

# **President Ronald Reagan Oral History Project**

## **Briefing Materials**

**Richard V. Allen**

**May 28, 2002**

**Prepared by Patrick Roberts, Research Assistant**  
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## **RICHARD V. ALLEN TIMELINE**

*Prepared by Patrick Roberts*

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**1967-71** Allen is the senior foreign policy advisor for the Nixon-Agnew campaign committee from 1967-68, a senior staff member on the National Security Council in 1969, and a consultant for National Security Affairs from 1970-71. He is a member of the Presidential Commission on International Trade and Economic Policy and deputy assistant to the President on International Economic Affairs from 1971-72.

**1979** Allen serves as an “intellectual impresario and talent scout for Reagan.” One of his duties is to mentor Jeane Kirkpatrick, the future U.S. ambassador to the U.N., in the ways of Washington. “I took her down to the Potomac and baptized her,” Allen said. He introduced her to the conservative Reaganites that made up the Committee on the Present Danger and asked her to become part of the foreign policy transition group. (*Washington Post*, 11/1/81)

During the campaign, Allen arranged meetings between Reagan and Alexander Haig, who at the time was retiring from his post as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and was a possible presidential candidate. Haig and Reagan discuss foreign policy and the possibility of Haig giving his support to Reagan. (Alexander M. Haig, Jr., *Caveat*, 1984)

**1980** Reagan sees Cuba as emblematic of the U.S. troubles in Latin America. In a broadcast during the campaign, Reagan says “The troubles in Nicaragua bear a Cuban label . . . there is no question but that most of the rebels are Cuban-trained, Cuban-armed, and dedicated to creating another Communist country in this hemisphere.” Reagan wants to widen the embargo against Cuba, but finds little support for the policy in Congress or among the public. Allen suggests to activist Jorge Mas Canosa that Cuban-Americans should form a lobby based on the powerful American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Cuban-Americans then form the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) to help build support in Congress for anti-Castro policies. The Reagan administration welcomed help from the Cuban community in order to persuade a Democratic-controlled House to follow Reagan’s policies. (Walt Vanderbush; Patrick J. Haney, “Policy toward Cuba in the Clinton Administration,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Fall 1999 114:3)

*June* Allen visits Cairo and Jerusalem during an unpublicized fact-finding mission in the Middle East. Allen does not visit Saudi Arabia, which opposes Egypt’s separate peace with Israel, after the Saudis were cool to

the idea of a semi-official visit by Reagan envoys. (*Christian Science Monitor*, 8/6/80)

China criticizes Reagan's suggestion that the U.S. might renew official relations with Taiwan. The U.S. ended formal ties with Taiwan when the Carter administration formally recognized Beijing in 1979. After the Chinese criticism, "Allen emphasized that Reagan, while deploring the brusque way Carter severed U.S. relations with Taiwan, had no intention of restoring them. 'There will be no turning the clock back,' said Allen. 'Reagan recognizes the importance of our present relationship with the People's Republic.'" (*Time*, 7/21/80)

*September* Reagan charges the Carter administration with jeopardizing national security by leaking information about the "Stealth" aircraft project to boost Carter's ailing campaign. Allen says that the stealth disclosure parallels events in election year 1964 when the Johnson administration released information about the SR71 reconnaissance plane. (*Washington Post* 9/5/80)

*October* Allen withdraws from the campaign staff after published allegations that he personally profited from his connections as a White House aide to President Nixon. The *Wall Street Journal* and other newspapers report that he used his White House connections to "obtain lucrative consulting contracts for himself and his friends." After the election, Reagan names Allen as national security advisor after announcing that "our people" have found "no evidence of wrongdoing" and "no conflict of interest." (*New York Times*, 11/31/80; *Christian Science Monitor*, 1/5/81)

## 1981

*January* Reagan announces that Allen will serve as assistant to the president for national security, informally known as "National Security Advisor," beginning January 21. Allen reports through Ed Meese as counselor to the president, just as Martin Anderson does on domestic issues. (Edwin Meese *With Reagan*, 1992) This is the first time in the history of the NSC that the NSC advisor does not report directly to the president. (Office of the Historian, "History of the National Security Council, 1947-1997" U.S. Department of State, August 1997)

On inauguration day, Al Haig presents Ed Meese with a draft of the National Security Decision Directive (NSDD). Meese passes the document to Allen for review before it is presented to the president for his signature. The NSDD establishes "an extensive network of committees and interagency groups with authority to coordinate various aspects of U.S. national security policy." (Meese, 73)

Allen tells an Israeli newspaper that the Reagan administration will try to convince the Palestine Liberation Organization that “terrorism doesn’t pay.” Allen says that “if the PLO will stop dealing in terror and supporting terrorism, and if the PLO will recognize Israel's right to exist, then we will be faced with a different situation, because the PLO will no longer be the same organization we have known.” (*Washington Post* 1/3/81)

### February

President Reagan meets with Korean President General Chun Doo Hwan on the 2nd. Chun was chosen as the first foreign head of state to visit Reagan at the White House. Allen recalls that Reagan was relieved because “Chun made known his pledge to stay in office for one seven-year term.” (Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime*, 1991, 2000, 144)

Between Reagan’s election and inauguration, General Chun had imprisoned dissident Korean official Kim Dae Jung and threatened to execute him. President Carter publicly warned Korea against carrying out the execution, and Reagan used Allen to send a similar message privately. Allen contacted Chun to say that Reagan was opposed to the execution, and offered the possibility of the first state visit of the Reagan Administration if Kim’s sentence was commuted. (Michael Armacost and Richard Holbrooke, “A Future Leader's Moment of Truth,” *New York Times*, 12/24/97). Chun was known for being a ruthless political actor: he had seized control of the Korean military in 1979, and by 1986 massive demonstrations in Seoul had forced him to resign. (Paul Wolfowitz, “Reagan Redux?” *Asia Times*, 11/11/01)

The State department releases a “White Paper” claiming that rebels in El Salvador are receiving aid from Cuba, the Soviet Union, and other communist governments.

### March

The Reagan administration announces plans to sell AWACS and other military equipment to Saudi Arabia.

The National Security Planning Group (includes Richard Allen, William Casey, Alexander Haig, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Caspar Weinberger) proposes a \$19.5 million covert program to support anti-Communist fighters in Nicaragua and Honduras. President Reagan signs an intelligence finding authorizing the program after meeting with Casey. (James Scott, *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine in American Foreign Policy*, 1996, 158)

Israel acknowledges that it has been using American arms in South Lebanon, even after Carter administration officials had tried to curb the use of U.S. weaponry in Israeli strikes. After meeting with Allen in Washington, David Kimche, director general of Israel's Foreign Ministry, says he thinks the Reagan administration “will understand perhaps more

than the previous one our need to strike at terrorism.” (*Washington Post*, 3/16/81)

Reagan is shot by John W. Hinckley, Jr. outside the Washington Hilton on the 30th. Allen presides over the meetings of the National Security Council throughout the day.

*April* On the 11<sup>th</sup>, Reagan leaves the hospital for the White House.

Reagan fulfills a campaign pledge on the 24<sup>th</sup> by lifting the grain embargo on the Soviet Union which Carter had imposed after the invasion of Afghanistan. (Cannon, 256)

Reagan drafts a handwritten letter to Soviet Leader Leonid Brezhnev acknowledging that he lifted the grain embargo in hopes of beginning a constructive dialog with the Soviet Union. According to Lou Cannon, Haig thinks the letter “naively undercut the administration’s militant strategy in dealing with the Soviets.”(Cannon, 257)

*May* The United States expels Libyan diplomats and closes Libya’s DC mission.

Pope John Paul II is shot at the Vatican on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

*June* On June 7, 16 U.S.-made Israeli aircraft bomb and destroy Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor near Baghdad. The Israelis do not notify the United States before the attack. In response, the United States delays the shipment of four F-16 aircraft.

When the Pentagon recommends the sale of AWACS surveillance planes and other equipment to Saudi Arabia, Israel protests and some members of Congress threaten not to approve the deal. On June 15<sup>th</sup>, the President appoints Richard Allen as chairman of a new committee to coordinate the administration’s strategy in negotiating the arms deal.

*July* On the 16<sup>th</sup>, the Reagan administration declares that it favors a political rather than a military solution in El Salvador. Previously, Secretary of State Haig spoke of the need to establish a beachhead in South America.

*September* Allen and Senator Howard Baker propose sending a congressional delegation to Saudi Arabia to discuss the AWACS deal. The Saudis “felt they had been humiliated by detailed press coverage of what they had supposed were secret negotiations.” In the end, the congressional delegation does not go. (Haig, 188)

Allen gives \$1,000 intended for Nancy Reagan to the White House secretary to deposit in a NSC staff office safe used by Allen. The deposit is intended as an honorarium for Nancy Reagan for an interview she did with a Japanese magazine, *Shufu no Tomo* (The Housewife's Friend). Allen does not inform Mrs. Reagan about putting the money in the safe, and he eventually forgets about it. When the money is discovered in mid-September, rumors spread that Allen hid the cash for his own use. Meese calls the justice department and the FBI to ask for an inquiry. (Cannon 160; Meese 111)

#### October

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat is shot and killed by assassins in Cairo on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Despite congressional opposition, the Senate approves the sale of AWACS planes to Saudi Arabia by voting against a resolution to disapprove, fifty-two to forty-eight. James Baker took over from Allen some of the responsibility for getting the sale through the Senate, according to Haig (Haig, 190). Allen, however, says that "Jim Baker stepped in and took credit for having done it." (The National Security Project Oral History Roundtables, "The Role of the National Security Advisor," 10/25/99, 7)

The sale marks an instance of the Reagan Doctrine in practice. According to the Reagan Doctrine, a term usually considered to have been coined by journalist Charles Krauthammer, foreign policy should be determined more by national security interests—especially in fighting communism—than by human rights concerns. (Kenneth A. Oye, Robert J. Lieber, Donald Rothchild, *Eagle Defiant: United States Foreign Policy in the 1980s*, 1983)

#### November

The investigation into the \$1,000 gift from the Japanese journalists becomes public on November 14.

President Reagan delivers his Address on Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, the "Zero Option Speech," to the National Press Club on the 18th. In the speech on reducing nuclear arms in Europe, the President sets a date for deployment of Pershing II missiles, but promises to cancel the deployment if the Soviets dismantle all intermediate weapons aimed at Western Europe. (*US News and World Report*, 11/30/81)

The United States and Soviet Union begin arms control talks on the 30<sup>th</sup> in Geneva.

#### December

Allen makes the talk show rounds to "clear the air" and defend himself against charges that he has received \$1,000 from Japanese journalists. (*Washington Post*, 12/2/81)

On the 10<sup>th</sup>, Reagan requests that Americans leave Libya as relations between U.S. and Libya worsen.

Four hundred conservative “Friends of Dick Allen” meet at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington to show their support for Allen. Attendees include Senator Paul Laxalt and political director Lyn Nofziger, but not President Reagan. (*Washington Post*, 12/17/81)

Attorney General William French Smith announces on the 23rd that he does not think a special prosecutor is warranted in Allen’s case. (Suzanne Garment, *Scandal*, 1991, 63)

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, Reagan names Vice President George Bush as chair of a proposed administration crisis management team as part of an effort to improve interagency coordination and reduce friction among the Departments of State and Defense, the CIA, and the NSC. The group, referred to as the Special Situation Group (SSG), received a formal charter but met only once. “Secretary Haig immediately and forcefully complained that the SSG would remove coordinating responsibility from him.” The Department of State historian lists the SSG as a failed effort to improve interagency communication. (Office of the Historian, “History of the National Security Council, 1947-1997” U.S. Department of State, August 1997)

President Reagan declares that the Soviet Union is responsible for the crackdown in Poland, and Reagan places economic sanctions on Poland and the Soviet Union on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

## 1982

*January* Allen submits his resignation to President Reagan on the 4<sup>th</sup>. The allegations surrounding Allen would be largely cleared up after Allen left office, but there were other tensions that led to his resignation, according to Meese. In the first year of the administration “policy differences and personal conflicts occurred far more than expected. Somehow the ‘roundtabling’ that had served Reagan in California and in other areas of his administration didn’t seem to work so well when it came to foreign affairs and national security. In frustration, the President decided that a change of players was necessary. He therefore asked Bill Clark to take over from Dick Allen.” (Meese, 85)

*June* Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II meet in the Vatican Library and agree to begin a clandestine campaign to bring about the end of communism. Reagan and the Pope agree to begin their alliance by concentrating their resources to destabilize the Polish government and support the Solidarity movement. Allen tells *Time* magazine: “That was

one of the great secret alliances of all time.” Less than three weeks before his meeting with the Pope, Reagan had signed a secret national security directive, NSDD 32, which authorized “economic, diplomatic and covert measures ‘to neutralize efforts of the U.S.S.R.’ to maintain its hold on Eastern Europe.” (*Time*, 2/24/92)

## 1983

*April* Allen signs a \$300,000-a-year contract to serve as chief lobbyist for a consortium of Japanese companies. The companies are seeking U.S. government approval of a canal through the isthmus of Panama. (*Washington Post*, 4/11/83)

## 1984

Allen writes a column titled “Control the Media to End Their Abuses” for *USA Today* in which he recounts the media abuse he suffered and compares journalism to street crime. Allen writes “In simulated gang rape, pack journalists descend on the homes of their victims. My family and I were virtually held hostage for six weeks during a non-stop stakeout.”

Many accounts claimed that reporters behaved inappropriately in their coverage of events that led up to Allen’s resignation. Reporters and camera crews camped out at Allen’s house, and one reporter even asked Allen’s 6-year-old daughter for an interview on her way to school. Others gave inaccurate accounts of the events surrounding the \$1,000 gift. (*New Republic*, 1/7/85)

*September* Allen’s lawyer, William D. Rogers of Arnold & Porter, sends a letter and “slander pack” to over 100 television, newspaper, and magazine executives warning that “any incorrect, incomplete, or misleading references to Mr. Allen’ will be ‘actionable by law.’” The package includes 45 pages of Justice Department reports clearing Allen and copies of apologies and corrections by journalists for their statements about Allen. Many journalists concede Allen was “roughed up” by the media, but others maintain he won only a “technical acquittal” (*Fortune* 10/15/84; *American Journalism Review*, 5/93; Suzanne Garment, *Scandal*, 1991)

## 1991

James Baker says that the U.S. administration “might very well” have agreed in 1981 to secretly permit Israel to sell several billion dollars worth of American-made arms to Iran. Baker was asked about the sale on CBS’s “Face the Nation” after the *New York Times* reported that Israel sold several billion dollars of such weapons to Iran with U.S. knowledge under an agreement worked out by the Reagan administration. “It might very well have been the case that we had decided to do that as a favor to Israel—I mean, I don’t know,” Baker said (*AP* and *New York Times*, 12/9/91)



**1996** Allen serves as an advisor for Patrick Buchanan's presidential campaign.  
(*New Republic*, 3/18/96)

## **RICHARD V. ALLEN SUGGESTED TOPICS**

*Prepared by Patrick Roberts*

*Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 5/5/2002*

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### ***Pre-Reagan Career***

- What you learned from the Nixon White House.
- Your relationship with Nixon and Kissinger.

### ***Reagan Presidential Campaign***

- Your selection by Reagan as an advisor on national security policy. Your impression of Reagan's knowledge of foreign policy matters.
- Your relationship with others in the campaign, particularly Nancy Reagan, Edwin Meese, John Sears, William Casey, and Michael Deaver.
- Your withdrawal from the campaign staff.

### ***Transition***

- The extent of Reagan's participation in selecting personnel for his administration.
- Your role during the transition. Your relationship with others in the transition.
- Your work in bringing potential executive branch staff members to the president's attention.
- Process through which the campaign identified potential appointees in the administration (Kirkpatrick, etc). Personnel Selection.
- Timing of appointments.
- Was there any communication between the transition staff and the Carter administration about the timing of the release of hostages in Iran?

### ***National Security Advisor***

- The definition of the role of National Security Advisor in the Reagan administration. Who was involved in defining the position? The extent of Reagan's involvement.
- Your relationship with the administration's foreign policy team and White House Staff, including Chief of Staff James Baker, Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver, advisor Ed Meese, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, and CIA Director William Casey. Leaks from the White House.
- Relationship with staff at the State Department, including Deputy Secretary of State William Clark.
- Relationship with Congress, including debates over budget and AWACS sale.
- Your departure from the administration.

### ***Events & Issues***

- *USSR*: Grain embargo. Key players in relations with the Soviet Union. Zero-option speech. "Holy Alliance" with Pope John Paul II. Efforts to encourage the Solidarity movement. Relations with allies in Europe during the Cold War.
- *Middle East*: Key players in generating and communicating policy on the Middle East. "Fact-finding" trips. Relationship with Saudis and Israelis. Relationship with

James Baker and Howard Baker during AWACS deal and other negotiations. Policy toward Libya. Israel's sale of U.S.-made weaponry to Iran in 1981.

- *Korea*: Relationship with General Chun and Korea before and after Reagan's inauguration. Chun's visit to the White House.
- Attempted assassination of Reagan.
- Attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II, and assassination of Sadat.
- Policy toward China and Taiwan. Reagan's attitude toward Taiwan.
- SDI or "Star Wars" development.

### ***The Reagan Presidency in Retrospect***

- Compare your experiences in the Nixon campaign and White House with the Reagan campaign and White House.
- What do you consider your greatest accomplishment as National Security Advisor?
- To what extent was the National Security Advisor looked to as the foreign policy spokesperson of the administration? To what extent should the National Security Advisor be central to foreign policy making? In your view, what is the proper role for the National Security Advisor?
- How was the Reagan administration viewed by world leaders?
- How should Reagan and his staff be viewed in the light of history? Reagan as a Washington politician and as a world leader.
- What features of the Reagan administration were missed or misunderstood by the press?
- What other important aspects of Reagan himself and of his presidency are neglected in most press and historical accounts?

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