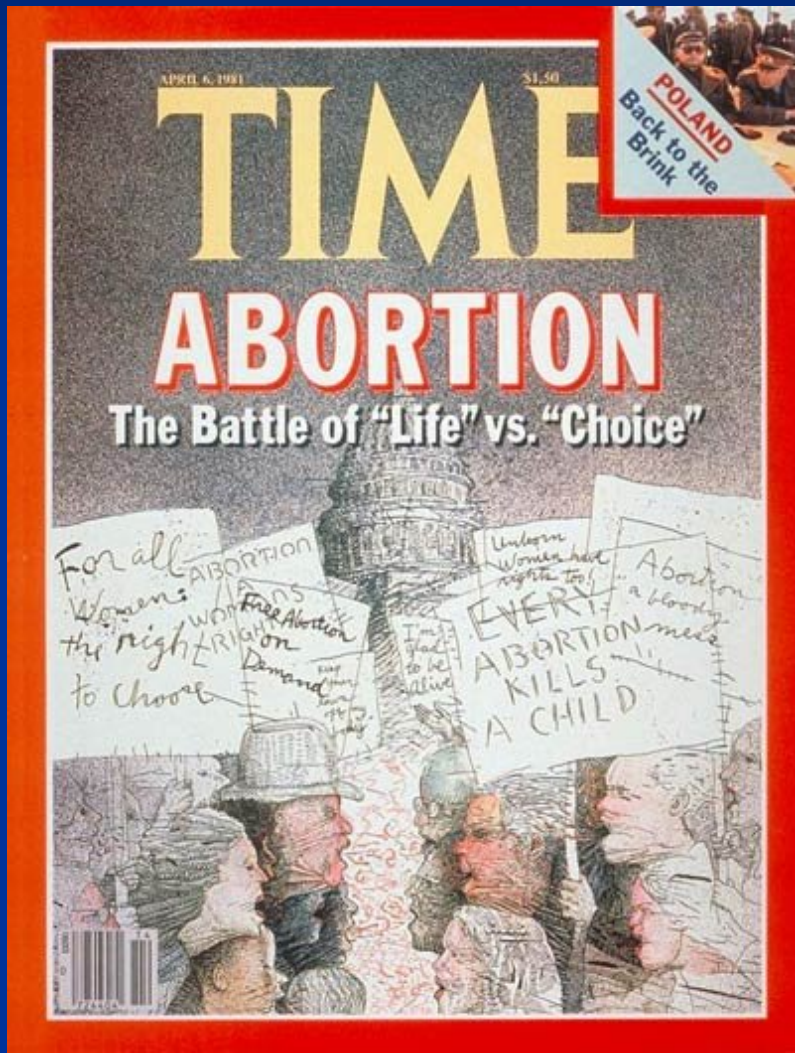


The New Right and the Reagan Revolution

WHY WERE PEOPLE DISCONTENTED IN 1980?

- 1970's Economic Stress
- Inflation: hurts middle class
- Nixon briefly tried price and wage controls – worked in short run, but removed and economy tanked
- 2 major oil crises: hit automobile suburban culture hard and fueled more inflation
- Stagflation: unemployment and inflation went up together while wages fell behind – very unusual.
- Escalating property taxes: suburban homeowners → tax protest – resent paying taxes they perceive as going to “special interests”
- Reaction to social reform, affirmative action, school prayer
- Christian Right led by Falwell's “Moral Majority” – *Conservative Christian groups become for GOP what unions used to be for Democrats.*
- Sunbelt: South & West have more clout – more religious and traditional
- Rustbelt: old industrial, New Deal liberal & union heartland de-industrializing.
- Foreign Policy debacles: Vietnam, Iranian Hostage Crisis – hurt liberals

Roe v. Wade Mobilizes Conservatives



- In Roe v. Wade (1973), the Supreme Court ruled that state laws restricting abortion violated a woman's constitutional right to privacy.
- The issue of legalized abortion helped galvanize the rise of the Christian Right in the 1970's and 1980's.
- In the wake of the sexual revolution and the women's liberation movement, many conservatives sought to restore "traditional family values".
- Roe v. Wade catalyzed the formation of a number of enduring political organizations.

Phyllis Schlafly and the ERA



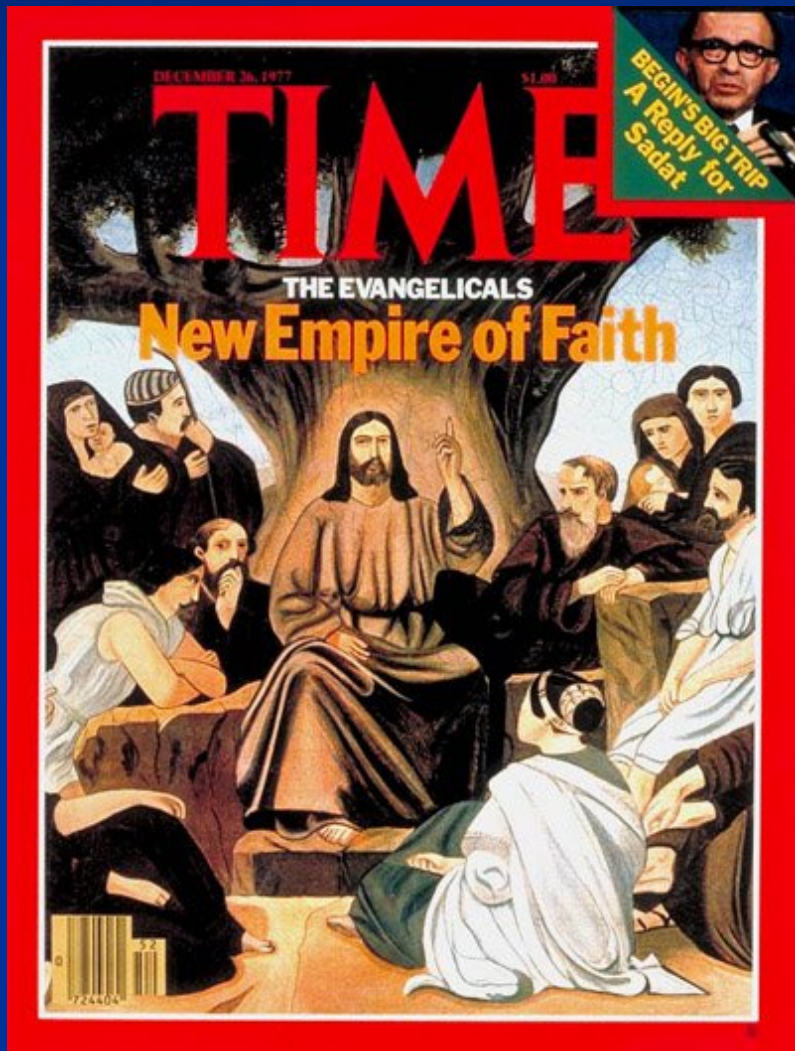
- One item on the agenda of social conservatives in the 1970's was the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment.
- Many felt that felt that "traditional family values" had been undermined by the women's liberation movement.
- Others were repelled by what they believed was intervention by the state into the private sphere.
- The campaign to stop ratification, led by activist and self-described homemaker Phyllis Schlafly, demonstrated the financial and political capabilities of the emerging New Right.
- ERA died in 1982, just three votes short of passage.

Text of Proposed ERA



- Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.
- Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.
- Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

The Christian Right



- The growth of evangelical Christianity in the 1970's reflects the concern for what many perceived as a decline in traditional moral values.
- By 1978, 40% of Americans described themselves as "born again," including President Carter.
- The divisive issues pervading American politics, including abortion and women's rights, contributed to the proliferation of evangelical political organizations.

Televangelism



Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker

- Evangelical television programming enjoyed a rising level of influence and viewership throughout the 1970's and 1980's.
- Charismatic "televangelists" like Jerry Falwell, Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggert, and Pat Robertson delivered rousing sermons that resonated with disaffected evangelicals and translated into political action.

Intellectual Foundations of Modern Conservatism: Goldwater



- Senator Barry Goldwater is widely regarded as the Father of Modern American Conservatism.
- Goldwater's libertarian orientation often put him at odds with the social and moral agenda of the Reagan Administration and the Christian Right by the 1980's.

Who was Ronald Reagan?

- B Movie Actor & GE “Pitchman”
- One time liberal who turned “friendly” witness during HUAC hearings of McCarthy era
- Elected governor of California in 1965-1974
- Sought presidency in 1976
- “The Great Communicator”

Before National Politics



Goldwater speech 1964

“The Speech”



- Reagan's televised 1964 "A Time for Choosing" speech on behalf of the Goldwater campaign propelled the actor from corporate spokesman to conservative champion.
- Reagan outlined the goals of the modern conservative movement: smaller government, lower taxes, personal autonomy, and more aggressive policy toward Communist states.
- He implies that liberal policies represent a dangerous shift toward socialism, even drawing parallels between Lyndon Johnson and Karl Marx.

Election of 1980



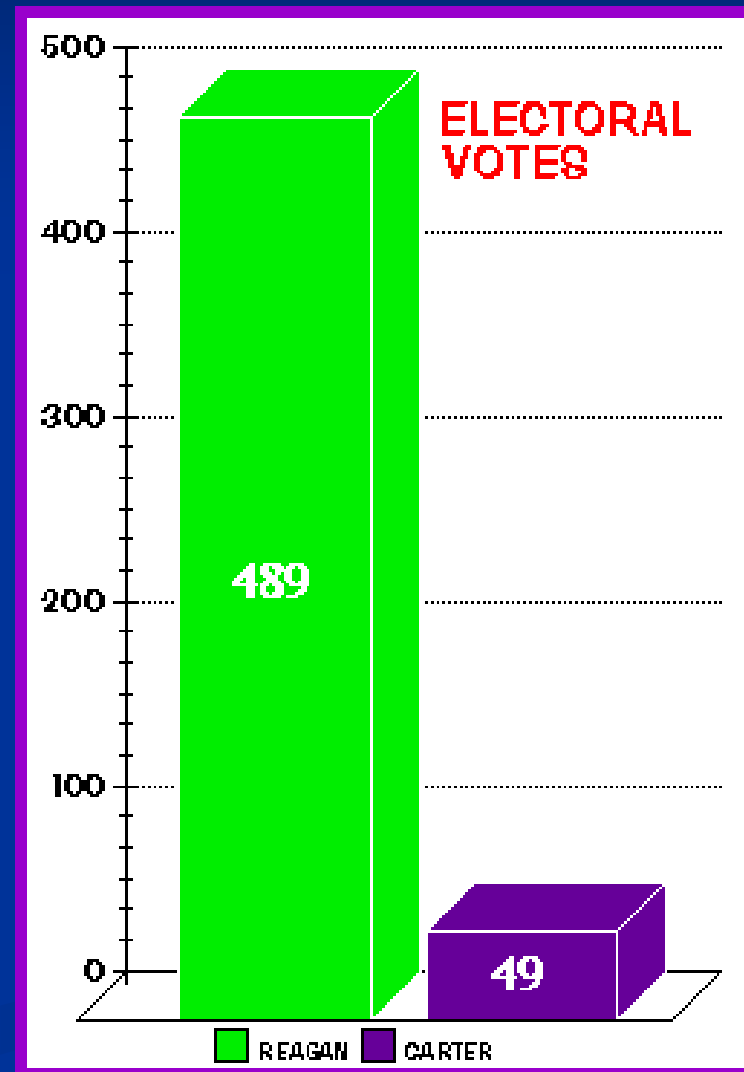
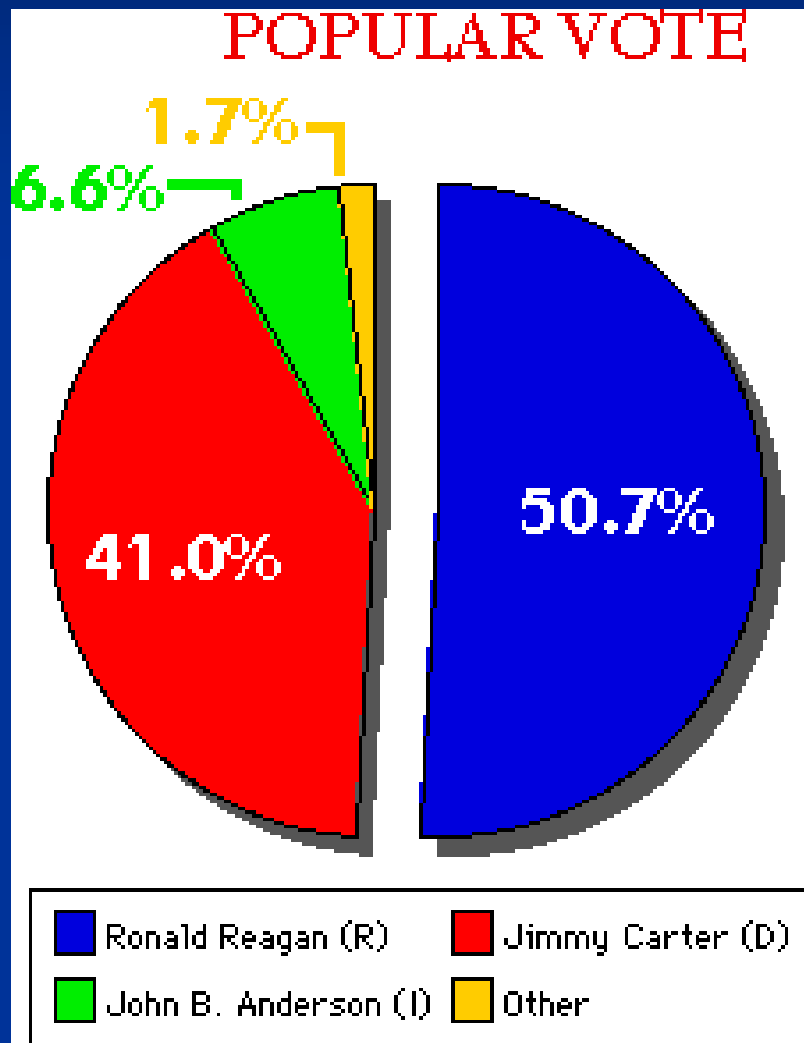
- Throughout the campaign, Reagan questioned Carter's competence, while Carter tried to cast him as a dangerous extremist.
- The election came down to a single televised debate in October 1980. Reagan closed the debate with the campaign's signature refrain, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?"

Reagan Landslide



- The election ended in a landslide victory of Ronald Reagan and the first Republican majority in the Senate since 1952.
- Dismal voter turnout suggested disaffection and apathy toward the political process as the 1970's came to an end and the "Reagan Revolution" began.

Election of 1980



Realignment

New Deal Coalition

- Democratic South
- African-Americans
- Union members
- Urban North
- Immigrant/newer ethnic groups
- Farmers

Reagan Coalition

- Midwest small towns
- Wealthiest Americans
- Hawks on foreign policy
- Blue Collar in North and Midwest (union and non-union)
- White Southerners
- Evangelicals
- Yuppies

The Reagan Revolution Begins



- Following his overwhelming victory Reagan and his political allies began an effort to reverse the political legacy of the New Deal and Great Society.
- Reagan was able to capitalize on the new conservative national sentiment with a simple message: low taxes, smaller government, and strong national defense.
- In addition to delivering a clear, concise agenda, Reagan conveyed a sense of optimism and accessibility that earned him the title "The Great Communicator."

A Dramatic Start to the Reagan Presidency



- In 1981, Reagan enjoyed high public approval and success in implementing his campaign promises.
- Immediately following his inauguration, Iranian terrorists released the American hostages after 444 days of captivity.
- Congress enacted legislation to reduce tax rates by 25% over three years, cut social spending, and advance the goal of a balanced budget by 1984.

A Dramatic Start to the Reagan Presidency

EXTRA! EXTRA!

NEW YORK POST METRO PORTS AREA

IRON MAN REAGAN!

● He walks into hospital with a gunman's bullet in his left lung
 ● He jokes with waiting docs: 'Tell me, are you all Republicans?'
 ● After surgery he quips: 'All in all, I'd rather be in Philadelphia'

SPORILL OF PRESIDENTIAL ASSASSINATION SEE NEWS PAGE TWO

18 PAGES OF DRAMATIC PHOTOS & STORIES

Bullet removed from lung

Assassin fails, president OK

Press aide, two others also shot

WASHINGTON (UPI) — A young gunman ambushed President Reagan at close range Monday and fired half a dozen shots — one of them piercing the president's lung inches from his heart. Doctors removed the bullet in a two-hour operation and said Reagan would recover.

The suspect in the assassination attempt, identified as John Warner Hinckley Jr., 25, of Evergreen, Colo., was tackled and pinned to the pavement, whisked away in a squad car and charged with attempted murder. Officials said that last fall, during the presidential campaign, Hinckley had been arrested for carrying three guns.

The shots outside a Washington hotel, crackling through a dismal rain-fall, gravely wounded presidential press secretary James Brads and left



GRIMACING IN PAIN, President Reagan is swept into a waiting limousine by Secret Service agents after the presidential party was fired upon after leaving a speaking engagement in a Washington hotel Monday afternoon. Reagan was hit by one .22-caliber slug in the left chest. Three other men, including the president's press secretary, were seriously wounded by the shots. Reagan was resting in the recovery room of the George Washington University Hospital Monday night.

- On March 30, 1981, Reagan survived an assassination attempt by John Hinckley, Jr. who shot the president in an effort to impress actress Jodie Foster. Reagan was more badly injured than the administration reported, but he remained optimistic and his approval rating reached 73%.

A Dramatic Start to the Reagan Presidency



- In 1981, Reagan appointed the first female Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Although she identified herself as a moderate Republican, foes of abortion and the ERA condemned her appointment to the bench.

Reagan Agenda: Limited Government & Deregulation

*“Government is not the solution to our problems,
government is the problem.”*

Ronald Reagan, First Inaugural Address

The Reagan Agenda

- ✓ Supply Side Economics (trickle down?)
- ✓ Tax Cuts
- ✓ Major Cuts in Entitlement Programs (social welfare of Great Society)

What did “Limited Government” Mean in Reagan’s Agenda?

- Deregulation of the economy: Airlines, television, telephone systems, public utilities
- Environment “Reforms”
- “Get government off the back of American business and people.”

What Else Did “Limited Government” Mean?

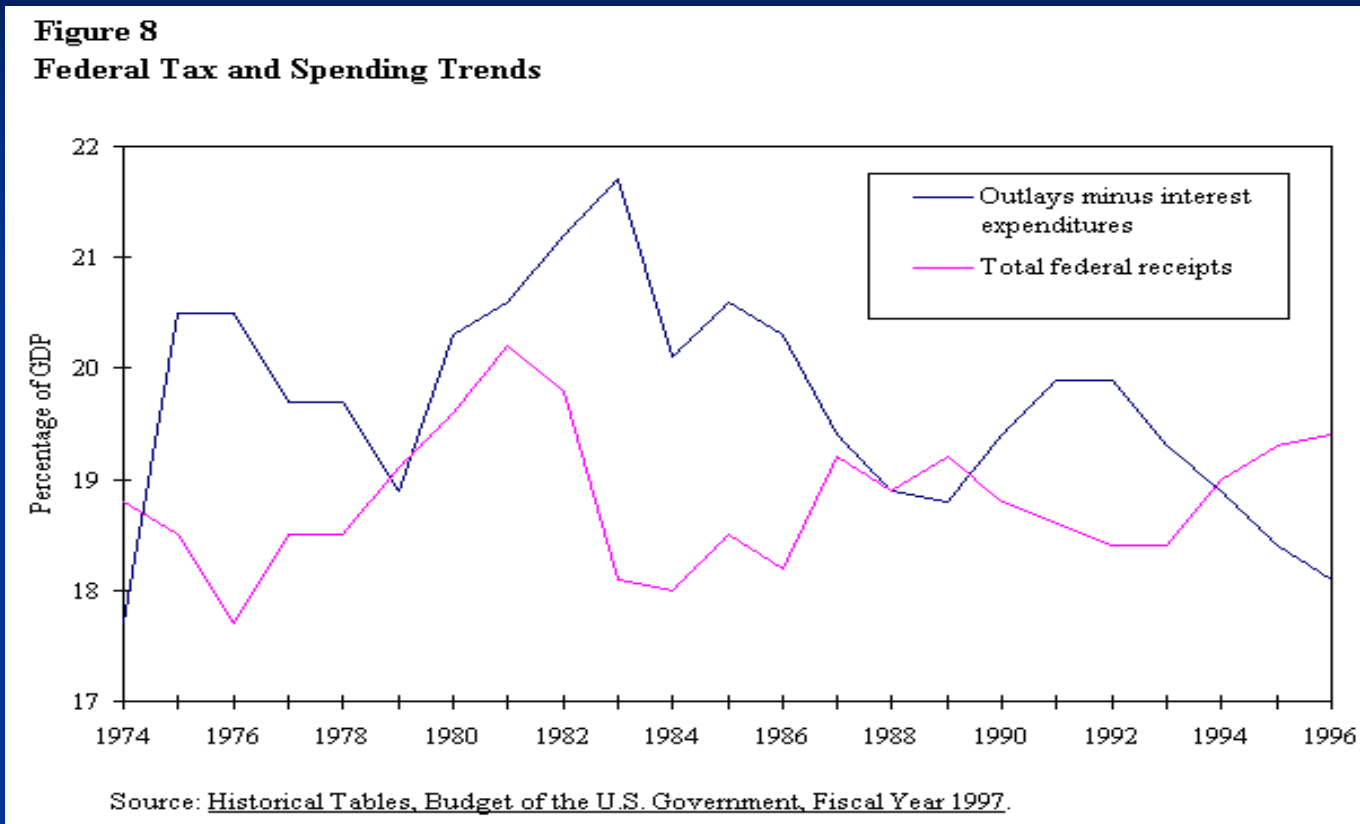
- **Civil Rights:** Justice Dept now actively opposes 1970’s busing to attain racial desegregation; opposes affirmative action
- **Social Security Reform**
- **Voting Rights Act extension:** Reagan Administration fought against extension (Congress passed it anyway)
- **Vetoed Medical and Family Leave Act repeatedly**
- **Attempted to Restrict abortion access to welfare recipients, women in military and in foreign aid programs.**

Recession and Rebound



- In 1982, the worst recession since the Great Depression occurred. ****

The Deficit and the National Debt



- The hike in defense spending, and vastly reduced tax revenues resulted in a skyrocketing federal budget deficit .
- By 1988, the interest alone on the national debt reached 14% of the annual budget and the United States became the world's biggest debtor.
- Reagan's goal to balance the budget by 1984 became unfeasible.

Foreign Policy Agenda

- **Restore US prestige internationally through building up US defenses**
- **Massive weapons build-up**
- **Missiles placed in western Europe**
- **SDI (“Star Wars Defense System”)**

Defense Spending Increases



- One facet of Reagan's ideological outlook was the need to bolster America's defense capability.
- Despite vowing to dramatically reduce taxes and government spending, the Reagan Administration increased military spending by over 50% between 1981 and 1988.
- Reagan emphasized the increasing military capability of the USSR. He acknowledged the expense of the military buildup, but insisted it was vital to national security.

Star Wars



- In 1983, President Reagan proposed his Strategic Defense Initiative as an additional check on Soviet nuclear capability.
- Reagan envisioned space-based missile defense technology capable of striking down nuclear weapons before they reached the United States.
- "Wouldn't it be better to save lives than to avenge them?"
- The press derisively dubbed the plan "Star Wars", and many believed it was unfeasible due to the enormous expense and technical innovation that it would require to become operational.

Foreign Policy: Cold War

- **USSR = “Evil Empire”**
- **Escalated tension in first term with missile systems and rhetoric**
- **1985 (Gorbachev premier)**
- **Summits & arms talks resume**
- **Personal Diplomacy**
- **“Mr. Gorbachev tear down this wall!”**

Foreign Policy: Global Issues

- “Reagan Doctrine” = support Freedom Fighters (anti-communists)
 - Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador
- Invasion of Grenada
- Panama, arrest strong man president
- Arm groups fighting USSR in Afghanistan
- CIA involvement

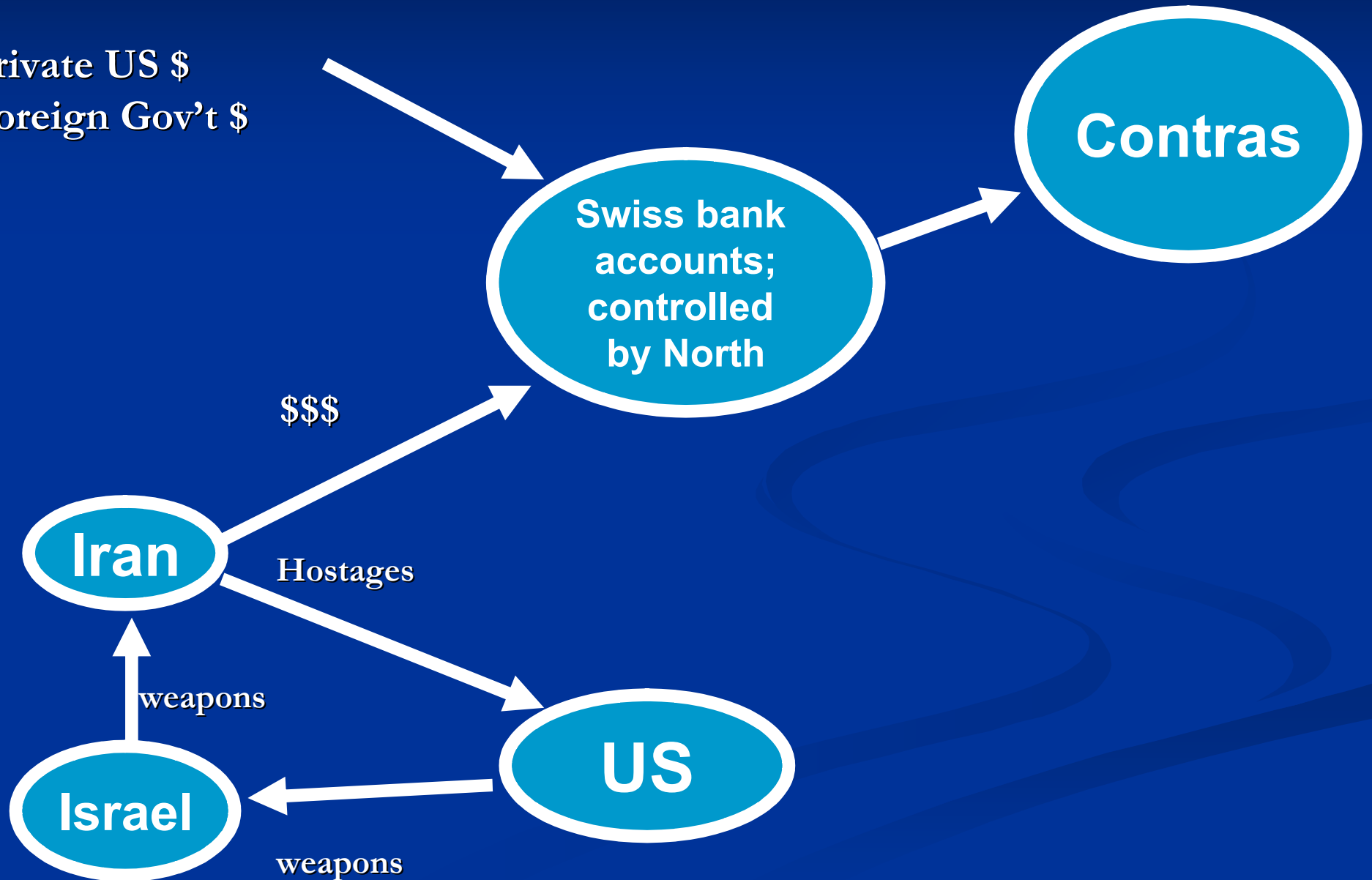
The Reagan Administration's NSC arranges secret arms for Iran to fund covert military aid to Contra (anti communist) forces in Nicaragua's civil war. (In violation of US Law)

NSC Iran-
Contra point
man Oliver
North testifies
before
Congress.

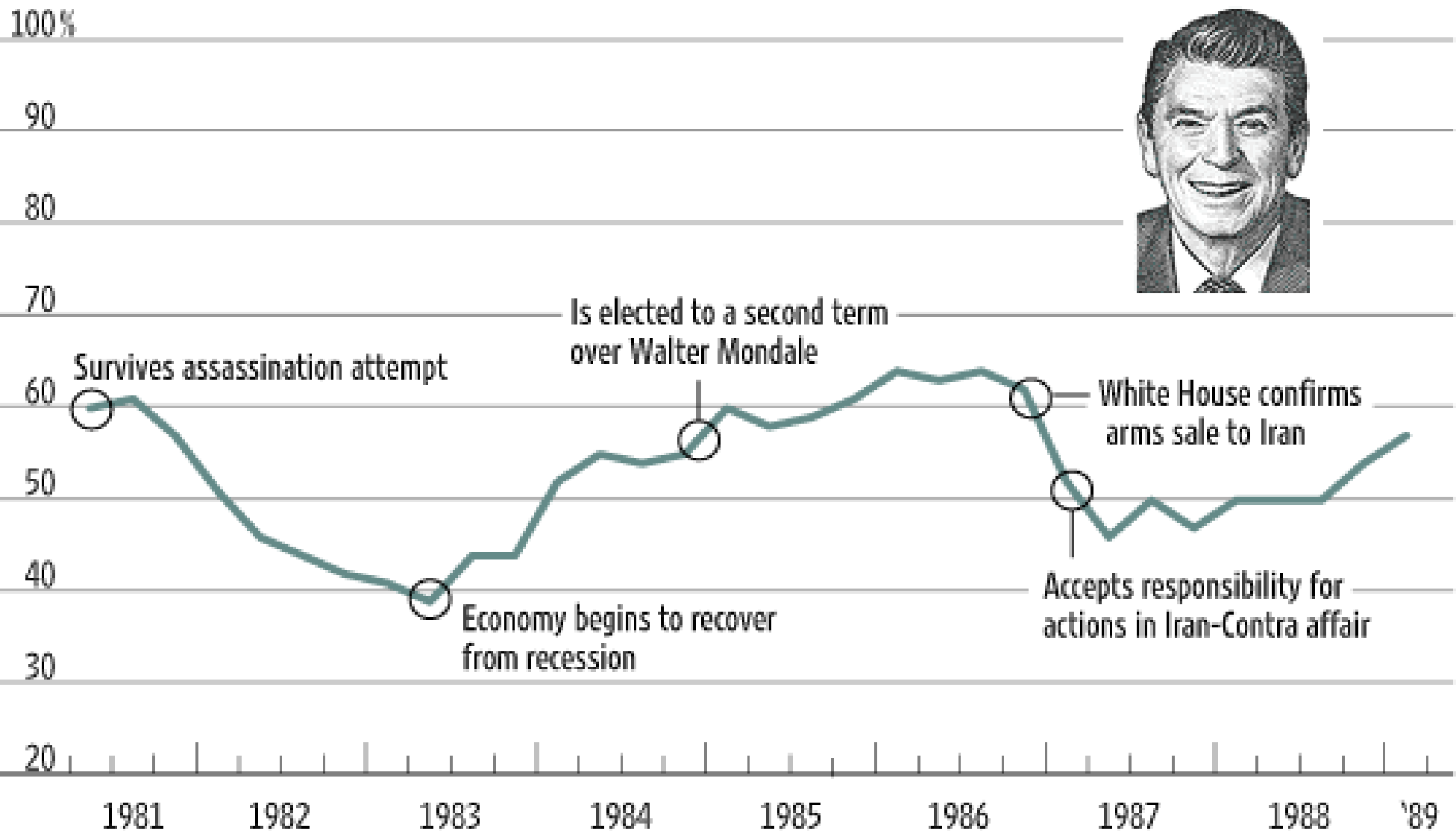


The Iran Contra Scandal

Private US \$
Foreign Gov't \$



Reagan Public Approval Ratings



THE BOTTOM LINE: SUCCESS?

- Major Recession 1981-1983
- Huge leap in concentration of wealth
- Homelessness, poverty
- Huge deficits (from \$70 billion to \$270 billion in 1983)
- But inflation did not resume
- By 1983 consumer spending increased-spurred by tax cuts?
- Was it policies or an overall shift in global economy...?

Lasting Legacies

- Power base of Southern and Western States increasingly evident in National politics.
- Republican Party becomes dominant party of last 25 years of century
- Power of the organized Christian Right in Republican Party
- Deregulation of business, growth stimulated, but inequality increased
- Increased burden on state and local governments to provide social welfare programs