

President Ronald Reagan Oral History Project

Briefing Materials

Martin Anderson

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MARTIN ANDERSON TIMELINE

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- 1968** Anderson serves as Director of Research for Richard Nixon's presidential campaign.
- 1970-1971** Anderson joins the Administration as special consultant and assistant to President Nixon. Anderson leaves the Administration to join Stanford University's Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace.
- 1976** Anderson serves as senior policy advisor on Ronald Reagan's 1976 presidential campaign. Despite being the only full-fledged economist in the inner circle of the Reagan campaign, Anderson dismisses suggestions that he is destined to be Reagan's top economist should Reagan win. (*The New York Times*, 8/15/1976)
- 1978** Anderson comments on President Carter's welfare reform program, arguing that for a radical welfare reform program to be politically acceptable it must establish a minimum level of welfare benefits at least as good as the current system, create incentives to work and have a reasonable cost. (*The New York Times*, 11/27/1978)
- 1979** Anderson joins the Reagan campaign as senior advisor and issues director in October. Shortly after Reagan formally declares his candidacy, Anderson, along with press secretary Lyn Nofziger, resigns from the campaign following disputes with campaign manager John Sears. Anderson's departure is soon followed by the resignation of longtime Reagan advisor Michael Deaver. (*The Washington Post*, 11/29/1979)
- 1980**
- February* Edwin Meese III replaces John Sears as Reagan's campaign manager on the eve of the New Hampshire primary. Once Meese is made campaign manager, Nofziger, Deaver and Anderson return full time to the campaign team.
- May* Anderson publishes a new conservative blueprint for future government policy in a book titled, "*The United States in the 1980's*." (*The Washington Post*, 6/8/1980)
- July* Anderson plays a central role as overseer of Reagan's platform committee at the Republican National Convention. Debate over the inclusion of a plank supporting the Equal Rights Amendment sparks controversy and Anderson plays a mediating role between opposing factions. (*The New York Times*, 7/10/1980)
- August* In a speech to the Ohio Teamsters Conference, Reagan declares that President Carter "has created a severe depression in our nation." Almost immediately after the address, Reagan and his aides begin issuing clarifying statements insisting that

Reagan was not using the word “depression” in the way that economists do. Anderson acknowledges that most economists believe the nation is in “a very severe recession” rather than a depression. (*The New York Times*, 8/28/1980)

October Following a Reagan speech in Lima, Ohio, an automobile town where unemployment is 15.5 percent, Anderson accuses Carter of using “ridiculous figures” to “totally misrepresent” Reagan’s own economic program. Anderson takes point-by-point issue with a speech on the state of the economy given by Carter to the National Press Club earlier that week. He rebuts Carter’s statement that various Reagan proposals would result in a \$140 billion budget deficit by fiscal year 1983. Anderson repeats estimates contained in Reagan’s September 9th economic message, arguing that the 1983 budget would be balanced. (*The Washington Post*, 10/16/1980)

November Senator Mark Hatfield (R-Oregon) announces he is pressing President-elect Reagan to wipe compulsory draft registration off the books. In discussions with Anderson, Hatfield says he has argued for action to suspend the existing registration requirement. (*The Washington Post*, 11/18/1980)

December Anderson and Reagan foreign policy advisor Richard Allen set up an office of policy coordination within the transition. (*National Journal*, 12/20/1980)

1981

January Anderson says that Reagan stands by his long-declared plan “to deregulate the energy market” and will begin moving in that direction early in his term. Anderson also reveals that the President-elect will send Congress legislation soon after taking office that will transfer control of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program to the states. (*The New York Times*, 1/15/1981)

Anderson plays a prominent role in the lagging search for a top economist to head the Council of Economic Advisors. (*Business Week*, 1/19/1981)

Anderson is named Assistant to the President for Policy Development and will serve as Reagan’s chief domestic advisor.

Reagan creates the Budget Working Group to meet with Cabinet officials to devise a plan for major reductions in Federal spending. The working group, consisting of Anderson, Office of Management and Budget director David A. Stockman, Treasury Secretary Donald Regan and incoming chair of the Council of Economic Advisers Murray L. Weidenbaum, is to meet with each of the Cabinet Secretaries to make what Stockman calls “major policy decisions” on cost cutting in every department. (*The New York Times*, 1/25/1981)

February On the 25th, the White House announces what it calls a miscalculation in the built-in growth in the cost of government. Newly authorized reductions must be added

to the \$41.4 billion in budget cuts that Reagan announced on February 18th if the Administration is to hold to its goal of a Federal spending ceiling of \$695.5 billion in 1982. Anderson says Reagan “expressed concern, but not surprise” when Stockman told him of the underestimation. Anderson says that “there is no intention now” to achieve the new reductions by cutting into the seven social welfare programs that the President spared from his original round of budget cuts. (*The New York Times*, 2/26/1981)

March The Reagan Administration backs off efforts to eliminate the antitrust authority of the Federal Trade Commission, but insists that the agency come up with similar, potentially massive cuts in its budget. The decision is announced by Sen. Robert Packwood (R-Oregon) after a private White House meeting with Reagan and Anderson. (*The Washington Post*, 3/3/1981)

Anderson is quoted as saying that “President Reagan says the one thing we’re not talking about is discrimination. The Federal Government has a role and he will enforce it – I don’t know if he’s said this publicly, but I’ve heard – at the point of a bayonet.” (*The New York Times*, 3/4/1981)

August Anderson announces that the Reagan Administration hopes to propose a tuition tax credit to Congress the following year. He also says an offer by the nation’s governors to pick up the full cost of public education if the Federal government would assume the full cost of welfare would probably find little support in the White House. (*The Washington Post*, 8/14/1981)

December Anderson is offered, but turns down, Frederick Schultz’s vacated seat on the Federal Reserve. (*The Washington Post*, 12/13/1981)

Reagan considers competing arguments from his staff before deferring a decision about whether to keep draft registration. Anderson, who has long been philosophically opposed to the draft, represents those urging its elimination. (*The Washington Post*, 12/25/1980)

1982

January Reagan decides to continue with draft registration. (*U.S. News & World Report*, 1/18/1982)

February Anderson announces his resignation as assistant to the President for policy development. Anderson says he is resigning to return to his previous post of senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and to devote full time to his writing. (*The Washington Post*, 2/4/1982)

August A brain trust of several of Reagan’s most prominent and longstanding conservative supporters hold an “urgent conference” on Capitol Hill to plan how to stop what they view as a drift away from the Reagan Administration’s supply-

side economic principles. The group, including former presidential advisers Anderson and Lyn Nofziger as well as a dozen leading conservative intellectuals and members of Congress led by Rep. Jack Kemp (R-New York), release a statement urging Reagan to reject the \$98.9 billion, three-year tax increase then before a House-Senate conference committee. In response to the meeting, Reagan invites Anderson and Nofziger to the White House to discuss the matter. (*The Washington Post*, 8/5/1982)

1983

September Anderson, chairman of a committee named by the Hoover Institution, unveils a plan to locate the Reagan Library at Stanford University under the auspices of the Institution. The move prompts considerable debate on the campus. (*The New York Times*, 10/25/1983)

November Presidential counselor Edwin Meese III warns Stanford University trustees that they may lose the proposed Reagan three-part presidential center (a library, a museum, and a study and conference center for public affairs), if they do not allow the Hoover Institution, a conservative think tank, to run the library's public policy center. Anderson says he still thinks that Stanford, the Hoover Institution and the White House will be able to reach an agreement, and compliments Stanford President Donald Kennedy on the University's thorough review of the library proposal. (*The Washington Post*, 11/11/1983)

1984

January In an unexpected compromise in negotiations over the Reagan Library, the White House backs down on demands that the center come under the academic governance of the independent Hoover Institution. Anderson says there are two precedents at Stanford for independent institutions that are run by "prestigious" national boards: the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and the National Bureau of Economics. Anderson notes that too much is being made of partisan politics within the academic setting. (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 1/26/1984)

Anderson advocates a second-term project to write into the Constitution what he calls an "Economic Bill of Rights." (*The Washington Post*, 2/1/1984)

November Anderson writes a *The New York Times* editorial advocating a strategic defense system to protect the U.S. against terrorist, accidental and third-world nuclear attacks. (*The New York Times*, 10/29/1984)

1985

May Commenting on a balanced budget amendment and the economy, Anderson says, "A critical factor is people's confidence. You can't measure that, you can't put it

into an econometric model. What's undermining confidence is they think the Federal government can't attack this problem of deficits. The problem today is the deficit and the deficit is caused by too much spending." If the constitutional requirement to balance the budget were made effective gradually, Anderson argues, "People would begin to act on certainty that inflation is brought under control" and interest rates would fall. "You have to impose an overall control that overwhelms the power of special interests." (*The Washington Post*, 5/12/1985)

August Anderson writes an editorial in support of a balanced budget amendment. (*The New York Times*, 8/30/1985)

1987

March In a *The Wall Street Journal* article, Anderson proposes a two-week constitutional convention in Philadelphia to draft an amendment to the Constitution mandating a balanced federal budget. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 3/11/1987)

April Anderson, now secretary of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Foundation, says the Foundation has approached the Irvine Company about locating the library complex on private land near UC Irvine. (*Los Angeles Times*, 4/29/1987)

November As Reagan considers issuing pardons for Administration officials involved in the Iran-contra affair, Anderson says it is unwise for Reagan to pardon anyone "until he has the full range of the facts." Anderson thinks it would be advisable for Reagan "to go slow about a pardon until the special prosecutor has completed his work." (*The Washington Post*, 11/23/1987)

1988

April Anderson argues that the appointees of the Reagan Administration were the best of any administration in recent history and maintains that Reagan's appointees were instrumental in helping the President achieve major fundamental changes in domestic and foreign policy that were truly remarkable. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 4/6/1988)

August Anderson urges George Bush not to back away from his acceptance-speech goal of 30 million new jobs in the U.S. if he serves two full terms as President. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 8/25/1988)

MARTIN ANDERSON SUGGESTED TOPICS

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Early Years With Reagan

- Discuss the origins of your relationship with Ronald Reagan. What were your roles and responsibilities during the 1976 presidential campaign?

1980 Campaign and Transition

- How did you come to join the campaign? What were your responsibilities? Why did you leave the campaign in November 1979, and return in February 1980? What were the major domestic policy issues during the campaign?
- Discuss your role and responsibilities during the presidential transition. Describe the recruitment and selection of the domestic policymaking staff.

Domestic Policymaking in the Reagan Administration

- Describe your charter as Assistant to the President for Policy Development. How was domestic policy made in the White House? Discuss the formulation of the domestic policy agenda. Which issues claimed the bulk of your attention?
- What was the division of domestic policymaking responsibilities among yourself, Ed Meese (Chief of Staff), Edwin Gray (Office of Policy Development) and Craig Fuller (Cabinet Administration)? Describe your interaction with the Office of Policy Development. What was the role of cabinet councils in domestic policymaking? With which cabinet members did you work most closely? On which issues?
- How would you characterize Ronald Reagan's leadership style as President? Describe his governing style and work habits. What kind of White House did he want? Upon whom did he rely?
- What role did you play as an outside advisor following your departure? Discuss your participation in the 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns.

Comparisons with Previous Administrations

- Having served as a domestic policy advisor during the campaigns and administrations of Nixon and Reagan, you are in a unique position to offer a comparative perspective on presidential domestic policy formulation. Discuss parallels and differences observed between the Nixon and Reagan administrations.

The Reagan Presidency in Retrospect

- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Reagan administration?
- What features of the presidency were missed or misunderstood by the press?
- How should the Reagan presidency be viewed in history?

TIMELINES

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