

What Ronald Reagan Meant To Me

The following was written by Gary D. Halbert:

I must take this opportunity to pay my respects to former President Reagan. It was Ronald Reagan who molded my political ideology and made me a conservative. In 1975 at the age of 23, I attended a Republican political rally in Dallas. I was apolitical until that evening. I don't even know why I went. Then Governor Ronald Reagan spoke for over an hour, and I was mesmerized. I will never forget it. I agreed with everything he said. In that one evening, he made politics an important part of my life.

I consider Ronald Reagan the greatest president of my lifetime. I believe history will agree. The fall of the Soviet Union, the Iron Curtain, the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War, the top tax rate falling from 70% to 28%, his championing of free market economics, etc., etc. These are just a few of the many accomplishments that make up Ronald Reagan's giant legacy. In addition, he was a man of such character, honor, grace and most of all, optimism and a keen sense of humor. He made us all feel better and stronger, about ourselves and about America.

As this is written, the media is in non-stop coverage of Ronald Reagan's life, his presidency, his accomplishments, etc. Almost everything I have seen so far has been fairly to very positive. Even John Kerry, Ted Kennedy and other Democrats have been complimentary to Reagan. Unfortunately, they may be changing as I will discuss below. **Let us not forget that the media and most Democrats despised Ronald Reagan during his eight years as president.**

Not unlike our current president, many in the media considered Reagan to be an intellectual lightweight, and that he just happened to be in the right place at the right time. Wrong on both counts. When Reagan won the presidency, many believed he would ignite a new world war with the Soviets. Wrong again. Instead, he ended the Cold War without firing a single shot. Even after he left office, many in the media refused to acknowledge that fact. Again, they maintain that Reagan just happened to be in the right place at an historic time. They failed to mention the things Reagan said at the time.

In 1981, Reagan told the students and faculty at the University of Notre Dame: ***"The West won't contain communism. It will transcend communism. We will dismiss it as some bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages are even now being written."***

In 1982, Reagan told the British Parliament in London: ***"In an ironic sense, Karl Marx was right. We are witnessing today a great revolutionary crisis. . . . But the crisis is happening not in the free, non-Marxist West, but in the home of Marxism-Leninism, the Soviet Union."*** Reagan added: ***"It is the Soviet Union that runs against the tide of history by denying freedom and human dignity to its citizens"*** and he predicted that if the Western alliance remained strong, it would produce a ***"march of freedom and democracy which will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash-heap of history."***

In March 1983, Reagan gave perhaps his most famous speech - the "Evil Empire" speech - in Orlando at the National Association of Evangelicals convention. He said: ***"So, I urge you to speak out against those who would place the United States in a position of military and moral inferiority. You know, I've always believed that old Screwtape reserved his best efforts for those of you in the church. So, in your discussions of the nuclear freeze proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride -- the temptation of blithely declaring yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil."***

I ask you to resist the attempts of those who would have you withhold your support for our efforts, this administration's efforts, to keep America strong and free, while we negotiate real and verifiable reductions in the world's nuclear arsenals and one day, with God's help, their total elimination.

While America's military strength is important, let me add here that I've always maintained that the struggle now going on for the world will never be decided by bombs or rockets, by armies or military might. The real crisis we face today is a spiritual one; at root, it is a test of moral will and faith.

In 1987, Reagan spoke at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin. He said: ***"In the communist world, we see failure, technological backwardness, declining standards. . . . Even today, the Soviet Union cannot feed itself."*** Thus the ***"inescapable conclusion"*** in his view was that ***"freedom is the victor."***

Then President Reagan spoke perhaps his other most famous words: ***"General Secretary Gorbachev . . . Come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."***

Not long after this, the wall did come tumbling down, and Reagan's prophecies all came true. These were not just results Reagan predicted. He intended the outcome and implemented policies that were aimed at producing it. In the end his objective was achieved. Margaret Thatcher remarked a few years ago that Reagan would go down in history as the man who ***"won the Cold War without firing a shot."***

Yet as noted above, Reagan was denounced for his Cold War policies at the time by the media and many Democrats. They severely criticized him for all of the quotes I have listed above. But now that he is dead, they are praising him. ***They cannot now ignore the great accomplishments of this very popular president, lest they lose all credibility.***

Yet the question is, what will they say of him now that he is buried? There are some who believe that the media and some of the more outspoken Democrats may change their tune after the funeral. Some on the far left began the attacks just after his death (see www.slate.com). Dan Rather and Bill Plante of CBS News were the first out of the network blocks on Monday, June 7th when they tried to link the 9/11 terrorist attacks with the Iran/Contra scandal during the Reagan administration. Plante said: ***"An arms control agreement with the Soviet Union refurbished President Reagan's image, but U.S. efforts to deal with the tough issues in the Middle East went on hold, helping to set the stage for the first Iraq war and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism."*** They just can't help themselves! They hated Reagan just like they hate George W. Bush.

May He Rest In Peace

I am not sad that President Reagan passed away. His disease in effect took him from us a number of years ago. Most of all, I know he is in a better place. Surely, God must be very proud of Ronald Reagan. We owe him a huge debt of gratitude and prayers. I think it is most appropriate to end this discussion of Ronald Reagan, and this newsletter, with what the 40th President said in one of his last major appearances. It was at the Republican national convention in 1988 when he said, ***"I have always believed in you and in what you could accomplish for yourselves and for others. And whatever else history may say about me when I'm gone, I hope it will record that I appealed to your best hopes, not to your worst fears, to your confidence, rather than your doubts."***

He did. What a leader. God rest his soul.