buildup as previous arms agreements had held; a global campaign to spread democracy that included ratcheting up public criticism of the Soviet Union; and the active support of anti-Soviet guerilla movements in Afghanistan, the Far East, Central America, and Africa.

Reagan's strategy, and especially his rhetoric, was highly controversial both at home and abroad. In 1982, Reagan argued in a speech in London that Soviet Communism was destined "for the ash heap of history"—a bold reversal of Karl Marx's prediction for capitalism.²⁰ In 1983, Reagan called the Soviet Union "an evil empire"²¹ and shortly thereafter effectively announced the end of the long-standing nuclear doctrine of "mutual assured destruction" when he called for the development of ballistic missile defense, known as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).²²

Then, in 1987, after he had begun a series of productive summit meetings and concluded an arms treaty with the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, Reagan stood in front of the Berlin Wall and issued a direct challenge: "Mr. Gorbachev—tear down this wall!"²³ His four dramatic summit meetings with Gorbachev were unlike any previous U.S.–Soviet summits: Reagan insisted upon arguing fundamental principles of democracy and human rights versus Communist ideology rather than negotiating narrowly about technical military details and small-bore trade agreements.

Reagan's strategy was vindicated starting in late 1988 when Gorbachev publicly repudiated the "Brezhnev doctrine," which held that the Soviet Union would defend socialism everywhere by force of arms if necessary. Gorbachev's decision to remove Soviet troops unilaterally from Eastern Europe

contributed in short order to Eastern European nations, starting with Poland, throwing off Communist rule. In November 1989, the Berlin Wall came down, and in 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved.

Margaret Thatcher later said that "Reagan won the Cold War without the firing of a shot."²⁴ Princeton historian Sean Wilentz, a liberal who is generally no friend of conservatives or Republicans, wrote of Reagan: "His success in helping finally to end the cold war is one of the greatest achievements by any president of the United States—and arguably the greatest single presidential achievement since 1945."²⁵

Reagan's Central Insight

Reagan's 1982 speech in London about the Cold War contains a succinct description of his central insight:

At the same time there is a threat posed to human freedom by the enormous power of the modern state. History teaches the dangers of government that overreaches—political control taking precedence over free economic growth, secret police, mindless bureaucracy, all combining to stifle individual excellence and personal freedom.²⁶

Reagan's conflation of "secret police" and "mindless bureaucracy" in the middle of this sentence makes clear that he regarded the problem of government power—statism—as a continuum rather than as a dichotomy. The same principles that animated Reagan's Cold War policy also directed his domestic policy vision.

In his farewell address in 1989, Reagan expressed both his own essential modesty and his confidence in the capacities of the American people:

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20. Ronald Reagan, "Address to Members of the British Parliament," June 8, 1982, in "20 Years Later: Reagan's Westminster Speech," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 106, June 4, 2002, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2002/06/reagans-westminster-speech>.
 21. Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida," March 8, 1983, http://www.reaganfoundation.org/pdf/Remarks_Annual_Convention_National_Association_Evangelicals_030883.pdf.
 22. Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on Defense and National Security," March 23, 1983, <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1983/32383d.htm>.
 23. Ronald Reagan, "Remarks on East–West Relations at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin," June 12, 1987, http://www.reaganfoundation.org/pdf/Remarks_on_East_West_Relations_at_Brandenburg%20Gate_061287.pdf.
 24. Margaret Thatcher, "Unfinished Business, New Challenges," Heritage Foundation *Lecture* No. 340, September 23, 1991, <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/unfinished-business-new-challenges>.
 25. Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), p. 281.
 26. Reagan, "Address to Members of the British Parliament."

I won a nickname, “The Great Communicator.” But I never thought it was my style or the words I used that made a difference: it was the content. I wasn’t a great communicator, but I communicated great things, and they didn’t spring full bloom from my brow, they came from the heart of a great nation—from our experience, our wisdom, and our belief in the principles that have guided us for two centuries. They called it the Reagan revolution. Well, I’ll accept that, but for me it always

seemed more like the great rediscovery, a rediscovery of our values and our common sense.²⁷

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27. Reagan, “Farewell Address.”