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ROUNDTABLE

Roundtable: revisiting the 1984 US presidential election

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Introduction

The 1984 US presidential election was one of the most decisive contests in modern US political history. President Ronald Reagan's landslide re-election, in which he won 49 out of 50 states, was not just an electoral triumph but a moment of political consolidation that defined American politics for decades. Marking the fortieth anniversary of this pivotal election, this roundtable, convened by Dr Chris Campbell (Keston Institute), Dr James Cooper (York St John University), and Ms Tilly Ross (student researcher at York St John), brings together a distinguished panel of scholars to reflect on the significance of Reagan's victory, the broader political context of the era, and the lasting implications of the election both within the USA and in transatlantic relations.

The USA and UK both held general elections in 2024. Many of the themes that shaped Reagan's victory–economic recovery, foreign policy strength, the role of social issues, and the evolution of party coalitions–also resonated during those election campaigns. The roundtable took place shortly after former president Donald Trump defeated Vice-President Kamala Harris to become the forty-seventh president of the USA. It was therefore a timely opportunity to revisit 1984, not just as a historical episode, but as a moment that defined the political landscape for a prior political generation.

The contributors were leading scholars in their respective fields. Professor Andrew E. (Andy) Busch began the discussion with an analysis of the critical moments that shaped the 1984 election. He highlighted how economic recovery, the invasion of Grenada, and strategic political decisions all played pertinent roles in the campaign's trajectory. Professor Diane Winston examined the role of religion in Reagan's campaign, exploring how economic and foreign policies had moral and religious undertones. Dr Elizabeth Rees provided insight into Nancy Reagan's role in the campaign, from her influence behind the scenes to her public presence as a symbol of glamour and strength. This part of the discussion explored how the First Lady helped to shape

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perceptions of the Reagan administration and played a key role in defining the president's image. Dr Anthony Eames expanded the discussion further so as to consider the international implications of Reagan's re-election. This focused on Reagan's relationship with Margaret Thatcher and how his approach to Cold War strategy played into the 1984 campaign's narrative of American renewal and strength. Professor Iwan Morgan concluded the panel by assessing the lasting implications of the 1984 election. He argued that Reagan's landslide cemented low-tax, free-market conservatism as a dominant force in American politics and laid the groundwork for the end of the Cold War and the emergence of Bill Clinton's Democratic Party. The panellists subsequently engaged with broader questions about the nature of incumbency, the role of social issues, and the shifting ideological battle lines in American politics.

Contributors

Professor Andrew E. Busch is Associate Director of the Institute of American Civics. He has authored, co-authored, or edited two dozen books on these topics, most recently *Ronald Reagan and the Firing of the Air Traffic Controllers* (University Press of Kansas, 2024) and *The Elephant in the Room: Donald Trump and the Future of the Republican Party* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).

Dr Chris Campbell (Keston Institute) is a historian of the Cold War, US foreign policy, and US-Russian relations and sits on the board of the Keston Institute, which oversees the Keston Center for Religion, Politics and Society at Baylor University. He was a 2022–23 visiting fellow at the Reagan Institute, where he worked on developing his doctoral thesis, entitled *"Are We Doing Enough?" US Foreign Policy and the Soviet Nationalities 1977–1984*, into a book manuscript.

Dr James Cooper (York St John University) is an Associate Professor of History and American Studies. His previous publications include: [with R.J. Richardson and Bailey Schwab*] Ronald Reagan's 1984: Politics, Policy, and Culture* (Palgrave, 2024); *A Diplomatic Meeting: Reagan, Thatcher, and the Art of Summitry* (University Press of Kentucky, 2022); *The Politics of Diplomacy: U.S. Presidents and the Northern Ireland Conflict, 1967–98* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017); and, *Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan: A Very Political Special Relationship* (Palgrave, 2012).

Dr Anthony Eames (Reagan Foundation and George Washington University) is the Director of Scholarly Initiatives at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute. He is the author of *A Voice In Their Own Destiny: Reagan, Thatcher, and Public Diplomacy in the Nuclear 1980s* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2023) and co-author, with John Baylis, of *Sharing Nuclear Secrets: Trust, Mistrust, and Ambiguity in Anglo-American Nuclear Relations, 1939-Present* (Oxford University Press, 2023).

Professor Iwan Morgan (UCL) is Emeritus Professor of United States History at the Institute of the Americas, University College London. His monograph, *The Age of Deficits: Presidents and Unbalanced Budgets from Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush* (University Press of Kansas, 2009), won the American Politics Group's 2010 Richard Neustadt Book Prize. His biography, *Reagan: American Icon* (I.B. Tauris,

2016) was named a *Times/ Sunday Times* Politics Book of the Year in 2016. His latest book is *FDR: Transforming the Presidency and Renewing America* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2022).

Dr Elizabeth Rees (Southern Methodist University) is a presidential historian whose work focuses on the evolution of the East Wing staff and the establishment of the Office of the First Lady in the mid-twentieth century. Her book project is under contract with University of Virginia Press and is tentatively entitled *The Counterpart System: The Evolution of the Modern East Wing and Office of the First Lady*. It is a history of the development of the East Wing staff and also sheds light on broader changes related to the position of women in national politics and intersects with the history of second wave feminism.

Ms Tilly Ross (York St John University) is a final year undergraduate student reading History and International Relations. As part of the University's "students as researchers" scheme, she helped to organise this event and prepare this transcript for publication.

Professor Diane Winston (University of South California) is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated journalist, author, and columnist. She has authored and edited numerous books on the connection between religion, media, American history, and politics. They include *Red-Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army* (Harvard University Press, 1999*), Faith in the Market: Religion and the Rise of Urban Commercial Culture* (Rutgers University Press, 2002), and *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and the News Media* (Oxford University Press, 2012). Her latest book—*Righting the American Dream: How the Media Mainstreamed Reagan's Evangelical Vision* (University of Chicago Press, 2023)—reveals how the Reagan presidency utilised news media to spread a new religious vision of American identity.

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Cooper: I'm Jim Cooper, an Associate Professor of History and American Studies at York St John University. It's my great pleasure to be convening this roundtable about the 1984 presidential election. Obviously, it is now forty years since Reagan's big electoral blowout: a big, massive landslide victory. Of course, all our attention recently has been on Harris v. Trump. For now, we can go back in time forty years.

We've got some esteemed colleagues with us. We are delighted to have Professor Andy Busch, Professor Diane Winston, Dr Elizabeth Rees, Dr Anthony Eames and Professor Iwan Morgan with us today. My suggestion is that Andy would speak first about key moments of the campaign. Then we'll hear from Diane to talk about religion, given her expertise on religion in media and politics in 1984. Then we'll hear from Elizabeth Rees talking about the East Wing – the first Lady, Nancy Reagan, and then Anthony, he'll talk about the Anglo-American dimension to it all. Then, Professor Iwan Morgan, our nation's top presidential scholar, will think about the legacy of 1984. We will also look to identify connections together between the

topics to get discussion going. So, without further ado, I will handover to Professor Andy Busch of the University of Tennessee, who's written so widely on Reagan, among other things.

Busch: Well, thank you very much, James. It's a pleasure to be here, a pleasure to be with you all. So, what are some of the key moments? There were several of them, but a lot of them came before the campaign was fully underway, or you could say the campaign between the two nominees was determined and going forward. So, I think actually two of the critical moments came in late 1982 and late 1983. Long before the election in November of 1984. There's two moments where the point at which the economy began recovering from a deep recession, which a lot of economists point to at that moment, being around December of 1982, when some of the economic indicators really began to shift. By 1984, that recovery was well under way. It was not inflationary, which was really important because Reagan's campaign in 1980 was built on, in large part, trying to defeat inflation but also unemployment. So, both of those figures were headed down, and they were headed down starting in late 1982 or early 1983.

The other key moment prior to the election really was, in my view, the invasion of Grenada, which I know, ruffled some feathers with Prime Minister Thatcher and others. But that was the point at which Reagan's approval rating actually went over fifty percent for the first time since late 1981. The perception among most Americans was that it was a decisive action. I remember this. I was in high school at the time, so I was quite young, but it seemed to me like my first memory of foreign policy was the evacuation of Saigon at the end of the Vietnam War, and things had been basically a long string of retreats from that point on. Then Grenada was kind of a reversal of that. It was the first time in years that the United States had actually, in some sense, successfully taken the offensive against the, what you might call, the Soviet empire, and that put Reagan into positive approval ratings for the first time in a long time. So those two things help to set the stage for the election.

There were other important points. Ted Kennedy, for example, deciding not to run for the Democratic nomination, really opened up the Democratic contest. There was a big fight between Walter Mondale and Gary Hart. Surprisingly, Gary Hart, a senator from Colorado, challenged Mondale on the basis of what he called new ideas. He thought Mondale was too tied to labour unions and the old Democratic Party. Mondale turned back that challenge. One of the key points was a debate that they held in Illinois. The Illinois primary was coming up; it was a crucial primary. There was a commercial being run at that time by the fast-food restaurant chain Wendy's, makes hamburgers and the commercial consisted of these old ladies complaining about the other brands of hamburger and one of them would always say "where's the beef?" and this had become famous. Walter Mondale challenged Gary Hart with this in this debate, kind of laying bare the fact that a lot of this talk about new ideas was somewhat vacuous, or at least ill-defined and then Mondale said, "where's the beef, senator?" And, a lot of people laughed, but it won, I think, Mondale the debate and the primary, and he was on his way to the nomination. So that was an important moment. Mondale also wound up picking Geraldine Ferraro as his vice-presidential

running mate. That was the first time that there was a woman on a major party ticket in the United States. So that was an important point. But all of this was taking place in the context of the circumstances that were set by the economic recovery and by the perception that Reagan had restored American strength abroad.

In the fall, there's not a lot of shifting, but probably the key moments came in the debates between Mondale and Reagan. In the first debate, Reagan faltered a little bit, started to show his age a bit, and Mondale closed the gap just a little, and it seemed like maybe if Reagan didn't do well in the next debate some people might be open to changing their minds about the race. Reagan came back and said famously, when he was asked about his age, he said "I refuse to use my opponent's youth and inexperience against him as a campaign issue." And again, everybody laughed. Reagan won the debate and that small challenge for Mondale was reversed. Those were really the key moments. I think a lot of what happens in these campaigns winds up being noise in some sense. That what is taking place in the context of what's happening in the country, that actually is the most important thing. So, I think there's two things that I noted at the beginning were probably the most important actual events.

Cooper: Thank you. I've already written down some things ready to ask yourself and others about so, that's brilliant. So, on then to Diane, please: Can you perhaps talk to us about the role of religion in 1984 in the election campaign?
Winston: American politics underwent a sea-change in 1976 when Jimmy Carter announced he was a born-again Christian. Many Americans had not heard that phrase before, and it subsequently energised Christian conservatives, Christian evangelicals who hadn't been a political bloc to realise their own strength. In 1980, Jerry Falwell began to organise this block behind Reagan and in 1984 it really came into its own. In 1984 the religious right did everything it could to support Reagan in his bid for re-election. Tim LaHaye, he of Left Behind fame, started a group called ACTV (the American Coalition for Traditional Values), which tried to organise religious conservatives for Reagan. LaHaye claimed that 4.5 million Christian conservatives voted for Reagan in 1980, and he wanted to raise that number by two and a half million. Religion quickly became part of the campaign because Reagan kept announcing his democratic bona fides and his opponent said things like, "if Mondale is elected by 1988, there will be no freedom in America". I was struck about how familiar that sounds. In addition, Reagan himself brought up on many occasions that he felt that part of governing the country was setting a moral tone for its citizens and its agenda.

One of the more important ways to gauge just how significant religion became was in the first debate, Diane Sawyer, the moderator, asked both candidates if they had been born-again and what that meant to them. Both men had very diplomatic responses, because neither wanted to upset their supporters, and alienate others. But the very fact that Sawyer brought this up was important because as I said earlier, just eight years earlier, many Americans had never heard the term before.

When the voting actually happened, and I just want to say one thing, religion came up time and again during the campaign. It came up in speeches. It came up in rallies. It came up as Mondale tried the best to explain his religious beliefs and kind

of thread the needle between religion and politics, church and state. So, it was something that voters saw in the media again and again.

When the voting was actually done, and Reagan did win by a landslide, polls show that religion was not very important to the voters. In fact, most voters supported Mondale's views but since Reagan had turned around the economy and he was perceived as a good leader, they voted for him. Most voters did not want religion to be part of the campaign, and most voters did not want a presidential agenda built around the social issues that the Republicans had been flagging during the campaign, which basically was prayer and school and into abortion and tuition tax credits for parochial schools. So, to me, the significance of religion in the 1984 election was mostly perceptual, because it became such a major part of this election. It became whipped up to the extent that American people were hearing probably as much about what they should do about abortion as they were about the economy. But in reality, it did not have real salience with the voters.

Cooper: Thank you. This is fantastic. Now we turn to Dr Elizabeth Rees from Southern Methodist University. Could you tell us a bit about Nancy Reagan during the 1984 election?
Rees: Thanks Jim for the invite and it's great to be here to talk about Nancy Reagan. Obviously, she is perhaps one of the best known First Ladies alongside maybe Eleanor Roosevelt, certainly and Jackie Kennedy, Hillary Clinton. So, there's a lot to say about her, but I'm going to try and keep it brief by condensing this down to five key points, which I will run through as quick as I can.

So the first point that I wanted to talk about was the decision to run in the first place. At the time, a lot of news outlets reported that this was a mutual decision in some way, and her press secretary, Sheila Tate, said that this was a decision they had come to together. Obviously, when he makes the announcement, she is there. But in reality, that was not necessarily the case. Mrs Reagan had to be slightly persuaded. She really was not that keen that he run again, especially because of the impact on his health. She worried terribly about him and the assassination attempt that had already occurred on her husband's life in the first administration, was something that she was deeply concerned about. I'm not sure how much of a dialogue it really was, but in the end, he does decide to run anyway, and it's portrayed as being this mutual decision.

The second point is just how visible a role she plays. You can see this especially in the Republican Convention, which was held here in Dallas in August. Mrs Reagan takes to the podium, and there's this outpouring of warmth for her, which is widely documented in the news, and that appearance really solidifies her centrality as a figure in this campaign. There's a really nice moment where they have this, seemingly quite advanced in the 1980s, livestream where he is beamed in watching from the hotel and she is waving up at him and he's waving back at her and it's this kind of nice moment. They show a film about her life where she is shown meeting the Pope and meeting all of these world figures and they talk about like all these good deeds that she's doing and what a great face of America she is out in the world and why she should be re-elected as First Lady.

The next thing is this idea of Mrs Reagan being her husband's protector, which is like a really cool image that we have of her and it was displayed in a number of different ways throughout the campaign. So, also in August, she was seen as ostensibly giving her husband cues, whispering to herself on the platform behind him and the press kind of reported that she was feeding him things. There had been other instances of this happening, and this was all denied. But the thing that it did raise was this question of age and obviously this was something that she also did work as his protector to dispute and contest in the press. She gave these interviews where she would talk about how optimistic he was for the future and how he slept so soundly at night because he didn't worry. Really portraying not only the personal side of him as a human, but also really shoring up this idea that he is like the strong, optimistic choice for America. The other thing to mention about Mrs Reagan is a protector was that when the first debate happened in October and it didn't go particularly well for President Reagan, she was absolutely furious with all of the aides, and she really roasted them for this. She thought that they had coached him too hard and that it wasn't the best way for him to approach this. So, she really did make her views known amongst the campaign team, certainly.

The fourth point to touch on is big one, which is abortion. Obviously, Mrs Reagan was in stark contrast to Betty Ford, who had been a Republican First Lady before her, who had been very pro-choice.[1] Mrs Reagan was, as Diane mentioned on the pro-life end of the spectrum and kind of allied with courting the conservative religious right. But she also did come a bit unstuck with this during the campaign. She had an interview with the *LA Times* where they asked her if she believed in exemptions for cases of rape, and she paused and said that she wasn't necessarily sure. This resulted in a whole situation where Sheila Tate had to issue a response. There were calls for her to clarify her position, but in actual fact, what Sheila Tate said was Mrs Reagan is not the candidate. She does not have to disclose her personal opinions. Some people would contest that by saying that the First Lady is also on the ticket in some cases. So that was an interesting instance and certainly one where she was an important figure anyway.

And then the final thing that I would say in terms of the practicalities of her campaigning that links a lot to her initiatives that she championed not only as First lady but also as First Lady of California. So, we have the "just say no" anti-drugs programme and we also have the foster grandparents scheme. What she would do when she was campaigning on her own was go into schools, into small kind of community groups under the guise of these initiatives where she could talk in very controlled environments to folks. It would be documented by the press and then that would be sent out there to the world. So, she was using her incumbent first lady position to be able to do that and project. It was sort of a continuation of doing the things that she was already doing as first lady. So, I will cut it there because there's a lot more I could say, but I'm sure there are plenty of parallels to be drawn between 1984 and 2024 that we can talk about in the Q&A.

[1] See: Elizabeth Rees, "What Melania Trump's Decision to Speak Out on Abortion Says About the GOP", *Time,* 1 November 2024. Accessed via *Time*: https://time.com/7134432/melania-trump-abortion-history-gop/.

Cooper: Thank you. I'm thinking now about the capacity of Jill Biden has as the protector. Thank you, Elizabeth. On then to Dr Anthony Eames who is the director of scholarly activities at the Ronald Reagan Institute. Of course, his most recently published on Reagan and Thatcher an excellent book which I've already enjoyed and reviewed elsewhere. Anthony, could you talk to us about the Anglo-American dimension of the 1984 election, please?

Eames: Well, Jim, thanks for having me on and it's great to see Andy and Elizabeth and Diane. Iwan, I'll be seeing you shortly next week in person so it's a nice appetiser here in this roundtable. I'll speak a little bit about Anglo American relations and I'll veer into the Cold War a little bit as one has to when talking about Anglo-American relations in the context of the 1984 election. I will be taking a pointed approach to how I'll discuss these things like Elizabeth.

The first thing I want to emphasise is the 1984 election begins in 1982. Not in the same way where we think about the political machinery that exists in the USA today—of never-ending elections and in the texts that we all get about donating to every single candidate day in and day out or various prop initiatives—it's really become quite something. But the strategy, the resolve, resilience in the concerns about how to pursue a winning campaign in 1984 really begin in 1982. They begin in 1982, because as is the case with incumbents quite often in US midterms, the president party loses a number of seats. They lose a number of seats on issues of the economy, and they lose a number of seats on issues of Reagan's handling of US-Soviet relations, particularly the nuclear dimension and the arms race. So, on economy and the arms race, of course, Thatcher and Reagan are in lockstep. These are two issues that the USA and the UK really carry forward on together. I will not speculate as to whether Thatcher's economic programme would have carried on without a political soul mate on the other side of the Atlantic, carrying on a similar, though not identical, economic programme. But certainly, if there was ever a time to reverse course and cut one's losses from an ideological point of view for the Reagan administration, it would have been after the fall midterms in 1982.

One of the big fault lines that emerges after 1982 is "how are we to get across our views? Are we not really, truly reaching the kind of moral centre or the morally righteous electorate in America now?" Diana has said religion did not play a big role by exit poll data, but the issue of morality and moral discussions, particularly around issues of life and death, capital punishment, abortion and nuclear warfare did play a big role. So, where we start to see a kind of a more aggressive transatlantic, Anglo-American framing of the moral dimension of nuclear warfare, for example, comes in June 1982 at Westminster and the famous Reagan-Westminster address where he lays out a new programme for defeating the Soviet Union, for confronting the Soviet Union. It frames that in staunchly moral language, if you read that speech alongside the 1983 speech that Reagan gives to the National Association of Evangelicals, they're strikingly similar. It's basically a British version of "peace through strength" in terms of the allusions to Britain's illustrious and imperial history and Winston Churchill. Some of these references are just swapped in and out.

So those moral dimensions really start to coalesce in a stronger way between the USA and the UK. In the UK, of course, you see Victorian virtues is a resurgent

under Thatcher. That sense of Victorian virtues in the 1983 British election as being an effective message in the context of broader geopolitics strikes a note with US strategists who are really concerned about the Thatcher governments chances of remaining in power at one point. So, when they see that messaging prove to be successful in the 1983 election, it further green lights the approach to Reagan's moral approach in the 1984 election. I should also note that, today, we see media in kind of global terms. Fox News, Sky News, the *Wall Street Journal,* and the *Times* and any number of think tanks have quite a number of either loose or very tight connections. In the 1980s, in the Reagan Thatcher years, you really start to see that emerge in a more robust way than it had been throughout the earlier Cold War period, 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. One of the best cases, for example, is the Heritage Foundation. The Heritage Foundation is considered Reagan's think tank. They do not have the Reagan approach to geopolitics anymore as their marching order, but in the 1980s it is considered to be the Reagan think tank. It emerges in 1973, first along the economic front, thinking about ways to reinvigorate the US economy. But it's a different type of think tank. It's not a think tank akin to Chatham House or Council on Foreign Relations or Brookings. Heritage is really a policy first advocacy think tank, and they export this model very successfully to the UK during the 1980s. The back and forth, not just on the model but on the fundraising side, for example, the former President of the Heritage Foundation goes out and raises quite a bit of money for British think tanks that are supporting conservatives, really sees Britain as the eyes and ears for the Reagan administration in Europe. So those are a few things that strengthen connections, particularly between the Conservative Party and the Republican Party, Reagan's Republican Party. There are of course, connections between what we would call Democrats who are emerging into a progressive coalition and a fractured Labour Party and some more progressive elements in the UK, but we're talking about a victorious 1984 Republican election, so I won't veer into those aspects.

One of the other things in terms of Anglo-American relations in the Cold War more generally, that's important for the Reagan re-election, is that the Thatcher government's willing to give Reagan space So Thatcher's not too excited about Grenada, but she recognises it's importance for Reagan being able to cast himself as a strong leader, as an assertive leader. Thatcher's not too excited initially about the Strategic Defence Initiative, but she recognises its importance for Reagan to wrestle the peace narrative away from the peace movement and the anti-nuclear movement in the USA. Thatcher's not too excited about economic sanctions in response to the pipeline crisis and the solidarity and martial law crisis in Poland. It very likely could have a direct impact, negative impact on Britain and European economies but publicly she gives space to Reagan on that so he can continue to consolidate that image of an assertive Cold War leader and it's important. It's important because in the 1984 election, of course, Reagan wins almost 60% of the vote, 49 of the 50 states in the USA, it's a landslide but there's actually two issues where Reagan does not beat Mondale on. Those two issues are foreign affairs, and specifically the handling of the arms race. He cuts down the margin but the successes of the Reagan administration's foreign policy, specifically regarding the Soviet Union haven't emerged yet in 1983 and in 1984. You have a collapse in arms control. Away from the Soviet

Union, you have, for example, a real catastrophe in the Middle East, in the Israel, Lebanon War, with the bombing of marine barracks in Beirut. You see some terror issues pop up abroad. The Soviets continue to seem to be on the March. So, the successes we look back retrospectively on, in foreign policy terms, during the Reagan years, are really all coming in quite rapid succession in the second term. It's a live question in the 1984 election, if Reagan's strategy's going to play out and so Thatcher's willingness to give space is really a key part of that political relationship.

Cooper: Thank you. That's fantastic. On then, to wrap up the opening remarks, to Professor Iwan Morgan. Over to you to talk about the legacy of the 1984 election, please.
Morgan: OK. Well, thanks very much. I'll keep my remarks brief. I'm going to talk about three things about the 1984 election for the Ronald Reagan legacy.

First of all, Ronald Reagan's victory by a landslide consolidated low taxes as a staple element of American political culture. As we know, in promoting the Economic Recovery Tax Act (ERTA) of 1981, Reagan created the greatest shake up of the federal tax system since the income tax became a mass tax in 1942. The ERTA may have principally benefited the rich, who got the biggest share of its largess, but every income group that paid taxes got something from it. That said, its permanence was by no means guaranteed, because the Democrats argued that the tax giveaways of 1981 were responsible for driving the budget deficit into the stratosphere. In fiscal 1983, the US deficit crossed the $200 billion mark for the first time in history. It doesn't sound very much today but it sent shock waves through the corridors of Washington power, not least in the White House. Early in 1983 opinion polls showed that the public was willing to sacrifice the final tranche of the income tax cuts, awarded annually over three years, in the interests of controlling the deficit, which people feared would reignite inflation to the levels of the late 1970s. That mood didn't last because the economy in mid-1983 began a very strong recovery that continued through to the election and beyond. The Democrats committed the strategic error of making the deficit one of their core issues of their 1984 campaign. Walter Mondale promised to cut it by two-thirds in the next four years if elected president through raising taxes on the wealthy. However, it soon became apparent during the campaign that he would have to hike taxes for the middle class as well as the rich to fulfil this goal. This went down like a lead balloon with voters, making Mondale's landslide defeat almost inevitable. This outcome also ensured that no future presidential candidate would risk advocating substantial tax increases in order to get the deficit under control. That has made it very difficult for the USA to close the fiscal gap, excepting, of course, during Bill Clinton's second term when the boom on Wall Street created a short-lived revenue harvest.

Secondly, I think that the 1984 election was a retrospective verdict on Reagan's first term rather than a mandate for an expanded conservatism in his second term. In this regard, it was very similar to the 1936 presidential election that FDR won by a landslide. Above all, it was a vote of thanks for the conquest of inflation that had been running at 13 percent in 1980. Of course, it was the Federal Reserve that had brought inflation down, but Ronald Reagan got the political credit and perhaps

deservedly so because he had taken the heat for the recessionary consequences of the Fed's monetarist strategy in 1981–2. I think that success established the Republican Party long term in voters' eyes as better able than the Democrats to deal with inflation, a reputation consolidated by the outcome of the 2024 election.

Finally, I think the 1984 vote was an endorsement of Reagan's "Peace Through Strength" approach to the Soviet Union. The public, of course, was very fearful that the growth of superpower tensions and confrontation in the early 1980s would lead to nuclear war at some point. Nevertheless, most Americans ultimately trusted Reagan to follow through on "Peace Through Strength". The Democrats offered a "Peace Through Talking" alternative that put primary emphasis on immediate renewal of arms-control negotiations with the Soviets, but it didn't get them there anywhere in terms of the vote. Reagan's landslide victory with a 58 percent share of the popular vote gave him a solid mandate to continue with his Peace Through Strength strategy in his second term. The death in rapid succession of three Soviet leaders who were hard-line Cold warriors—Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov, and Constantin Chernenko—had limited Reagan's prospects of building a relationship with his Kremlin counterpart. Mikhail Gorbachev's coming to power in early 1985 would transform the dynamics of the Cold War because he wanted to ease international tensions in order to focus on domestic reforms. The new détente that he built with Reagan moved US-Soviet relations from the extreme tensions of 1983—the year of living dangerously—to the signing in 1987 of the Intermediate Nuclear Force Treaty. Though this could not have been foreseen in 1984, the Cold War was on the verge of termination largely on American terms by the time Reagan left office. Although Gorbachev got the main credit for this, signified by his Nobel Peace Prize award in 1990, Reagan deserves to be remembered for playing an equally significant role. I would argue that the ending of the Cold War was Reagan's greatest legacy to the USA and the world.

Cooper: Thank you for a fantastic wrapping up for the initial opening remarks. So, I've got all sorts of scribbles. I'm going to ask a general question that's going to kick off the discussions. Please also do talk amongst yourselves and make connections with each other. We will try and fit that into the discussion as well. So, I'm sure you've got your own ideas, questions and comments you want to ask of each other, but for me, I think the story, the connection ringing through are these words like incumbency, battle of ideas, the economy all seem to be some common threads. Did Reagan win this because of incumbency, and he was incumbent as the ideas, which in the Battle of Ideas, seems to be winning and that was more important than social issues?

Eames: You know one thing we didn't mention is "It's Morning Again in America". Anyone studying the 1984 election from the junior high student in the United States to the graduate student in US politics in the UK either has heard that phrase, or better yet, has seen the commercial video on YouTube. I say this to someone who thinks that Reagan was an incredibly gifted politician but also the bar for the presidency was pretty low in 1980 and 1984. You had not had a full two term president since Eisenhower. Kennedy, of course, would have liked it to go a little differently. Johnson flames out dramatically in his decision not to

run because of the Vietnam War. Obviously, Nixon is a pox on the office of the presidency; very much lowers Americans' esteem of the office. Ford is seen as a gatekeeper, and Carter is seen as really one who embraces narratives of decline, whether or not that's actually true. But probably one thing that most American history students know about Jimmy Carter is the "Crisis in Confidence" speech. So, the bar is really low, and Reagan's ability to simply restore faith in the office of the Presidency is incredibly important. That's restored through really strong assertions of US leadership in places like NATO. It's restored through these incredibly determined and persistent references and rhetorical investments in American patriotism and pride. Not necessarily nativism and nationalism, but patriotism and pride in a positive spin. Of course, his opponents would say otherwise but I wouldn't go that far given how we've seen nativism has played out in American politics not just today but throughout its history. It can have a lot harder edges, a lot of uglier edges. So, the social issues, whether or not they played such a major role. Let me borrow a term that we heard a lot around US politics today. It was a lot more of a vibe election than people actually give it credit for. It's a term that isn't perhaps academically precise, but nevertheless has some purchase.

Cooper: Thank you Anthony. Good morning, America, just to add, students love them. I think it really is a master class in campaigning. Diane and then Andy.

Winston: My sense is that Reagan himself was not as enamoured with the social issues as he was with the economic issues. In fact, I think he was fine back-burnering the social issues. But I also think that he considered the economic issues as moral issues and religious issues. I think he really did believe that cutting taxes with the flip side of getting rid of welfare. We know that he deeply opposed welfare because not only was it a drag on the economy, but it stripped people of their autonomy and their sense of personal responsibility. I make the case in my book that Reagan basically put a religious sheen on neoliberalism, which allowed it to be more palatable for many Americans who would not necessarily have bought into the market-based economics and politics, which have come to determine our society at this point. I think making a hard division between Reagan's moral religious sense and his political economic perspective is not really doing full justice. I think that occurs often because of the way religion is covered by the media in this country. If you think about what really drove the 1984 election, which was the economy and the resurgence of American international viability, that was that was there, but religion took a really big place in that election, even if it wasn't really a determinative factor in how people voted. I think that's because the media finds religion or thinks of religion as a topic which is a hot button topic and gets people clicking and reading. The media's take on religion has never been particularly sophisticated. So the fact that Reagan didn't go to church, enabled critics to say oh he wasn't religious, whereas I would argue his religion was interwoven into his policies.

Cooper: Thank you Diane I think that's really helpful. Andy. I think you were next. Then Iwan and then Elizabeth and back to Anthony.

Busch: Well, I would agree with Diane about the connection between you know Reagan's religious views and economic issues. I would go a step further and say that that connection was also true of his view of foreign policy. I think his very

deep anti-communism was substantially rooted in his religious views. So, I think that's all true.

Getting back to Anthony's point of the vibe, I think there's a lot to that. There was a vibe, and the vibe was if you wanted to put one word to it was renewal. The notion was the economy is coming back. The US is coming back abroad. But there were a lot of Americans who were also worried about social trends and things that they think had gone wrong since the 1960s in terms of whether it was crime or drugs or an explosion of pornography, abortion, of course. There were a number of issues that were there that a lot of Americans saw as indicative of decline. I think it's right that Reagan did not put a high priority on those issues, but I do think that he agreed with them. I don't think he was being simply disingenuous by embracing, for example, school prayer. Even though we didn't believe it because it might help him get votes, I think he believed it. It just was not to his mind at the higher level of priority and that was true from the very beginning. If you see there were folks in the religious right saying, "you should have led with school prayer and abortion right out of the gate." Reagan was not going to do that. He saw the economy as being the primary challenge. Foreign policy, particularly dealing with the Soviets, being right up there with the economy and the other issues not as high a priority.

Cooper: Thank you Andy. I'm having a great time. Iwan, please.
Morgan: A couple of things. First of all, I think without a shadow of a doubt what got Ronald Reagan into the White House in 1980 was the wretched state of the economy with 13 percent inflation and 7 percent unemployment making for a "misery index" of 20 percent. All the exit polls are consistent in that regard. By 1984, however, it was 'Morning Again in America'. The national mood was simply a product of the economy's improvement. I think it was a broader sense of America having regained its confidence and optimism under Reagan. You have Grenada as a demonstration of the new spirit that America can project itself abroad as a contrast to the Iranian hostage crisis under Carter. If you look across the pond to Britain, Thatcher also wins a landslide election in 1983 as a consequence not only of victory in the Falklands conflict but also, at home, the conquest of inflation, and her administration's standing up to the trade unions, which were seen as overly powerful in the 1970s. There is a strong sense of national renewal in Thatcher's Britain and Ronald Reagan's America, which earns both leaders a second term. It is led by the economy, but I don't think it is simply about the economy.
Cooper: Thank you, I think in the past people have perhaps over egged the idea that it was the Falklands War that won the 1983 general election for Thatcher. In 1983 it was the improving economy, that broader narrative, that for me was behind her win. Elizabeth over to you.
Rees: I completely agree with this idea. It's accepted that the economy was so important and obviously with the first lady, she is a symbolic figure. She is not making economic policy, but there are intersections where she does meet these issues. So obviously in the first term, she is not seen as being a widely popular figure and makes a few mistakes in terms of the timing of the announcements

that she makes. She purchases expensive china for the White House that comes in the same week as an announcement that ketchup is considered a vegetable on school meals. All of these kinds of missed timings and she was generally seen as being extravagant in the first term. Then as the economy improves, she also simultaneously improves her relationship with the press, you have the Gridiron skit famously. By this point she is seen as restoring a glamour to the White House that is Kennedy-esque, which very much ties in with this discussion of it being It's Morning in America. It's like a lasting legacy of hers. And so, it's interesting how, even though she is not involved in making economic policy, what she does clearly links to that and mirrors that.

I would also say on social issues and whether social issues really drove this, that's kind of difficult. Mrs Reagan herself kind of was pushing herself as this pro-life figure that was not necessarily the case in reality. Those were not necessarily her own personal views. We find out about that much later on, after her husband has left the White House, but it's about courting of this moral social vote. I also think in terms of abortion, there's something that I have seen from my recent research, there seems to be an interesting shift in that when you look at previous elections and First Ladies discussing abortion, particularly in the 1970s, it seems to be discussed as if it's a woman's issue. It's talked about amongst the female press corps and on the women's sheets of newspapers where First Ladies are kind of expected to answer for the women's issues on the ticket, and so abortion kind of seem, to fall under that remit. So, when President Reagan challenged Gerald Ford for the Republican nomination in the 1970s, you have Betty Ford at one end of the spectrum saying "I completely support women's rights, I support the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment)." Then you have Nancy Reagan saying, "I don't think the ERA is necessary." They're pitted against one another as these competing conceptions of female leadership on the ticket. But then I think by the time we get to 1984, abortion really moves from being a woman's issue into being a broader social and moral issue, particularly tying in with the religious elements of the campaign and the courting of the religious right. So, I think there are some fundamental redrawing of the battle lines that are happening that are happening there. First ladies occupy this very liminal space where they are part of the campaign but they're also not necessarily on the ticket, therefore, it's difficult to say for sure how they fit into that.

You mentioned incumbency, and that's something that we haven't necessarily spoken about. If you read *My Turn*, there's a tiny section where Mrs Reagan talks about the 1984 election. It's really not that long at all and she just says how we didn't really have that long term campaign. It wasn't as drawn out of process as previous cycles so that was a huge factor in terms of the fact that she didn't necessarily change anything that she was doing, particularly in terms of going out and campaigning. I'll leave it there and there's plenty of stuff that we can talk about.

Cooper: Thank you. Anthony and then Iwan, please.

Eames: So, on this issue of social issues and how important they were, I think all my colleagues kind of have it right that Reagan waved to a lot of these issues. He

dealt with them not in a comprehensive, robust manner. There's a couple concrete examples that I'll share.

The first is the appointment of C. Everett Koop to the Office of Surgeon General. I'll note I was a reviewer for a new biography coming out on Koop with the University of Massachusetts press and it's phenomenal.[2] I have a lot more appreciation for the complexity of his character and his career. But the surgeon general was a backwater, nothing post in 1981. It is seen as a concession to the pro-life movement, but it's not seen as a real victory. The surgeon general has no real formal powers. The powers that the surgeon general once had have been subsumed by other offices and agency heads, so it's really minimal and Koop is ultimately able to remake that office in its influence and its impact. So, on the balance, when Reagan goes out of office, Koop with him, it seems like, oh my goodness, what an appointment with great foresight. Clearly a major gift to evangelicals and social conservatives and movement conservatives. But it really wasn't at the time.

The second is Reagan and his aides pen a pamphlet, *Abortion in the Conscience of the Nation*.[3] There are a couple of different ways to take that. It's not like Reagan really pursued an abortion amendment or any really serious legislative or executive action on the matter. But penning, writing his thoughts down on it, is seen as again waving to that social conservative constituency. Appealing to that social conservative consistency without actually kind of making good on the policies that might alienate other parts of his of his broad voter base.

The third point I want to make actually is a compliment to those who were trained in British academia on how they view Reagan on social issues. It strikes me that in all the different project proposals I read about Ronald Reagan and all the books I've read about Ronald Reagan and articles. British students, particularly, British students who come up with a perhaps more thorough and deeper understanding of class politics as a natural component of your nation's academic culture. They seem to get the 1980s right in a way that American students often don't because of the obsession with the social issues, gender, race, religion. Those things are important, but they're not all consuming. They don't explain everything. Diane mentioned that Reagan saw the social issues through the lens of economic policy and dimensions, I think that's absolutely right. For example, there's a new book on Reagan in the South, by Jonathan Bartho, who I believe might have been Iwan's student if I have my memory correct, that really centres the economic dimension in Reagan's engagement with the South: the anti-statist right rather than the racial aspects.[4] That's something that I think US based and trained historians could learn from our British counterparts.

Cooper: Thank you. A book to look out for. Over to you, Iwan.

[2] See: Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Dr. Koop: The Many Lives of the Surgeon General* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2025).

[3] Ronald Reagan, *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation* (Thomas Nelson Inc., 1984).

[4] Jonathan Bartho, *Whistling Dixie: Ronald Reagan, the White South, and the Transformation of the Republican Party* (University Press of Kansas, 2024).

Morgan: Just on Jonathan Bartho. Yes, he was my PhD student, and his book has just come out with University Press of Kansas, a terrific book, in my humble opinion!

The point I was going to make was we're somehow freeze framed around 1984 and I just wonder whether we also ought to be thinking about what the election signified for Reagan's second term? It's my belief and it would be interesting to hear other people's views that second terms for presidents rarely go as well as the first term. One thinks of FDR. One thinks of Dwight Eisenhower. One thinks of Richard Nixon, most obviously. And Ronald Reagan makes up the quartet.

Yes, his presidency culminates in the great achievement of the INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty) of 1987. Nevertheless, he has a harder road to travel in domestic policy because of the spiralling budget deficit. The Republican Party in Congress begins to take an independent line to demand measures that restore some degree of fiscal discipline. Reagan finds himself having to defend his defence increases and his tax cuts to ensure that they are not given away in any deal to control the deficit. He succeeds in preserving them but this is a defensive operation to safeguard conservatism's past achievements rather than build new ones.

The second thing relates to Surgeon General Everett Coop's on the AIDS epidemic, the great humanitarian and health crisis of the 1980s. In 1987 he advocated a campaign to educate people, particularly the young, about the dangers of unprotected sex. This is exactly what happened in the UK when Margaret Thatcher's administration promoted the "Don't Die Of Ignorance" campaign. This was a massive public campaign warning people of the dangers of unprotected sexual relations, whether among heterosexuals or homosexuals. The Coop report doesn't get the kind of support it needed from the president because socio-moral conservatives in the administration object to its implicit acceptance of premarital sex. As a consequence, Reagan's handling of the AIDS crisis is one of the major criticisms that many historians level against his second term performance.

Finally, it should be emphasized that even as Reagan is winning his massive re-election, he's getting deeper into the morass of what would become the Iran-Contra crisis. When the illegal operations that he sanctioned became public knowledge in late 1986, he faced a threat of possible impeachment. It never came to that but the episode cast a stain on his presidency.

So, I would argue that Reagan's second term, despite his role in securing nuclear arms reduction, does not match his early success in office. His annus mirabilis in domestic policy was 1981. Thereafter his main concern was preserving his conservative achievements rather than expanding them. In other words, talk of a Reagan Revolution is much exaggerated.

Cooper: Thank you, I know Diane is going to come in, but I agree. I see it as the high point or like the final kind of victory, if you will, of that first term team. Because of the first term you have Baker, you have Meese, you have Deaver and of course come after 1984, Meese has gone on to be Attorney General. Baker's gone to Treasury Secretary. Don Regan's came in and it's not at all as effective as chief of staff and Deaver's on his way out as well really. He's gone within a

couple of years too. So, I think that 1984 is a referendum on the incumbency, the ideas of Reganism, restoring the faith in the office again. In some way the seeds of the problems of the second term have been sown by some of the departures and some of the events happening in the background like you're saying Iwan. So I think there's a lot to say about that as well. Diane and then Andy please.

Winston: We've talked a lot about Everett Koop, but I want to mention another one of Reagan's appointees who I think is interesting, especially in retrospect and that's Sandra Day O'Connor. As we all know, O'Connor was the first female to be on the Supreme Court. She proved to be a swing vote in many ways. She was pretty much anathema to the religious conservatives who backed him. I think that's another example of how non-doctrinaire Reagan was in certain ways, and of his ability to think outside the box in ways that sort of flummox both his supporters and his opponents. I personally would pick 1983 as an important and key year for the administration, since that's the year when Reagan went from being almost seemingly unelectable in January because of his very low ratings to being the white knight on a white steed by December because of the economy. The recovery may have started in 1982, but most Americans didn't really start feeling it until the summer of 1983. 1983 was also the year when we went into Grenada, which, as everyone has said, was a really pivotal moment in terms of restoring America's national pride. It's also the year when Reagan really took on the Freeze Movement and I would say in many ways bested in them by the end of it. He also, depending upon who you read, has had his own "come to Jesus moment" after seeing *The Day After*. So economically, politically, he didn't really get any big social wins that I can think of in 1983, but to me that was that was the year that was a high point of the presidency, and it was way before he got entangled in all the Iran Contra stuff later on. So that would be my vote.

Cooper: Thank you, Diane. Over to Andy then, please.

Busch: So, thinking about the second term and its relation to the to the election of 1984, there were things that Reagan got through in his second, there were problems – obviously Iran Contra is probably the biggest problem that he faced. There were other problems. There were a lot of diplomatic successes, but there were some domestic successes that we haven't really talked about, one of them being the Tax Reform Act in 1986, which was really a bipartisan measure, but it as Iwan mentioned, it preserved the basic idea of low individual tax rates. But it also flattened the tax system quite a bit, so the top rate was only 28%. That was something Reagan had wanted; he had been talking about it in the election. He offloaded it to the Treasury Department and then Congress to work it out, but the end product was something that he found very amenable to his overall goals.

There was also a welfare reform measure that passed when he was almost out of office in 1988 and it did not go as far, he wanted to go, but it in some ways set a precedent for the much more serious welfare reform in 1996. So, there were some things that happened, but I absolutely agree that it was not like the first term. It was not like the first year certainly. I think what a lot of folks who have looked at this would argue, and I don't think they're wrong, is that part of this had to do with the way he ran his 1984 campaign. Precisely because it was a very retrospective campaign and

the folks running his campaign were really hoping for a 50-state sweep. The way to do it was Morning in America. It was not a more hard-nosed kind of drive to add seats in Congress. On the basis of a more specific kind of programme for the second term, and so Republicans did gain about a dozen seats in the House, which is pretty modest. They actually lost a couple seats in the in the Senate in 1984. So, there was an unchanged Congress, basically and not a whole lot of sense after 1984 that if you were in Congress, you owed a lot to Reagan or that that he could hurt you in any particular way. But a lot of members of Congress feared that after 1980 because there were big coattails in 1980. But after 1984, that sense was not there as much, which helps explain why Republican senators, for example, strayed from Reagan's preferences when it came to some of the budget questions and things like that.

Cooper: Thank you Andy. Just before we bring Elizabeth back in, I was just wondering if any of you, after Elizabeth has spoken, have any thoughts about the Democrats in all this? Did they just simply not understand Reagan? Learn the lessons from 1980? Was it inevitable that they lose since they get Mondale as the nominee, Carter's VP? Was that inevitable? Were they just simply unable to get to grips with any potential weaknesses of Reagan? Elizabeth.

Rees: So just hanging on from Iwan's question, I already touched a little bit on how the first term, Nancy Reagan has some kind of PR problems. Those get ironed out and in terms of the second term looking forwards, I just wanted to point to this idea of a consolidation of her own power by the end. Not necessarily something that's viewed as a good thing always, as a question of how much power is too much power for the first lady to have, which is a really enduring question. She, from 1985 onwards, is pushing for a summit with Soviet leaders and for Reagan to sit down and talk with them. So, she is playing a really key behind the scene roles in terms of that. Obviously when Gorbachev comes to DC in 1987, she organises the social events for that and plays a key role. This is kind of apocryphally summed up by Gromyko saying, "do you know to whisper peace in your husband's ear every night?" And she says, "yeah, and I'll whisper it in yours too." I think that is a real image of this soft power that first ladies have that seem to have just been really shored up under Nancy Reagan. It's usual that at first, they used to have some kind of soft power, but I think it's almost a step that much further. Obviously, this idea that she is like the power behind the throne is really entrenched by the end of the administration, particularly in terms of her role in staffing and personnel decisions. When she has a fall out with Donald Reagan and his book comes out he exposes this idea that she's consulting astrologers in the White House. You can't talk about Nancy Reagan and not talk about Joan Quigley and the astrology connections there. So, I think her status as this Republican queen is really solidified in the second term for good or ill either side. Talking about the Democrats briefly on the flip side of that, Rosalynn Carter re-wore her dress that she wore for the gubernatorial inauguration to her husband's White House inauguration. They were turning the lights off in the White House, and she was seen as this very hardcore working woman, who reorganised the East Wing Office, which is a whole other story. But Nancy Reagan was obviously a very marked difference from that, and I think that Joan Mondale was probably

just tainted by association for a start. Also, she got into a bit of bother in the campaigning because she said that she wasn't going to do teas and do the traditional thing, and then she ended up writing a cookbook because they had to backpedal on that. So, I think Joan Mondale, was facing a very clear choice in terms of different conceptions of American womanhood, and which mother and spouse-in-chief, you wanted in the White House in that election. She said she was going to campaign for the arts, and she was going to further arts as her project in the White House. I wonder if maybe that was because the arts are historically something that first ladies do, and they do go in saying that. But I wonder if by this point that wasn't necessarily enough of a promise of what she was going to do. Then again Nancy Reagan obviously had the foster grandparents programme, and those were entrenched social issues that she was already working on so I'm not too sure on that. Maybe there's a broader discussion to be had here in terms of the decline of the women's movement and the failure to ratify the ERA, which was obviously something that Joan Mondale was well and truly aligned with at that point. So, I think it's a firm rejection of that, certainly. There are people far more qualified to talk about the Democrats, though, so at this point, I'm going to relinquish the floor.

Cooper: Thank you, Elizabeth. You make really interesting, really thoughtful comments about the broader story here about the women's movement and so on. Perhaps ask Anthony, then Andy, then Iwan and, then we will bring this to a close.

Eames: I'll spike the football since we're talking American politics, I'll talk American sports here. I'll spike the football and Elizabeth's comments. I mean 1984 for Democrats is gender gap, gender gap, gender gap, gender gap. In some ways it's similar to 2024 in that regard, where gender gap politics put up some blinders on Democrats heading into the election.

They really think the advantage is with women, obviously the Ferraro ticket is key to that.

But one of the reasons I would argue that the gender gap becomes so prominent in democratic strategists in mind is because they're searching for ways to rebuild a coalition that's collapsed.

In American politics you see this flux where one party seems to have tightly coupled its coalition or it's big tent and the other party's big tent or coalition seems to be kind of unravelling or unwinding or loosening. So, for Democrats in the 1980s, you see Catholics starting to increasingly move toward Reagan. You see the Labour vote shift toward Reagan in a way that was surprising. Andy surely has something to say on this given his his recent, very good book on the PATCO (Professional Air Traffic Controller) strike. You see, Hispanics aren't that big of a population group, Latinos aren't that big of a population group in the United States in the 1980s, certainly as they are now. But even Latinos vote for Reagan in fairly high numbers and percentages as opposed to Democrats. Part of that, again, is the Democrats don't know what their coalition is. So, if we centre it within the Nuclear Freeze Movement, for example, which is certainly the area where the Democrats have the most stock organising and grassroots muscle, you have odd bedfellows with the women's

movement and the Catholic Church which had previously been lined up on opposite ends on Roe V Wade and on the abortion issue. Labor, you have people like Lane Kirkland, head of the AFL-CIO (The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organisations). A real staunch cold warrior actively suppressing some more political activities from labour unions, who want to be more aggressively in support of anti-nuclear or peace movement attacks on Reagan's record during the campaign. This coalition doesn't have a reason for being yet. It doesn't have a purpose yet, and perhaps one of the biggest indicators of this is Jesse Jackson's run for the presidency in the 1980s. He sees this opportunity to seize and realise a new Democratic Party in a way that even though he's not the first African American to run for president, in a way that I think African Americans hadn't before. I'll yield then of course to Iwan.

Cooper: Thank you. Iwan: last words from you, please.

Morgan: Looking at transatlantic connections, it's often remarked that Margaret Thatcher's greatest legacy for British politics was Tony Blair. In other words, New Labour came into being because old Labour had lost electoral appeal in the Thatcher era. I think you can similarly argue that one of Ronald Reagan's most significant legacies is Bill Clinton. The New Democrats of the 1990s contended that a new middle way was required in American politics because New Deal style liberalism had lost its electoral relevance. It is significant, I think, that immediately after the crushing defeat of 1984, moderate Democrats formed the Democratic Leadership Council with the ultimate aim of a new-style Southern centrist being nominated as the party's presidential candidate. That strategy culminates in the 1992 nomination of Bill Clinton, who can take on the Republicans without them tarring him as a big-government liberal.

Cooper: Thank you all. I think that's our time. But thank you all very much for your time. Thank you for your contributions.

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