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THE REAGAN PRESIDENCY AFTER SEVEN YEARS

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The Reagan Presidency, 3.17.88

I'm Eugene Lee, Director of the Institute of Governmental Studies. Welcome to the seventh symposium on the Reagan presidency.

We first met either in this room or across the hall, in February 1981, only seven weeks after the new administration had been in office. Every year but one we have gathered here to discuss the role of this remarkable Californian who moved from actor, lecturer, political campaigner, to governor and president. We've had a great group of panelists to help us in these past sessions. Let me remind you. From the press, Martin Smith of the McLatchey chain, Haynes Johnson, David Hoffman, and Lou Cannon from the Washington Post; Charles McDowell from the Richmond Times Dispatch; Ellen Warren from Knight Ridder; and on all six occasions as tonight, Gerald Lubenow, our colleague from across the Bay but now in London as the London bureau chief of Newsweek. From the academic side we've been joined by Austin Ranney, Jack Buzzell, and tonight Nelson Polsby again.

I'd like to ask how many of you have been to all of these sessions since 1981. Can anybody remember if they've been to all of them. How about four or more? We've got an alumni group here and that's great.

The questions we've asked over the years, and those of you who have been here before will forgive me for repeating this, represent an intriguing glimpse of recent history. It's unfortunate and I only learned late in time that we should have really saved all the answers, taped all these meetings, but I did save the questions. Here are some of the questions. In 1981, Jerry Lubenow, you may remember, "The President is credited with instituting very effective Congressional relations. This was in seven weeks after the administration. How has this been achieved. Can it last? Can President Reagan accomodate the far right. Does he have to?"

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In 1982, we asked Nelson Polsby, "President Reagan has made a restructuring of the federal system the centerpiece of his domestic policy. With important modifications the governors of the states have agreed regardless of party. Will this policy be implemented?"

Then again in 1983 we asked Jack Bunzell, "President Reagan is damned by the Democrats as being overly ideological and by the conservative wing of the GOP as being too flexible, if not a wimp. What can one make of this seeming paradox?"

And then to David Hoffman--remember the year we're talking about is 1983, "William Safire predicts that Reagan will decide later this year to step down, that actors good and bad know the importance of making an exit. In your opinion, will he or won't he?"

And we asked Jerry Lubenow a follow-up. "Assuming he retires, how do you rank the chances of Baker, Bush, and Kemp in gaining the nomination in 1984?"

A year later we asked Jerry, "What specifically can we learn about this administration from its handling of the Grenada and the Korean airliner incidents?"

And we asked Nelson, "You stated that there is little evidence that Ronald Reagan was an especially attractive candidate in 1980, that his election really resulted from Carter disaffection. How do you do assess the President as a candidate in 1984? Vis-a-is Reagan, how do you look tonight at the respective strengths and weaknesses of the Democratic candidates, especially Mondale, Hart, and Glenn? And what about Kennedy?"

"In 1986: The subject of terrorism dominated last night's Presidential news conference. How do you assess the administration's approach toward Khadafi?"

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"Yesterday's papers reported that "Check it with George" referring to George Bush, is a line being heard increasingly around the White House. Whose idea is this and what does it mean?"

And then last year. "What can we anticipate in the months ahead from the Iran-Contra crisis? Investigations are going ahead by the House, the Senate, the independent counsel. Will any good come out of all of this?"

To Charlie McDowell, that delight from the Richmond Times Dispatch, "A few days ago the Los Angeles Times reported that 46% of the public believe the President is in control, 48% think he is losing control, but 80% like him personally, and 52% approve of his job performance. What are we to make of these paradoxical figures?"

Well tonight we've got a wonderful panel to continue this ongoing discussion that we've had for seven years. It's sort of *deja-vu*, the calendar sort of stops when you go from one year to the next and it hardly seems this much time has elapsed. I'm not going to introduce the panel. You know them all. You'll know them as we get to them, but they represent collectively over 125 years of professional writing and personal scholarship about American politics representing such distinguished journals as Newsweek, the Wall Street Journal, the Congressional Quarterly, the California Poll. The last time I looked, Merv, the number on the California Poll was approaching number 1500. That's a lot of polls, a lot of articles in Newsweek, a lot of articles in the Wall Street Journal and Congressional Quarterly, and when I tell you that my colleague Nelson has published 17 books, that's a lot of words that our panel has gone through over the years. We hope that from these words we can distill some wisdom tonight about the events of 1987, a look back at the Reagan presidency and, before we're through tonight, a look at 1988, where we're going

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in the months and years ahead.

We're going to follow the same pattern we've used before. I'm going to pose questions to one of the panelists and then invite others to comment if they so wish. We're going to try to move this along in the next hour and complete a half a dozen questions or themes during the next hour, take a two minute stretch, and then invite you--the audience--to participate in a discussion for the second hour, closing promptly at 10 p.m.

The first question I want to ask is to our very distinguished panelist who's traveled in the last 24 hours from Washington, where she was in the White House briefing room as late as midnight last night, Washington time, Ellen Hume. You've been traveling all over the United States in recent weeks. How would you assess the mood of the country concerning the Reagan presidency? Age aside, if Ronald Reagan was running today, would he win the election in November? Ellen?

Hume: Good question. Actually he is winning the GOP nomination. All the exit polls show, the focus groups I've done show that George Bush is doing very well because Ronald Reagan is still enormously popular, and I think all of that is up for grabs in November. I don't think anyone can really answer tonight, especially with the fast moving events. It is very hard to measure whether these indictments will mean the Iran-Contra scandal finally sticks to this administration. Perhaps George Bush's role will be fleshed out more if we do have these trials, if they do go forward. Also, I'm not sure how the troops going into Honduras will affect the general election. But certainly so far Ronald Reagan to me has been the big surprise of this election year. He is still enormously popular. We Wall Street Journal people always look at the numbers. Right? Follow the numbers. I think we learned that from the

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Washington Post actually. The misery index is down from 20.6, remember that's inflation and unemployment together, to 9.9 and that's from the early days of his presidency until now. I think that's a major factor. So I think that as of today, if you want me to answer your question, Ronald Reagan is doing extremely well in the Republican party, but could end up being the major liability in the fall.

Lee: Merv, today I went back and reviewed your polls over the past seven years. The popularity of the President has gone up and down, the percentage of people who rate him good or excellent has gone as low as 40 and I think as high as 65. What's your assessment of the public attitude toward Ronald Reagan as he approaches now his final year in office?

Field: Well the speculation as recently as last year was that Ronald Reagan would be a very weak, lame duck President. I would say that Reagan's lame duckedness is stronger than most two term presidents. He's doing better now in his eighth year than Dwight Eisenhower did in his eighth year. He's still very popular. There is still this fascinating separation between the public's perception of Reagan the man and his policies, and the gap seems to widen. He's still enormously popular, and as Ellen says he's been instrumental in the virtual sweep that George Bush has had in the primary states.

Lee: Any of the rest of panel want to comment on this, the mood of the country, the mood about the Reagan Presidency? Anybody have a comment?

Lubenow: I can't comment on the mood of the country having been gone for the last five months. But at this point, I think in Europe looking at Reagan after seven years of office they still are tremendously befuddled by how this country could ever have elected him to begin with. I was speaking to a group recently and I after I made this short speech, someone got up and the first I

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got was "How on earth could America elect someone like Ronald Reagan?" And this was a group of Americans abroad. It's worse with the Europeans.

Lee: Is there such a thing as a European attitude, Jerry? Or is that an overgeneralization about American politics generally. What do they think about the American political system?

Lubenow: Well, I think there's a feeling about Reagan in particular. There was a political cartoon that was done shortly after he took office and it showed Reagan gathering some of his advisors around him and he said, "Now we're going to talk about Europe." And that's spelled "Yoorp." I think they still have this sense that that's about the depth of his understanding of things. I think that it hasn't improved much over the years. I think that his performance a Raykjavik enhanced that where there was a very serious concern in Europe that he was selling out the interests of the Alliance without really thinking about what it was that he was doing, that he's not someone who considers things deeply which is something that Europeans tend to do. They value professionalism. They value positions which are carefully thought out and then approached in a very professional manner, and they feel that Reagan is not in that mode.

Ehrenhalt: I was going to say that to some extent Reagan's popularity in the polls has depended over the years on whether you give people two choices or four choices. If you say, "Do you generally approve or do you generally disapprove?" Reagan gets good approval ratings. If you look at the polls in which people get a choice between one, two, three and four, Reagan's ones are not particularly high for an American president. Which leads me to believe that over most of the eight years Reagan has been popular in reaction to people's instinctive distrust of the Democratic party and its capacity for leadership

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at the national level, which to me has been true over the last 20 years. To some extent Reagan's popularity has been exaggerated at least in the sense that the intensity is concentrated within a fairly small block. That is masked by the fact that when you ask people "yes" or "no," most of them give you a "yes" and Reagan comes out very well. Otherwise, I don't know that he compares all that highly with past presidents. Merv, you might have something?

Field: Unfortunately, I disagree. I'm not here as a Reagan advocate. You know that I'm non-partisan, an independent and I'm a prisoner of data, and I always reserve the right for the next set of data to change my mind. But in respect to Reagan's position, if you take even a three point scale, a four point scale, a five point scale, or whatever, take the ratio of that part of the scale that would be favorable versus that which would be unfavorable, he's doing much better than Jimmy Carter, much better than Richard Nixon, much better than Lyndon Johnson and Gerald Ford. The one aspect to Ronald Reagan's popularity is that the American public wants to like their president. It's the most personal vote that they have, it's the closest tie that they really have with any elected person. They like Ronald Reagan, they didn't like Jimmy Carter, they didn't like Gerald Ford, they didn't like Richard Nixon, they didn't like Lyndon Johnson. Ronald Reagan is the first president that has been able to tap the genuine adoration of a lot of people. Perhaps not here, but if you're talking about the American public, the California public, you have to face reality.

Lee: Ellen, you want to get in on this?

Hume: I just wanted to add one addendum. I am a little jet-lagged, and I forgot to mention this earlier but I think what might be helping President Reagan is that we in the press tried but we never found the smoking gun on the

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Iran-Contra affair and I think we finally figured out that Ollie North sold it to Iran. Lee: Nelson I want to ask you about the Bork hearings. They at times seemed to be highly principled discussions of constitutional theory by our academic colleague, but they also revealed partisanship at its most vitriolic. I was reading about the White House lobbyist, retained by the White House to advance the Bork candidacy before the Senate. He said, "The ferocity of the opposition and the supporters is remarkable. I've never seen anything like it." Is this a departure in presidential-congressional relations? Is this a footnote in history or is it a new trend?

Polsby: It's certainly going to be a footnote, all right, because the Bork hearings, I suppose, were the most bitterly contested of any since Brandeis in 1916. The way I heard it, the Reagan administration didn't wake up to the fact that they had a real tough battle on their hands until it was too late. That suggested their management of Congressional relations has not been picture-perfect and that they may have been getting more credit than they deserved for those three great votes in 1981 on budgetary reconciliation and income tax thereafter. I haven't any idea whether the Bork nomination was winnable in the end, but it seemed to me that by the time they were ready to have hearings, which were somewhat delayed until opposition to Bork could build out in the country, that the Bork nomination was in very deep trouble indeed. It had to do in part with the timing, that is with the delay, in part with the fact that they were nearing the end of an administration; and something that was on the minds of a fair number of Democrats was the fact that the Abe Fortas Chief Justice nomination had been put on ice because it was so close to the end. This was considerably earlier in the final stages of a lame-duck administration but it seemed to me that that was a lame duck kind of thing.

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Lee: Ellen, has this affected in any permanent way the relationships between the President and Congress in either this administration or future ones?

Hume: I agree very much with what Nelson said. The way the Bork nomination played out had to do with an erosion in the relationship between the President and Congress that had been going on. The Contra battle had something to do with it. Certainly the Senate going back to the Democrats had everything to do with it. The Bork nomination was interesting because it was the real resurgence of the Democratic to the left end of the spectrum that had been really demoralized ever since 1980. What was interesting is they really got their act together and poured all their resources into this one fight. Many of you reading about these affairs have noticed the fight was led by Norman Lear's People for American Way, which has emerged as a very interesting lobbying group in Washington, and they were very effective.

Lee: Do you see this as a dangerous precedent in the selection of appellate justices or not?

Hume: I think that the public indicated to its representatives in the Senate that they weren't ready to move the Court far to the right. I think there was a lot of debate about this. There may have been some misrepresentations during the process, which is normal in every ideological fight in Washington, but I remember that there were polls taken in the South and phone calls coming into the Southern senators offices that showed that the public really didn't like Bork. The way he came across on television didn't win them over. They were used to the Ollie North standard, and he just didn't quite make it. Unfortunately, it may have had something to do with his beard. He did not help himself in that televised presentation. I remember very well that it came after the Ollie North success which stunned the White House. They

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hadn't been quite sure that North would come across that well and they very mistakenly anticipated that Bork would come across very, very well on television. As Nelson very ably put it, they didn't anticipate that the battle would be joined so effectively by their opponents. In the end I really think that the people who cared about the issue registered with their senators and the public just wasn't pushing for Bork.

Field: Before I think anyone takes too much comfort from the set back that Reagan had in attempting to appoint a hardline conservative either in Bork or in Ginsburg, I think that it should be pointed out that no matter what values you put on it one of Reagan's more lasting legacies is the change that he's made in the ideology of the courts. He's gone very far in shaping the courts in his own conservative image. He's appointed more than 350 lifetime judicial judges, including about half of the active Federal district judges. He's appointed younger conservative judges that are going to be with us into the next century.

Ehrenhalt: If you go beyond the tactical successes and failures of the Bork nomination, I'm struck by that whole episode seems almost the end of era, at least a short era in American politics. 1988 is roughly 20 years after it first became clear that you could win votes in American politics and succeed by taking a hardline position on crime a la George Wallace, Barry Goldwater in 1964, Ronald Reagan in 1966. Those were the ingredients of political success. I think it was somewhat reflexively assumed by Republicans that that was still a politically successful formula in 1987; but when John Breaux went back to Louisiana or Richard Shelby to Alabama and talked to their constituents and found that the politically correct move, leave aside the merits of the issue, was to oppose Bork, then I think something very important has changed in

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American politics. The balance of political influence is not where it was 20 years ago or ten years ago or even five, but the balance of political influence is in favor of the opponents of Bork. Whether that pays dividends for the Democrats in 1988, I don't know, but clearly something has changed and the Bork hearings were clear testimony about it.

Lee: Alan, my 1981 question, after seven weeks in office, gave the Reagan administration very high marks in White House-Congressional relationships. How would you assess the relationships in the last couple of years? Has Baker made a difference? Has the shift from Tip O'Neil to Jim Wright made a difference? I noticed in a column this week that the President vetoed only three bills in 1987, which is somewhat of a record, certainly at the low end. How do you assess White House-Congressional relationships? How do you rank the administration on this front?

Ehrenhalt: I think Congressional relations is an effect rather than a cause. The White House wins on something important, and you assume they won it because they've got brilliant Congressional relations. Usually that is a result of something larger that is going on politically. By 1981 it would have been hard for the Reagan administration not to have good Congressional relations, because the President could go on television and had the support of the country for most of the things he was doing. In the wake of the 1986 election and Reykjavik and the Iran-Contra affair it would have been hard for him to have good Congressional relations, leave aside the fact that he hardly had any agenda in domestic politics to have good Congressional relations about. If you want to know what sort of Congressional relations a Republican administration will have, look at the number of Republicans in the House. If it's over 185 or 190, the Republicans will do fine because they can make common

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cause with Democrats and win some votes. If it dips much below that to 170, 175, they aren't going to win very often and then stories will be written saying how terrible their Congressional relations are, but it seems to me that those things are functions of much larger events and political alignments in the society. I think the best display of their, I don't know if it's skill but success, was the fact that in the second administration they could get a tax reform bill passed or at least participate in the passage of a tax reform bill at a point where they had no special political clout, certainly not on that issue. Since 1986 they've hardly had any agenda, so it's hard to measure what their Congressional relations are like. I suppose that the nuclear arms treaty in some way is a test of that, but there's a natural history to Congressional relations in which administrations do well in the beginning, gradually lose power; if they get to the end of a two-term period then they're just not going to have much oomph left. On the other hand, they're usually not asking for much at that point so it becomes a moot issue as you reach the eighth year of a two term presidency.

Lee: Nelson, Alan is suggesting the organization of the White House or its skill is relatively, unimportant or of secondary importance. Do you have a comment on this?

Polsby: Yes, I think he's got it about right. Just looking at the organization of the White House, it was pretty clear that they were doing extremely well, particularly in contrast with Jimmy Carter early in the administration, when they got every single vote that they could possibly have gotten in the House of Representatives on those three big votes in 1981. Of course it helped that the President had just been shot at and was in the hospital. It also helped that he had some people who knew their jobs. For the

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rest of the first administration as James Baker got more and more power in the White House and managed it extremely well, legislative power was being handled quite well with a very limited agenda. I think that's right.

On the second term one of the first things that happened you may recall was that the Secretary of Treasury and the Chief of Staff of the White House exchange jobs, mentioning that fact to the President the day before it was announced.

Lubenow: They had to mention it to him or he wouldn't have noticed.

Polsby: Anyway, James Baker's successor as Chief of Staff was someone who was not as good at handling apparently everything as well as Baker did. The President's Congressional relations suffered. It was also the case, of course, that the Senate changed hands, and both the House and the Senate were in Democratic hands. After a while, for reasons that we all read about in the newspaper, Donald Regan's tenure as Chief of Staff came to an abrupt end. They ran in Howard Baker who has been playing catch-up ball ever since. I think the reason Howard Baker's been playing catch-up ball is because of the wider trends that Alan mentioned, and that's the way it goes. It's a rollercoaster in there.

Lee: Do you want to make some comment about the shift from Tip O'Neil to Jim Wright. Is that something you've been following?

Hume: It's fascinating to see how much trouble the Speaker of the House can get into how quickly. Tip, of course, was an institution and an emotional Democrat. Jim Wright is much more of the moderate, sort of the Texas-South tradition and doesn't come from the same kind of liberal identification that Tip did. One of the first things that Wright did when he came out was he said, "Well, we're all going to have to raise taxes." This sounded to an awful lot of Democrats like Mondale all over again, "disaster city." Since then, I think

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Wright has had a very, very hard time forging a really cohesive Democratic party on the hill. He's got all the advantages right now. Reagan is very much a lame duck, not considered a factor in Democratic policy very much anymore, and why can't Wright and his Democrats therefore come forward with something that the party stands for? They've had a heck of a time. Part of it is the Democratic party itself doesn't seem to really know what it stands for anymore. But part of it is that Wright has had a little bit of a rocky beginning.

Lee: I want to shift gears to 1988. Merv Fields, you've followed presidential politics for many years and the 1988 race for many months. I looked at the February 1987 poll. You reported that four persons, that California Democrats said they were inclined to vote for were Hart, Kennedy, Cuomo, and Iacocca. Clearly things have changed. In both parties what's been the biggest surprise to date and, if it isn't a semantic contradiction, can we predict any surprises to come?

Field: Gary Hart was odds on favorite, and some people might have even argued that he had a lock on the nomination. You had Joe Biden as a possibility. Kennedy was always thought of as a possibility. Dukakis had just announced at the time. Gebhardt was working behind the scenes; he's not well known now and he was even less well known then. The biggest surprise is that the people that looked as if they would be running well ahead of the pack are no longer in the race. Last year at this time the so-called inside politics thought that Pat Robertson's drive would be much stronger than it has been; it's one that has fizzled. Not only has it fizzled, but it was overblown by events. Not to upbraid or excoriate the media, I think that Pat Robertson was never the factor that the headlines made him out to be. The fact that Jack Kemp was not the alternative on the conservative side and that Bob Dole has run such an atrocious

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campaign for someone who's supposed to be a recognized political leader, I'd say those are the surprises.

Lee: Jerry, is there a European perception of our the nomination process? Do they look at it with amazement or befuddlement or horror or what?

Lubenow: I think a combination of those things. I have been doing a lot of radio and television things trying to explain this process, and it's interesting the level from which you have to start. I have a friend who's with the Baltimore Sun who did one of these shows for the BBC the other day, and he was sort of dumbfounded when the first question that the interviewer asked him was "Why is it that some states have primaries and some state have caucuses?" I was struck by the fascination that exists. It's very interesting to look at the amount of coverage that the American campaign is getting in the British press. Most of the papers, most of the quality papers, anyway, have two people, two reporters travelling full-time with the candidates. Some of them tend to drift off and get lost. One of them went up to Maine at some point and figured out that he was in the wrong place so wrote a long column about the fact that there was nobody there campaigning. I have some of my favorite clips, which I will give you just very quickly. This was from an editorial. the Evening Standard, which gives you some sense of their attitude about the American process: "Today (this was Iowa speaks), Mr. George Bush, Vice-President and aspiring President of the United States is not a happy man. In the quaint electoral process for choosing the next leader of the free world a handful of Republican activists in the party caucuses of the hick state of Iowa placed him third behind Pat Robertson, a rightward leaning television Bible thumper."

Then we have the Sunday Times. The Sunday Times tends to dramatize things a bit more. Their lead after the New Hampshire said, "Last Tuesday George Bush

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looked political death in the face and death blinked."

When Haig bowed out the International Herald Tribune did a rather small story on page three. Most of the British papers ran it on page one with huge headlines. There Europeans know Haig and like him. He's their kind of guy. The lead in the Guardian story said that, "General Alexander Haig, the former U.S. Secretary of State launched one of the most effective strikes against a struggling front runner in the history of presidential primaries yesterday when he coupled his withdrawal from the White House race with a calculated assault on the ability of the Vice-President George Bush." We all know what effect that had.

My favorite comment on it was a very short letter to the editor which says, "The more I see on television of the presidential election race in America, the more I thank God I live under a monarchy."

Lee: This is a nice lead into the question I wanted to ask my colleague Nelson Polsby. Those of you who want to do some further reading on the Presidential election process can do no better than to run down to the bookstore and get the seventh edition of Polsby and Wildavsky's Presidential Election Strategies of American Electoral Politics. It's not only a marvelous description but has some very, thoughtful analysis. The analysis I want to share with you and ask Nelson to comment. Nelson and another colleague, Aaron Wildavsky, have expressed great concern with the trend of national politics and I quote, "The balance has been altered in favor of factionalism to the detriment of consensus building," which they hold to be very important in American politics. Nelson, is there anything about the 1988 race that has increased or decreased your concern? Is it better or worse? What's your impression?

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Polsby: By consensus building, we mean a presidential nominating process in which candidates are required to build coalitions of people within their party so that the party comes out of it reasonably united in the general election contest. My view is that the way the rules were written about 20 years ago and have been rewritten since have stripped away those elements in our nomination process which make coalition building a feasible strategy for getting the nomination. This happens disproportionately to hurt the Democratic Party because the Democratic Party has a wider appeal in the population and simply is an umbrella under which more different kinds of people gather. Republicans are more ideologically together, and therefore the selection process which has a lot of elements of disunity in it can nevertheless not hurt the Republicans as much because the Republicans have some ideological cohesion. I think we're seeing some of that. Which is to say the Republicans are willy-nilly getting their act together sooner than the Democrats. The strategy for winning the nomination is perfectly clear. What you must do, what a candidate must do is find a sufficient number of people who will vote for them in state after state to the exclusion of other people, which means negative advertising might help, bad mouthing the other guys might help, and indeed in some cases it's been very effective, and then coming out ahead and then putting those delegates together. That's, I think, more or less the way it's worked in both parties so far. There's been a lot of negativity, a lot of sniping, a lot of bad mouthing, a lot of impression management which has required taking shots at other members of the same party. Sooner or later, they're going to have to put it together, but the later they put it together the more people will feel that the candidates that they ultimately have to choose between are inadequate. The less trust and confidence they will put in the final result. That means

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that the historic role of the political party in bringing people together and making it possible ultimately for someone to govern is less well served by the presidential nominating process that we've got today than the one we had little more than 20 years ago.

Field: In respect to process, I would agree with Nelson. I think that one thing that's occurring in the 1988 race on the Republican side is that Ronald Reagan, whether he has done it deliberately or it's happened by design, has been able to supply some glue between what I see two diverse, conservative elements, the laissez-faire economic conservatives, who want less government intervention, and the moral, religious conservatives, who want a lot of government intervention. He's been able to keep these two factions together. I think now that that entente is dividing. While the Pat Robertson failure may have prevented a larger schism, it's going to be very difficult for any Republican nominee, George Bush, to be able to supply that same kind of welding personality or welding magnetism that Reagan has been able to provide I'd say that the Republicans have a structural weakness that may do them in in November.

Hume: One of the things we were all looking forward to this cycle--I guess maybe I was too optimistic--was that a new generation would be coming of age in both parties. I think a lot of us were kind of interested to see if new ideas would come up. Would liberal and conservatives redefine themselves? Would the Democrats and Republicans stand for something that would be identifiable that we could all say this was a new era? I don't see any of that happening. What's happened is that when you look at the old coalition factors the only one that really emerges is, of course, the Black community. They have really been very strong in supporting Jesse Jackson, who of course has reached out beyond that as well this time. You look at the blue-collar vote, and Gephardt seems

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to be doing well on the Democratic side with that, but it's unclear what's going to happen with Michigan. That's going to be a big showdown to see if Dukakis can woo away some of the blue-collar vote that went with Reagan last time. Bush seems to be doing well at all levels, but that's in comparison to what? I mean his rival Bob Dole is the kind of guy who after New Hampshire when asked a stupid question, which presidents often are so candidates have to get used to it, he was asked, "How do you feel about losing New Hampshire?" He said, "I have a bad cold. Maybe someday you'll have one, too." I mean Bush hasn't really had that bad a time out there. So I don't see this kind of jelling of these different voting blocks. We've talked a lot earlier this year about the character issue in politics. Why is the press nitpicking about this and that model in Miami and so forth. I think one of the reasons is we don't have cutting issues yet, except the Robertson factor, which was a very big issue I found, at least in the South Carolina primary. Mainstream Republican voters really didn't want Robertson, and they really voted against him as much as they did for other things. Except for that, we've found a year when the issues just haven't been that big of a dividing line in either party. So what do you fall back on? Personality. Character. I assume the nominees are going to be Bush and Dukakis. I don't know if that's true, but that seems to be the way it's going and I'm waiting for one of them to emerge with some sort of vision or plan for the future. I don't see anything taking shape yet.

Ehrenhalt: I think if there really were an intense factional dispute on the Democratic side, in an odd sense they might be better off. Factions can fight and then kiss and make up and there's something to bring them together in the end. When you have a group of candidates who represent essentially nothing but their own organizations and ambitions, then they snipe at each

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other, and each of them is in turn discredited. They don't have a whole lot to fall back on, and that's why candidates whose main constituency is based on winning, can see the bubble burst remarkably quickly. Similarly, when they're attacked they can fall very fast. If you go back to a campaign between wets and dries in the 1920s in the Democratic party or whatever, factions can have a way with dealing with each other. But individuals who become discredited turn out to be rather helpless, as I think in some ways Mondale and Gary Hart found out in 1984. In some ways, it's the fact that the Democratic competition no longer represents any real battle between organized factions but simply between ambitious individuals that's the real dangerous element for the party and that makes it so hard for them to put anything together afterwards and to win the election in November.

Lee: I want to come back to the presidency and ask Ellen Hume the following: Steven Ambrose, a biographer of Nixon and Eisenhower and currently the Richard Nixon Scholar at Whittier College, recently wrote in the Los Angeles Times and I quote, "INF (the treaty) is Reagan's greatest achievement in foreign policy, the one for which if there is a follow-up in further reductions he will be praised in history. He came into office as a man who had been scathing in his criticisms of both detente and SALT II. He could well be leaving as the man who finally turned around the nuclear arms race. He ran in 1980 as the most hawkish candidate since Barry Goldwater, wanting to take the offensive against communism around the world. Now seven years later, he is in sight of establishing the all-time cold war record for sustained peace. With his rhetoric of being a hawk and his record as a peacemaker we must raise the question 'Has he been fooling us all these seven years.'" What do you think will be the Reagan heritage in international affairs?

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Hume: On U.S.- Soviet relations and in some other areas, President Reagan has really been a surprise. We've been fooled. It was Nixon who went to China. President Reagan signs a treaty with the Soviets which probably will pass without too much amendment, although probably a lot of sturm and drang in the Senate, which will actually reduce the number of nuclear weapons. This is an amazing development. President Reagan is also extremely intent on going to Moscow at the end of May. The dates are unofficial but probably the last week in May he'll be in Moscow, barring major problems. We thought he'd be the President who'd get tough on terrorism. What did he do? He ransomed the hostages. He did exactly the thing he said he wouldn't do. OK. Let's look to the Federal government. He was going to be the President who would pare back the Federal government. Well the number of Federal workers has increased by about two percent. There has been a drawing back in some of the domestic issue work force, but there's been a 12% increase in military personnel so that has offset it. We now have a larger Federal work force. He said he was going to balance the budget. I don't have to tell you about what happened there. He does blame Congress for that, and certainly Congress does approve spending bills. But there has been a study by Ben Friedman at Harvard which shows that actually the amount of money that Congress appropriated beyond the Reagan proposals is not a large share of that. So it's really not fair for him to blame Congress entirely for the deficit. One other area that I think is very interesting is that President Reagan came in saying he wanted to deregulate. He wanted to get the government off our backs and get rid of all this red tape and what happened very early on was as the New York Times editorialized, he put some foxes in charge of some chicken coops and what we see is now a new consensus building for re-regulation in some areas, not just in areas he really

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didn't have anything to do with. The airline industry, he didn't deregulate; that happened under Jimmy Carter. And there is a new sense we need to have more government vigilance over that. But in other areas, such as environmental toxics, we see that the whole EPA legacy that Reagan tried to put in there backfired. One of the things that they didn't do that they might have done was they didn't ever go after the legislative underpinnings of those laws. Instead, they just tried to mandate it through the executive branch, and as a result the courts overturned them over and over again. So I think he's been a surprising president.

Lee: Let me follow-up with a general line. This will be our last question before we turn to the audience. Just one year ago almost to the day, I asked each of the panel to predict what would be the enduring legacy of the Reagan administration that historians would note. The answers given a year ago are interesting. Charlie McDowell said the restoration of the presidency with the lessons learned that we cannot operate a government with people whose theme is anti-politics. Those of you who were here last year remember how much Charlie McDowell praised the replacement of Mr. Regan by Mr. Baker. The return of politics to politicians which he thought was terribly important and a terribly important step. Jerry Lubenow said a lot of politicians will be reevaluating the importance of how they are viewed as individuals, their individual state. Ellen Warren of Knight-Ridder said, although tempered by the Iran-Contra scandal, the legacy will be that Reagan enabled us to feel good about ourselves again. And Austin Ranney, our colleague in Political Science said it depends on what happens as a result of the deficit. If you tell me what the deficit is going to do over the next ten years, I can tell you what the historians will be writing. One year later can we get a better fix on this question. What

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will be the Reagan legacy that historians will write about?

Field: Well I think it's going to be mixed. It's difficult to ignore the deficit, the budget deficit and the trade deficit, If you just listen to the doomsayers, the economic doomsayers, it's been a horrible legacy that all of us and our children will pay for and, it's something phenomenal. If that comes to pass, then it's going to be a case of where the Reagan administration is going to be looked at in a very negative light; how could this individual who didn't seem to have his hand on the tiller get us into this kind of situation. On the positive side, I'd say that whether you like him or not, has changed the view that we had before that the presidency was too big a job for any one man. It's one of these phenomenal things. We all know him. We all can laugh at his lapses, he's ineffectual, he's sleeping, he has to have cue cards to say good morning to somebody. But on the other hand, what you've seen a big change. He has at least delivered on his campaign promise in 1976 and 1980. He wanted to lower taxes. He said he was going to whip inflation. He wanted a stronger military. And he's achieved that. The big question is at what price?

Polsby: It occurs to me that there is a problem with the question. Take the way historians have evaluated Dwight D. Eisenhower. One generation of historians said one thing and another generation has said something different. I think that's likely to be...that happens with a lot of presidents. That is, sometimes they say one thing and sometimes they say another thing. And I dare say that Reagan will have the same thing. At some point, people are going to admire Grandpa Sunshine and say that he certainly must have been a wonderful president because look how popular he was his last two years in office. At another point people are going to say, "Well on the other hand he swept a lot of things under the rug with the deficit" and so forth. Some people are going

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to say at some point, "It is true that the military budget was very greatly beefed up under Reagan just the way it was heading under Jimmy Carter" and somebody else is going to say, "Ah, yes, but he never delivered anything to the people who were most fervently for him, excepting inflammatory rhetoric." That is to say, he really didn't do anything about those social issues where he was making extravagant promises. Some people are going to say, "Isn't it a pity that he didn't do something early on about arms control." Other people are going to say, "Yes, but he got Gorbachev into the Kremlin and that meant that there was somebody on the other side for him to talk with." I mean, we could say that the great event of the Eisenhower administration was Eisenhower's achievement of the death of Stalin in 1953. I think Reagan had a little luck on that side, too. All the members of his generation who were running the Kremlin died off.

Ehrenhalt: I want to underscore what Merv said. If we were having this discussion eight years ago about the presidency, there would be a lot of talk about the system simply making it impossible for a president to come into office, establish a program and have lots of it enacted. There would be discussion of a parliamentary system and how we would need to make basic structural changes in order for a president to govern. Whether or not you think Reagan governed well, the fact remains he arrived in office in 1981 set out to do certain things and basically did them, basically setting to rest the contention of the preceding four years that no president could do anything, which turns out to be a contention related more to Jimmy Carter's failings, his personal failing, I think, than to the inability of the system to function. In the long-term historical sense, as I said in the beginning, Ronald Reagan came to office not at the beginning of an era in American politics but at the

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climax of an era in which for over more than a decade millions of middle-class, white Americans came to feel that the majority party in the country, the Democratic party, was taxing them to provide benefits for somebody else. Reagan began playing upon this theme in the mid-1960s in California. It was the basis of his political career and his election as president. It made him in many ways a politically successful president, and I think his era coincides with the end of that feeling and those ideas as the dominant strain in American politics. But Reagan represented that he was not the beginning of an era, but the middle of an era, and he brought it to what was to him at least a politically successful conclusion.

Lubenow: I think that to some extent Reagan's legacy will be a result of unintended successes. He came in and meant to do something about the economy and did, but the jury is still out on that and what the long-term impact of that is likely to be. If you look at what he accomplished in terms of social spending, I think that over the long run the sort of trend lines under Carter would have gone the same way. They had to beef up defense spending, and they would have had to get the money from somewhere, and they probably would have cut back on welfare spending. That feeling was there, and I think they would have responded to it the way any politician would. But what Reagan accomplished in terms of arms control will really have a very significant, long-term impact. Again, it's because of perhaps unintended consequences. When you look at how he did it, when he first proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative, which I think is a crackpot notion and still think is a crackpot notion, but without that we might not have had the arms control agreement. If we get a START agreement largely because Reagan and Nancy are concerned about his role in history, I think you will have fundamental restructuring of the relationship

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between the United States and Europe. You'll start to see some changes in terms of Europe taking more responsibility for their own defense. I don't think there's any European leader now who thinks that there will not be some withdrawal of American troops; in terms of a fundamental relationship, you're going to see a shift there that will go on. Hume: I endorse all of these comments and just want to summarize some points. One of the things that still puzzles me about President Reagan is how far away we got in this presidency from some hard facts and how deeply we drew on our feelings as a nation on some of the myths, some of the deeply held beliefs we have. The welfare queen, that welfare actually causes more problems than it solves. We've been in a kind of seventh inning stretch. We needed a break. We had had all those shortages. Jimmy Carter made a mistake calling it malaise, but we really did have a down period for a while. I think if we all remember how most people felt in 1980 when President Reagan came in, it was a tremendous relief. He'd brought back a sense of pride, a sense that America's finest days aren't over. What we're all seeing now as his legacy is that he did restore sort of a collective sense of faith in where we could go, but he left an enormous amount of unfinished business. He didn't get us there. We see that with the twin deficits. He says inflation is down, but I think most economists believe that hasn't really been conquered until we solve our trade deficit and so forth. His plusses are in the success that he's had as a political leader of really getting people to feel better about America again, some people anyway, many people. The failures are what he's left behind for others to deal with. Because of both of those things, this actor from California is going to be an awfully tough act to follow.

Audience: So much of what we hear regarding the deficit is blamed both on Congress and the President. Why is it that 43 state legislatures have

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granted the governor of the states the line item veto but still refuse to grant the President the line item veto?

Polsby: Item veto. That's an interesting subject. The main cause of deficits in the Federal budget is, of course, the necessity to fight wars and defense budgets. All 50 states of the union have no defense budget and no deficits accruing as a result of defense budgets. So the analogy between state governments and the national government with respect to the prevention of deficits by means of item vetoes is nonsense. That of course doesn't affect the issue whether you'd want an item veto on the merits. My view of the item veto on the merits is this. At present, Congress and the President are required to collaborate on legislation and on appropriations. If the President were given an item veto, it would be possible to enact anything at all, quite confident that the President would through his item veto have to pick up all the political responsibility for the final shape of the budget. It would lead in short to powerlessness and irresponsibility on the part of Congress, which I believe would be a very bad thing. Our Congress is a very unique in the world today, a legislature with real power and real responsibility. The Constitution is organized so as to make sure that that occurs, and I think it would be a terrible blunder on our part, constitutionally, to remove the power and responsibility from Congress. Now, it's part of the President's current litany to holler for an item veto so that he can do something about these terrible deficits, but the fact is he doesn't send a balanced budget up on Capitol Hill. So my view is that a lot of the talk about the item veto is they're just blowing smoke at you.

Ehrenhalt: I tend to think that Nelson is right. It would encourage Congress to do all sorts of things that they are precluded from doing under the

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current system it would be more or less a recipe for mischief, I think, if it were enacted.

Question: Is there a structural deficiency in the Gramm-Rudman procedure?

Hume: The structural deficiency is that it doesn't go after the money. It doesn't go after the entitlements, social security COLAs, politically untouchable, right? And I just don't see that that's really taking us down the road that we need to go if we're really going to tackle the deficit.

Polsby: Gramm-Rudman is politically rather interesting. What happened is this. There are basically four big items that you have to consider if you're serious about fiscal policy. One has to do with taxes. How high taxes are and whether you raise enough money through taxes. One has to do with deficits. How big you want them to be. One has to do with the defense budget and one has to do with entitlements. And then there's all the rest of the expenditures of the government. Basically what happened politically was this. They got into a kind of a political gridlock in which they wouldn't consider raising taxes, they wouldn't consider touching entitlements. The President refused to consider defense budgets. He took that off the table. The only thing left to do in order to start talking politically again was to pull everything else off the table, which was basically what Gramm-Rudman did. Gramm-Rudman was fundamentally a device for making it necessary to start all over again in some kind of serious conversation about fiscal policy.

Hume: And they have a new device. It's this new commission that's been set up to study what to do about the deficit, and all kinds of folks are on it, including Robert Strauss and Iacocca. This is a favorite tactic when there is gridlock in the government, turn it over to a blue ribbon commission. Right? You do that in local government, too, I think. That means that it's sanitized,

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it's politically OK, and the question is will it go the way of the Grace Commission or the Brady Commission on the stock market, which is nowhere, or will they actually come up with something that the next president can say, "Well, I endorsed what the blue ribbon commission did, and therefore I really must raise taxes." You know what David Stockman says. He says it isn't a question of whether you're going to raise taxes, but how.

Question: Jesse Jackson was mentioned in reference to the Black vote. However he was not mentioned in terms of our expectations a year ago, nor in terms of his role in the 1984 race. Why is it that as he gains respect and popularity he increasingly resembles Ralph Ellison's "invisible man?" Do you think the media is involved?

Hume: I studied the Harlem renaissance when I was in college. I wrote my thesis on Claude McKay and I did read the Invisible Man, and I disagree with you. I think Jesse Jackson is very visible. I think that what you're talking about perhaps is whether there is a color barrier. Is that what you're saying?

A Question: What I'm talking about is his portrayal in the media and the tendency not to mention him as a serious candidate.

Hume: He's on the cover on one of the news magazine this week. He is the topic this week. Perhaps we haven't taken him seriously the same way we've taken other candidates. That's a fair criticism. We were all talking about that at dinner. I covered him in 1984, and clearly in 1984 it was a very different candidacy. At that point he was securing his position as the leader of the Black community. He was running for President. That was his goal; that's still his goal. That is what he wants. But what he had to do first was to secure his base. That's what any good politician does. He did that. And now he's moving beyond that base. And to do that he's wearing Wall Street suits

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and trying to reach out to others with some success, but I do think that you're going to see--I've already seen them, but maybe that's because I'm watching pretty closely--articles talking about the other things that are barring him from being the nominee. And it's not just his color, although obviously I think that's the number one problem at this point. It's some of his foreign policy things. He's embraced Yassar Arafat. His whole Farakhan problem with the Jewish community. There are a number of things that another Black candidate down the road isn't going to have as baggage. I think we will very easily have other Black candidates who will be much more likely to be president than Jesse Jackson.

A Question: When the panel was evaluating the Reagan presidency, I didn't hear anyone mention except in passing the Iran-Contra. Is it not possible that this administration may be looked at in history as absolutely one of the most sleaziest, and corrupt core of people from high places leaving under a cloud of suspicion or actually getting indicted? I didn't hear anything about that.

Polsby: It occurs to me that the question just shows you how limited our historical memory can be. Remember the Nixon administration? So at most it seems to me if you'd like to rephrase your question--Isn't this going to go down in history as the second most whatever?--maybe we've got something to talk about.

Hume: Iran-Contra hasn't affected Bush yet because the issue hasn't been joined, but I think come the general election the Democrats are just lying in wait. And as long as Ed Meese is the Attorney General of the land with some of the conflicts that he seems to be embroiled with and when you're going to have ongoing trials from the Iran-Contra affair, I think all of this is probably going to come home to roost if the Democrats are at all able to use these

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issues.

A Question: Who is going to be most successful in courting the Hispanic vote.

Field: My view of that issue is mixed. First, you cannot look at the Hispanic population as an entity and see it as a monolithic block. All you have to do is look at Dade County Hispanics--Cubans versus Hispanics in Mexico and Hispanics in California. Hispanics, like other minority groups, in respect to voting, are underrepresented. I'm only looking at citizens, those who have an opportunity to vote if they want to vote. They're still underrepresented. In this state, for example, about 21% of the population is Hispanic. I'm excluding any estimate of so-called undocumented or illegals. Twenty-one percent of the citizens are Hispanic. The proportion of the Hispanic vote in the 1984, 1986 election is roughly about seven percent of the total. So you can see the drop-off there.

My feeling is that if you talk about Mexican-Americans who are in the voting process, while they have a long cultural tie to Mexico, they are reasonably more assimilated. Once you lay on education on any group, they become different than the root people. So you don't see those differences. Now it happens that Mike Dukakis, a yuppie from Massachusetts, is bilingual and did very well among the Tex-Mex population. It was one of the reasons that he carried Texas. I think Dukakis will do very well in California, not only for that tie but for a lot of other reasons. But George Bush will do very well with the Cuban Hispanics.

A Question: Does Albert Gore have a chance in the Democratic candidacy?

Polsby: It's a free country and I think he's got a chance.

Hume: We don't see where he goes from Super Tuesday. He seems to be one

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of the regional candidates. But I know a lot of people who think he's going to be the vice-presidential nominee under Dukakis.

Ehrenhalt: I can say this safely since nobody can ever prove it wrong. I don't think Gore missed by very much having a real breakthrough on Super Tuesday. I think as it came out very muddled, but he was only two or three states away from getting some momentum. ...I agree actually at the moment that he isn't really going anywhere. He's not come out of the pack, but give him Georgia and Alabama and take Texas or Florida away from Dukakis, we might have had a different situation. It was an interesting strategy by Gore to come in at the point when he did, and I think it came closer to working than any of us will ever be able to establish, and it might well get him the vice-presidency. I agree with that.

Field: If I could add one point, just one quick line. This came from an Eastern pollster who said that he found that the image of Al Gore was it's OK to buy a new car from him but not a used car.

A Question: Is there any chance of Bradley, Nunn, or Cuomo entering the race at some future time?

Hume: The chances of that are really slimming down. One of the reasons is that when they haven't been out there going through this process, the people who have gone through this ordeal are less likely to want to turn over all of that pain and all those delegates to someone who's just going to sort of ride in. That's going to be somewhat unlikely. And also would the Democrats really pick someone who's been untested by the market to go into November? Would they really allow that? I think that that's a dangerous possibility.

Field: When pollsters ask for an inclination to vote, Cuomo gets as high an inclination a vote as any of the leaders. One newspaper polled the several

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hundred Democratic leaders going to Palm Springs this weekend. Without Cuomo on the list, Dukakis is ahead. When Cuomo's on the list, he runs ahead of all others. This is among Democratic leaders in the state. Who would they like to see to be the standard bearer?

Hume: But that's not true nationally.

Field: No, I don't think so. The opportunity for Cuomo has declined and particularly with the stance that he's taken. If you believe he wants to be president but has eschewed going through the primary or caucus for whatever reason, he's running a very "virginal" race. It would be a catastrophe if the Democrats nominate anybody else that's gone through the campaign.

A Question: Why does the press not pursue the President more vigilantly on questions?

Polsby: You can't hear the question. The helicopter's going.

Hume: I always have. I would like to invite you and join me on the White House beat and just take a day. You will ask. You will be nowhere near him. You'll be 25 miles away from him.

A Question: Why do you put up with it?

Hume: Because there are men with guns between me and him.

Lubenow: This question has been asked every year since we've been doing this. The question is not why does the press ignore these wild statements that Reagan makes, but why is it that people don't seem to care when the press reports them? Because the press has reported them time and again, year after year and it does not seem to make any difference to people.

Hume: Let me just add one anecdote, I absolutely respect the question, and I didn't mean to make light of it. It is a frustration to me that I have two kinds of audiences when I give speeches: the critics who say we're too soft

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on Reagan and the critics who say we're too hard on Reagan. There is never a favorable audience. We are not popular people. We people who cover Reagan. But the truth is that President Reagan has tuned into the American public on his own frequency. There is something going on there that we have absolutely no filtering mechanism. We can't change it. It's there. And we tried. And you know last week at Notre Dame he said his famous line, "Win one for the Gippet." And this is true and I'm on your side on this. I turn to my colleagues because I knew that this wasn't going to fit into any economic story that would be running that day in the Wall Street Journal. I called my desk, I said, "Is there any way to get this in? This is kind of weird." And they said, "Well, it just doesn't fit today." I said, "Well, I'll save it for some other time. Like a speech." And I turned to my colleagues there in the press room there at Notre Dame, all my White House colleagues, Sam Donaldson and Bill Plant, and all those guys, and I said, "Did you hear that? 'Win one for the Gippet?'" Some of them said, "Hey, by the way, he sort of slipped and said 'Gippet' but most of them, and this is a fault, had their stories already set up as a nice piece about the Gipper, and they didn't bother to mention that he blew the line. I think that was a terrible mistake. You have a good point.

A Question: To what extent do you think the press intentionally play a role in pushing candidates?

Polsby: I take it that you think the press, being deprived of a horse race on one side, are going to try and create a horse race on the other side. Is that what you think or is that's what's being alleged?

Hume: What you're talking about is a phenomenon we've all seen, and I think it's worthy of questioning. This year throughout this whole campaign in both parties, it seems, the press has alighted on candidate, like a bee on a

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flower and written the heck out of that candidate: it was Babbitt's week, then it was Gephardt's week, now it's Jackson's week, and that this has been a process. Part of the reason for that is that we don't have political parties defining these people for us as they go in. So we've had to kind of start these guys from scratch. Who are these guys? A lot of them aren't really nationally known, and that's why there have been these little boomlets. The unfortunate side is that it does seem to be a pack situation where all of a sudden somebody's hot and somebody else isn't. But I do think that sooner or later it all balances out and everybody has his Andy Warhol 15 minutes.

A Question: Is there a connection between Bush and drugs?

Will Bush be implicated in Iran-Contra?

Polsby: Can I fulminate about that for a moment? One of the absolutely fascinating characteristics of our pattern of attention is how irrelevancies block out relevancies. Take the issue of the authority of a Vice-President of the United States to do anything independently. It's very well settled, it seems to me, that the Vice-President has no such authority and so to concentrate very heavily on the issue of what George Bush did or does as Vice-President makes very little sense indeed. I think, virtually all 30,000 members of the Washington press corp know this, or if they don't know it, they must be covering something other than politics. So it may very well turn out that Bush knew more than he says he knows because vice-presidents sometimes get to hear things, but for Bush to have actually done something on his own in respect to that or anything else during his vice-presidency seems to me very highly improbable indeed. The preoccupation with the off chance that something may drop out of the machine that makes Bush look bad with respect to Iran-Contra is obscuring something else with respect to Bush that I think

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people ought to be paying attention to and are not. Namely, when he occupied positions which do have independent responsibility, what did he do? I think that you will find a complete absence of coverage of that, and I think it's a great pity. It seems to me when the man has responsibility is the time to ask him how he exercised those responsibilities. But when he has no responsibility, it seems silly to be hanging around, waiting for some revelation.

Hume: Nelson, in general I endorse your comments. I covered the Bush campaign in 1980 and we all tried to write about what he had done when he was head of the CIA, what he had done when he was the envoy to Peking, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. You're right. The man has not cast a very large shadow anywhere. But I have to slightly disagree with your point on the Iran-Contra Affair. While I think you're right that we are all aware the Vice-President doesn't have much to do, there are a couple things about George Bush's role in the White House which could be pertinent as the trials unfold. Indeed, McFarlane is expected to be possibly testifying and expanding. I'm not saying I think there's any smoking gun on Bush either. I really don't. But here's what's possible. He headed the Terrorism Task Force for the President. His son, Jeb, headed the Dade County effort to raise money for the Contras and was head of the Republican Party in Dade County, Florida, where there was a lot of fundraising for the Contras. There has been a lot of investigative reporting going on for a long time, ever since the Iran-Contra thing broke to try to tie Bush into any of the illegal activities, to his son, right. To illegal activities.

Polsby: Well lots of luck.

Hume: But all I'm saying is it's still possible. My prediction is not that that necessarily will happen, that Bush will be tainted in any way. But

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just one last thing. Dole will stay in the race, but not as an active campaigner. He can't. But I doubt he will actually drop out and cast his authority to Bush because I think he will be waiting on the off chance that something comes out.

Question: If the Democrats manage to lose another Presidential election what do you think will be the long-term effects on the party?

Ehrenhalt: Back to my horse that I've been beating the whole last hour and a half. I think an era is coming to an end. If it isn't now, it will be soon. If you look at all sorts of issues, not just the ones dealing with the Bork nomination that we talked about but the role of government regulation, there's more sympathy for the sorts of things the Democrats are talking about in however muddled form they may be talking about it. It may be too much to think that they will win in 1988. If they nominate Dukakis and Dukakis cannot carry the South, which I think is a very reasonable supposition, notwithstanding the fact that he won the two Southern primaries. If he cannot win Southern states, then he's not going to be elected president. Any Democrat who can't carry the South has almost no margin for error. So I think it's reasonable to suppose that that hurdle probably can't be overcome. But I think as things change and this era ends, the so-called "new ideas" that have really not developed in the 1988 campaign can be the basis of the Democrats coming to power in a new order of some sort in the next decade. I used to think that the era that began in 1968 would last somehow until the end of the century. Now I think it's coming to an end much more quickly. American values are changing in so many ways. They're much more permissive than they were five years ago, ten years ago, to the point where people are scared of a Republican nominee. A Republican nominee who was too close to Christian fundamentalism would be

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in big trouble in this country in 1988. That may not happen to the Republican party, but I think it signals some changes. We should not assume, even if the Democrats lose this time, that they are somehow doomed in some long-term sense. They remain the majority party in Congress, in state legislatures, in local government, and that is not accidental. I think the Democratic party is not in some way doomed if it loses one more presidential election.

A Question: This morning our headlines are reporting another little military skirmish that the Reagan administration seems to be getting us in to Central America. It had a little bit of luck in the defending of Kuwait and in whatever was happening in protecting medical students at one point. Tell us what the latest is from Washington. What does that mean, moving troops in? Did Honduras ask for them?

Hume: There's a lot of deja vu going on. I was in the press room last night until midnight trying to sort all this out and what kept haunting me and others there was that in March 1986, right before a Contra vote, then-CIA Director Bill Casey said, "The Sandinistas have invaded Honduras. We've got to do something." And we sent helicopters and people down there to ferry the Honduran troops to the front to fight against the Sandinistas who were coming over the border and in what the Iran-Contra investigating committees later found was an exaggeration. It was not an invasion, it was a hot pursuit situation. So when this week we have intelligence reports saying that Contras may have only one or two days left in terms of their food supplies and they may be in their absolute last legs, as a fighting force how can this be that all of a sudden we have exactly the same situation? The credibility is stretched. The Hill, the Congressional leaders are extremely skeptical. Ironically, one intelligence source who's been very true in the past, he's absolutely called

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it when it's been phony and he's called it when it's been true, said that it really was a more serious incursion this time than before. I don't know. I'm not down there in the field. We still need to find out what's happening. Whether or not there was a stronger force coming over the border into Honduras, there's no question the Reagan administration was looking for precisely this opportunity to exploit. Your question about whether Honduras really asked for our help is extremely interesting because the way the whole scenario worked out was we had people from Fort Bragg--I don't know about Fort Ord--already telling their families as of 2'clock in the afternoon yesterday, East Coast time, "I'm sorry I'm going off on a mission". But we didn't have the formal request relayed to the White House from Honduras until 7:45 p.m., East Coast time. Now I don't know the actual sorting out of the facts. I think it will take a couple of days to figure it out.

A Question: Getting back to the 1988 election. What do you think are the chances of George Bush picking Deukmejian as his running mate?

Field: I think someone said at dinner tonight that George Bush might want to do that to add a little charisma to the ticket. But I think it's very unlikely. George Deukmejian does not want to be vice-president. George Deukmejian as a two-term governor does not have that political drive that other governors of large states have, and I'd say it's highly improbable. He may be asked, but if he were to take it I'd be very much surprised.

A Question: What do you think the chances might be of Reagan pardoning either North or Poindexter and would there be any fallout on Bush's campaign if that were to happen.

Polsby: Ford's pardon of Nixon was extremely unpopular. It cost him a tremendous amount. Reagan obviously doesn't have that kind o vulnerability.

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So whether it would carry over, I have no idea.

Hume: I think it would be a mistake. I think the Bush people are not pushing for that at this point. Although North and Poindexter are close to Bush and he had them both at his Christmas party this year.

Question: Jesse Jackson is four delegates behind Michael Dukakis. He's fairly well established himself as a force to be reckoned with at the Democratic Convention. Now, the truth of the matter is he's probably not electable, starting out that he's Black but for other reasons and although he says that he's going for the nomination, people have asked him what he's going to ask for in return for his support. What do you see as his demands? Could he possibly demand the vice-president's nomination and would that help or hurt the Democratic ticket?

Field: I don't think Jesse Jackson wants a job. He doesn't want to be Vice-President and I don't think in his heart he believes that he can really get the nomination for the presidency. First, to go back to the premise that he's four delegates behind Mike Dukakis, in respect to the degree to which he has collected delegates to date, that will subside from here on out. He will still have the delegates that he has. He will add some increments, but when you start looking at the other states and look how he has acquired his delegates--for example the delegates in South Carolina where he had about a 45,000 turnout of which almost half was his basic constituency--he's not going to have those kinds of states. He will pull some delegates in Congressional districts in New York and California. He did very well four years ago. He got 20% of the vote, of which about 14 points were Black, six points were not Black. He could conceivably do a little better this time but given the fact that even though the Democrats have very, I'd say, reasonable rules, a proportional

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representation within Congressional districts, I would see his ranking in the delegate total, while it will increase, is going to drop. The distance between whoever is at first and Jackson will widen.

A Question: This is for the gentleman from Newsweek. When we bombed Libya, essentially everyone in Europe except Mrs. Thatcher was against us. Do you think INF has reversed that?

Lubenow: I don't think so. Part of that derived from a special relationship that Thatcher and Reagan have but also because of Thatcher's position on terrorism. She's been very, strong, very firm that you do not deal with terrorists and that when you do get a situation such as that you deal with it very firmly. I don't think it would change it.

A Question: This is also for Mr. Lubenow. Has the European press adopted this view of the electoral process, the Theodore White view of turning it into a horse race, focusing too much on who's going to win to the detriment of looking at the issues?

Lubenow: I think that part of the process that I referred to earlier is that there is not a great deal of understanding about the process itself, so that what you do focus on is who's ahead, who's winning, what the percentage is. The Europeans are very interested in polling. They love to have numbers. In the British elections it seems that there's polling that's done three times a week and the amount of polling condensed into that very short time is incredible compared to American races.

A Question: What is the Gippert's legacy to civil rights?

Hume: Oh boy. You want to get me in trouble, right? I think the fact that he takes the conservative line which is that affirmative action is a negative. This administration has consistently been on the side of overturning

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those things. They fought the extension of the Voting Rights Act. That's going to be something that the Democratic party will draw on for a long time to come.

A Question: Does the INF treaty necessarily tie into the Reagan legacy. I'm wondering if this is really an achievement on the part of Reagan or in spite of Reagan?

Hume: Oh, no. You have to give President Reagan credit for this. I think it's extraordinary that a man that had called the Russians the "evil empire" and really believes that we are in a Manichean struggle of good versus evil, has come this far. And truly I don't know anyone who thinks it's just people manipulating him. This is something that he truly has exerted leadership on in the White House and it's true that Mrs. Reagan cares about this a lot too.

Lee: The 1981 article I quoted to you earlier cited the address, State of the Union address, in which Reagan mentioned arms limitation as an important part of what he wanted to do in his administration.

Question: Do you think that we as a society have become, have a general preoccupation with the presidency versus other elements of the power structure?

Polsby: I think in general people pay attention mostly to their own lives.

Field: If I had to answer that question in 1980, I'd answer it one way. But viewing President Reagan and his administration, the feeling I come away with, yes, there is a preoccupation and also that we must have one hell of a robust system to be able to still be moving along with in many respects the kinds of things that will be the Ronald Reagan legacy.

Question: Do you see any greater emphasis on symbolism and character in the role of picking the President of the United States? Do you think this has sort of hurt the democratic process? Iowa and New Hampshire have started to

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become very important, seemingly. Do we need some sorts of reforms at all in the process. Have the media been part of this?

Polsby: Character doesn't simply mean monkey business. Character also means whether somebody is intelligent or stupid, whether they're attentive to their job or a goof-off, whether they're stuffed shirts or reasonable to get along with. There are all kinds of dimensions of character, it seems to me, which are relevant to job performance and which we ought to care very much about. It's part of the conventions of journalism that they don't like to write about things like that without some kind of external source to use as an authority, so it's sometimes very difficult to get a full texture of the kind of people we're voting for, these total strangers, as people to work with. I think in some respects the so-called symbolism obscures this. In some respects attention to "issues" obscures this, the laundry list of where they stand on x, y, and z, when in fact they're all standing roughly in about the same place. Their speeches that they make last week may be the thing people focus on rather than on some longer term thing like how they actually performed while holding public office, which I regard as terribly important and much more important, I must tell you, than last week's press release.

Ehrenhalt: When people essentially nominate themselves for president, run on their own, build their own organizations, represent basically no one but their own ambitions, what else are you supposed to judge them on except character? When you have a contest of factions within a political party, Robert Taft versus Eisenhower or Taft versus Dewey, then I think character becomes less important. People represent something and you judge them on the basis of whether you like the people that hang around with them or not and you know who those people are. But when a Gary Hart or an Albert Gore comes out of nowhere

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and simply says, "Make me president because I want it more than anybody else", then I think it's perfectly legitimate to say, "Who are you anyway and why are you thrusting yourself when none of your peers would have particularly chosen you for this task?" And then what could be more legitimate but to say, "What is it that makes you so sure that you're entitled to this office?" I think the more we talk about character, the more we're asking the right questions about the kinds of people who run for president in this system. In another system it might matter less. I'd really prefer another system, but we don't have it.

Lee: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to call this to a halt, in small part because Ellen Hume is now on Eastern Standard Time at about 1 a.m., having been up for the last 26 or 27 hours. I think it's been a marvelous evening. Thank you.

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