

*“The first year of the Reagan administration set a new tone in U.S. foreign policy, correcting a sense of drift and bringing a clear halt to the notion of American slippage.”*

*Richard V. Allen*

The first year of the Reagan administration set a new tone in U.S. foreign policy, correcting a sense of drift and bringing a clear halt to the notion of American slippage. On the domestic scene, although the administration didn't achieve all it wanted, it succeeded in changing the way people think about federal government spending, and it reversed the more onerous forms of overregulation.

Our diplomacy was beset by differences over organization, substance, and style, but it eventually settled down in the second half of 1982. The administration revitalized the intelligence community, taking it off the front pages and reviving its spirit and its effectiveness. President Reagan restored momentum in the defense field by his prudent, balanced, and affordable long-range defense strategy and his willingness to deploy weapons, although the public relations and information debate were handled less skillfully. He reversed the notion that arms control agreements are best reached by holding off on developing and deploying new weapons and by making repeated concessions to the Soviet Union.

In pursuit of the national interest, President Reagan demonstrated a willingness to take a stand on the basis of principle. The administration said no to the Law of the Sea Treaty and maintained a strong position in the face of criticism from liberals of all persuasions. The administration also declared its willingness to participate in north-south talks but steadfastly refused to endorse outright transfers of wealth and resources, relying instead on the promotion of free enterprise principles.

Not enough Reaganauts were put in key positions, and in certain cases too much autonomy was given to cabinet officers in making personnel choices. In the first six months of the administration, the president should have spent an hour each day assessing the qualifications of personnel down to the level of deputy assistant secretary.

Much is to be said for the Reagan style of government. But the moment that any administration begins to make policy choices on the basis of what the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* or one of the networks will say the next morning, that is the moment it loses control of its own agenda.

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RICHARD V. ALLEN was national security adviser in the first year of President Reagan's administration.

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*Senator William L. Armstrong*

Ronald Reagan is a man with very good instincts and human qualities, with the potential to be a great president. If his administration fails to achieve his goals, or if it goes down in history as mediocre, it will be because the president wasn't bold enough at the outset.

The president could have gotten just about anything he wanted in the first six months. The tax cut passed easily. He should also have used his mandate to insist on systemic reforms, such as line-item veto authority, or enhanced rescission or impoundment authority, that would have permanently brought the budget under control. Instead he managed to polarize the country over budget cuts that didn't happen. He cut the budget enough to make special-interest groups and the press mad, but not enough to solve the problem.

What's the sense of having a Republican administration and a Republican Senate if the best we can do is a \$200 billion deficit? That's not what we promised the people, and it's not what Ronald Reagan believes in.

A president isn't necessarily weakened by losing battles with Congress. Sometimes he's strengthened: Just look at Harry Truman. Reagan should have sent Congress a balanced budget that achieved its balance through spending reduction. Instead he sent us up budgets that didn't reflect what he believes in. When he sent up a jobs bill, that was inconsistent with Ronald Reagan. It causes confusion in the ranks.

In order for Republicans to win and earn the right to govern, we've got to have a bold vision of the future. Failing that, the Democrats will win because since 1952, this has been a Democratic country. Ronald Reagan had and has a vision of America for the future. It involves a reduced profile of government in domestic life, a revitalized private sector, including stronger churches and voluntary organizations, a stronger defense, and a firmer but not bellicose foreign policy. The problem has been that not everybody in the administration shared that vision, and there wasn't much sense of how you get from here to there.

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WILLIAM L. ARMSTRONG is a Republican senator from Colorado.

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*John T. “Terry” Dolan*

Ronald Reagan’s only historic accomplishment has been the tax cut. His minor accomplishments include stopping the Law of the Sea Treaty, cutting the growth of federal spending to 12 percent instead of 15 percent as it would have been under Carter, cutting down on regulation and red tape, and implementing an economic policy that has slowed down inflation.

But I expected more to happen. There has been no major defense buildup beyond what Carter would have done. There has been no spending cut. There has been no turnover of control to the states. There has been no effort to dismantle the Washington bureaucratic elitist establishment.

Franklin Roosevelt never let his political opponents rest. He fought the establishment all the way. He had his finger on the pulse of the people and was out to change the country. In 1938 unemployment was 17 percent, but Roosevelt was still able to run the country. The question when Reagan got elected was whether he was going to be closer to Eisenhower as a caretaker or to Roosevelt as a revolutionary. He’s been generally closer to Eisenhower, preserving a status quo established by previous liberal administrations.

If SALT II is fatally flawed, as candidate Reagan said, then why is President Reagan abiding by it? There’s no point in a defense buildup against the evil empire if at the same time you maintain there is a need for arms control agreements with the same evil empire.

Reagan should have exerted leadership on Social Security and come up with some alternative system—something like separating welfare and annuity payments, or providing government-guaranteed private social security payments. Reagan proposed cutting Social Security benefits, but you don’t need to cut benefits; you need to get rid of the system so that benefits will increase.

In February 1983 Reagan said that we will abolish the Department of Education. In March 1983 the secretary of education said we will not abolish the department. Nothing happened to him. The secretary of education knew he could get away with saying that and Reagan wouldn’t do anything about it.

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JOHN T. “TERRY” DOLAN is chairman of the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC).

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This has been essentially another Ford administration. It has been business as usual, not much different from any other Republican administration in our lifetime. It has been an administration populated by corporate executive types, and people with previous experience managing large government institutions, with the result that there has been no Reagan revolution. People used to the decorum of the boardroom back off from controversy. Good managers are good at maneuvering within the existing situation, but the whole point is to change the existing situation into something different.

The best things Reagan has done have been the de-regulatory initiatives. By eliminating at a stroke all controls on petroleum, he instantly ended the energy crisis.

Real budget growth has been larger under Reagan than under Carter, and the budget is now totally out of control. If the energy used on AWACs and a tax increase had been used on entitlements reform, the Reagan people would have gotten it. What was needed was to put all the entitlements programs together in one package and have major reform together with an end to all business subsidies. On Social Security, the administration should have gone ahead with the Schweiker program of postponing early retirement, which was a moderate, sensible program, much less severe than what Jake Pickle, a Democratic congressman, was proposing. They could also have worked with Pickle. From 1973 to 1983, the average family lost \$1,200 in purchasing power because of rising taxes and inflation caused by runaway government spending. But instead of making these points, they let the spending forces set the terms of debate.

On foreign policy, what troubles me most is SALT. Reagan talks about more agreements with the Soviets when there is overwhelming evidence the Soviets are violating agreements we already have. The administration is unilaterally adhering to the SALT II treaty, a treaty Reagan as candidate said was fatally flawed.

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