

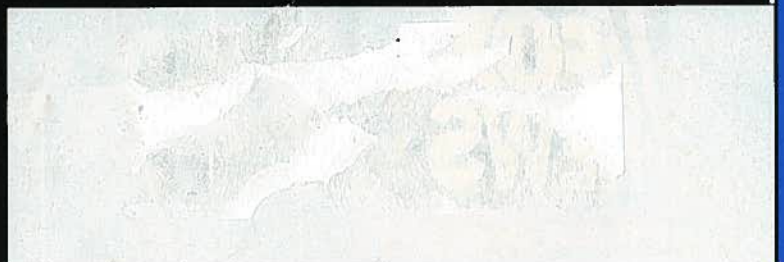
TUCSON AND ITS AFTERMATH

NATIONAL REVIEW



The Point of Reagan

STEVEN F. HAYWARD
TEVI TROY
THE EDITORS



The Gipper Beyond 100

*Conservatives can extend Reagan's legacy
into the next generation*

BY TEVI TROY

As we approach the 100th anniversary of Ronald Reagan's birth on February 6, it seems that the most common question conservatives ask is whether anyone can unite the Right the way Reagan did. In 2008, during the GOP primaries, NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE held a symposium on the question: "Is the Reagan coalition dead?" Respondents, including Terence P. Jeffrey, Paul Kengor, Mark R. Levin, John O'Sullivan, John J. Pitney, Mark Rozell,

Mr. Troy is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and the author of Intellectuals and the American Presidency: Philosophers, Jesters, or Technicians? He served as a senior White House aide under Pres. George W. Bush.

and Peter Schweizer, disagreed over whether such a thing was possible, but all agreed that Reagan was the driving force that had put the coalition together. As Rozell wrote in his entry, "Reagan was the leading force in legitimizing conservative ideas long mocked, and in putting the modern conservative movement into the mainstream."

It is undeniable that Reagan's intellectual legacy continues to shape the Republican party. Even as conservatives have serious and significant disagreements—there are neoconservatives, paleoconservatives, libertarians, social conservatives, tea partiers, and other strains—nearly all of them admire and seek to emulate Reagan. It cannot be true that Reagan would have agreed with all of them all of the time, but each of these factions has a legitimate claim to parts of his intellectual legacy. And Reagan would likely add that a robust debate on the right is good reason for optimism about the future of the conservative movement and America.

Still, it is a problem that Reagan has become the Republican party's primary unifying intellectual force. The GOP should of course honor him, but it should also use his own approach to develop conservative intellectuals and take itself beyond the Reagan era.

This will not happen by a mindless and metronomic process of looking for "the next Reagan." In recent years, that appellation has been bestowed upon, or claimed by, among others, Mitt Romney, Mike Huckabee, Bobby Jindal, Fred Thompson,

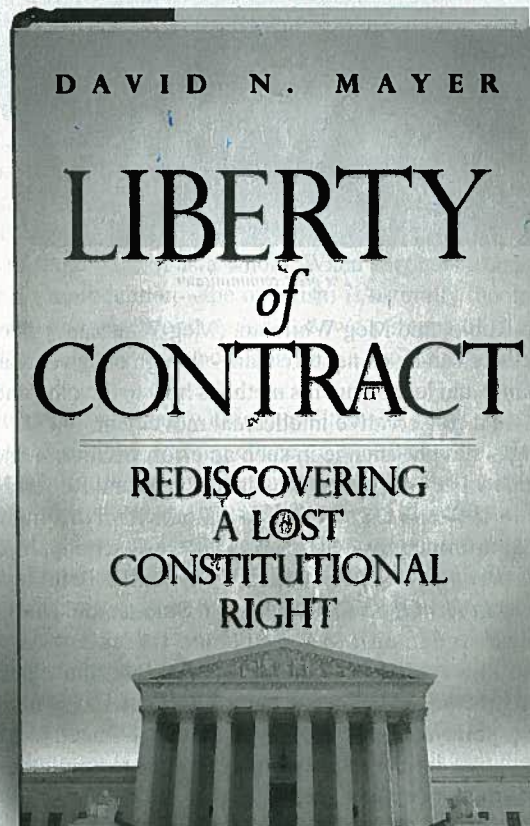
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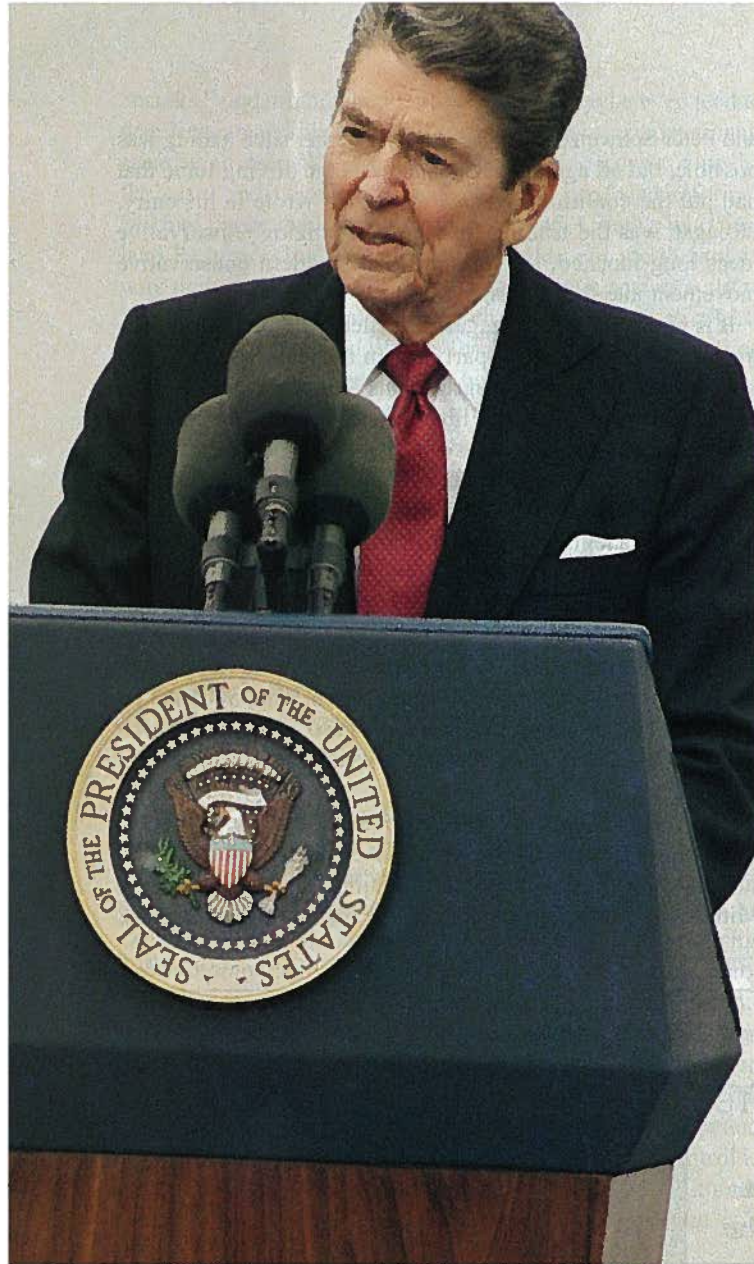
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The great communicator

Marco Rubio, and Meg Whitman. (Meg Whitman?) The truth is that there can be no next Reagan—though others can take up his mantle and learn from his methods how to develop and capitalize on a conservative intellectual movement.

Reagan did not engage in such an effort because he needed to decide what to think. As Rowland Evans and Robert Novak wrote in 1981, “Reagan came to office with a driving ideology that informed his every action.” Recent scholarship, such as *The Reagan Diaries* (edited by Douglas Brinkley) and *Reagan: In His Own Hand* (by Kiron Skinner and Martin and Annelise Anderson), has confirmed the extent to which Reagan knew what he thought, both before and during his administration. He did not need intellectuals to help him develop policy. But he recognized that he did need to foster a conservative intellectual movement both to implement his policies and to develop a legacy.

It is almost impossible to overstate how tiny the conservative intelligentsia was before Reagan’s political rise. In the years following World War II, there was no significant intellectual conservative movement in the United States. In the

1950s, Lionel Trilling infamously dismissed the notion of American conservatism as a series of “irritable mental gestures which seek to resemble ideas.” In the late 1960s, even though some progress had been made on this front—due in large part to William F. Buckley Jr. and the creation of *NATIONAL REVIEW*—Richard Nixon hired the Democrat Daniel Patrick Moynihan to serve as his intellectual-outreach expert. After 18 months, Moynihan complained to Nixon’s chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, that there was a limit to what he could accomplish, and if this effort were to succeed, “it needs to be done by real Republicans.”

Less than a decade after the Nixon presidency, though, everything had changed, and the bleak desert of conservative intellectuals in Washington had become a blooming oasis. As the historian James A. Smith put it, Reagan’s “revolution brought to the fore new cadres of policy experts—libertarian and classical liberal economists, traditionalist conservatives, Straussian political philosophers, and ‘neoconservatives.’ In fact, so many conservative intellectuals had already descended on Washington by the early 1980s that veteran political journalists began to speak of a new ‘ideas industry.’”

REAGAN did not create this industry on his own, of course. As Hoover fellow and former Reagan aide Martin Anderson wrote, Reagan “was an extremely important contributor to the intellectual and political movement that swept him to the presidency in 1980. He gave that moment focus and leadership. But Reagan did not give it life.” A host of other developments helped bring conservative ideas to the fore at the same time. But Reagan recognized this development, and helped advance it, in a number of crucial ways.

First, Reagan was, with the help of Anderson, a great talent scout. According to Smith, Reagan “conferred with conservative intellectuals regularly in the years before he ran for the presidency and seemed generally familiar with the work under way at conservative think tanks.” Over 450 experts and intellectuals participated in Reagan’s 1980 campaign, and many of those people ended up serving in the administration. The think tanks and scholars Reagan promoted appreciated his interest and began to see in him an informed and visionary politician—and this began to be reflected in their conversations and writings about him.

Three think tanks, in particular, received and benefited from Reagan’s attention: the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Hoover Institution. Before Reagan was sworn in, Heritage put together the agenda document *Mandate for Leadership*, which, according to the *Washington Post*, “came to be known, hyperbolically, as ‘the bible of the Reagan Revolution.’” In 1980, Hoover produced the anthology *The United States in the 1980s*, which was seen by Mikhail Gorbachev as “the real blueprint” for Reagan-administration policy. And as for AEI, Reagan himself said that “today the most important American scholarship comes out of our think tanks—and no think tank has been more influential than the American Enterprise Institute.” This praise for think tanks was not window dressing. Reagan brought dozens of think tankers—past, present, and future—into his administration as part of a conscious and effective strategy to cultivate conservative talent. *The United States in the 1980s* alone had

17 contributors who came to work for Reagan. As a result of these efforts, the number of conservative intellectuals active today who served or got their start in the Reagan administration is staggering, and dwarfs those who came from either the first or second Bush administrations.

Second, Reagan was, as his nickname indicated, a great communicator, and he articulated conservative ideas better than any politician then—or since. Reagan taught conservatives how to talk about first principles, and not just short-term political goals. He did this for years on his speaking tours and in his radio addresses, and he continued to do it as a political candidate and later as president. His administration made direct communication with the American people a priority. According to Reagan communications aide David Gergen, Reagan spoke “to the American people through prime-time television more often and more effectively than any other president.” Jeane Kirkpatrick, who came to the attention of Reagan on the basis of her famous article “Dictatorships and Double Standards” in *Commentary*, understood that Reagan’s communication skills were his key contribution to the movement. According to Kirkpatrick, Reagan “was not an intellectual, not a professor, [and] not a journalist—but he was a person who communicated.”

Third, Reagan found ways to unify conservatives even though there were serious divisions among them. Anderson, for example, distrusted Pat Moynihan from their days in the Nixon White House, and for a time blackballed Moynihan ally Checker Finn from an administration position. The neoconservatives and the old-line conservatives battled over whether Bill Bennett or Mel Bradford should become chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. (Bennett won.) Yet Reagan did not let these battles break the larger unity of conservatives behind his administration. He did not invent what Frank Meyer called “fusionism”—bringing together the vitality and strengths of conservatives and libertarians—but he knew how to use these two strands of thought to further the cause of freedom and constitutional government. A latter-day conservative leader may not be able to harness the same unifying issues that Reagan used (such as anti-Communism, toughness on crime, and tax cuts), but there are still plenty of opportunities to focus on the first principles that unite conservatives rather than the issues that drive the movement apart.

Reagan’s legacy is especially relevant in 2011, and not just because this year marks the centennial of his birth. Republicans are once again on the rise politically, and once again searching for a unifying message to drive consequential reforms. As Republican leaders begin their effort to don the Reagan mantle, they would do well to learn from Reagan’s methods, and to apply his techniques to the current day.

Anderson’s worthy book *Revolution* concludes with the observation that Americans possess a great heritage, but “what we will do with that heritage is the great question of our lives.” Similarly, Ronald Reagan has given conservatives a great heritage, but conservatives need to figure out how to build on his legacy rather than rest on his laurels. As Reagan would be the first to remind us, freedom is always only one generation from extinction—so every generation must find its own way to help make America into Reagan’s vision of that shining “city on a hill.”

NR

TWO VIEWS OF Marriage

And the falsity of the choice between them

BY JASON LEE STEORTS

OUR views about marriage are multifaceted, and the primary facets are two. On one hand, we think marriage has something to do with reproduction and its consequences; on the other, we think it has something to do with the experience of two people who are in love.

Opponents of same-sex marriage think the law should concern itself only with the first facet and must not define marriage other than in terms of its orientation toward procreation. I think the law has a legitimate interest in both facets and can reasonably address the public-policy considerations related to each.

I will call that position “traditionalist” according to which legal recognition of marriage should be restricted to unions of a man and a woman. The traditionalist holds that there is a pre-legal fact as to what marriage is, namely “comprehensive union” of two persons, and that only a “reproductive unit” can be a comprehensive union, although marriage qua comprehensive union is intrinsically valuable whether or not a couple reproduce. I use terms of Sherif Girgis and Robert P. George, both of Princeton, and Ryan T. Anderson, editor of *Public Discourse*, in their *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* article “What Is Marriage?” They say that to exist as a person involves a bodily dimension as well as cognitive, volitional, emotional, etc. ones, and that any union which is not bodily will by that omission fail to be comprehensive. What unites the organs of a single person’s body is their coordination toward achieving the biological purposes of the organism as a whole. When it comes to one such purpose—reproduction—the organism is naturally incomplete. Only a man and a woman, and not two persons of the same sex, are able to join their bodies in such a way as to achieve this purpose.

Coitus achieves bodily union, traditionalists say, whether or not the couple intend to reproduce or are capable of reproduction. It is because any instance of coitus belongs to the kind of act that is reproductively oriented that the relationships of infertile couples, but not those of same-sex couples, are potentially marital. Traditionalists also say that it would be practically difficult and/or wrongly intrusive for the state to assure itself that a couple are fertile before marrying them.

Why does the law concern itself with marriage at all? A conservative might feel special force in the question, for a conservative wants the state at a large remove from his life. The answer, as the editors of *NATIONAL REVIEW* have put it, is that the legal institution of marriage exists “to solve a problem that arises from sex between men and women but not from sex between partners of the same gender: what to do about its generativity.” Sociology demonstrates that children are better off when raised by their two biological parents than when raised by single, cohabiting, or