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Published by American Enterprise Institute

Nov/Dec 1987

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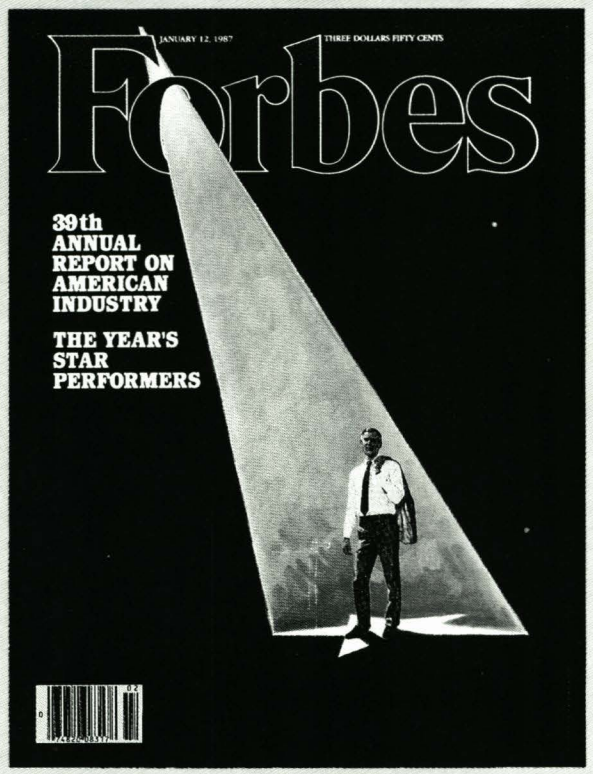

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Public Opinion

Volume 10, Number 4 November/December 1987

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PUBLIC OPINION. Nov./Dec. 1987, Vol. 10, No. 4. Published bimonthly by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Subscription rates: $26.00 for one year, $48.00 for two years. Individual copy: $5.00. Information on bulk orders of multiple subscriptions available on request. Editorial and business offices: c/o AEI, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Send changes of address and all subscription correspondence to Circulation Department, c/o AEI, same address.

Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C.

ISSN 0149-9157

U S A Newsstand Distribution by
Four Star News Distributors, Inc.
31-17 12th St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11106

Similar Designs on the White House THE 1960 AND THE 1988 CAMPAIGNS

by Stephen E. Ambrose

The many points of comparison being drawn by political analysts between the 1960 campaign and the upcoming 1988 campaign require some sorting out. While observers are drawing parallels between the mood of the country a year before the presidential contests, the most interesting comparison may be the positions of the two vice presidents, Richard Nixon and George Bush. Of course, we can't know whether Bush will prevail in what promises to be a spirited contest next year as Nixon did after a spirited contest of his own. History does not repeat itself. Still, the parallels are there.

The Similarities

In 1960, as in 1988, the Republicans had been in power for eight years. President Dwight Eisenhower, at seventy, was the oldest president in history, a record now surpassed by President Ronald Reagan. Under Ike's leadership, the nation had enjoyed eight years of peace and prosperity. Reagan can claim as much. Ike had immense personal popularity, as does Reagan, but in both cases there was a widely felt sense that the president was out of touch, stuck in the past, incapable of facing the problems of the coming decade.

In 1960, as in 1988, the Democrats controlled Congress while the Republicans occupied the White House, which led to a stalemate in legislative activity and made the president a caretaker. Ike, like Reagan, was much less active in his second term than in his first. As Reagan did with the Iran-Contra affair, Ike took a pounding from his critics in his second term. The press, the intellectual community, and the hard-liners on the Cold War joined in an improbable alliance to charge that Ike was letting the Russians get ahead in the space race (Sputnik, 1957); that he had failed the great moral crisis of his presidency at Little Rock's Central High (also 1957); that he had blundered in the Mideast crisis at Suez (1956); and that his handling of the U-2 crisis (May 1960)—when he first lied, then admitted his lie, first asserted the right to spy from the sky, and then said he was suspending U-2 flights—was pitifully inept.

The parallels in 1988 include America's setbacks in the space race, the debacle in Beirut (1984), Reagan's inability to cope with communism in Central America (as seen from the right), his confused policy in the Persian Gulf, and most of all the Iran-Contra affair.

The parallels between the position of Vice President Richard Nixon in 1959 and Vice President George Bush in 1987 are also striking. Both men had served their presidents loyally. Nixon privately disagreed with Eisenhower on nearly every substantive issue, but he never did so in public. Neither has Bush. Both men had earned and deserved the president's enthusiastic endorsement, but Nixon did not get it until it was too late to do much good. With Bush we will have to wait and see what happens when the primaries begin.

Both Nixon and Bush had problems with their bosses, some personal, some structural. Nixon didn't go back very far with Ike, had not known him before 1952, was not a part of Ike's inner circle. Bush is in a roughly similar situation. Ike and the people around him inevitably saw the 1960 election as a referendum on their administration; Reagan and his advisers will see 1988 in a similar light. But for Nixon in 1960, as for Bush—if he is the nominee—in 1988, the election is not a referendum on the past but the selection of a leader for the future.

A vice president running for the Oval Office has to establish himself as his own man with his own pro-

gram, while simultaneously maintaining his good relations with the president (Hubert Humphrey's central dilemma in 1968). He must pledge his unqualified and continuing support for the president's programs, while advocating his own.

Another point of comparison: in 1960, as in 1988, the Democrats were badly divided and had no party leader. The previous Democratic presidents (Harry Truman and Jimmy Carter, respectively) had left office with about one-third approving their performances, making their endorsement more harmful than helpful. The previous Democratic presidential candidates (Adlai Stevenson and Walter Mondale, respectively) had just been decisively repudiated by the electorate.

The Democratic contenders in 1960—Senators Humphrey, Kennedy, and Johnson—were certainly better known than the current Democratic candidates, but they weren't well known. Even after his nomination, Kennedy had a less than 50 percent name recognition factor. Nixon's in 1960 was over 90 percent; Bush's is nearly as high.

But as with any point of comparison, this one also illustrates a contrast. Nixon's extensive campaign and his slashing style kept him on the front pages throughout the Eisenhower years. Bush neither works as hard nor is he so controversial. Where Nixon called Stevenson a "graduate of Dean Acheson's Cowardly College of Communist Containment" and warned that a vote for the Democrats was a vote for socialism at home and surrender abroad, Bush called Mondale a liberal and warned that the Democrats would raise taxes.

Bush has traveled extensively abroad, but never with the kind of effect Nixon could generate. In 1958 Nixon went to South America, where communist mobs threw stones and spat upon him in Caracas and elsewhere. He conducted himself courageously and with dignity and earned high marks and great publicity. In 1959 he went to Moscow, where he stood up to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in the Kitchen Debate. Only Nixon could contrive to get Khrushchev to debate communism versus capitalism for American television; it is just not George Bush's style.

Differences

We will have to await the release of Bush's private papers to learn if he disagrees with Reagan as much as Nixon did with Ike. Bush's "voodoo economics" phrase, and the way he has tried to distance himself from Iran-Contra, indicate that there are some points of contention in the relationship.

Nixon's disagreements with Ike cut across the board. Ike insisted on a balanced budget, a sound dollar, no tax cuts. Nixon wanted to cut taxes to stimulate the economy and had no fear of a deficit. Nixon wanted to invade Cuba and get rid of Castro, but Ike was cautious and refused to act. In defense and space spending, Eisenhower had held the line for eight years, much to the disgruntlement of the hawks, the arms makers, the scientists, the high-tech people, and right-wing Republicans. Nixon wanted to spend more, much more, on defense and space than Eisenhower was willing to consider.

On all these issues, Nixon was anticipating Reagan's policies, thus highlighting one of the major differences between 1960 and 1988: that is, that Reagan is not Eisenhower.

On policy questions, Ike and Reagan were on opposite sides, except for Reagan's conversion to arms control. Like Ike in 1960, Reagan is now running for the Nobel Peace Prize. An arms agreement, any arms agreement, would be the capstone of his career. For Ike, the summit in Paris in May was to have been the capstone, but it crashed into ruins with the U-2. With Reagan, who knows?

One of the structural factors inherent in the situation is that the vice president wants the administration to gear policy toward winning votes in November, while the administration is concerned with its own historical record. Thus Nixon urged Ike to invade Cuba in October 1960; fearing a debacle, the president would not do it. No doubt Nixon would have won in 1960 if the Republicans had managed to liberate Cuba in October, but he would have lost badly had the invasion failed, as it did at the Bay of Pigs less than a half-year later.

All this shows what a tricky business running for the boss's job can be. Bush would probably love Reagan to overthrow the Sandinistas by next summer, one can assume. What should he urge Reagan to do to bring this about? Invade? Continue what he has been doing? Double the aid to the Contras? Withdrawal is not an option available to the Republican candidate in 1988, and all the action options carry potential traps for Bush. He can't know how they would turn out—a successful invasion without much loss of life would certainly give him a great boost, but if there were any kind of protracted resistance, the cries of "No More Vietnams" would become overwhelming. Continuing aid at current levels, even doubling it, leaves everyone in doubt about America's seriousness, opens the Republicans to the charge of accepting stalemate, and gives the Democrats the opportunity to condemn them from the right and the left.

In 1960 the Democrats made a major issue out of communism in Latin America; Kennedy's criticism was that the Eisenhower administration had not done enough about Castro. In Miami, Kennedy called for more support for the Cuban counterrevolutionaries. He hinted at invasion. Nixon was outraged, his issue had been stolen from him. His public reaction was to point out how irresponsible Kennedy was; he predicted that an American-sponsored invasion would not work, that it would invite the Russians to use Cuba as a military base, that it would lead to condemnation by the Organization of American States and the United Nations, and that it would make Castro into a folk hero throughout Latin America.

Nixon was exactly right. Everything he predicted did happen after the Bay of Pigs, but of course Nixon had not believed a word of what he was predicting at the time. Then, after stating the negative so well, he assured audiences that the Eisenhower administration *was* providing covert aid to the counterrevolutionaries on a massive scale and promised action soon.

Although Nixon felt he had won on debater's points, he soon realized he had lost with the electorate by allowing Kennedy to sound tougher than he was on Cuba. That was the last time Nixon ever let anyone out-tough him on the communists.

Bush's problem is the opposite, which provides one of the great contrasts between America in 1960 and America in 1988. Then the country was eager to save the world, and the candidates vied with each other for the image of most hot-blooded, fire-breathing Cold Warrior. In 1988 the Republican nominee and the Democratic candidate will be vying for the image of most reasonable, most responsive to new opportunities, the most post-cold war new era statesman.

Back in 1960 Kennedy charged, "You're not doing enough about communism."

Nixon replied, "Yes, we are."

In 1988 the Democrats will charge, "You're doing too much about communism."

If the nominee is Bush, he will reply, "No, we are not."

Another difference: in 1960 Kennedy did all he could to keep Ike out of the campaign. He never attacked him directly and almost never used his name. He concentrated on Nixon. In 1988 the Democratic challenger is certain to do all he can to make Reagan the issue. Kennedy never linked Nixon's name with Eisenhower; the 1988 challenger is certain to try to link the nominee's name with Reagan. If Bush is the nominee, the link is most obvious.

Different Men, Similar Times

Nixon, for his part, badly wanted the president's endorsement. But Ike had his doubts about Dick; sometimes he liked him, sometimes he didn't. He regretted Nixon's partisanship, his immaturity, and his lack of administrative experience. Ike refused to endorse Nixon before the convention; after Nixon won the nomination, the president gave an endorsement that seemed more a defense of his own policies than praise of Nixon. But he knew Dick had served him loyally, and he certainly preferred Nixon to Kennedy.

Ike's ambivalence showed most clearly in a famous incident at a press conference early in the campaign. Nixon was claiming that he had far more experience than Kennedy, that he had helped Ike make some of his toughest decisions. A reporter asked the president to name one. Ike bristled. He hated the charge that he let others run his government. He insisted that he made his own decisions, although he did listen to others for advice, among them the vice president. The reporter persisted; he insisted that the president name one such decision. Thoroughly exasperated, Ike snapped, "If you give me a week, I might think of one."

Eisenhower realized at once how terrible that sounded, and immediately called Nixon to apologize. Then Ike stayed off the campaign trail until the last two weeks. When he got active, he drew big crowds and gave Nixon a boost in the polls. But time ran out. In the post-election analysis, the Nixon people generally felt that the biggest "what if" of the campaign was, "What if the president had hit the trail a week earlier?"

For Bush, the situation is different. He hardly wants to be identified as a decision maker in such events as the Marines in Beirut, arms for hostages in Iran, undercover aid to the Contras, or the failures to get the hostages out of Lebanon and the communists out of Nicaragua. Nonetheless, Bush would probably have liked Reagan to offer an example or two of his contributions when Reagan was recently queried about the vice president's role in policy decisions. Instead, Reagan said, "I can't answer in that context."

In 1988, as in 1960, people are demanding new leaders with new ideas to attack the new problems. There was a feeling then, as now, that the administration was old, worn out, somnolent. The election of 1960 featured broad agreement between Kennedy and Nixon on the basic issues. Both men argued that America was rich enough and good enough and powerful enough to eliminate racial prejudice, abolish poverty, defend the Free World anywhere and everywhere, and cut taxes, simultaneously and at no cost.

In 1988, too, there is likely to be general agreement on basic questions. The coming generation of America's leaders agrees that we cannot keep borrowing forever, that something has to be done about the deficit in trade and in the federal budget. Inevitably this means higher taxes and lowered defense spending, which means repudiating some of the most basic policies of the Reagan administration.

Nicaragua will certainly be a big and divisive issue, with gross exaggerations coming from both sides about the cost of the policy and the importance of the effort.

The most obvious difference between the two contests is that Bush and Nixon are so different. Nixon paid a price for being better known—he was also much more widely and deeply disliked. Partly because of his personality, partly as a result of his outrageous campaign statements, Nixon was the most hated politician of the post-war era. He was also one of the most admired, if never loved. His politics were the politics of division, and in 1960 millions of hate-Nixon voters came out to vote. Bush has excited no such opposition.

Stephen E. Ambrose, alumni distinguished professor of history at the University of New Orleans, is the author of Nixon:The Education of a Politician *and* Eisenhower, *among other books.*

The New Materials of American Politics

A year and counting til election day!
We asked several leading American thinkers to give us their ideas about how America is different from the recent past.
These individuals are architects in their own right—of policy and public philosophy.
Their ideas provide some different perspectives on the foundations for the 1988 campaign.

by Daniel Yankelovich

Three things about the country are different from what they were a decade or so ago. Perhaps for the first time since the 1920s, the country is tilted neither to the right nor to the left. For a couple of years there was a lot of talk about a swing to the right. It became clear that that was not the case, though there is still a great deal of emphasis on the country's conservatism.

The liberal thrust of the country came about during the depression and continued until the late 1960s and into the 1970s. The reaction that began to build up at that point culminated in Reagan's victory. The Reagan years have offered an opportunity for the country to sort out and respond to Reagan's accusations of certain liberal abuses. But we are probably finished with that.

During the Reagan years the country was not so much pro-conservative as it was anti-liberal, and that is becoming clearer. But that anti-liberalism has worked itself through now. The situation is genuinely wide open. I don't remember another time like it. Sometimes in marketing, a dominant brand name suddenly disappears and the market becomes wide open and receptive to newcomers. The new mood is like that—neither liberal nor conservative, a political climate without an ideological tilt. The outlook of the person who wins in 1988 and the way that individual defines issues, themes, and problems will help to set the cast of the country for the future. I would be very surprised if the 1988 contest or the 1988 victor is distinctly liberal or distinctly conservative. There will be a pragmatic mix of those elements that seem most responsive to the issues of the day. That is the first point of difference I sense from the recent past.

Another way in which the country is different is that we now have a politics of values, not issues. Reagan continued something that Carter started, which was to define his campaign in terms of values rather than issues. Carter didn't take it far, but Reagan succeeded with it so thoroughly that I don't believe American politics will ever be the same. It was not Reagan's amiability and personality that made him a popular leader; it was his ability to articulate and personify fundamental values, which is the way average voters define issues. They don't define issues in technical terms; they define them in terms like standing up to the Ayatollah, or not getting into another Vietnam.

The emphasis we've seen on character in the Democratic candidates, and the role it played in knocking a couple of them out of the race, really has to do with looking at things through the perspective of values. It can work to the detriment of both parties, though. Reagan helped create this climate, and ironically, it has done in his own administration. He's been hoist with his own petard. One of the strongest values Reagan represented was toughness—he was tough enough not to yield to pressure, whether from the air traffic controllers' union or from the Ayatollah. The assumption was that he was a man so true to his values that he could resist any kind of pressure. He would be tough rather than submit to blackmail by Iran, and, if necessary, he would be tough enough to sacrifice the lives of the hostages. When it turned out not to be the case, he suffered an enormous drop in standing from which he really can't recover. Our political leaders have not quite figured out how to deal with issues defined in terms of values.

Fairness is one good example. Americans have always stressed fairness; it has always been important. But the definition of fairness changes from era to era. When I was growing up, the dominant definition of fairness was "you get what you deserve." You work

hard, you play by the rules, and you're rewarded for it. The people who don't, don't get rewarded—which is fair—and the people who do, do, and that's fair, too.

In the sixties and seventies there was a feeling that there was enough affluence to go around, and a different conception of fairness based on need arose. If you were in ill health and needed medical care, then fairness consisted of your getting it whether you could afford it or not. Fairness was having access to a college education whether you could afford it or not. Fairness was need-based. For a while the conflict between the two conceptions wasn't clear, but it became clear in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. Part of Reagan's message was to reemphasize the old conception of fairness based on deserving.

The fair thing today is for people to have a chance to be successful. Having a chance means that you must make the effort, and that has both liberal and conservative overtones. It's conservative in its emphasis on autonomy and everyone standing on his own two feet. But it also has a liberal element, in the sense that people should be given a break: if they are willing to make the sacrifices and work hard for an education, for example, then there should be scholarships and other forms of support available—loans that they can pay back later. The two things blend. Americans would regard it as very unfair if only the wealthy were able to go to college, and with college tuition going up the way it is, fairness could become a political issue in the campaign.

The third change from the recent past is the dominance of the external challenge—the foreign challenges to our economic competitiveness, mainly from Southeast Asia, and competition in the military-political field, personified by Gorbachev's initiatives in the Soviet Union. We are not quite ready for these serious challenges. Our country is still so inward-looking and ethnocentric that it's going to be a long time before we wake up not only to the seriousness of these challenges but also to developing a consensus on how to respond to them.

Fundamental Issues

This is not an issueless climate, as some have suggested. The number one and two issues are going to be what they always have been: war and peace and the economy. Every four years the country has an opportunity to wrestle with these most fundamental issues. The war and peace issue is going to be defined in terms of the strategy for responding to the Gorbachev leadership—an arms control strategy, Star Wars strategy, and a strategy to balance a strong America with a new relationship with the Soviet Union. That's the central issue. Just because politicians haven't yet figured out a new way to grab ahold of it doesn't mean the issue is different. Similarly, on the economy, competitiveness is the issue. The question is how the candidates will approach it, and opposition or support for protectionism isn't the only way.

Someone like Richard Gephardt, playing on protectionism, is interpreting the public opinion polls in a literal way, and he's going to be led down the garden path in the same way that Walter Mondale was when he misread the polls to assume that the public supported a nuclear freeze. The Gephardt strategy is foolhardy because the public support for protectionism—70 to 80 percent in the polls—is really mushy. It looks strong, but it's not. As soon as someone comes up with a better approach to the problem, the ground will go right out from under Gephardt.

Issues like competitiveness and protectionism are confusing, because the old reliable left-right guideposts no longer apply. In the past conservatives could get behind free market solutions and liberals could get behind industrial policy, and there would seem to be issues that differentiated them. But neither of those positions is an appropriate response to our lack of competitiveness. Politicians are accustomed to defining issues in liberal and conservative ways, and if that terminology is not available to them—if people don't respond to it because it's irrelevant—then they're going to flounder. That's exactly what we're seeing in Campaign '88. No one has a handle on how to connect important values to the great issues. So much depends on the issues that come from America regaining its competitiveness in the world economy. We have the kind of country that really doesn't work unless there is an opportunity to do better. If we aren't competitive, opportunities will dry up.

Other important issues will be race, education, and the gradual decline in the American individual standard of living. The latter isn't visible because we have gone from single-earner households to dual-earner households. But there aren't any more earners to add on: you can't put your nine-year-old kid or your aging grandmother to work. Dual-earner households have enormous kinds of strains. The issue of how people are going to cope economically—tax policy, child care, social welfare issues of fairness—are becoming central. That whole collection of potential issues is extremely fertile ground on which a candidate can define his particular vision.

People are nervous about their own economic situation. This is an atmosphere where everyone feels he has to scramble or be left out. In the sixties, the feeling was that there was enough to go around for everybody. Today the atmosphere of scrambling, the need to develop your own personal competitive edge, is a strong part of the psychology of the individual American. There's no peace of mind. There's no ease. It's not so much a generalized unease about the economy as a generalized unease about one's own personal situation. ☑

Daniel Yankelovich is chairman of the Daniel Yankelovich Group and president of the Public Agenda Foundation.

Our Economic House of Cards

by Michael Harrington

The United States is not yet quite different from its own recent past. It soon will be.

The timing of the significant discontinuity will shape the limits of American politics; if it comes prior to the 1988 elections, it will clearly affect their outcome; if it comes after, it will profoundly shape the fate of the next administration. I do *not* for a moment argue that the change will determine the future. It will not make choices for us—but it will radically redefine the range of choices open to us.

The complex event I have in mind is the palpable collapse of the appearance that, since January 1983, Ronald Reagan has solved the structural, economic, and political crisis that first surfaced under Richard Nixon. That crisis has already defined itself in terms of stagnating real incomes, a massive shift in production processes and consequently in the occupational and wage structure, the deteriorating balance of trade and concomitant dependence of the United States upon foreign loans, the Latin American debt situation, the doubling of the national debt under Reagan, and so on.

It was this crisis that did so much to help elect Ronald Reagan. Jimmy Carter moved from a timid liberalism to a timid conservatism and satisfied few; Ronald Reagan was the radical candidate of 1980, the man who denounced the entire past as a terrible mistake and demanded bold new departures. With average real income below 1973 levels (where it still remains) and inflation in the double digits, Reagan's radicalism struck a responsive chord.

The new president had a theory to explain how we got into such trouble. Massive social spending on unproductive consumption, it was said, had "crowded out" the private entrepreneurs in financial markets and thus kept us from generating productivity, jobs, and competitiveness. Subsidize the supply side—above all

through the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981—and there would be such an expansion of the economy that, as the conservative George Gilder put it in the Devil's own phrase, there would be a national free lunch.

That was bad theory in 1981, a fact that became apparent in the recession of 1982 (when, to be sure, Paul Volcker's monetarism, initiated under Jimmy Carter, helped to prolong and deepen the event) and then disappeared from the consciousness of the majority of Americans with the recovery that began in January 1983. But that recovery itself was the crisis in a new form. It required foreign money—if the West Germans had obliged Carter in 1979 the way the Japanese helped Reagan in 1983, our history would likely be somewhat different—it was uneven, generating low-payed jobs[1], reducing poverty at a much lower rate than the growth of the sixties, compatible with a dramatic deterioration of the nation's trade position, and so on.

Future Shocks

Politically, Reagan's inspired use of the fallacy *post hoc ergo propter hoc*—because there were supply-side incantations prior to the recovery, *therefore* the recovery was the effect of the incantations—helped him win a landslide in 1984 in what was surely the most vacuous presidential campaign in recent history. Luck runs out, however, even on the charismatic Irish, as the president himself is now learning. The great shaping event of the next period, I believe, will be the collapse of the pretended solution to the real crisis of welfare-state liberalism. When that happens there will be no conventional wisdom on the right or the left.

As a principled foe of Reagan, I could be expected to greet the fall of his house of cards with unalloyed glee. Not so. *If* I were convinced that the Democratic opposition had an alternative to both Reagan's and Carter's policies, I would indeed be a happy man. But I do not see any policy alternatives even mentioned in the current presidential campaign, except by Jesse Jackson and to a certain extent Paul Simon.

If the Reagan economy skids to the ground in time to affect the presidential election in 1988—if the numbers and reality are unmistakable by June 1988—then the Democratic chances for victory clearly mount, no matter who the candidate. If not it is just possible that the Democrats will snatch defeat from the jaws of victory and that George Bush or Robert Dole will move into the White House. Only the victor might come to feel like Herbert Hoover, who enjoyed less than six months of his new term before the roof fell in on him in October 1929.

Does this mean that I am predicting an economic event as spectacular and politically imperious as the Great Depression? Not at all. I would even remind readers that the stock market went up after October 29, 1929, and that the collapse of big business production took over a year to become apparent. Moreover, I believe that Franklin Roosevelt, and the successor liberalisms that lived off his heritage, did indeed create some structural barriers to a breakdown as utter as that of the thirties. Even if only one-third of the jobless now receive unemployment compensation, that is one-third more than when Roosevelt took office.

At the same time, I think there are a number of different reasons—many of them related to private, corporate, and international debt—why even a "modest" recession could be more of an upheaval than in the post-World War II past. Under such conditions, the hypnotic repetition of phrases about morning in America even as the machine tool industry lost half of its market will no longer suffice. There will be a rendezvous with reality.

That hardly guarantees that there will be solutions to a crisis that has been unrelenting since at least the recession of 1969. We face problems of structural change more profound than those posed in the thirties. To oversimplify, but not outrageously, in the depression there was an insufficiency of demand rationalized by pre-Keynesian shibboleths. An increase in that demand—first as a result of World War II, then as a consequence of liberal social and economic policies—prepared the nation to take advantage of a powerful secular upturn in the postwar economy. It was not necessary to change many established institutions, and particularly the board room was left in almost complete charge of a dominant private economy.

But our current problems are more like those that tore the nation apart politically, socially, and economically in the tempestuous years between 1877 and 1896, which marked the transition from laissez-faire to corporate capitalism. At that point we were the inventors of the future—of the "Fordist" model of mass production and consumption, of the Taylorite methods on the factory floor—and the Japanese studied us. Now the future is not so reassuring.

The debate over a response to the crisis that will reveal itself once again sometime in the not-too-distant future—between tomorrow morning and 1990, say—will define America as decisively as the thirties did, perhaps even more so. I have my own ideas about what should be done—described most recently in *The Next Left*—but I do not have the space to summarize them here.

Suffice it to say that the future I envision is one that will be set in motion—not determined—by discontinuities and difficult truths the likes of which we have not seen in the postwar generation. ☑

1. I am perfectly aware that Ben Wattenberg is able to talk non-stop against this proposition for days. The serious evidence I read in the *Monthly Labor Review*—the work of Patrick McMahon and John Tschetter as well as a forthcoming analysis by Larry Mishel—convinces me that Wattenberg is wrong. I refer those seriously interested in the issue, rather than in polemics over the issue, to the *Review*.

Michael Harrington is co-chairman of the Democratic Socialists of America and author of The Other America *and most recently* The Next Left.

The Building Blocks of a 1988 Foreign Policy

by Zbigniew Brzezinski

The most significant foreign policy change of the last decade is the way the Soviet Union is perceived. A decade ago the Soviet Union was viewed as both a military threat and a dynamic rival. The military threat was uppermost in people's minds. The Soviet Union was perceived as a genuinely global power, still thrusting outward and potentially displacing the United States as the number one super power. That was why Reagan won.

People didn't view the Soviet Union to be as ideologically militant as it had been under Khrushchev, but that was compensated for by the sense—partially correct, partially exaggerated—of momentum in their military buildup.

The change in perception started taking place roughly in 1979, when we began to increase the defense budget, reactivated the covert capacity of the Central Intelligence Agency, and initiated more covert activities than Reagan did later. In 1980, we started providing aid to the Afghans.

Reagan continued these activities, and I'm glad that he did. He expanded the defense budget significantly. Unfortunately some of the money was spent badly. We could have gotten much more for the additional $350 billion if strategic priorities had been set. Instead we just put the money into the services. Some of it was spent well, because you could not avoid spending some of it well. But a lot has been wasted.

Today there is growing awareness that the Soviet Union is in a serious state of disarray. We already have a sense that the Soviet Union is ceasing to be an economic or an ideological rival. That is certainly true among articulate elites, where an awareness of Soviet decay, stagnation, and deterioration is pervasive. This, too, may be exaggerated. In the long run, Soviet weakness cannot be separated from their military standing.

This change in perception should not encourage us to relax. Any extreme perspective of the Soviets is a danger, including viewing them as no threat, which can lead to Pollyanna-ish expectations. It can precipitate a massive and premature turning away from necessary security and defense measures, similar to what happened right after World War II.

Rather than say that the cold war is over, as some have been arguing, I would say that it's continuing, and that we're prevailing. But it's not yet a victory. We should keep on winning and not just lie down and let the tide turn against us. The danger is that we might declare victory, go back home, and thereby start losing. The scales have tipped in our favor, but not decisively.

We need to keep up the good work, keep the pressure on, and move into more active policy—in communications, for example. In the East now, we have an enormous opportunity to move on communications. This could pluralize the political systems there at best, or complicate the life of the communist regimes at worst. The $50 million Radio Liberty transmitter that this administration was so reluctant to fund is worth probably more than five B-1s, at $280 million each.

But taking advantage of the great communications opportunity doesn't mean that we start disarming. The opportunity has arisen because we have, by and large, checkmated the Soviets' capacity to prevail militarily. We must keep doing that, which means doing much more strategically.

The second major change of this period has been our complete reassessment of the American-Chinese relationship. By the latter half of the seventies, because of the Nixon-Kissinger opening, the Chinese were no longer viewed as enemies. That opening was consummated under Carter, particularly through the development of a strategic relationship with the Chinese, parallelled by a massive socioeconomic relationship between China and the United States. That has made China appear to most Americans as a friend—in some respects, even more of a friend than it actually is.

The third major change has been the growing sense of resentment over trade and alliance issues—against the Japanese and the Europeans.

Another change is that a 1988 candidate is going to have to become passively resigned to the view that much of the third world is going to go to pot, and that there isn't much that can be done about it.

These are four things that each candidate might usefully think about. All have policy implications. ☑

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The Moral Building Code

by Robert Nisbet

Assuming the absence of any economic downturn that rivets our attention for a long period, morals and moralism will almost certainly dominate the 1988 campaign for the presidency. This will mean attention to character, codes of morals, and moralism. Americans are a moral people, and this is to their credit; but they also have occasional spasms of moralism, the first occurring in their first century and the most recent having just occurred. The recent fate of Gary Hart, Joe Biden, and Governor Dukakis's campaign manager suggests the prominence of the moral.

So, it seemed to me, did the inquisition of Judge Robert Bork. This was no ordinary interrogation of a nominee for the Supreme Court, one oriented toward legal learning and judicial competence. It was more like a spectacle out of the Middle Ages. Henry Lea, in his classic study of the Spanish Inquisition, describes a technique often used then: two or three inquisitors would return again and again to a single point of faith and morals, waiting for sheer exhaustion of the subject to let fall some damning tidbit of heresy. Lea says the method was at least equal in efficacy to the thumbscrew. The grilling and re-grilling of Bork by Senators Specter, Kennedy, Metzenbaum, Leahy, and Biden suggested the technique to me. It was not an edifying spectacle for the most part. Nor will be much of the presidential campaign unless, as I deeply hope, I am wrong in foreseeing an extravaganza of moralism played by what the essayist Joseph Epstein calls "virtucrats."

The atmosphere began to be moralized in the early 1970s when the evangelicals got involved in the political theater. This was interesting in itself, for they had kept a low profile for decades, ever since the humiliation of their great protector, William Jennings Bryan, by Clarence Darrow, H.L. Mencken, and others at the Scopes trial. But the profile of Jerry Falwell, Jimmy Swaggart, Oral Roberts, Pat Robertson, and a few others has been anything but low during the last ten years. They and their many millions of followers have turned up the moral heat on abortion, school prayer, and pornography and catapulted these issues into the very vortex of national politics. Now one of them, Robertson, has announced his candidacy for the presidency as a Republican, and right in step, he's having his morals questioned by the press. How much farther could faith and morals be politicized than that? It is hard to estimate the kind of popular support Robertson and the other TV evangelists will have in 1988. Two possible misfortunes lie in wait for all the evangelicals in politics. First, internal divisiveness ripening into internecine hatreds—like those we saw a few summers ago at the televised national convention of the Southern Baptists—and second, repetitions of the Jim Bakker scandal or of Oral Roberts sitting like some rejuvenated St. Simeon Stylites atop his tower. War within the ranks is the more probable. As G.K. Chesterton wrote many years ago, a large number of Christians have just enough religion to hate, but not enough to love.

Hanging Loose on Society

Another area is bound to evoke a great deal of moraliz-

ing from now to election day. It is difficult to stigmatize as either immoral or illegal. The atmosphere is hazy, but the individual figures aren't. We can start with Wall Street and its varied arbitrageurs, leveraged buyers-out, insider traders, merger artists, greenmailers, and golden parachutists. A recent article on a financial page described five kinds of insider trading, only two of which are stamped illegal. It is not certain that these performers are so much as immoral. The *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page could, and for all I know, has, exonerated the lot of them, praising their positive effect on economic growth. Only a few Ivan Boeskys have been indicted. So we the people don't know that this assemblage is either illegal or immoral, but at least some of the candidates are labeling it as both.

At the very least these rascals hang loose on economy and society. Dr. Johnson is cited by Boswell anent a certain individual in London who, Johnson says, "hung loose upon society." There are many who hang loose in our society today, and Americans in general are aware of these people, however difficult they are to pigeonhole in law. There are the Marines in Moscow, evangelicals like Jim and Tammy Bakker, candidates Gary Hart and Joe Biden, extremely well-paid professional athletes either flaunting themselves as free agents before teams and fans that supported them or else going on strike at the beginning of a season, the myriad of government servants from highest echelons going through the revolving door to the basically unearned world of astronomical salaries or book royalties or lecture fees, and many, many others. They aren't breaking any law or any established moral dogma; it's just that they hang loose in the public eye.

Hanging loose on society, too, are the New Woman, the New Man, and the New Child. The rights of all free people now include the right of both spouses to pursue careers even when young children are at home. This new egalitarianism, with the New Man and the New Woman who "though in holy wedlock he and she go, each maintains a separate ego" invites a reaction of some sort, but it is hard to know what kind—if any—will come. Perhaps we have a hint in the enormous amount of attention the media and the candidates are devoting to the "New Child." He just won't go away from the American conscience—the New Child as cocaine or alcohol addict, as pregnant unwed teen, as runaway, as thrill killer, as abused child, or whatever. Our democracy may just muddle through this social transformation as it has done with many others. But for the moment, we can only observe that from Wall Street to Main Street, more and more Americans hang loose on society. Or so the press reports regularly.

We hang loose in politics. More than a decade ago David Broder wrote his *The Party's Over*. He was discerning and prescient. It is over, except as a label bearing memories. What we have instead of party is the coalition, ever shifting, ever in motion, ever in doubt. The Roosevelt coalition, formed in the early 1930s, lasted half a century. The heralded Reagan coalition began to crack up almost from its beginning. How could it *not*, what with its weird miscellany of military hawks, evangelicals, libertarians, supply-siders, neoconservatives, far rightists, and even a good sprinkling of old-line Republicans whose pedigrees went back to Coolidge? It's humorous to think that the press has labeled as "conservative" this disparate assortment of groups with their wildly divergent viewpoints.

This coalition, or what is left of it, is what will oppose the Democrats, so called; those for whose support Gary Hart, Joe Biden, Jesse Jackson, Paul Simon, Bruce Babbitt, Michael Dukakis, Al Gore, and Richard Gephardt have offered themselves during the last year, some of them already fallen by the way. But who are these political performers reaching out to? Old-line Democrats dating from FDR? Not on your life. To ADA liberals, to women's rights professionals, to blacks, Hispanics, gays, and all the other groups that can by some magic of ratiocination be thought of as hungry sheep thirsting for secular redemption. Is it any wonder that first-rate minds like Sam Nunn, Bill Bradley, and Mario Cuomo back off from 1988? The Democratic scene is one of moralistic sects in a kind of Brownian motion, each advertising the deathless morality of its product—homosexuals, new women, Galbraithian liberals, organized blacks, and others. If religion is at bottom, as some of its best students have said, no more than veneration of the Sacred, then the fundamentalists may have a point in equating the concerns of these secular groups with religion. After all, we are asked to regard their concerns with the same respect some give to things holy. The concerns have been elevated to quasi-religious standing—to a "sacred" of their own definition. I know of no charismatic on the right more zealous about *his Sacred* than any of millions of Democratic-oriented political sectarians about *their Sacred* concerns, starting first with feminism.

No one, no reasonably normal person of either political party, really likes this Vanity Fair, this Babel. Thus, at the present time, the siren call of Community. As I predicted thirty-five years ago, *community* was on the way to becoming the high ground of politics, of the struggle for political power. Let there be no misapprehension here. The Robert Bellahs and Robert Reichs and the Mario Cuomos aren't talking about your nice local community. It is first of all the Moral Community and, second, the National Community they have in mind. And so do a great many others. Community has come close to displacing property, equality, jobs, and even, so help us, liberty and rights as the *omnium gatherum* of all the idols of the mind. Mario Cuomo held his vast audience in the palm of his hand in 1984 when he sent forth the call for Community. No one knows what it is, as politically and ideologically presented, but that fact has never slowed down anything. ☑

Robert Nisbet is Jefferson Lecturer designate for 1988.

Ideological Subdivisions

by Irving Kristol

The American political and social landscape today resembles nothing so much as a—well, seascape. There are a lot of large, imposing icebergs floating about, and much of our time is devoted to circumnavigating them. But beneath the surface new icebergs have been forming for over a decade now. We are all more or less aware of this development, especially since every now and then one of these new formations will lunge temporarily into view before subsiding again—each time a bit closer to the surface. At some point in the next ten years, we are very likely to witness a new seascape.

The icebergs that now dominate the horizon emerged in the years 1955-1975. They have been shaped by a liberal media; a radicalized academia; an increasingly anti-war, quasi-isolationist Democratic party; a black nationalist temper among the official leaders of the so-called black "community"; and militant, often radical feminism. All together—these groups are usually in concert—they represent an intimidating force. There is plenty of evidence that, even so, they do not constitute anything like a majority of American *popular* opinion, which is still largely trying to find its appropriate form under water. But they do represent a majority of American *public* opinion—that is, the opinion of the educated, activist people who, in a democracy, will generally have the predominant influence on public policy.

It is this split between the popular and public opinion that I take to be the most significant aspect of democratic politics in the United States today. It cannot endure indefinitely, without some event triggering a crisis that would tear the nation apart. The longer it endures, the greater the probability that the new subterranean forces will be more destructive than constructive.

What are these subterranean forces that are assuming some kind of definite form? The first involves sexual relations. It can be asserted quite dogmatically, based on the historical experiences of Western civilizations, that periods of relative sexual libertinism are always succeeded by periods of relative sexual puritanism (and of course, vice versa). Such a cycle seems to be integral to a "progressive"—that is, dynamic— civilization, and one may reasonably assume it is the way human nature copes with the challenge of such drastic change. The past two decades of "sexual liberation" are already showing some signs of exhaustion. The advent of AIDS and the sharp increase in all varieties of venereal disease have only accelerated this trend. A shift in ideology always appears to correspond to events in the real world—even though there are many possible interpretations of such events.

No less important are all those novels now being written and published by younger men and women that are alike in revealing how unhappy their authors seem to be with their "liberation." Bret Easton Ellis, David Leavitt, and Tama Janowitz come to mind. The dominant themes of these writings are loneliness, frustration, and despair at the possibility of finding happiness in sexual relations that are also human relations. "Sexual liberation" pushed to an extreme results in an intolerable dehumanization— that is the message coming through, often unwittingly.

Something similar can be said about the cycle of religious belief and disbelief. It is a much longer cycle, because it reaches so much deeper, down to one's sense of the meaning of human existence or of the universe itself. Twenty years ago I was asked to make one prediction about the future in which I had a large measure of confidence. I replied instantly that we would see a powerful resurgence of religious sentiments. I also said that, obviously, I could not predict what form it would take, or when or how it would gather momentum.

I still believe that prediction. There is nothing more intolerable to men and women than a sense of utter meaninglessness in their lives and destinies. Similarly, there is nothing more intolerable to men and women than being dispossessed of moral certainties that they can pass on to their children. Only religion has been able to provide this meaning, just as only religion has been able to provide a moral code that is tested by tradition to be strong enough to tie generations together.

There is one more sign that I take to be significant. Ever since the bicentennial celebrations of 1976, it has become evident that the American people have been of an increasingly patriotic temper. At least, that is what the media call it: patriotism. A more accurate term would be nationalism. Patriotism is love of one's country, and there are very few people who are not patriotic, whatever their country. Nationalism, however, goes further and asserts that one's nation— not country, but nation— is competing with other nations in shaping the future of the world, or at least a region of the world. My own reading of the American mood is not of a people who merely have a deep sentimental

affection for their "homeland" but of a people who are eager to leap to their feet, their forefingers outstretched, crying "We're number one."

If I am right, then American attitudes in foreign policy have undergone a post-Vietnam, subterranean sea-change over this past decade. That change has had little impact on the State Department or the Pentagon, and it has yet to be taken seriously by our political and media elites. But it is slowly eroding the assumptions on which they blithely proceed. True, President Reagan seems to have had an instinctive appreciation of this situation, but he has permitted his instincts to be nullified by the weight of conventional wisdom among his senior advisers. Just what a new, more nationalistic foreign policy would look like is hard to say. But it is a force that is in the process of seeking its form.

Do these subterranean forces even exist? Many of my conservative and neoconservative friends have concluded that the forces represent either total mirages or, if and where they exist, have had their growth permanently impaired. A great many liberal observers are of the same mind, and blithely dismiss the forces' potential. One can easily understand their pessimism/optimism. There have been so many premature, exaggerated hopes or alarms. Meanwhile, the staying power of the established formations remains intimidating, as is exemplified by the sad experience of Judge Bork.

Nevertheless, we do not live in some kind of new era in which human nature is radically different from what a study of Western history suggests it to be. My own reading of history and political philosophy persuades me that the liberal or left-of-center ideologies that now legitimate the status quo are, over the longer term, *contra nature*—they raise expectations that can only be dashed; they are not ways of thinking that can sustain a viable way of living; gradual disillusionment and ultimate revulsion is certain to be their fate. It surely is no accident that all the major political movements of the twentieth century, whether of the left or right, have been reactions against liberal or social-democratic orthodoxies.

One already sees many signs of such a reaction today. Tentative signs, ambiguous signs, flickering signs—but signs that I take to be signposts. ☑

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The Sturdy Foundations

by Burns W. Roper

When viewed in the broadest perspective, most things in our society haven't really changed over the past ten years or so. Americans' core values are the same now as they were in the mid-1970s, and so is their basic outlook on life. Socially and politically, they are slightly more conservative and slightly more Republican today than they have been in the recent past. But the general consensus now, as then, is still essentially the same: conservative and Democratic.

In some areas, our society has seen both change and stability. The role of women is an example. The belief that marriage is the ideal way of life is as strong as it ever was (and, incidentally, this popular belief never faded, despite all the media attention once devoted to its alleged decline). The *nature* of modern marriage, however, is quite different. It is no longer the traditional marriage where the husband works and the wife takes care of the house and children. Now it is a sharing marriage where both do both. Yet the fundamental importance of marriage—and its attractiveness to the vast majority—persists alongside these momentous changes.

Some attitudes and beliefs, of course, have changed substantially in the recent past. Public concern about energy, for example, is way down from what it was ten years ago, in line with declining oil prices. But concern about AIDS is skyrocketing. Similarly, ten years ago we had a trend toward smaller cars; today we are moving to bigger ones again. Inflation worries are down; drug abuse concerns are up. VCRs were unknown ten years ago; now they are the favorite toy of half of America. Microwaves and PCs weren't unknown then, but they were exotic and unfamiliar.

Any time frame is artificial because events have cycles all their own. Temporal "cycles" must fit events, not the other way around. Let's take public attitudes toward our most recent presidents as an example. We tend to think of Ronald Reagan as a popular president and Jimmy Carter as an unpopular one, but ten years ago Carter had a very high positive rating on our supporter/critic question—63 percent positive, 31 percent negative in September of 1977. Reagan's latest reading is 48 percent positive, 46 percent negative. In this comparison—based on a strict ten-year time frame—Carter is the more popular president. In 1978—one year later—Carter's support was down 6 percentage points to 57 percent. His critics' score was up 8 percentage points, to 39 percent. Look at it in 1979—eight years ago—and he was much less popular than Reagan is today.

In another area, ten years ago Americans were telling the pollsters that our government was spending too much money on defense. Five years ago they said that we were spending too little. Those attitudes toward defense spending have changed once again, and now they resemble the attitudes of a decade ago. It's hard to evaluate change in our society within any specific framework of time, because in many cases the "base period" that is selected is not truly comparable to the present.

Lasting change—whether social, political, or economic—has a dynamic all its own. Sometimes the best we can do is discern slices of trends and try to judge their breadth, depth, and longevity. This said, the most significant change in the recent past is one that actually began much earlier, and what has been impressive to me is its steady pace. This is the trend toward greater social toleration of minorities—sexual minorities, racial minorities, religious minorities, and even oddballs of one kind or another. What's key here is the growth of a kind of "live and let live" mentality, if not actual acceptance. Over the long term—from the past into the future—this is the most persistent and important social trend. Even though AIDS is a major public concern today, support for the legal rights of homosexuals has been rising. Acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle, however, is not. Increasingly, Americans are saying that they do not need to personally *approve* a kind of minority lifestyle in order to *accept* it in their midst. AIDS has not—at least to date—had any effect on that broader historical trend toward social toleration.

What's Ahead

Three major concerns will affect our political future. Probably the most immediate is whether the events of October 1987 herald a repeat of the events following October 1929. We all know the reasons that things are supposed to be different now from what they were at the time of the crash and Great Depression: margin requirements, unemployment insurance, social secu-

rity, and so forth. But all the things that are different presumably meant that October 1987 wouldn't happen —yet it did. One can't help but wonder whether the parallels are stronger than we think.

People who are getting nervous and thinking that they ought to get out of the market were largely caught unaware by the crash of October 19, 1987. They may now decide to get out of the market. Recovery may not be all that reassuring to the American people. If it happened once, it can happen again. How politicians address the public's sense of economic uneasiness will be very important.

The second area concerns the presidency. Our last two presidents have both run against Washington. Disillusion set in with Carter very quickly—within two years of his taking office. Disappointment is now setting in with Reagan. We don't know yet what the American people will look for in their next president. We know that people will want the president to be honest, because the public always wants honesty in a president. But what else are Americans seeking? Are they going to want somebody who runs an even more anti-Washington campaign than Carter or Reagan did, or are they going to want a Washington insider or a professional politician—someone with established experience?

The fact that Americans voted for anti-Washington candidates twice suggests that there is something persistent about those feelings. Today the anti-Washington sentiment manifests itself most in the candidacies of Jesse Jackson and Pat Robertson. They haven't actually run against Washington, but neither one comes from the ranks of experienced government leaders. Neither Jackson nor Robertson, perhaps, can get majority support, but they do have highly committed supporters. The fact that Americans have twice elected someone who ran against Washington establishes something of a precedent. They may do it yet again.

My third concern involves AIDS. We won't know for some time how this issue will evolve. If AIDS becomes epidemic and begins to affect the heterosexual community, we may see the first reversal in fifty years of the trend toward greater social tolerance. Will public health concerns then overwhelm civil liberties concerns of "high-risk" groups? That will be a key question for our political and social future.

In general, I'm more impressed by the absence of change in our society than by the supposed rapidity and pervasiveness of change. There has been change, but in most areas it has been rather small. The fundamental values and beliefs of the American people are remarkably constant and enduring. There is always talk about a new decade, a new era, but most change is much more evolutionary than revolutionary—fortunately. ☑

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Bleak House:

by Ronald Brownstein

Nothing is more mutable than political wisdom. But it took the Democratic party remarkably little time to junk a central lesson of Walter Mondale's 1984 defeat. In his challenge to Reagan, Mondale relied on an overwhelmingly negative message, warning constantly of imminent economic catastrophe. That argument seemed not only out of touch with economic reality in a year when the gross national product grew by almost 7 percent, but also somehow un-American in its fundamental pessimism. When Reagan overwhelmed the former vice president, many Democrats thought the lesson couldn't be clearer: avoid gloom and doom.

But guess what? Long before the stock market crashed last month, the Democratic candidates were already offering —irresistibly—a negative portrayal of the economy.

Richard A. Gephardt is a walking litany of hardship, a fair-haired prophet of despair. His standard stump speech oozes gloom. "The heart of America's heartland is being torn out," Gephardt says. And he says, "What I see is an America in decline," and "There is something very wrong in America." Gephardt is running for president in John Steinbeck's dust bowl.

Even Mondale might have had trouble matching Gephardt for sustained bleakness—Dostoyevsky might, too—but several other Democratic contenders strike similar, if less jarring, chords. "The American economic dream has begun to evaporate," said Joseph R. Biden, Jr. last spring, before his own presidential dreams did just that. And Jesse Jackson, "The dominant theme of our day is economic violence." Jackson sees a disenchanted and demoralized America. "Everywhere I have heard a similar concern: not just the loss of a job, but the loss of a future; not just the closing of a factory, but the death of a community; not just the loss of hope, but the growth of fear." Paul Simon is less mesmerized by disaffection, nonetheless he fears for the American middle class: "You have a shrinking middle class," he says, "a few people moving up, many more moving down."

Not all the Democrats came out of the box so downbeat. Massachusetts Governor Michael S. Dukakis tells his story of industrial revival in Massachusetts with brisk optimistic certitude. Former Arizona Governor Bruce E. Babbitt (though joining with the gloomers in calling our "prosperity. . .insecure") believes the country stands on the threshold of vast economic changes, "enormous opportunities" it can squander or "seize and profit from."

The Doomocrats

Were the downbeat Democrats prophets? Until the stock market sank, the economy looked to be as unrewarding a target for this crop of candidates as it was for Mondale in 1984. Until last month, the most visible indicators—economic growth, unemployment, the stock market—were all pointing up for the Republicans. But now that the stock market has gone south, many economists wonder if the broader economy can be far behind.

It wasn't the stock market crash that inspired the Democratic language of despair, though: the candidates were selling that message even as the Dow soared to new heights. Other factors were more significant. The first was vividly demonstrated by last month's dramatic events. As the out party, the Democrats cannot embrace the status quo. The Republicans are the status quo. They own it for better and worse.

Tactical considerations also moved the Democrats toward this message. The tough times rhetoric reflects the primacy of the Iowa caucus, the first major test between the contenders. In Iowa, the Democrats build their speeches around farm auctions, boarded-up storefronts, and suicides—all indicators of the pain the state suffered through most of the 1980s. But ironically, even in Iowa, the appeal seems overdrawn; statewide personal income is now rising rapidly, the farm crisis appears to have bottomed out, and unemployment is below 5 percent.

The Democratic candidates have also ingested the rhetoric of the Joint Economic Committee that has argued in a series of studies since 1984 that the recovery

The Democrats' Doomsday Message

has been uneven—strong on the coasts, weak in the nation's heartland; that the well-paying jobs that sustained the middle class are disappearing; and that the baby boomers are living less well than their parents. These numbers are controversial among economists, but they offer Democrats a way to look beyond the immediate good news and touch the voters' more vague apprehensions about the future. (See "New Arguments about America's New Jobs," by Marvin Kosters, *Public Opinion*, July/August 1987.) So the Democratic rhetoric crackles with warnings of a nation reduced to flipping hamburgers and taking in each other's laundry for its livelihood.

The Democrats also believe they can focus apprehension on the unprecedented trade deficits, perhaps the most glaring weakness in the Reagan economic record. Sensing vulnerability, the Democratic candidates have called for tougher trade policies than the Republicans, with Gephardt, among others, embracing measures that have been criticized as protectionist. Pollsters say that support for protectionist policies rises when the economy falls, so the more protectionist candidates naturally paint the darkest economic picture. That holds true across the Democratic field, with Gephardt, the most protectionist, also the gloomiest; and Dukakis, the closest thing to a free-trader, the most optimistic. To sell protectionism—a radical response—the tough-on-trade Democrats must first sell economic crisis. Ironically, the travails of the stock market may hurt the Democrats associated with protectionism, since many analysts believe fears that Congress will approve a restrictive trade bill helped to trigger the slide.

Finally, the revival of gloom and doom represents the full flowering of the post-1986 Democratic strategy: the return to repudiation of Reagan and all his works. Reagan's indecisive performance in the first days of the crisis—his obstinacy and seeming irrelevance to the debate—will certainly encourage more aggressive salvos from the Democrats. Since they regained control of the Senate, the Democrats have confronted Reagan on arms control, the budget, trade, and most pointedly his nomination of Judge Robert H. Bork to the Supreme Court. Their rhetoric, sharp and scornful, harkens back to the early days of the Reagan presidency, when the Democrats engaged him in ideological warfare over the role of government. But with the president at the height of his popularity after his landslide reelection, the 1986 Democratic Senate challengers switched gears and did their best to ignore him. Avoiding sweeping national issues, they made their races personalized referendums on their opponents. And by and large that worked allowing the Democrats to oust the weakest Republican senators from the class of 1980. In that localized environment, the good feeling in the electorate probably worked against the GOP by keeping home the casual voters who had helped put those freshman senators into office six years earlier as part of Reagan's landslide.

Public Concerns

But a presidential race is by definition a national race; it has to coalesce around something, and in 1988 the Republicans clearly expected the race to pivot on the country's general good feeling about the economy. That strategy now seems threatened, at least partially.

Clearly until the stock market was routed, nothing much had been bothering the public: though fear may spread, even the public's initial reaction to the crash was muted, displaying none of the panic felt in New York and Washington. Voters have been so quiescent in recent months that it may take some time to remember how to get worked up about anything. Since mid-1984, in CBS/*New York Times* polls, no issue has been mentioned by more than 20 percent of the public when people are asked to name the most pressing problem facing the country. Moreover the public seems satisfied with Reagan's management of the economy. In a poll for two Democratic groups this summer, Louis Harris found that the GOP led the Democrats by 50-40 percent as the party that can best "keep the economy prosperous." Even more decisively, Republicans held a 52-37

(Continued on page 57)

The Soundness of Our Structure: Confidence in the Reagan Years

by Jack Citrin, Donald Green, and Beth Reingold

Ronald Reagan came to Washington to bury government rather than to praise it. Ironically he wound up presiding over a resurgence of trust in the country's political institutions. "America is back," exulted the president at the end of his first term, and the polls showed that an optimistic public agreed.

All this preceded the Iran-Contra fiasco and the stock market's fluctuations. Have the revelations about deceit and ineptitude tarnished Reagan's personal image? Are the rebuilt walls of faith in government crumbling once again?

Trust Redux

The rebound in political confidence after 1980 began with the public's expectation that Reagan would be a strong leader. His demeanor, whether natural or stage-managed, communicated a sense of pride in the nation and confidence in its future. By the end of 1982, lower inflation and belief in the president's personal abilities had reversed a fifteen-year slide in political trust, despite a severe economic recession (July 1981-November 1982).[1]

Table 1 shows that the resurgence of trust in the government's ability to "do what is right" intensified between 1982 and 1984. Other survey indicators all pointed in the same positive direction. The rise in confidence was based on the reviving economy and on continued approval of Reagan's personal leadership. This renewed trust focused most intensely on the presidency and was manifested by virtually every segment of society, including the people who identified themselves as strong Democrats.[2]

The Third Quarter

Since trust in government is built on presidential performance and good news about the state of the nation, a steady growth in confidence requires a sustained period of perceived success. Given the complexity of the problems facing American government in

Table 1

PERCENT TRUSTING THE GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT ALL OR MOST OF THE TIME, 1980-1987

	Nov. 1980	Nov. 1982	Nov. 1984	Feb. 1985	Mar. 1985	July 1985	Nov. 1985	Jan. 1986	Sept. 1986	Nov. 1986	Jan. 1987	Mar. 1987	June 1987
CBS/NYT			45%	46%			49%	42%		49%	44%	41%	
ABC/Post				43	37%	38%			40%		44		48%
NES	26%	34%	45							39			

Source: Surveys by CBS News/*New York Times*, latest that of March 1987, ABC News/*Washington Post*, latest that of June 1987, and Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, American National Election Study, latest that of 1986.

1985-1986 and the likelihood that Reagan's previous accomplishments had raised expectations for the future, this was a difficult task.

The third quarter of the Reagan presidency lacked the dramatic triumphs of the first term. In the economic realm, continued growth and low rates of inflation and unemployment were counterbalanced by huge budget and trade deficits. In foreign policy, a popular air attack on Libya was followed by embarrassing questions raised about the Reykjavik summit.

Against this background, there was little change in the public mood. The president's vaunted likability remained intact, and all the major polls showed that Reagan's job performance rating was slightly higher in October 1986 than when he was reelected.

Evidence about the trend in political trust is more uneven. Louis Harris and Associates found that the proportion of the public with "great" confidence in those running the White House dropped from 42 percent in the afterglow of Reagan's triumphant reelection to 30 percent a year later. But the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) found no equivalent drop in ratings of the federal executive branch, and neither polling organization recorded a substantial or consistent decline in confidence in other political institutions.

As table 1 shows, the media telephone polls indicate a slight increase in trust in government between the beginning of Reagan's second term and the onset of the Iran-Contra affair. However, the 1986 Michigan National Election Survey (NES), based on personal interviews, found that the proportion of trusting responses declined from 45 percent to 39 percent and that agreement with the statement "public officials don't care what people like me think" also became more widespread.

Whether these inconsistent results are due to differences in the timing, interview method, samples, or content of the polls is unclear. But the main conclusion is that the overall decline in political trust between 1984 and 1986 was minor.

Who Changed?

While the upswing in morale during Reagan's first term was pervasive, the slight dip in political trust recorded by the 1986 NES survey was concentrated among blacks, the poor, Democrats, and Independents. Republicans actually expressed a slightly higher level of confidence in 1986 than in 1984, so the link between party attachment and political confidence grew stronger.

A politically significant note is the hint of diminished trust among several of the social groups central to the Republicans' efforts to achieve a lasting political majority. The level of confidence among Catholics and union households remained essentially unchanged, but southern whites under thirty-five and fundamentalists, who were unusually trusting in 1984, registered declines of more than 10 percentage points in confidence. Even before the impact of the Iran-Contra affair could make itself felt, then, there were signs of uneasiness within the groups whose attraction to Ronald Reagan produced the 1984 landslide.

Table 2

TRUST IN GOVERNMENT BY POLITICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS, 1984-1986

	1984	1986
Party identification		
Democrat	40%	32%
Independent	50	33
Republican	50	52
Approval of Reagan		
Approve	52	48
Disapprove	31	24
Beliefs about state of the economy		
Better	50	52
Same	45	42
Worse	36	30
Race		
White	47	43
Black	32	22
Region by race		
Northern whites	47	44
Southern whites	47	40
Religion		
Catholic	49	49
Protestant, Non-fundamentalist	46	43
Fundamentalist	52	39

Source: Surveys by the Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, American National Election Study, latest that of 1986.

One reason for the drop in trust between 1984 and 1986 was renewed anxiety about the economy. The NES surveys revealed a 13 percentage point increase in the belief that national economic conditions were worsening. Iowa political scientists Arthur Miller and Stephen Borelli contend that growing disagreement with Reagan's policy agenda also contributed to the reduced sense of trust.

Reagan's Fall

Arguably the darkest day of the Reagan presidency was November 25, 1986, when the diversion of funds to the Contras became public knowledge, John Poindexter and Oliver North left the White House, and the president admitted that he had not been in full control of his foreign policy. As investigations of the Iran-Contra affair got under way, the public's reaction was decisively negative. Gallup found that public satisfaction with the state of the nation fell from 58 percent in September 1986 to 47 percent in December. All the polls conducted in the aftermath of news about the diversion of funds reported an unprecedented monthly decline in approval of the president's job performance (*Public Opinion*, Mar/Apr 1987, pp. 34-35).

The 1986 NES survey also revealed the first cracks

(Continued on page 59)

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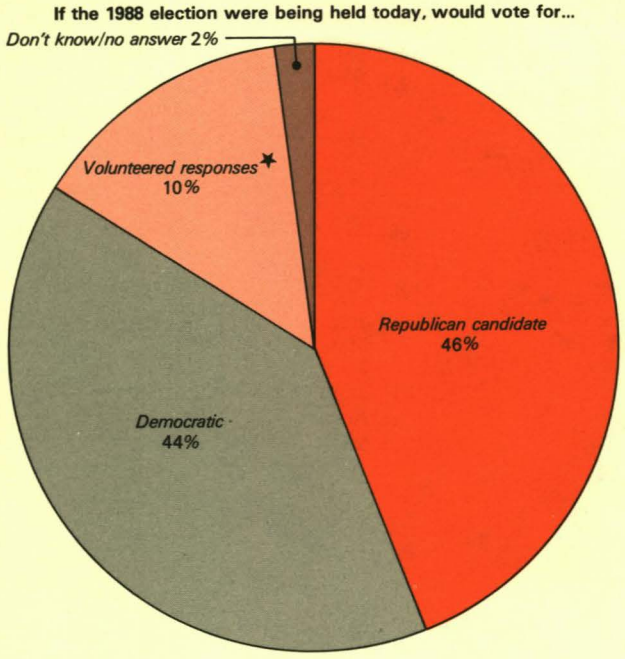
FOUNDATIONS OF CAMPAIGN '88

POLITICAL INDICATORS

Question: If the 1988 election were being held today, do you think you would vote for the Democratic or for the Republican candidate for president?

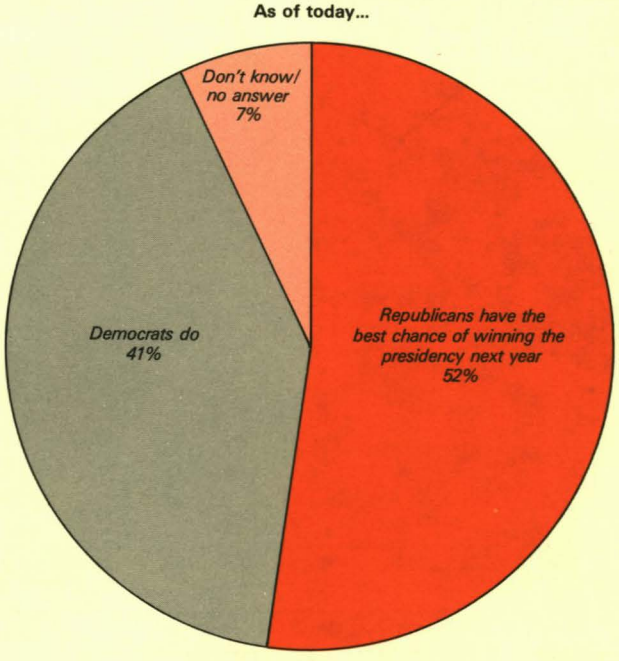


Note: *Volunteered responses = "Too soon" (1%), "Vote for other" (1%), "Wouldn't vote" (1%), "It depends on who is running". A Gallup/*Newsweek* poll taken October 7-9, 1987 showed a different result when a similar question was asked. Thirty-three percent said they would vote Republican, 43% Democratic.

Late Poll: A *Time*/Yankelovich Clancy Shulman poll of October 22 found that 41% thought "it would be better for this country to have a Democrat as our next president." Twenty-eight percent said a Republican.

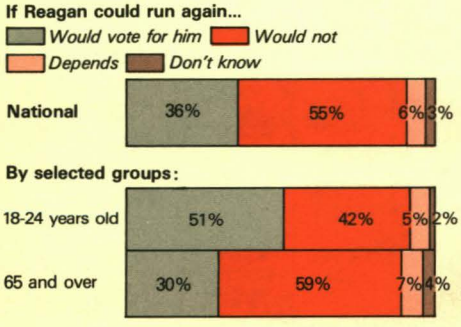
Source: Survey by ABC News/*Washington Post*, October 19, 1987.

Question: As of today, would you say that the Democrats or the Republicans have the best chance of winning the presidency next year?

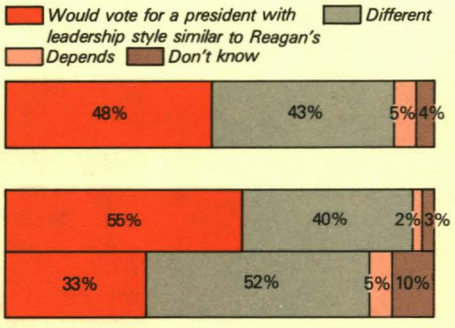


Source: Survey by ABC News/*Washington Post*, September 17-23, 1987.

Question: If Reagan could run again, would you vote for him?

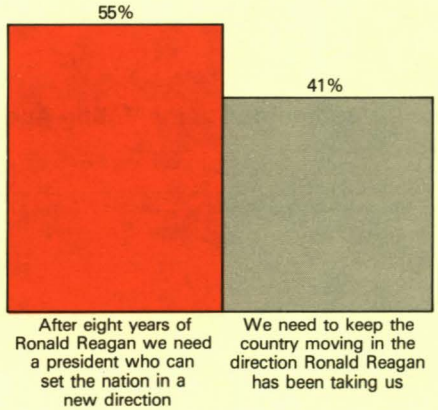


Question: Would you vote for a president with a leadership style similar to or different from Ronald Reagan's?



Source: Survey by Gordon S. Black for *USA Today* and CNN, September 8-13, 1987.

Question: Which of these two statements comes closest to your own views:

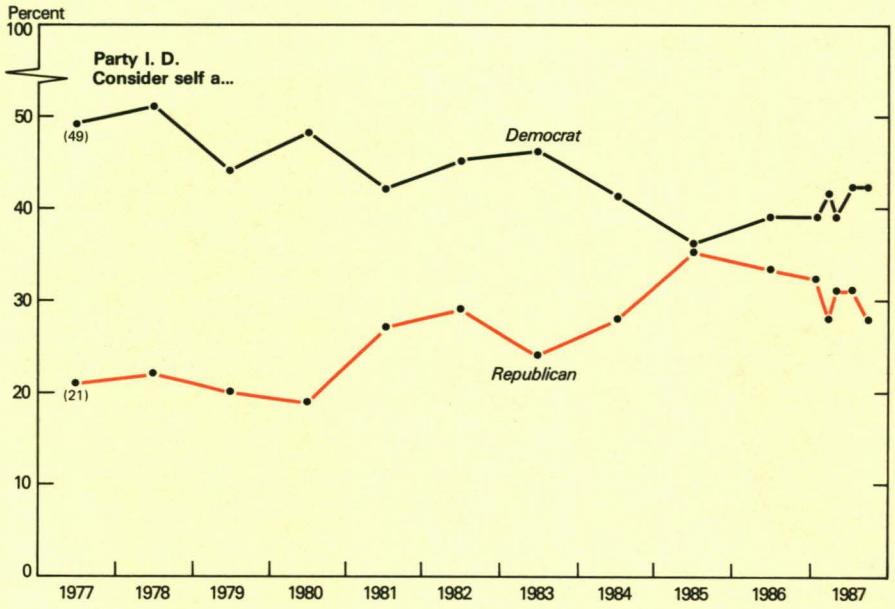


Note: The responses "Somewhere in between" (vol.) and "Neither" (vol.) are not shown.

Source: Survey by ABC News/*Washington Post*, September 17-23, 1987.

Party I.D.

Question: In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?



	Dem.	Rep.
1977	49%	21%
1978	51	22
1979	44	20
1980	48	19
1981	42	27
1982	45	29
1983	46	24
1984	41	28
1985	36	35
1986	39	33
1987 Jan.	39	32
March	41	28
April	39	31
July	42	31
August	42	28
Sept.	42	30

Note: Percentage shown is the first asking each year.
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of September 18-24, 1987.

Median Age of the Population

31.7 years

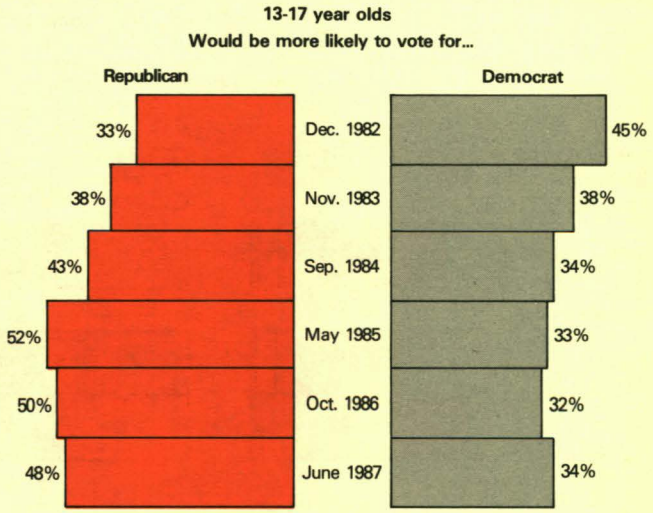
Median Age of the Voting-age Population

39.9 years

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

TEEN ATTITUDES

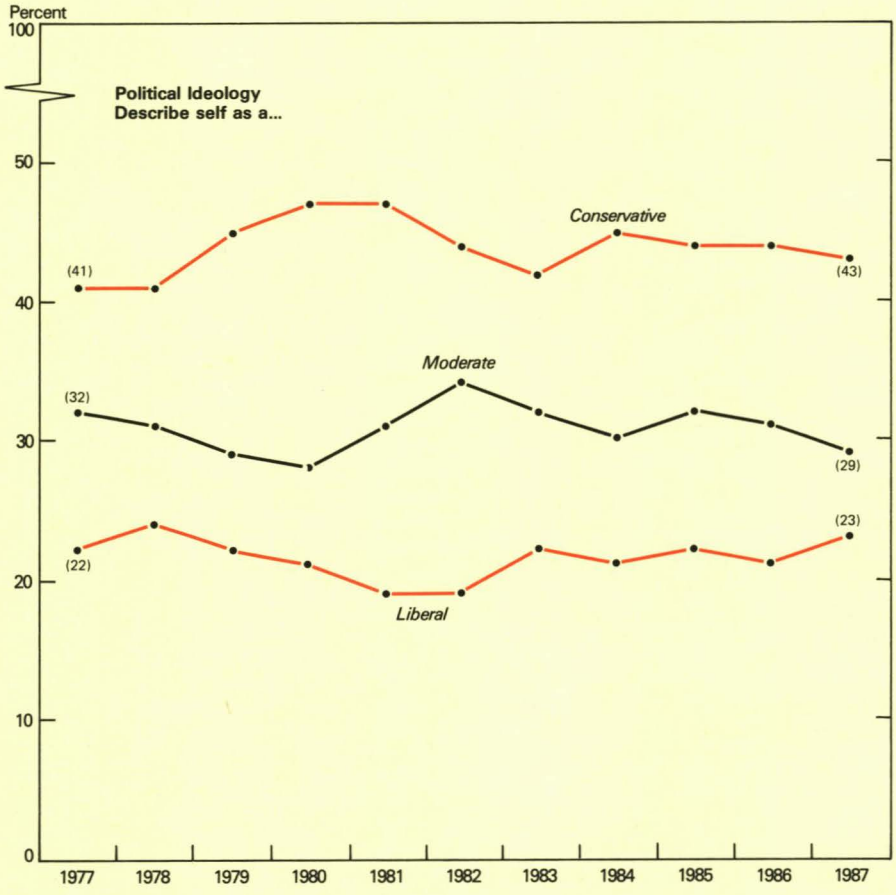
Question: When you are old enough to vote do you think you will be more likely to vote for the candidates of the Republican party or for the candidates of the Democratic party?



Note: Points shown are the last points for each year. In 1985 this question was asked only once, in May. In surveys taken by the Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, high school seniors were asked to describe their political preference. In 1976, 17% called themselves Republicans, 26% Democrats, 30% Independents. Twenty-six percent said "Don't know" or "Haven't decided." In 1986, 28% described themselves as Republicans, 20% Democrats, 23% Independent.
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Youth Survey, latest that of June 1987.

Ideology

Question: Now, thinking politically and socially, how would you describe your general outlook—as being very conservative, moderately conservative, middle-of-the-road, moderately liberal, or very liberal?



	Cons.	Mod.	Lib.
1977	41%	32%	22%
1978	41	31	24
1979	45	29	22
1980	47	28	21
1981	47	31	19
1982	44	34	19
1983	42	32	22
1984	45	30	21
1985	44	32	22
1986	44	31	21
1987	43	29	23

Note: Percentage shown is sixth asking each year.
Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 87-6), latest that of May 16-30, 1987.

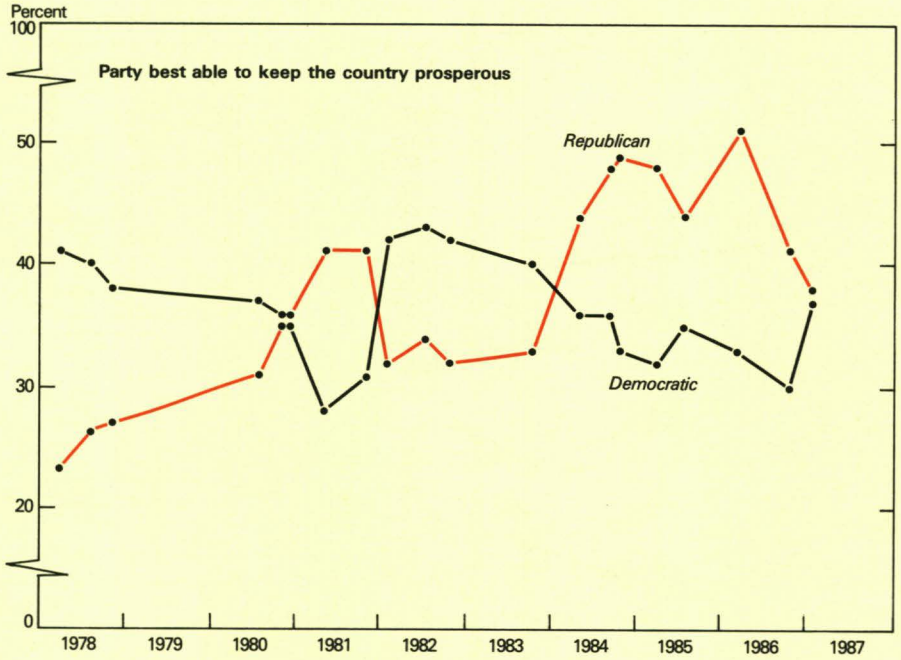
VOTING AND REGISTRATION STATS

	Total population (millions)	Voting age population (millions)	Percent registered to vote			Percent voted
			Total	White	Black	Total
1964	192.1	110.6	—			62
1968	201.1	116.5	74.3	75.4	66.2	61
1972	209.8	136.2	72.3	73.4	65.5	56
1976	218.0	146.5	66.7	68.3	58.5	54
1980	227.7	157.0	66.9	68.4	60.0	53
1984	237.0	169.9	68.3	69.6	66.3	53
1988 (projection)	245.3*	181.7	?			?

Note: *Census middle series projection.
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Turnout figures from *Public Opinion*, December/January 1985.

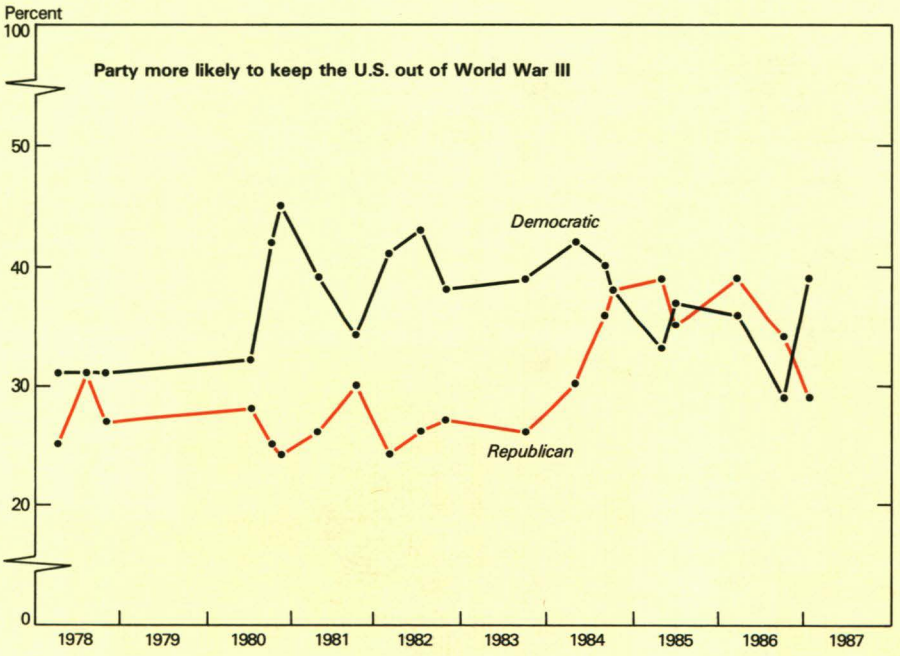
Party

Question: Looking ahead for the next years, which political party—the Republican or the Democratic—do you think will do a better job of keeping the country prosperous?



	Rep.	Dem.
1978		
March	23%	42%
July	26	40
October	27	38
1980		
June	31	37
September	35	36
October	35	36
1981		
April	41	28
October	41	31
1982		
February	32	42
June	34	43
October	32	42
1983		
October	33	40
1984		
April	44	36
August	48	36
September	49	33
1985		
March	48	32
June	44	35
1986		
March	51	33
October	41	30
1987		
January	38	37

Question: Which political party do you think would be more likely to keep the United States out of World War III—the Republican or the Democratic party?

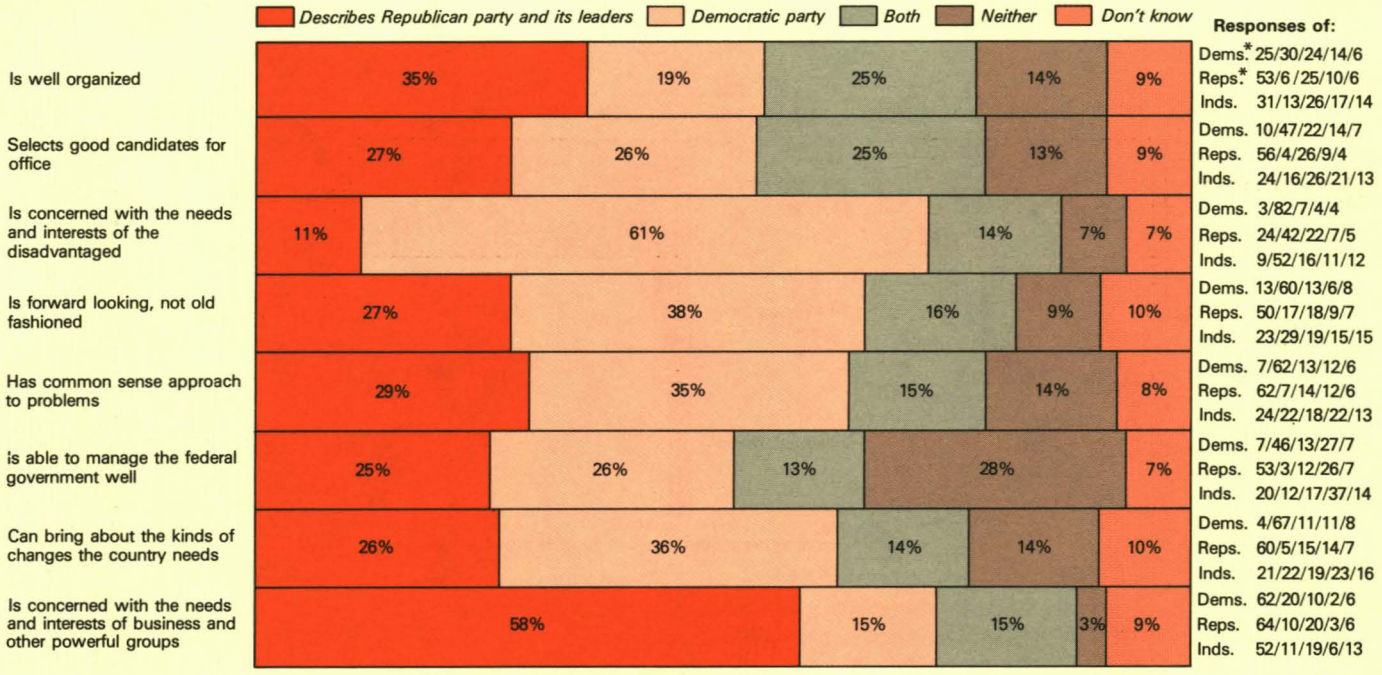


	Rep.	Dem.
1978		
March	25%	31%
July	31	31
October	27	31
1980		
June	28	32
September	25	42
October	24	45
1981		
April	26	39
October	30	34
1982		
February	24	41
June	26	42
October	27	38
1983		
September	26	39
1984		
April	30	42
August	36	40
September	38	38
1985		
March	39	33
June	35	37
1986		
March	39	36
October	34	29
1987		
January	29	39

Note: The responses "No difference" (vol.) and "No opinion" are not shown.
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of January 16-19, 1987.

Images

Question: (Hand respondent card) Now I'm going to read you a few phrases. For each, I'd like you to tell me whether you think that the phrase better describes the Republican party or the Democratic party. How about . . .? Does that more accurately describe the Republican party and its leaders or the Democratic party and its leaders?



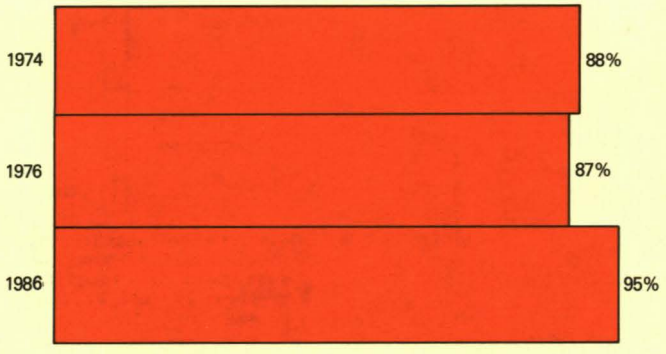
Note: Democrats = Democrats plus those leaning Democratic; Republicans = Republicans plus those leaning Republican.

Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for the Times-Mirror Corporation, April 25-May 10, 1987.

A Nation's Confidence

Question: How much confidence do you have in the future of the United States: quite a lot, some, very little, or none at all?

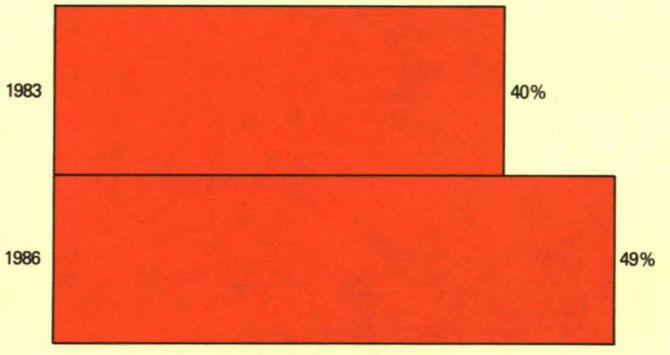
Quite a lot/some confidence in future of United States



Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of June 9-16, 1986.

Question: Since the time this country was settled, the United States has been called the Land of Opportunity. Do you think there are more opportunities for Americans today than in the past, or less opportunities today, or about the same as in the past?

More opportunities for Americans today than in the past

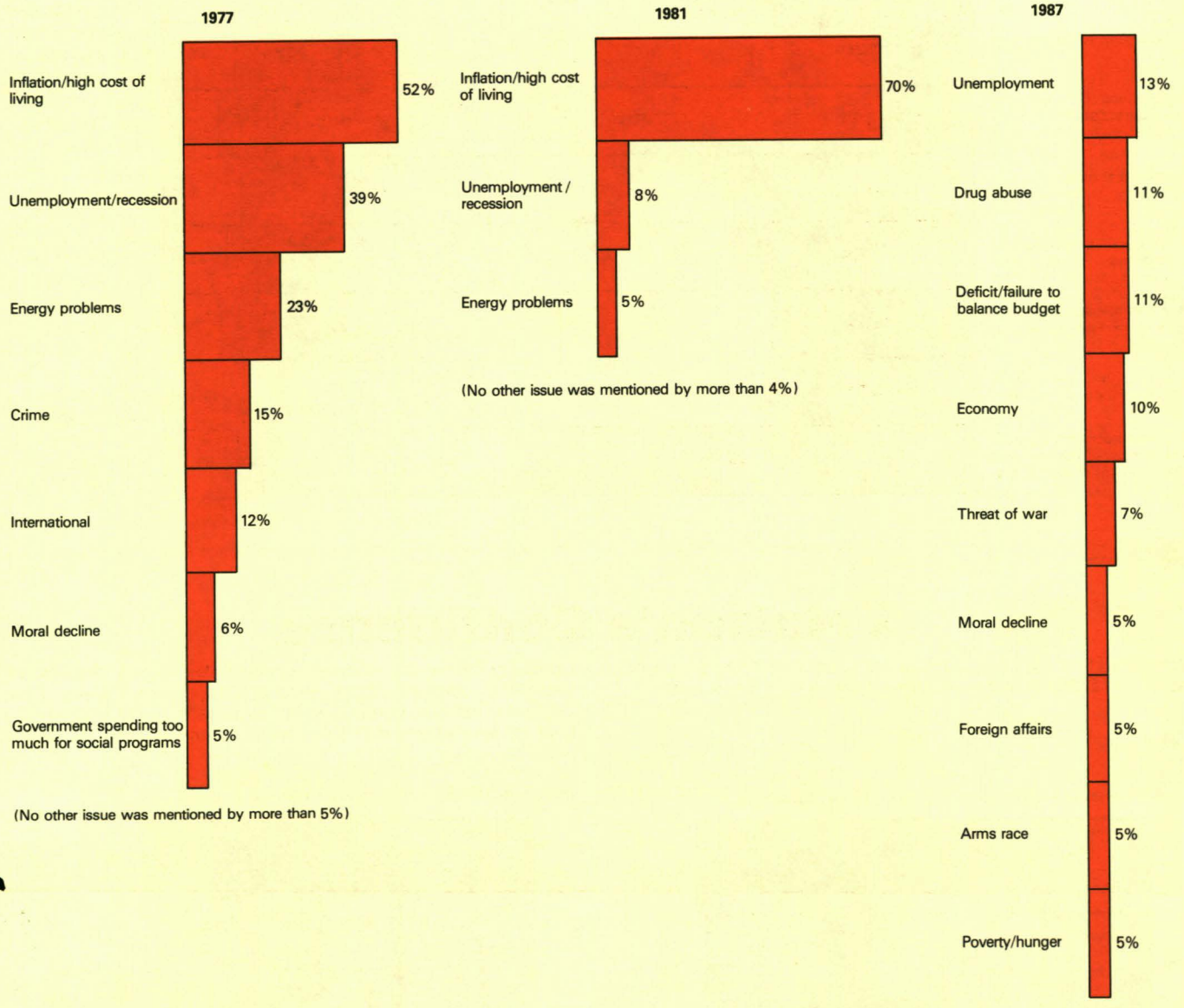


Note: "Fewer opportunities" = 34% in 1983, 24% in 1986. "Same" = 25% and 26%.

Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization, 1983; the Roper for the *Wall Street Journal*, October, 1986.

Most Important

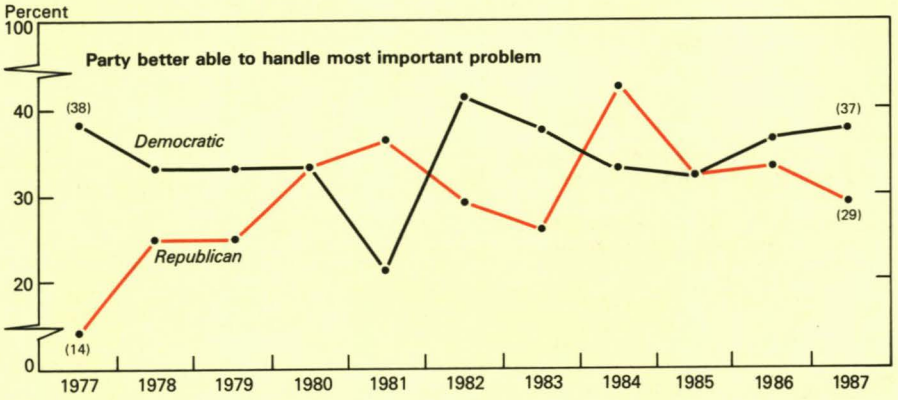
This is on open-ended question where respondents can give the pollsters any answer they wish. The responses are then coded into manageable categories by Gallup. The responses provide a striking picture of the public mood. Inflation and the high cost of living—an issue that dominated political discourse in 1977 and 1981—was mentioned by only 2% in 1987.



Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of April-May, 1987.

Problems

Question: Which political party do you think can do a better job of handling the problem you have just mentioned as the most important problem facing the country, the Republican party or the Democratic party?



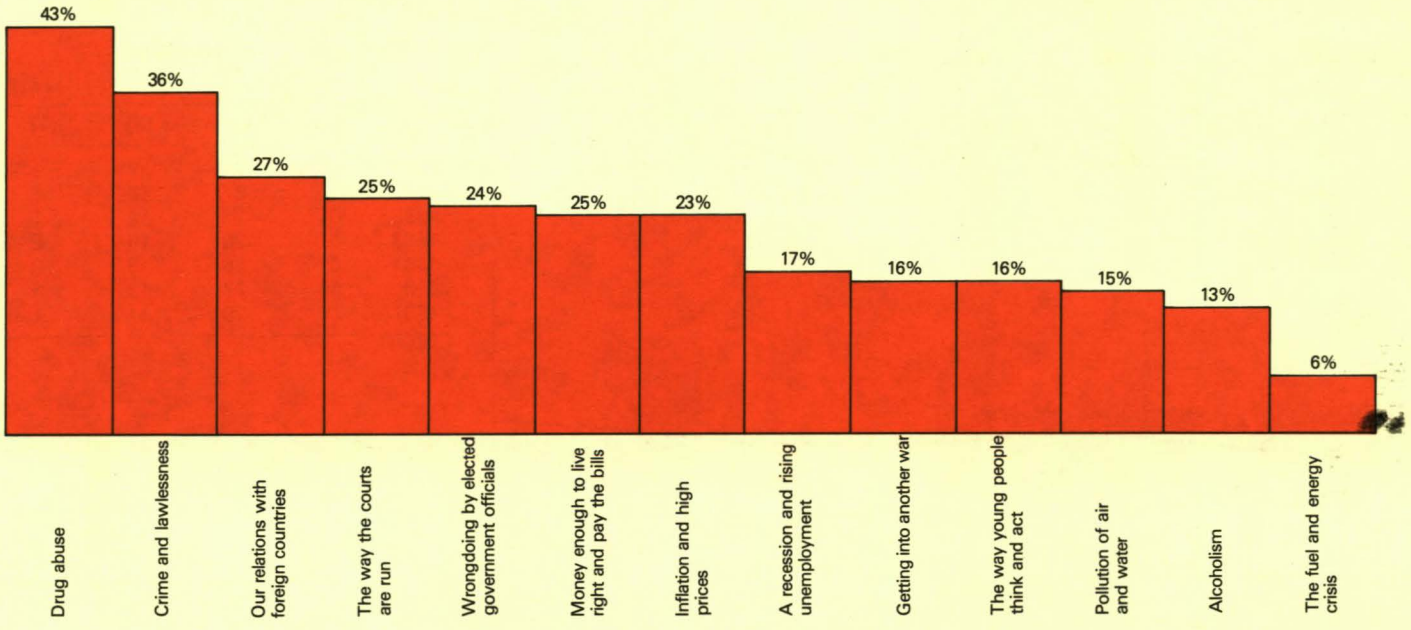
	Rep.	Dem.
1977	14%	38%
1978	25	33
1979	25	33
1980	33	33
1981	36	21
1982	29	41
1983	26	37
1984	42	33
1985	32	32
1986	33	36
1987	29	37

Note: Percentage shown is latest available each year.
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of April 10-13, 1987.

This question gives respondents a list of concerns. They are asked to select two or three that concern them personally. The results differ from the Gallup open-ended question, and give us a different perspective about Americans' concerns.

Question: Here is a list of things people have told us they are concerned about today. (Card shown respondent) Would you read over that list and then tell me which 2 or 3 *you personally* are most concerned about today.

Personally most concerned about today (1987)



1983	17%	33%	17%	27%	27%	46%	17%	50%	14%	11%	8%	6%	13%
1977	21	40	9	27	28	48	22	19	8	17	13	7	31

Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 87-2), latest that of January 10-24, 1987.

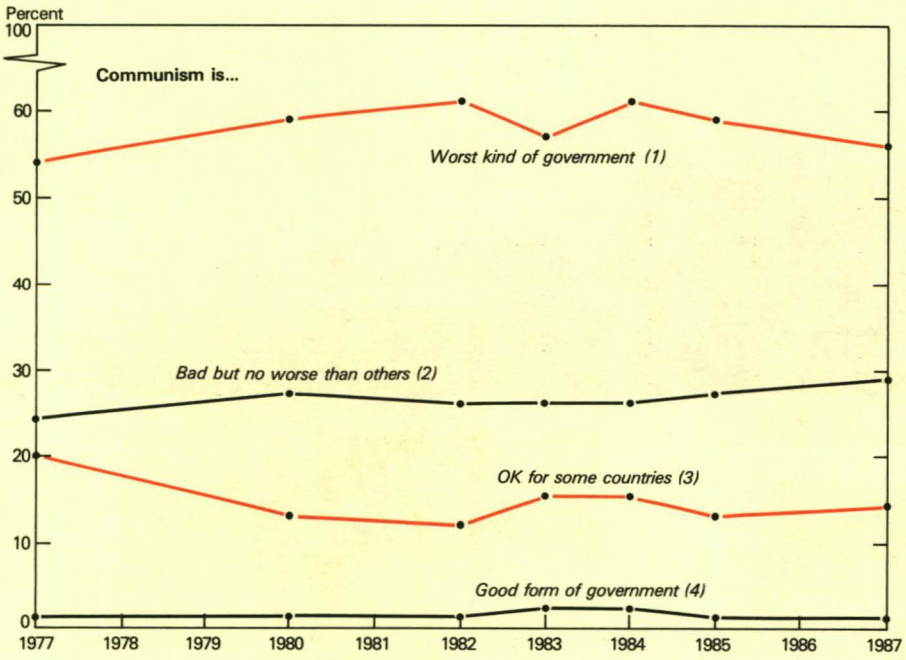
Our

Question: In your opinion, which of the following best describes Russia's primary objective in world affairs? (Card shown respondent)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
6/78	7%	25%	34%	23%
10/79	9	30	37	18
2/80	5	18	34	39
11/80	5	21	38	28
9/81	6	18	35	34
3/83	9	23	34	29
9/84	7	28	38	20
9/85	8	29	35	20
3/86	8	30	36	18
5/87	9	31	37	17

Note: "Don't know" not shown. It was 11%, 6%, 4%, 8%, 7%, 5%, 8%, 9%, 9%, and 5%.
Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 87-5), latest that of April 25-May 2, 1987.

Question: Thinking about all the different kinds of governments in the world today, which of these statements comes closest to how you feel about communism as a form of government?

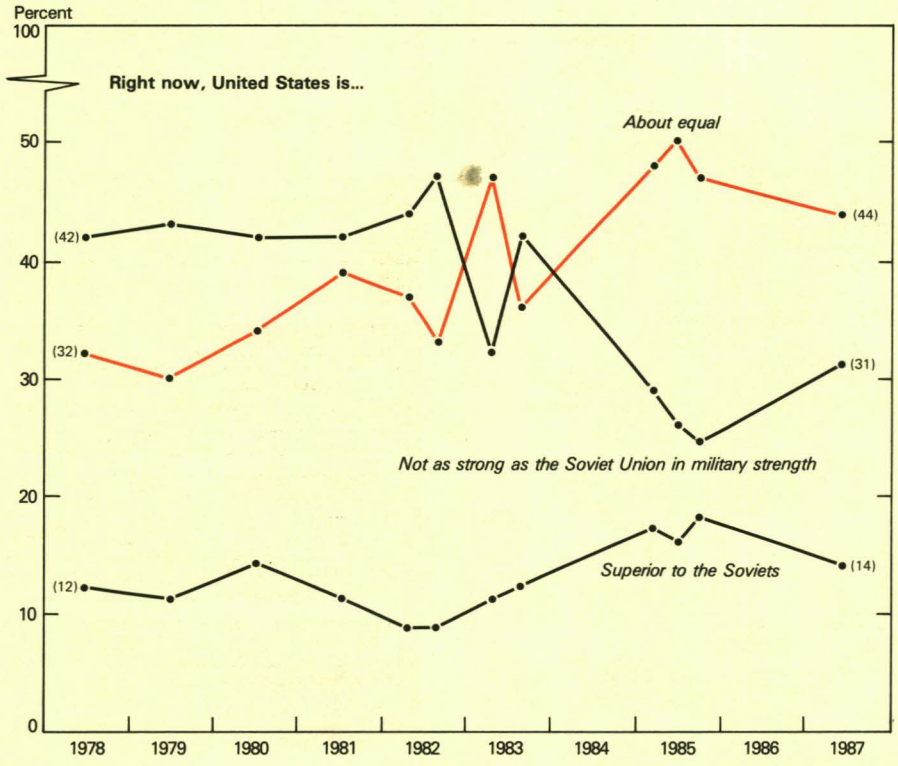


	Communism is . . .			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1977	54%	24%	20%	1%
1980	59	27	13	1
1982	61	26	12	1
1983	57	26	15	2
1984	61	26	15	2
1985	59	27	13	1
1987	56	29	14	1

Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey, latest that of February-April 1987.

World View

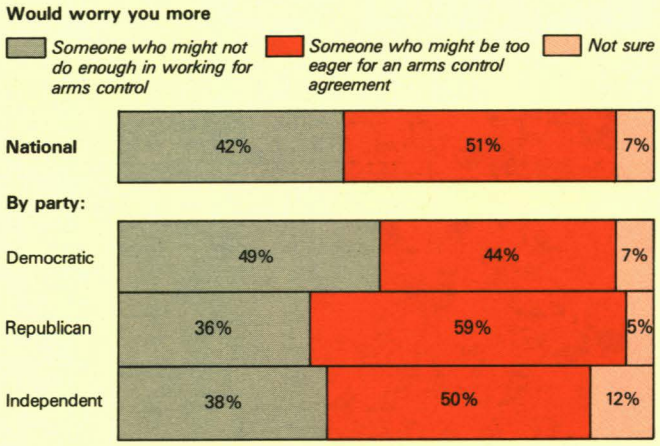
Question: Right now, would you say the United States is superior in military strength to the Soviet Union, is about equal in strength, or is not as strong as the Soviet Union?



	U.S. superior to Soviets	About equal	Not as strong
1978	12%	32%	42%
1979	11	30	43
1980	14	34	42
1981	11	39	42
1982	9	37	44
	9	33	47
1983	11	47	32
	12	36	42
1985	17	48	29
	16	50	26
	18	47	25
1987	14	44	31

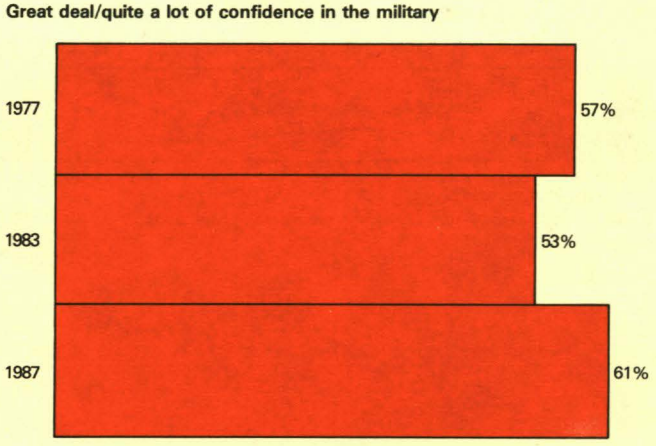
Note: Sample size for September 1985 = 1,277. "No opinion" not shown.
Source: Surveys by CBS News/*New York Times*, latest that of September 9-10, 1987.

Question: And which would tend to worry you more—someone who might not do enough in working for arms control with the Russians, or someone who might be too eager for an arms control agreement with the Russians?



Source: Surveys by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, May 18-19, 1987.

Question: I'm going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Would you tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one? . . .



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, latest that of July 7-13, 1987.

Assessing the Rol

Question: We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount? . . .

	Federal spending as percent of GNP	Federal deficit as percent of GNP
1977	21%	2.8%
1981	22	2.6
1983	24	6.1
1987	25	3.3

Source: *Economic Indicators.*

Defense Spending as a Percent of GNP	
1977	5.1%
1981	5.2
1983	6.2
1987	6.3

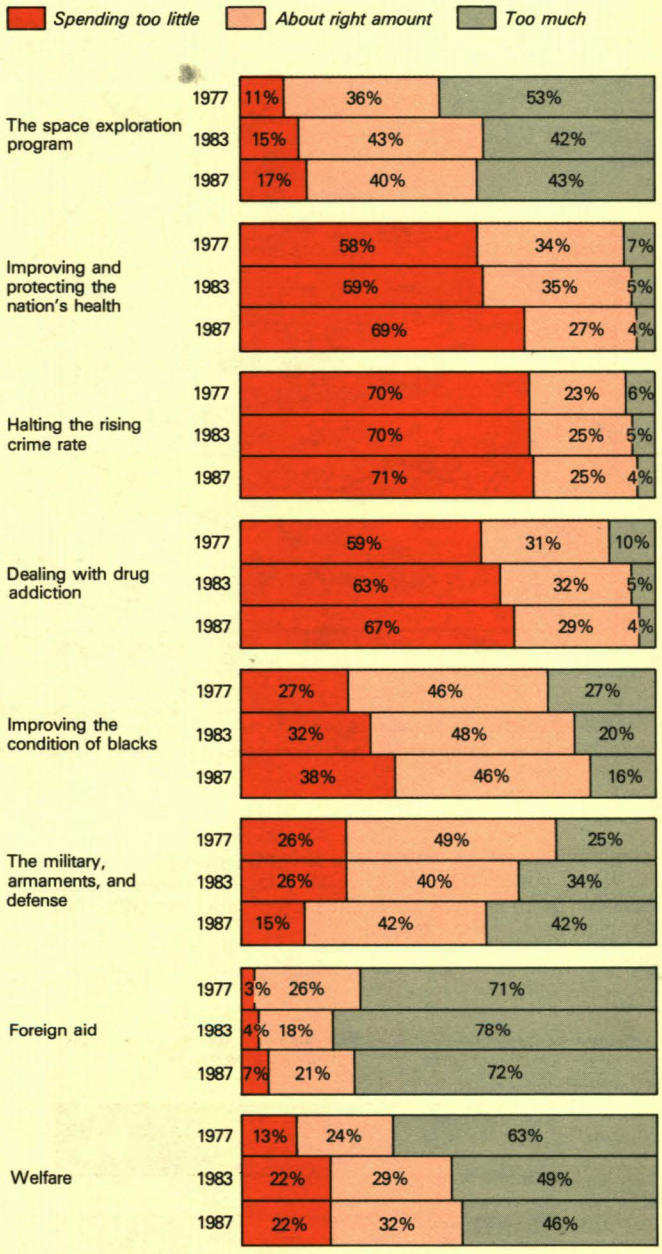
Source: *Economic Indicators.*

Poverty Statistics

	By current "poverty" definition		Alternate definition*	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1977	24.7 million	11.6%	NA	
1982	34.4	15	29.1 million	12.7
1986	32.4	13.6		

Note: *This measure takes into consideration "in kind" services (food stamps, Medicare, etc.) when calculating the poverty rate.

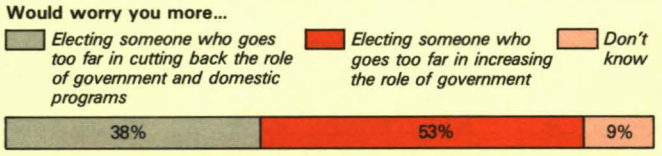
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.



Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey, latest that of February-April 1987.

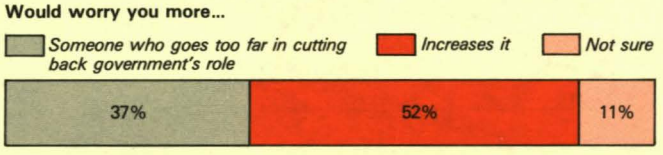
le of Government

Question: In electing the next president, which would tend to worry you more—electing someone who goes too far in cutting back on the role of government and domestic programs, or electing someone who goes too far in increasing the role of government and domestic spending?



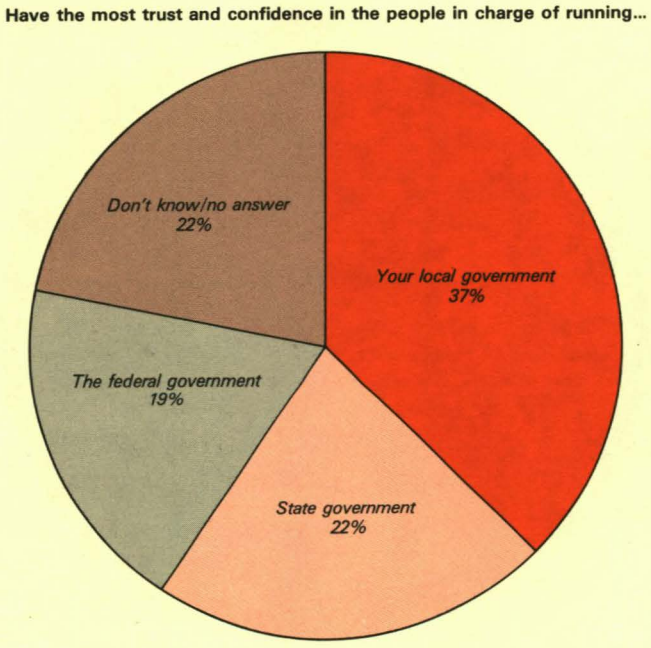
Source: Survey by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, May 18-19, 1987.

Question: When you think in general terms about electing a president, what would worry you more—electing someone who goes too far in cutting back on the role of government and domestic programs, or electing someone who goes too far in increasing the role of government and domestic spending?



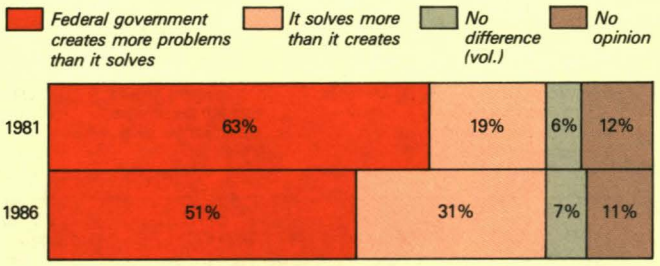
Source: Survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. for KidsPac, June 17-24, 1987.

Question: In which of the following people in government do you have the most trust and confidence?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, June 6-14, 1987.

Question: Do you think that, in general, the federal government creates more problems than it solves, or do you think it solves more than it creates?



Source: Surveys by CBS News/*New York Times*, latest that of January 19-23, 1987.

Employment by Sector

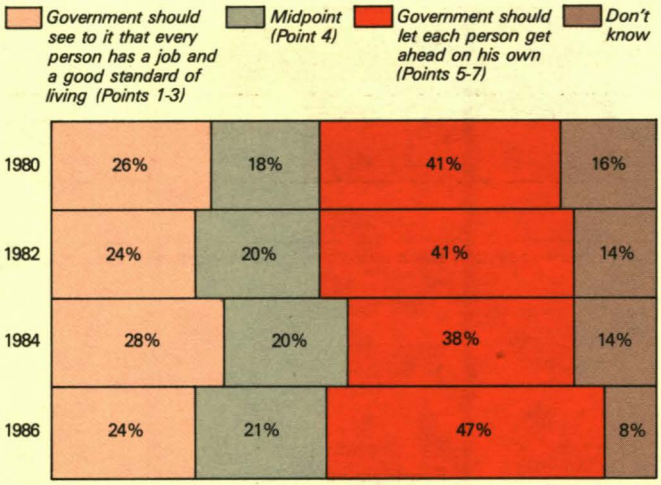
	Agriculture Number/Percent	Blue collar/ Production Number/Percent	White collar/ Service Number/Percent
1975	2.9 mil. 3.4%	28.3 mil. 33%	54.5 mil. 64%
1986	3.4 mil. 3.1	30.1 mil. 27.5	74.2 mil. 67

Number of Government Employees*

	Federal	State and local
1977	2,848 million	12,084 million
1981	2,865	13,103
1985	3,021	13,669

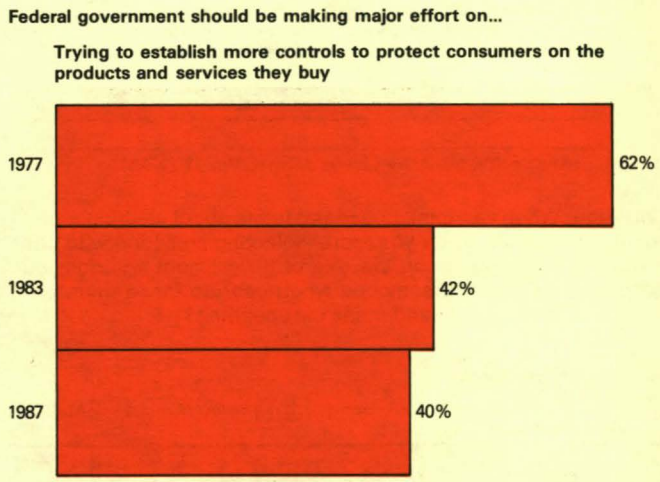
Note: * = civilian.
Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1987.*

Question: In general, some people feel that the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on his own. Where would you place yourself on this scale or haven't you thought much about this?



Source: Surveys by the Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, American National Election Study, latest that of 1986.

Question: There are many problems facing our nation today. But at certain times some things are more important than others, and need more attention from the federal government than others. (Card shown to respondent) I'd like to know for each of the things on this list whether you think it is something the government should be making a major effort on now, or something not needing any particular government effort now. First . . .



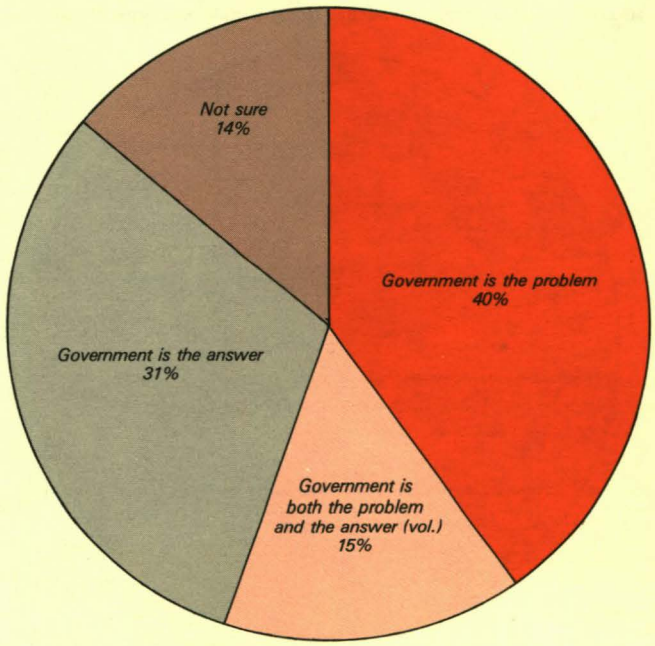
Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 87-6), latest that of May 16-30, 1987.

Per Capita Income
(1982 dollars)

1977	$ 9,381
1980	9,722
1986	10,780

Source: *Economic Report of the President*, January 1987.

Question: Generally speaking, do you think that government is the problem or the answer?



Source: Survey by the *Los Angeles Times*, February 20-23, 1987.

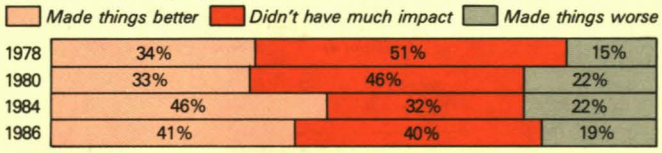
Poverty Rates

	Percent of people under age eighteen in poverty	Percent of people over age sixty-five in poverty
1977	14.9%	24.6%
1980	17.9	15.7
1986	19.8	12.4

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Question: There were many government programs created in the 1960s to try to improve the condition of poor people in this country. Do you think these programs generally made things better, made things worse, or do you think they didn't have much impact one way or another?

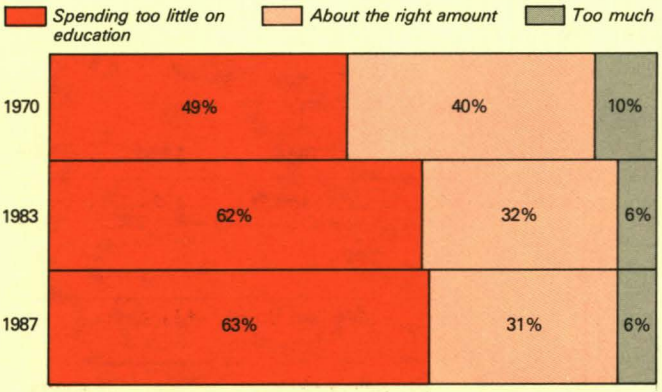
Government programs created in the 1960s to try to improve the condition of poor people



Source: Survey by CBS News/*New York Times*, latest that of January 19-23, 1987.

Education

Question: (see page 30)



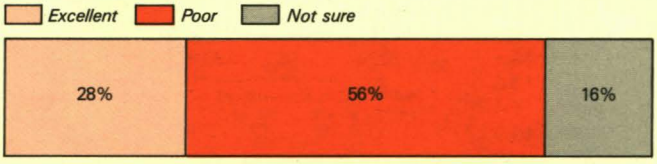
Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey, latest that of February-April 1987.

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1985
Percent of adults with high school diplomas	24.5	34.3	41.1	55.2	68.6	73.9
Percent of adults with college degree	4.6	6.2	7.7	11.0	17.0	19.4
Percent of U.S. population engaged in education (student, teacher, administrator)	23	21	25	30	27	26
Expenditures for elementary/ secondary education (in billions of $)	3	6	17	43	103	149
Expenditures for higher education (in billions of $)	.6	3	7	25	62	98
Combined math and verbal scores on Scholastic Aptitude Test	—	970	975	948	890	906
Percent of Gross National Product devoted to education	3.5	3.4	4.8	7.1	6.6	6.6

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Census Bureau, Educational Testing Service.

Question: How would you describe the education standards in our schools today? Would you describe them, in general, as being excellent or poor?

Education standards in schools today are ...



Source: Survey by *Time*/Yankelovich Clancy Shulman, February 17-18, 1987.

Question: How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give the public schools nationally? . . .

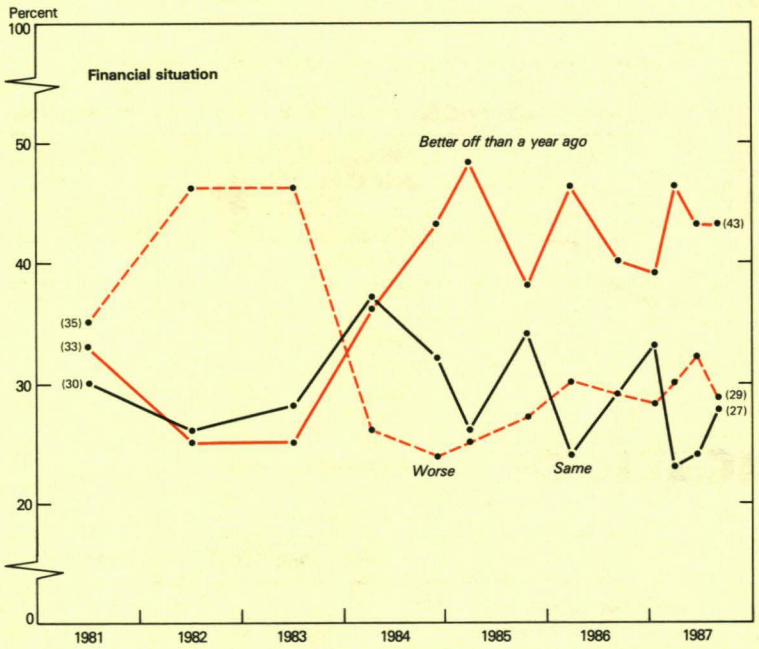
Would give public schools nationally . . .

	A	B	C	D	Fail
1981	2%	18%	43%	15%	6%
1986	3	25	41	10	5

Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for *Phi Delta Kappan* and the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, latest that of 1986.

Economic

Question: We are interested in how people's financial situations may have changed. Would you say that you are financially better off now than you were a year ago, or are you financially worse off now?



	Better	Same	Worse
1981	33%	30%	35%
1982	25	26	46
1983	25	28	46
1984			
March	36	37	26
Nov./Dec.	43	32	24
1985			
March	48	26	25
October	38	34	27
1986			
March	46	24	30
September	40	29	29
1987			
January	39	33	28
March	46	23	30
June	43	24	32
Aug./Sept.	43	27	29

Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of August 24-September 2, 1987.

Dow Jones Industrial Average	1970	1972	1974	1976	1978	1980	1982	1984	1986
12/31	821.51	1020.32	596.50	976.86	807.94	945.96	1033.08	1188.96	1924.07

	Inflation rate (December to December)	Labor force participation rate	Male labor force participation rate	Female labor force participation rate	Unemployment rate (All workers)	Unemployment rate for men who head families	Unemployment rate for women who head families	Median duration of unemployment (weeks)	Misery Index
					(Civilian)				
1970	5.5%	60%	80%	43%	4.8%	2.6%	5.4%	4.9	10.3
1971	3.4	60	79	43	5.8	3.2	7.3	6.3	9.2
1972	3.4	60	79	44	5.5	2.8	7.2	6.2	8.9
1973	8.8	61	79	45	4.8	2.3	7.1	5.2	13.6
1974	12.2	61	79	46	5.5	2.7	7.0	5.2	17.7
1975	7.0	61	78	46	8.3	5.1	10.0	8.4	15.3
1976	4.8	62	78	47	7.6	4.2	10.0	8.2	12.4
1977	6.8	62	78	48	6.9	3.6	9.4	7.0	13.7
1978	9.0	63	78	50	6.0	2.8	8.5	5.9	15.0
1979	13.3	64	78	51	5.8	2.8	8.3	5.4	19.1
1980	12.4	64	77	52	7.0	4.2	9.2	6.5	19.4
1981	8.9	64	77	52	7.5	4.3	10.4	6.9	16.4
1982	3.9	64	77	53	9.5	6.5	11.7	8.7	13.4
1983	3.8	64	76	53	9.5	6.5	12.2	10.1	13.3
1984	4.0	64	76	54	7.4	4.6	10.3	7.9	11.4
1985	3.8	65	76	55	7.1	4.3	10.4	6.8	10.9
1986	1.1	65	76	55	6.9	4.4	9.8	6.9	8.0

Note: The Misery Index = the unemployment rate + the inflation rate.
Source: *Economic Report of the President*, January 1987. Misery Index, *Public Opinion* calculation.

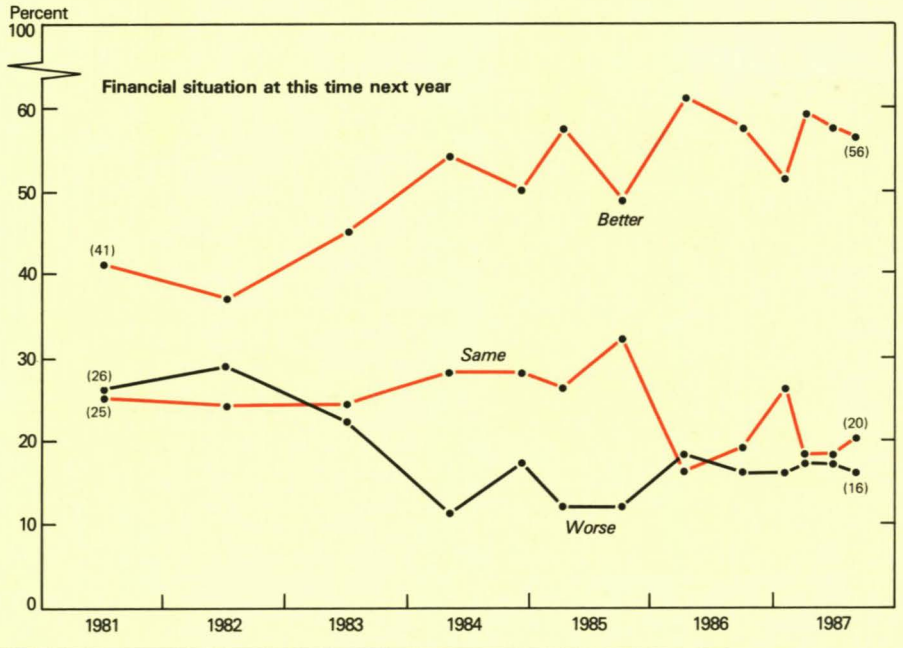
Median Household Income
(in 1986 dollars)

		Change
All households		
1980	$23,564	
1986	24,897	+6%
For married couple's households		
1980	$30,800	
1986	32,805	+7%
For female-headed households		
1980	$14,400	
1986	13,647	—5%
For households headed by 35-44 year olds		
1980	$31,400	
1986	32,787	+4%
For households headed by 45-54 year olds		
1980	$33,400	
1986	35,660	+7%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Indicators

Question: Looking ahead, do you expect that at this time next year you will be financially better off than now or worse off than now?



Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of August 24-September 2, 1987.

	Better	Same	Worse
1981	41%	25%	26%
1982	37	24	29
1983	45	24	22
1984			
March	54	28	11
Nov./Dec.	50	28	17
1985			
March	57	26	12
October	49	32	12
1986			
March	61	16	18
September	57	19	16
1987			
January	51	26	16
March	59	18	17
June	57	18	17
Aug./Sept.	56	20	16

Late poll: Gallup/*Newsweek*

October 22-23, 1987

Better	52%
Same	16
Worse	21

Business Failures

	Number	Total failure liability (billions of dollars)	Failure rate per 10,000 listed concerns
1984	52,078	29	107
1985	57,253	37	115
1986p	61,232	44	120

Note: p = preliminary.
Source: The Dun & Bradstreet Corporation, *Business Failure Record.*

Business Startups

	Number of firms	Number of employees
1985	249,770	1,360,015
1986	251,597	1,220,003

Source: The Dun & Bradstreet Corporation, *Business Starts Record.*

Number of Farms and Land in Farms

(percent change)

	United States		Midwest		Iowa	
	Farms	Acres	Farms	Acres	Farms	Acres
1960-65	—14.2	—1.4	— 1.3	— .8	—11.0	0
1970-75	1.3	1.6	—11.8	— .9	— 3.1	1.8
1980-86	— 9.0	—3.0	— 9.9	—1.3	— 8.4	— .6

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Farm Real Estate Market Developments.*

Dollar Value of Farmland

(dollars per acre)

	United States	Iowa
1965	146	279
1970	195	392
1975	339	719
1980	737	1,840
1986	596	841

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Farm Real Estate Market Developments.*

Farm Failures

1984	1,988
1985	2,699
1986	2,622
1987*	2,804

Note: * = First 7 months.
Source: The Dun & Bradstreet Corporation.

GETTING BY

Question: What is the smallest amount of money your family needs each week to get along in this community?

	Median Estimate
1977	$152
1978	198
1979	199
1980	203
1981	248
1982	248
1983	249
1984	252
1985	298
1986	300

Note: The median estimate is the mid-point of the dollar amounts reported. One-half of the sample is above and one-half is below the median dollar amount.
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, latest that of March 7-10, 1987.

McDonald's

	1977	1987
Hamburger and fries	$ .60	$1.07

Note: Suggested price. Prices vary by region.
Source: McDonald's.

Cost of Raising a Child to age 18*
(thousands of dollars)

1981	
in urban area	76.2
in rural area	71.1
1986	
in urban area	92.2
in rural area	85.9

Note: *In a husband-wife family with no more than 5 children present. Estimates are for Midwest (considered appropriate for a U.S. average).
Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Family Economics Research Group.

Children and Poverty

	Poverty rate for children under 18 (percent)	
	In all families	In female-headed families
1970	14.9	53.0
1975	16.8	52.7
1980	17.9	50.8
1985	20.1	53.6

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

	Pupil-teacher ratio (K-12)	Expenditure per pupil in average daily attendance in public schools (constant 1985-86 dollars)
1970	22.3	—
1975	20.4	$3,329
1980	19.0	3,471
1985	17.9	4,051 (est.)

Source: U.S. Department of Education.

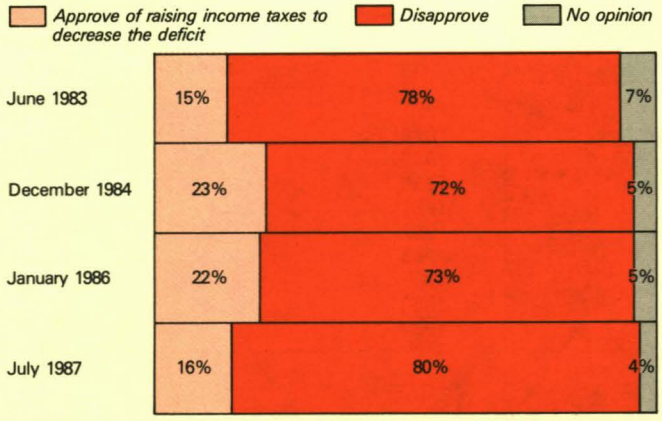
Food Prices

	1977	1987
5 lbs. sugar	$ .87	$1.83
1 gal. milk	1.27	1.99
1 lb. butter	.69	2.14
1 lb. hamburger	.69	1.49
1 doz. eggs	.69	.69
1 loaf bread	.44	.50

Note: Washington area prices.
Source: Supermarket advertisements (1977), Safeway (1987).

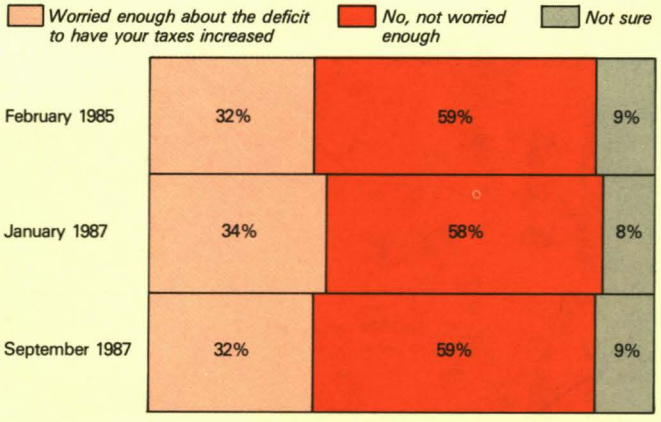
THE DEFICIT AND TAXES

Question: Basically, there are only a few ways this deficit can be reduced. Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of each of the following ways to reduce the deficit.



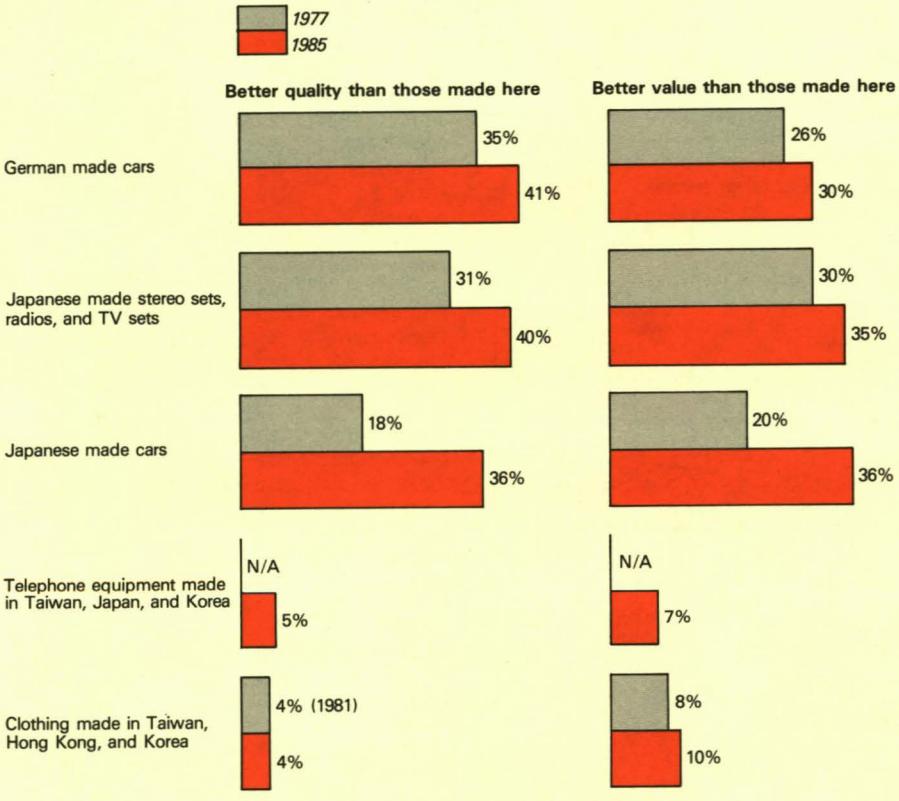
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of July 10-13, 1987.

Question: Are you worried enough about the federal budget deficit to be willing to have your income taxes increased to reduce it, or not?



Source: Survey by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, latest that of September 21-22, 1987.

Question: Now here is a list of some of the kinds of imported products now being sold in this country. (Card shown respondent) Would you read down that list and for each one tell me whether you think the products are usually better quality than those made here, about the same quality as those made here, or not as good quality as those made here? . . . Now would you tell me for each of those products whether you think they are usually a better value for the dollar than those made here, about equal value for the dollar, or not as good value for the dollar as those made here? . . .



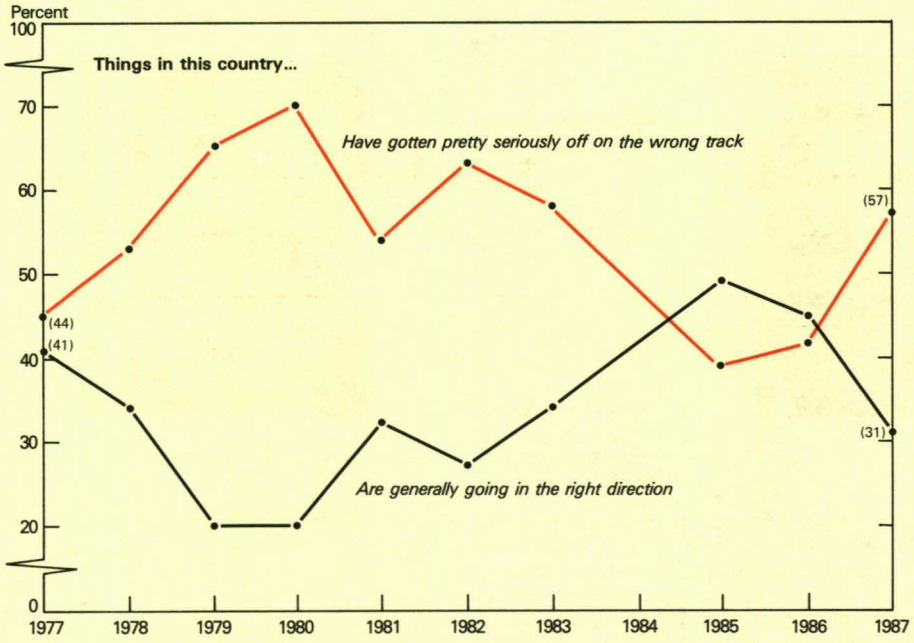
Note: In 1985, the "about the same" responses were (in the order shown above) 29%, 33%, 32%, 22%, and 24%. The "not as good quality" responses were 14%, 17%, 21%, 47%, and 64%. The "about equal value" responses were 31%, 34%, 32%, 23%, and 24%. The "not as good value" responses were 22%, 19%, 21%, 58%, and 44%.

Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 85-10), latest that of October 26-November 2, 1985.

	Exports of goods and services	Imports of goods and services
	(billions of 1982 dollars)	
1970	178	208
1971	179	209
1972	195	245
1973	242	274
1974	269	268
1975	260	241
1976	274	285
1977	282	317
1978	313	339
1979	357	353
1980	389	332
1981	393	343
1982	362	336
1983	348	368
1984	370	453
1985	362	471
1986p	371	521

Societal Indicators

Question: Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction today, or do you feel that things have gotten seriously off on the wrong track?

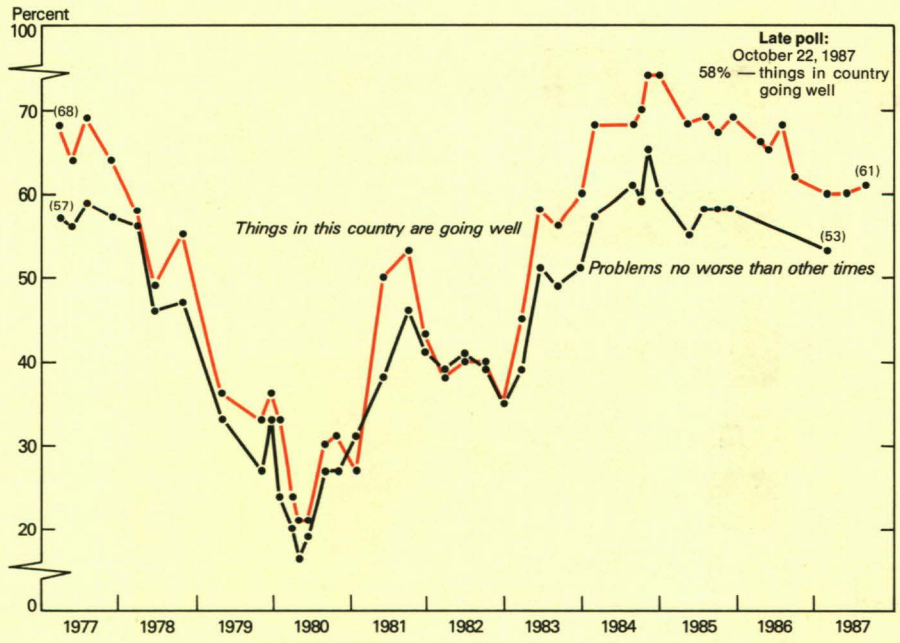


	Right direction	Wrong track
1977	41%	44%
1978	34	53
1979	20	65
1980	20	70
1981	32	54
1982	27	63
1983	34	58
1985	49	39
1986	45	42
1987	31	57

Note: A September 17-23, 1987 ABC News/*Washington Post* question found that 43% said "going in the right direction" and 54% said "the country was off on the wrong track."
Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization (Roper Reports 87-3), latest that of February 14-28, 1987.

Question: How do you feel things are going in the country these days—very well, fairly well, pretty badly, or very badly? (1)

Question: In commenting on how things are going in the country, some people tell us that the problems we face are no worse than at any other time in recent years. Others say the country is really in deep and serious trouble today. Which comes closest to your own feelings—the fact that: Problems are no worse than at other times. . . . The country is in deep and serious trouble? (2)

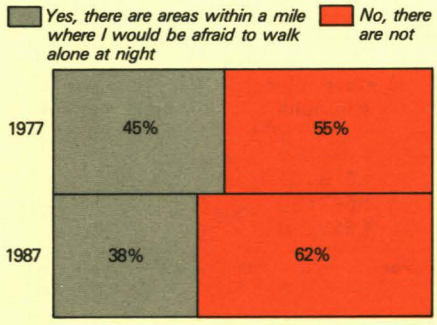


Source: Survey by *Time*/Yankelovich Clancy Shulman, latest that of October 22, 1987.

	Problems no worse than other times (2)	Things in this country are going well (1)
March 1977	57%	68%
May	56	64
July	59	69
November	57	64
March 1978	56	53
May/June	46	49
October	47	55
April 1979	33	36
October	27	33
December	33	36
January 1980	24	34
mid-March	20	24
late March	16	21
May	19	21
August	27	30
October	27	31
January 1981	31	27
May	38	50
September	46	53
December	41	43
March 1982	39	38
June	41	40
October	39	40
December	35	35
March 1983	39	45
June	51	58
September	49	56
December	51	60
February 1984	57	68
August	61	68
September	59	70
October	65	74
December	60	74
May 1985	55	68
July	58	69
September	58	67
November	58	69
April 1986	—	66
May	—	65
July	—	68
September	—	62
February 1987	53	60
May	—	60
August	—	61

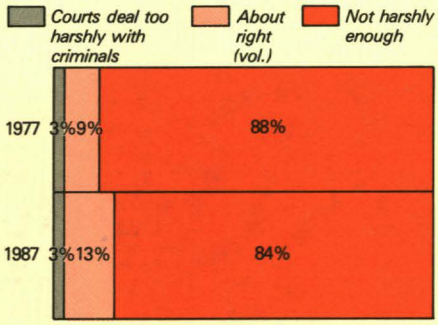
CRIME

Question: Is there any area right around here—that is, within a mile—where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?



Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey, latest that of February-April, 1987.

Question: In general, do you think the courts in this area deal too harshly or not harshly enough with criminals?



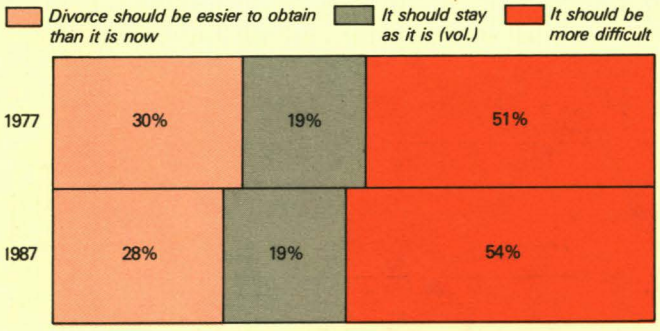
Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey, latest that of February-April, 1987.

Criminal Victimizations	
1981	41.5 million
1985	34.9 million
1986	34.1 million

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

DIVORCE

Question: Should divorce in this country be easier or more difficult to obtain than it is now?



Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey, latest that of February-April, 1987.

	Marriages	Divorces
1977	2,178,000	1,091,000
1981	2,422,000	1,213,000
1984p	2,487,000	1,155,000

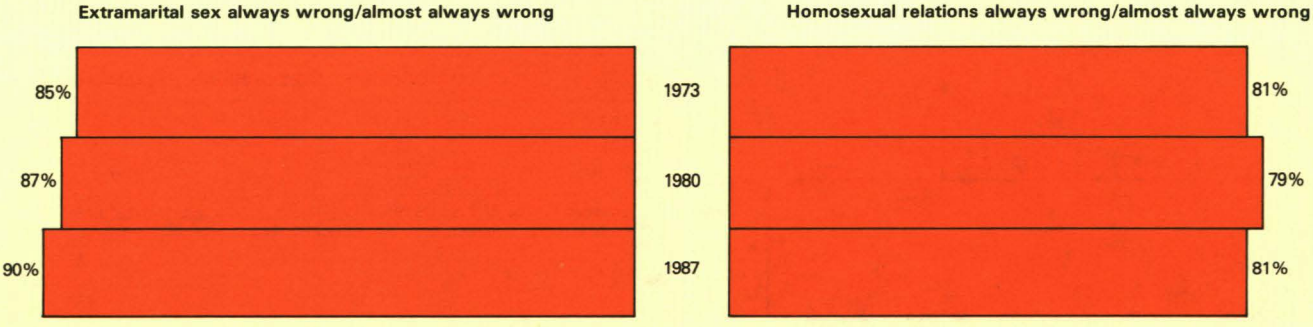
Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1987.*

EXTRAMARITAL SEX

Question: What is your opinion about a married person having sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner—is it always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

HOMOSEXUALITY

Question: What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex—do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?



Source: Surveys by National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey, latest that of February-April, 1987.

ABORTION

Question: Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion. . . .

	Percentage of those who said yes	
	1977	1987
Should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain legal abortion . . .		
If there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby?	86%	79%
If she is married and does not want any more children?	47	42
If the woman's own health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy?	91	89
If the family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children?	54	45
If she becomes pregnant as a result of rape?	84	81
If she is not married and does not want to marry the man?	50	42
If the woman wants it for any reason?	33*	40

Note: * This question was not asked in 1977. This data is from 1978.

Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey, latest that of February-April 1987.

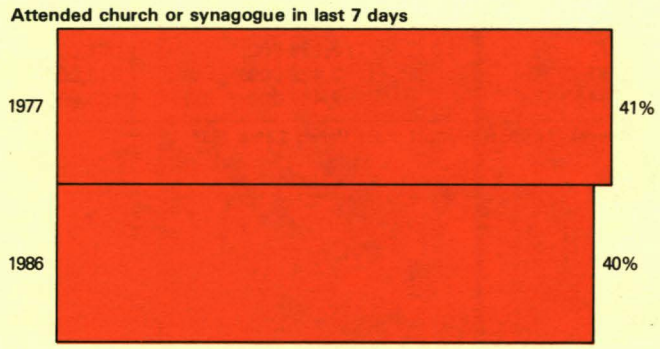
Abortions

	Number of legal abortions	Rate per 1,000 women
1975	1,034,000	21.7
1977	1,316,700	26.4
1981	1,577,000	29.3
1983	1,515,000	27.4

Source: U.S. Center for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia.

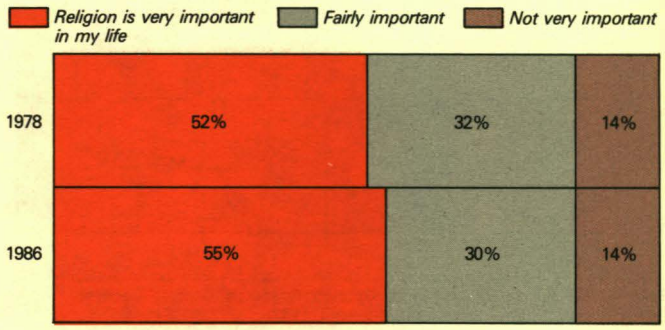
Religious Belief

Question: Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days?



Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of 1986.

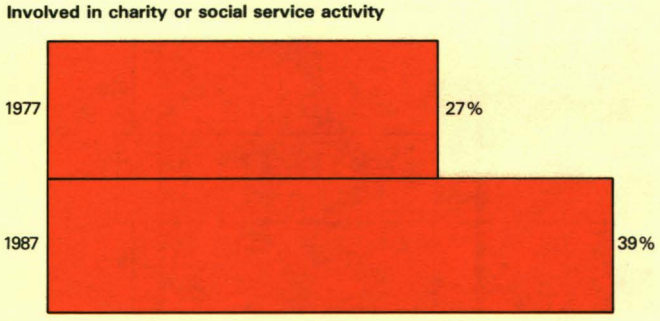
Question: How important would you say religion is in your own life—very important, fairly important, or not very important at all?



Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of 1986.

CHARITABLE ACTIVITY

Question: Do you yourself happen to be involved in any charity or social service activities, such as helping the poor, the sick, or the elderly?



Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of May 4-10, 1987.

Charitable Giving
(billions)

	Individuals	Corporations	Foundations
1977	$29.3	$1.7	$2.0
1980	39.9	2.5	2.4
1986	71.7	4.5	5.2

Source: *Giving U.S.A.*, 1986 Annual Report, American Association of Fund Raising Counsel, Inc., latest that of 1986.

Constructing A Winning Coalition

by Andrew Kohut and Norman Ornstein

For more than six years, through two presidential elections, Ronald Reagan was on a roll, attracting public support and admiration greater than any president since Dwight Eisenhower in the 1950s. Reagan restored America's shattered confidence in its institutions, erasing notions of a misery index, malaise, and maladroit leadership.

No wonder, then, that the Gallup poll in November 1986 showed that nearly two-thirds of the American public approved of Reagan's performance in the White House—a rating significantly higher than the margin of victory he had achieved in the 1984 GOP landslide. Indeed, polls even showed some signs of softening opinion among Reagan's strongest opposition, black Americans, toward the Republican president. And in early 1985, Republicans looked like they were increasing the number and proportion of their party adherents—promising evidence of a long-promised partisan realignment, the possible extension of Reagan's popularity permanently to his party.

Seven years after the 1980 election, the situation is not quite so outstanding. Reagan has not dipped to Truman or Carter nadirs of approval, but he has moved from two-thirds support to a bare majority. While still basically bullish, people have less confidence in the nation's leadership and institutions. The gains in Republican party identification in 1985 have disappeared, dashing hopes that the Reagan coalition will become an enduring Republican coalition. By objective standards, Reagan and the Reagan presidency are healthy in the eyes of the electorate, but the forward roll of the first six years has stopped and begun to move backward.

What has happened to cause such bright hopes to dim? One major factor has been the Iran-Contra affair. In a matter of weeks, it sharply eroded a solid and previously unshakable bloc of public support. But one event alone was not responsible. The nature of the Reagan coalition—the kinds of voters and types of groups that made Reagan's two handsome victories possible and kept his popularity buoyant for so long—also helps explain the abrupt shift in momentum in the president's seventh year.

The Demographics of the Reagan Coalition

In partisan terms, the coalition forged by Ronald Reagan was a combination of three kinds of voters: traditional Republicans; voters who had leaned Republican for years but identified themselves as Independents; and Democrats and Independents who had never before shown any inclination to vote Republican. These partisan groupings reflect broader demographic tendencies.

In 1980 core Republican groups gave Reagan a level of support comparable to all the other postwar Republican candidates except Barry Goldwater. But in 1984, Reagan's support among these GOP partisans skyrocketed. Gallup found that 96 percent of Republicans voted for Reagan, matching or exceeding the highest levels ever recorded for Republican candidates. His support among the broader demographic groups that comprise the traditional Republican vote coalition reflected that partisan consensus (see table 1).

While Reagan captured 59 percent of the overall vote, he achieved 68 percent support among those earning $50,000 or more per year, 71 percent among white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, and 68 percent among households headed by business people or professionals. In both elections, Reagan outpolled his Democratic opponents in small-town and suburban America—two solid Republican territories—and among white Americans, a group that has gone Republican in every presidential election since 1964.

One of the keys to both Reagan victories was the strong support he obtained from Catholics and southerners, two groups that have traditionally leaned Democratic but have at least flirted with the Republican party in national elections since 1968.

In 1980 Ronald Reagan brought a plurality of Catholics to the GOP side, with most exit polls showing his vote among Catholics at just under 50 percent and the Carter vote in the 41 to 46 percent range (the rest went to John Anderson).

But 1984 was another story. A full 61 percent of Catholics supported Reagan's reelection effort. What-

ever vestiges of the New Deal that had kept Catholics from moving to the GOP presidential column in the past were gone—possibly forever.

Like Catholics, southerners had longstanding historical Democratic party loyalties with rare glimmers of partiality to the Republicans. In 1980, Reagan achieved 52 percent of the vote in southern states. But in 1984, that modest margin exploded to a 63 to 37 percent Reagan landslide over Walter Mondale, with the margin considerably stronger among white southerners.

Ronald Reagan was also able to capture support from a demographic group that had shown no previous GOP tendencies. Throughout most of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, young people distinctly favored Democratic candidates over Republican. This tendency was still evident in 1980 when Reagan was only able to split the under thirty vote with Carter. But in 1984, Reagan broke through with a record 60 percent of the under thirty vote, exceeding John F. Kennedy's share in 1960. Among postwar presidents, only LBJ in 1964 outran Ronald Reagan among young people.

Reagan was also able to capture the solid allegiance of men. In 1984, Ronald Reagan got more votes from men than any other presidential candidate in the past nine elections.

Reagan's Impact

Demographic groups overlap, and that limits the utility of pure demographic analysis. But what it can tell us is that the common link among the groups that have supported the president is neither ideology nor political ideas. Rather, it is opinions about Reagan himself and what he represented—and achieved—as a leader. Consider young people in 1984. Polls at the end of the 1984 campaign showed people under thirty consistently reporting that Walter Mondale came closer to their way of thinking than Ronald Reagan on most issues—yet they voted solidly for Reagan. For most voters in 1984, young and old alike, it wasn't where Reagan stood, it was what he accomplished.

If Reagan's performance more than his philosophy undergirded his support, it is not surprising that the level of support dropped with Iran-Contra. The public response was stark: the president's approval rating took the steepest plunge in the fifty-year history of the presidential approval tracking question. Ronald Reagan has lost support virtually across the board. If we compare Reagan's recent approval ratings to the percentage that voted for him in 1984, we find a twelve-point decline overall—from 59 percent of the vote to 47 percent approval (see table 1). The decline shows up in all but two groups: Democrats and blacks. Democrats remained stable: 21 percent approved of the president, matching the percentage who voted for him in 1984. Among blacks, ironically, Reagan's approval rating is actually *higher* than the percentage who voted for him three years ago.

A few groups stand out. In the Midwest and in rural areas fueled by economic problems, Reagan's approval rating fell more sharply than the norm, by 15 and 19 percentage points, respectively. Older voters are also more disillusioned. Young people, however, had a much greater propensity to stand by their man. Reagan's approval ratings were off only 6 points among those under thirty. Catholics, meanwhile, showed less faith in the president than Protestants, falling off by an average 15 points compared to 12 for Protestants.

Why have young people and older voters reacted in the opposite way? Why has Democratic support for Reagan not declined sharply from its already modest levels? Why have Catholics fallen away in greater numbers than Protestants? Answers to questions of this sort are key to understanding the Reagan coalition.

Table 1

DECLINE IN REAGAN SUPPORT BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

	Voted for Reagan in 1984	Approval April 25–May 5, 1987*	Difference
Total	59%	47%	−12
By sex:			
Male	64	52	−12
Female	55	43	−12
By race:			
White	66	52	−14
Nonwhite	13	21	+8
By education:			
Coll. grad.	62	52	−10
Some college	60	50	−10
H. S. grad.	61	49	−12
Less than H. S. grad.	50	38	−12
By age:			
Under 30	60	54	−6
18–24	59	55	−4
25–29	61	52	−9
30–49	60	48	−12
50+	59	42	−17
By race/religion:			
Prot.	61	49	−12
Cath.	61	46	−15
Black	8	19	+11
Hisp.	51	43	−8
By Political ID:			
Rep.	96	81	−15
Dem.	21	21	0
Ind.	67	50	−17
By Household:			
Union	48	41	−7
Non-union	62	49	−13
By region:			
East	54	46	−8
Midwest	58	43	−15
South	63	50	−13
West	60	49	−11
By Metropolitan area:			
Central city	49	42	−7
Suburb	62	50	−12
Rural (non-SMSA)	65	47	−18

*Times Mirror Typology Survey, n = 4,244.

A Typological Look at the Reagan Coalition

Convinced that demographics, ideology, and partisan identification alone were not enough to explain voting patterns and election preferences, the Times Mirror Corporation commissioned Gallup to develop a way to segment the electorate using underlying values. Answers to seventy-two questions on the values that have in the past been tied to political choice elicited nine core beliefs. When those nine beliefs were related to partisan self-identification and to political involvement,

eleven distinct political categories emerged. The categories flesh out our demographic interpretation of the Reagan coalition.

It was Ronald Reagan's political genius that enabled him to weave together four disparate groups. But that success contained the seeds of subsequent decline, when events changed political reality.

Reagan's political foundation started with "Enterprisers" and "Moralists," equal size groups of rock-solid Republicans who voted 96 percent and 98 percent, respectively, for him in 1984. Party loyalty and voting patterns are what these two groups have in common. Enterprisers are driven by economic issues, from a pro-business, anti-government, and free-market position. They are moderately tolerant on lifestyle and social questions. Moralists are characterized by their préoccupation with the social agenda. They are less tolerant of lifestyles unlike their own. They are not hostile to an assertive role for government in the social welfare arena. Enterprisers tend to be affluent, married, suburban, and educated, and Moralists tend to be middle aged, middle income, and southern, from small towns or rural areas.

Despite their different concerns, these two groups showed equal enthusiasm for Ronald Reagan. He was able to motivate Enterprisers with his economic program and Moralists with his soaring and convincing rhetoric about his commitment to the conservative social agenda. The two groups turned out in massive proportions to cast their votes for Reagan; although combined they make up only 21 percent of the overall electorate, Enterprisers and Moralists comprise a full 30 percent of voters.

Thirty percent is a healthy foundation, but it is not enough to build a majority. Reagan went further in his coalition, including two additional groups of Independents who lean to the GOP but remain outside it in their own minds. These two groups, "Upbeats" and "Disaffecteds," voted 86 percent and 81 percent, respectively, for Reagan in 1984—but each voted over twenty percentage points less than that for GOP candidates for Congress in 1986.

Upbeats are clearly a legacy of Ronald Reagan and his presidency. Nine percent of the voting population and 9 percent of likely voters, Upbeats are young (largely under thirty-five), optimistic, white, middle income, strong believers in America, moderate on most issues, and not critical of government, business, or other institutions. Reagan's theme in 1984, "It's morning in America," fits their outlook nearly perfectly.

Disaffecteds—9 percent of the adult population, but only 7 percent of actual voters—are the mirror opposite of the Upbeats. Alienated, pessimistic, down on their own financial status and on most American institutions, middle aged, middle income, middle country, Disaffecteds were attracted to Reagan because of his image as an outsider coming in to clean up the mess in Washington. That worked in 1980; even in 1984, Reagan, the ultimate insider, railed against the "puzzle palaces on the Potomac" and effectively exploited the outsider symbol.

Support from these four groups was the backbone of the president's victory coalition. In addition, Reagan was able to attract a variety of voters from other groups, for a variety of reasons. He captured a majority of a small Democratic-leaning group, the "Followers" —a young, poorly educated, heavily minority group with little interest in politics, who are not high on America but not critical of American institutions. They were attracted to Reagan's incumbency and leadership. Although this group does not vote in large numbers, it still represents 4 percent of likely voters (7 percent of adults), and 54 percent of them voted for Reagan.

Reagan also managed to attract healthy support from several other groups of Democrats or near-Democrats. The "Seculars" are affluent, professional, bicoastal, sophisticated, knowledgeable, nonreligious, and in their mid-thirties to mid-forties. Despite their issue positions and orientations closer to the Democratic party platform than to the GOP or Reagan, more than one-third of them voted for Ronald Reagan in 1984. Many were attracted to Reagan because of the strong economy, but more were turned off by the Democratic party's continuing inability to get its act together.

In addition, Reagan attracted 30 percent each of the votes of "New Dealers," the largest segment of partisan Democrats (11 percent of the population, 15 percent of voters) and of the "Passive Poor," who make up 6 percent of likely voters. The New Dealers, largely in their fifties and sixties, blue collar, anticommunist, 29 percent Catholic, and conservative on social issues like abortion, were also alienated from their own party. They were put off by their perception of the Democratic party's incompetence and its ideological tilt. The Passive Poor were also anticommunist and more accepting of authority and more reverent of American institutions like the presidency.

Looking at the coalition from this typological vantage point, it becomes easier to see why Reagan's support had the demographic profile we described above. We suggested that the president had received substantial support from Catholics, southerners, young people, and men. In addition, Reagan did well in small towns and suburbs, and among professionals and upper-income families. Upbeats, Followers, New Dealers, and the Passive Poor have concentrations of Catholics greater than the national norm; Moralists, Followers, New Dealers, and the Passive Poor are concentrated more than average in the South. Reagan's votes from Catholics and southerners, in other words, came from specific types of Catholics and southerners.

The same phenomenon holds true with age and gender. The extraordinary support for the president among Upbeats—42 percent of whom are under thirty, and 68 percent under forty—provided the backbone for his strength among young people. Young people

show up in substantial numbers in other groups as well, but it is their core among Upbeats that matters for Reagan. Similarly, Enterprisers and Disaffecteds, two groups that are key components of the basic Reagan coalition, are disproportionately male. The electorate as a whole is 48 percent male, Enterprisers are 60 percent male, and Disaffecteds, 57 percent. By contrast, the most heavily female group in the electorate is "Sixties Democrats," a knowledgeable and politically active group that is pro-social welfare, peace-oriented, tolerant on lifestyle issues, and environmentalist. Finally, professional and upper-income people are heavily concentrated among Enterprisers, Seculars, and Sixties Democrats, three groups with sophisticated knowledge about politics but with dramatically different values. Reagan earned some support from each of these three conglomerations, the most from his impressive support among upper-income and professional voters built upon the near-universal backing from the Enterprisers.

Table 2 shows Reagan's decline among these eleven categories of voters, using his 1984 vote as a baseline and comparing it to his approval ratings in 1987. The greatest dropoff comes from the Disaffecteds. For Disaffecteds, cynical about politics and distrustful of politicians, Iran-Contra confirms their worst fears and deepest beliefs: Reagan's just like all the rest of them.

Table 2

DECLINE IN REAGAN SUPPORT BY GALLUP/TIMES MIRROR GROUPS

	Voted for Reagan in 1984	Approved of Reagan May 5, 1987	Difference
Enterprisers	96%	84%	−12
Moralists	96	85	−11
Upbeats	86	71	−15
Disaffecteds	78	49	−29
Bystanders	0	--	--
Followers	54	41	−13
Seculars	34	27	−7
'60s Democrats	25	18	−7
New Dealers	30	27	−3
Passive Poor	31	30	−1
Partisan Poor	19	20	+1

Although the core Republican groups continue to have favorable opinions about the president, his ratings have declined by 12 percentage points among Enterprisers and 11 among Moralists. There is a slightly greater change among Upbeats, who lack the strong partisan anchor of Enterprisers and Moralists. Issue beliefs and partisan sentiments no doubt limit the negative feelings toward the president from the two GOP units; continuing good times and a bullish attitude have kept most Upbeats in the president's camp.

Interestingly, Iran-Contra and the events of the past year have affected the attitudes of Democrats and Democratic leaners toward Reagan less than those of Republicans and Republican leaners. Approval among Seculars and Sixties Democrats dropped only 7 points each; New Dealers and the Passive Poor have barely changed. Seculars, Sixties Democrats, and New Dealers who voted for and/or liked Ronald Reagan are still uneasy with the Democratic party. Lacking a deep commitment to Reagan, they did not feel as let down or disillusioned by the Iran-Contra mess. And, of course, for all of these Democratic or leaning groups, their base of support for the president was half or less of the base among the GOP or GOP-leaning groups, leaving less potential for dramatic dropoff.

An Unstable Coalition

The data have to be disturbing to the president's partisans and to those who have confidently predicted the coming of a new Republican era. The Republican party base had four sturdy legs in 1984—Enterprisers, Moralists, Upbeats, and Disaffecteds—but one, the Disaffecteds, has been sawed in half, and another, the Upbeats, is growing a bit wobbly. While Iran-Contra is the root of the Disaffecteds' defection, the problem goes deeper—back to the fact that, after nearly seven years of this president, the Upbeats and Disaffecteds remain stubbornly independent, unwilling to commit their enduring allegiance to the GOP. Each has liked the president for different reasons, but has not been willing to transfer that affection to a solid partisan attachment. And now their support for the president is diminishing, reducing the chance that they will commit to the GOP or even turn out to vote in 1988.

If the Disaffecteds' disillusionment remains at current levels through the campaign, it is hard to imagine them voting 80-plus percent for the Republican candidate—indeed, it is hard to imagine many of them voting at all. And if times should become more uncertain—and it would not take too many more stock market drops to make it so—the Upbeats would not be so enthusiastic about the GOP. Neither would many affluent Seculars. Moreover, if the Democratic party showed any signs of stability, cohesiveness, and predictability, the defections of New Dealers and Passive Poor would clearly be reduced.

The Reagan coalition cast an exceptionally wide net, attracting some voters for partisan reasons, some because of issues or themes or performance, and some for personality and image reasons. The breadth of the president's base was a major factor in his success in building such a coalition—but that very breadth also contributed to the longer-term instability of the coalition, and to the disappointment of those who hoped that Ronald Reagan could, at long last, build a Republican majority in America. ☑

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Contra-dictions:

PUBLIC AND LEADERSHIP OPINION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

by Mark Falcoff

One of the changes in American foreign policy making in the last dozen years has been the use of foreign opinion to help shape the domestic debate over our international role. In the past Americans knew little about foreigners and foreign countries and professed not to care. Since the Vietnam War, however, a decline in our national self-confidence has raised the relative standing within the United States of "world opinion," usually—as Peter Berger recently noted in *Commentary*—not really the opinion of the citizenry of other countries, but of their leaders and intellectuals, which is quite a different matter.

Central Americans' Concerns

This disjunction between foreign leaders and those they lead is crucial: the value of what is represented as world opinion is not its objectivity, but its specific content. The principal appeal of the views of the United Nations, or the Organization of American States, or the Non-Aligned Movement to the liberal foreign policy community is that they tend to reinforce preexisting preferences, particularly on security issues, where there is a decided bias toward non-intervention, mediation, and diplomacy—what some conservative critics are pleased to call "appeasement."

In the case of the Central American conflict, this tendency has been evident from the very start. Americans leery of military involvement in the region, first in El Salvador in 1981 and subsequently in Nicaragua, have made frequent use of the pronouncements of the Latin American "majors," particularly Mexico and (since 1983) Venezuela, Colombia, and Panama, joined together in a diplomatic initiative known as the Contadora Four. These countries have generally tended to discount the Soviet and Cuban threat to the region, have regarded the conflicts in the Central American countries as having roots in poverty rather than com-

munist subversion, and favor a diplomatic solution. Such a solution would leave the Sandinista regime in control of Nicaragua, reduce outside (that is, U.S.) military and naval presence in the region, and above all, disarm and disperse the forces of the Nicaraguan armed resistance.

Until recently, the Contadora proposals lacked a basic element of credibility—namely, they were not endorsed (and indeed, frequently were rejected) by the four countries most deeply affected by the existence of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. These nations were reluctant to consign their future security to an international control commission representing a fictitious sovereignty.

Since September 1987, however, the situation appears to be changed, thanks to a peace plan put together by President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica, and now endorsed by all of the other Central American countries, including Nicaragua. In many ways the Arias plan resembles earlier efforts by Contadora, but with an additional agenda, which is to obtain some slight changes in the conduct and nature of the Nicaraguan government.

Many observers doubt that it is possible to reconcile non-intervention, self-determination, and internal democratization in Nicaragua; the Reagan administration has allowed its skepticism to become a matter of public debate. But it is difficult to claim, at least at the level of rhetoric, that the Central Americans do not know their own interests, particularly when the Arias plan originates with the oldest and firmest democracy in the area (Costa Rica) and is endorsed by elected governments in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Particularly since President Arias recently received the Nobel Prize for his efforts, it seems almost certain that the Arias plan will contribute to ending U.S. support for the Nicaraguan resistance, and consolidating the Sandinista regime in Managua. It also presages—whether President Arias realizes it or not—a gradual U.S. diplomatic and military withdrawal from the area.

The emergence of a Central American diplomatic consensus suggests that the threat to Central America—by Nicaragua, Cuba, or anyone else—has all along been a figment of Ronald Reagan's imagination. But is this the way ordinary people in the region see things? How do they line up on such issues as U.S. aid to the Contras, the role of other Latin American countries, Soviet and Cuban involvement (or non-involvement) in their affairs? To learn the answers, in January 1987 the Consultoria Interdisciplinaria en Desarrollo, S.A. (CID), the Gallup affiliate in Costa Rica, conducted an extensive U.S.I.A.-sponsored survey in that country and in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Between 1,200 and 1,300 adults in each country were interviewed.

Some of the things the CID pollsters discovered were not surprising, since there is a considerable overlap in public attitudes in all third world countries. Most Central Americans, for instance, are mainly concerned about unemployment, inflation, corruption, and lack of good housing; the overall mood is not particularly upbeat. When asked, "How would you say things are going in our country—well or badly?" a majority in all four countries say "badly"—53 percent in Costa Rica, 81 percent in Honduras, 97 percent in El Salvador, and 87 percent in Guatemala. Nor is there abundant optimism about the future: in all of the countries at least a plurality of respondents believe the economic picture will grow worse rather than improve. The most optimistic is Costa Rica (34 percent think the economy will improve; 40 percent think it will get worse); for El Salvador the figures are, respectively, 10 and 59; for Honduras, 28 and 26; for Guatemala, 27 and 41. In all of the countries approximately a quarter of respondents believe that economic conditions "will stay the same."

When we turn to specific political and geopolitical issues, the grim mood is honed into sharply defined views. In all four countries, for example, the government of Nicaragua is seen by between 64 and 79 percent as representing a minority rather than a majority of the people; as treating its own people unjustly (62 to 85 percent); either as undemocratic as it was a year before (40 to 48 percent) or even more so (33 to 42 percent). Between 57 and 83 percent believe that the Nicaraguan government is making little or no effort to protect human rights, and a question that sought an overall opinion of the Sandinista regime yielded lopsidedly unfavorable responses.

Table 1

OPINION OF SANDINISTA GOVERNMENT

Question: Now some questions about Nicaragua. What is your opinion of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua?

	Costa Rica	Honduras	El Salvador	Guatemala
Very favorable	2%	1%	1%	1%
Somewhat favorable	2	7	7	7
Total, favorable	4	8	8	8
Somewhat unfavorable	21	46	47	50
Very unfavorable	69	36	27	28
Total, unfavorable	90	82	74	78

Note: "No opinion" not shown. Sample size = 1,200-1,300 in each country.

Source: Surveys by Consultoria Interdisciplinaria en Desarrollo, S.A. (CID), the Gallup affiliate in Costa Rica.

The government of Nicaragua is seen not only as a problem for its own people, but also as a serious threat to its neighbors. Thus while in many quarters in the United States the Sandinistas are thought to be an expression of purely Nicaraguan nationalism, in the four other Central American countries, between 76 and 88 percent see the Managua regime as "an instrument of Cuba and of the Soviet Union in Central America and the Caribbean" (as opposed to "independent of Cuba and the Soviet Union" or "don't know"). Except in Honduras (52 percent), only a minority—between 20 and 38 percent—think it likely that their country

will be attacked militarily by another country within the next two or three years; among those who believe it likely, Nicaragua is the country they think will attack. In such a case, however, all four believe overwhelmingly—in percentages running from 83 to 91—that "the U.S. can be relied on to help us."

When asked to name "which country, if any, is trying to weaken our government," 73 percent in Costa Rica named Nicaragua (Cuba—8 percent, U.S.S.R.—6 percent); in Honduras, 72 percent chose Nicaragua (Cuba—10, U.S.S.R.—3); in El Salvador, 64 percent Nicaragua (Cuba—45, U.S.S.R.—11). Guatemala stands apart: only 39 percent named Nicaragua, though Cuba and the Soviet Union received 23 and 14 percent, respectively.

The generally low perception of threat from the Soviet Union seems due less to confidence in that country's benevolent intentions than to a widespread opinion that Cuba acts as its local surrogate (by majorities ranging from 73 to 83 percent). Notwithstanding the many authoritative foreign policy commentators in the United States who doubt that the Soviet Union is even interested in Central America, between 73 and 79 percent in all four countries answered in the affirmative when asked whether the U.S.S.R. does or does not "foment armed conflict" in the region (those in the negative ranged from 10 to 13 percent; the remainder —between 11 and 17 percent—did not know).

The negative views of Nicaragua, Cuba, and the Soviet Union contrast sharply with perceptions of the United States. As a society, it is viewed favorably or very favorably by respondents in all four countries (between 89 and 95 percent), and majorities between 64 and 86 percent named the United States as the country that is "trying to keep our government stable."[1]

Support for Critics

In two areas the Central American sample shows an important division of opinion—on dealing with the causes of conflict in El Salvador, and on the sources of support for guerrilla activities in that country and others nearby. Specifically, respondents were asked to choose between two views of the conflict in El Salvador—"there would be no war. . .if Cuba and Nicaragua were not supporting the leftist revolutionary forces," or, "there would be a war even if Cuba and Nicaragua were not involved." The former proposition was chosen by an important plurality in Costa Rica (42 percent) and near or bare majorities in Honduras (50 percent) and Guatemala (54 percent). In El Salvador, a 45 percent plurality said there would be a war even without Cuba and Nicaragua.

Also some uncertainty exists (up to 57 percent "don't know") about "which country, if any, provides support for guerrilla or insurgent forces here in our country," with the exception of El Salvador, where 80 percent of the respondents named Nicaragua, 62 percent said Cuba, and 12 percent named the Soviet Union. On the other hand, El Salvador is the only one of the four to have a serious guerrilla movement (the insurgency in Guatemala is in sharp remission), so that this factor may have skewed the answer. Otherwise this response would appear to contradict the overall notion of the regional role of Cuba and the Soviet Union cited above.

In the United States the nature of the insurgencies in El Salvador and Nicaragua have provoked the sharpest foreign policy debates since the Vietnam War, but the same issues appear far less divisive within Central America itself. In all four countries, for example, people firmly oppose Cuban involvement with the Salvadoran rebels, and they support moderately to strongly U.S. military assistance to the Duarte government.

Table 2

CUBAN MILITARY AID TO LEFTIST REBELS IN EL SALVADOR

Question: As you may know, Cuba provides military aid to the leftist revolutionary forces in El Salvador. What is your opinion about the shipment of arms from Cuba to leftist revolutionary forces?

	Costa Rica	Honduras	El Salvador	Guatemala
Approve	5%	11%	8%	15%
Disapprove	76	76	86	79
No opinion	19	13	6	6

Table 3

U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO DUARTE GOVERNMENT

Question: As you may know, the U.S. is giving military aid to the government forces in El Salvador. What is your opinion about U.S. military aid to the government forces in El Salvador?

	Costa Rica	Honduras	El Salvador	Guatemala
Approve	56%	81%	75%	70%
Disapprove	25	9	22	25
No opinion	19	10	3	5

When asked, "Will it be better for El Salvador if the government forces win the war, or if the leftist revolutionary forces win?" people sided with the government.

Table 4

EL SALVADOR'S FUTURE

Question: Will it be better for El Salvador if the government forces win the war, or if the leftist revolutionary forces win?

	Costa Rica	Honduras	El Salvador	Guatemala
Better for El Salvador if . . .				
Government wins	62%	79%	71%	76%
Rebels win	6	4	4	10
No opinion	32	17	25	14

Views on the civil war in Nicaragua—between the Sandinistas and the U.S.-supported resistance forces —are even more decisive. Again, in contrast to the United States where polls have generally shown two out of three Americans opposed to aiding the Nicara-

guan resistance, nearly three out of four Central Americans affirmed that it would be better for Nicaragua if the Contras win, and also "better for our own country."

Table 5

NICARAGUA'S FUTURE

Question: Will it be better for Nicaragua if the Sandinista government forces win the war, or if the Contra opposition forces win?

	Costa Rica	Honduras	El Salvador	Guatemala
Better for Nicaragua if . . .				
Sandinistas win	6%	6%	15%	17%
Contras win	76	79	62	70
No opinion	18	15	23	13

It is not surprising, then, that by majorities of between 68 to 81 percent, the Central Americans favor U.S. military aid to the Contras, and by slightly higher proportions—74 to 82 percent—approve the dispatch of non-military aid. Perhaps the area where much U.S. opinion diverges most sharply from the Central American sample has to do with the character of the resistance itself. Those polled in the four countries tend to have a higher opinion of the way Contra forces treat Nicaraguans living in areas of armed conflict than of Nicaraguan government forces (by between 46 and 74 percent). They also seem largely convinced—by between 54 and 69 percent—that in the event of a Contra victory, "their leaders will have free elections and restore democracy." And while in three of the four countries low pluralities believe the Sandinistas are *presently* winning the war (with almost as many "no opinions" as other choices), all four countries expect an ultimate Contra victory.

Table 6

NICARAGUA'S EFFECT ON ITS NEIGHBORS

Question: Will it be better for our own country if the Sandinista government forces win, or if the Contra opposition forces win?

	Costa Rica	Honduras	El Salvador	Guatemala
Better for us if . . .				
Sandinistas win	5%	5%	10%	14%
Contras win	76	77	70	70
No opinion	19	18	20	16

Table 7

OUTCOME IN NICARAGUA

Question: Who do you think will eventually win the war in Nicaragua —the Sandinista government forces or the Contra opposition there?

	Costa Rica	Honduras	El Salvador	Guatemala
Sandinistas will win	20%	15%	22%	21%
The Contras will win	48	51	26	54
No opinion	32	34	52	25

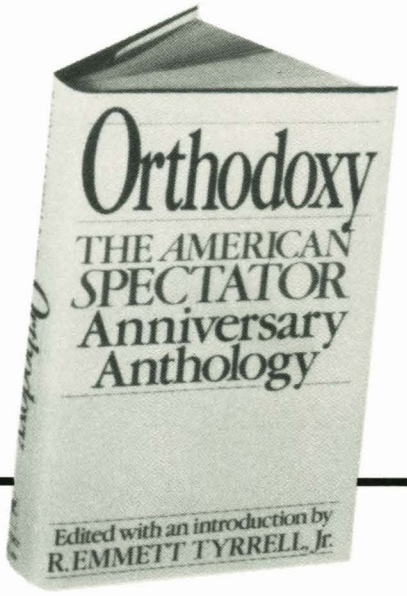
The relatively high vote of confidence in the Contras may represent a masked affirmation of the power of the United States, with whom they are ultimately identified. Some of the respondents may simply be assuming that, given the commitment of U.S. prestige to the outcome, Washington cannot afford to see its local allies fail. On the other hand, it seems remarkable that the Sandinistas are given so little chance of success, particularly in light of their superior armaments from the Soviet bloc, their police-state control of Nicaraguan cities, their control of the media, and the array of international forces behind them. Here there may be some confusion between perception and desire on the part of respondents; either that, or the Central Americans know something we do not. In either case their views are certainly different from those that currently prevail in the United States.

Special Cases

Responses in two of the four countries deserve additional comment. In Guatemala it is apparent that there is far less engagement in the El Salvador-Nicaragua controversy and less inclination—often by considerable percentages—to support U.S. policy in the region. In part this can be explained by geography and history —unlike Honduras or Costa Rica, Guatemala shares no contiguous borders with Nicaragua, and in contrast to El Salvador, its guerrilla movement has never had important links to the Sandinistas. (In fact the Guatemalan guerrillas predate the FSLN in Nicaragua by several years.) In its ethnography and social structure, Guatemala more nearly resembles the southern states of Mexico, and though its history is full of class and racial conflict—much like Mexico itself—the problems it faces as a society are vastly different from those of the relatively homogeneous national communities of Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Moreover Guatemala's relations with the United States have been quite different. Until recently, American involvement in the internal political affairs of other Central American countries has been minimal, but the United States was deeply implicated in a military coup that in 1954 ousted leftist President Jacobo Arbenz, which unleashed decades of bloodletting. In addition, in recent years Guatemala has been subject to stringent U.S. sanctions for its appalling human rights record. The Carter administration suspended military assistance and training in 1977, and the Reagan administration felt obligated to continue the policy until 1986, when Christian Democrat President Vinizio Cerezo Arevalo took office—the first civilian elected in twenty years, and the first to win a genuinely free election in more than thirty.

The result is that both left and right in Guatemala have reasons to dislike and fear the United States. Though small and badly decimated by persecution, kidnapping, and murder, the Guatemalan left vividly recalls the role played by the United States in ending the Arbenz regime and in supplying the military with



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weapons and training for nearly twenty-five years thereafter. As for the Guatemalan right, it deeply resented the Carter administration's human rights policy, which—in its recollection—forced the country's armed forces to face a guerrilla movement alone and unaided by the one foreign power that should have been its natural ally. The failure of the Reagan administration to rectify matters promptly in 1981 gave the grudge a new lease on life.

These feelings are particularly evident in responses to two questions. One asked, "Would you say U.S. treatment of our country generally has been very fair, somewhat fair, or not at all fair?" Guatemala scored the highest "unfair" rating (28 percent), compared to El Salvador (19 percent), Honduras (13 percent), and Costa Rica (10 percent). When asked to evaluate bilateral relations to determine "which country benefits most"—the United States, the surveyed country, or "are the relationships more or less equally beneficial?"—again, Guatemala stands apart. In it alone did a majority (51 percent) think that the relationship was one-sided in favor of the United States; in the other three, strong pluralities believed the relationship "equally beneficial," and between 10 to 20 percent actually perceived it to be more beneficial to the surveyed country than to the United States.

Honduras

Until recently Honduras ranked extremely low on the list of foreign policy priorities for the United States, even within the Central American region. Today, however, Tegucigalpa is a key diplomatic assignment because of that country's crucial propinquity to El Salvador and Nicaragua. United States intelligence sources have long believed that Honduras was a point of transshipment of arms and other supplies from Nicaragua destined for the Salvadoran guerrillas. Also, though officially denied by both U.S. and Honduran governments, it is apparent that Honduran territory serves as a base for Nicaraguan resistance forces moving in and out of their homeland. To underscore this country's new importance, the United States has stationed 700 troops there and periodically holds joint exercises with an expanded version of the permanent military party and with Navy forces stationed on the Caribbean side of the isthmus.

The sudden military and political presence of the United States in a country with no real tradition of close relations has raised all manner of objections in both countries. Yet in the question on the effect of bilateral relations, 45 percent of Hondurans found them "equally beneficial"—second only to Costa Rica (51 percent). A specific question about joint military maneuvers drew a complex—or perhaps merely a sophisticated—response. Some 79 percent agreed that the maneuvers "link Honduras too closely with the United States." Further, 59 percent believe that they "are dangerous [and] could lead to conflict with Nicaragua." Yet 85 percent of the same sample approved of the maneuvers nonetheless—40 percent "strongly," an additional 45 percent "somewhat." (Only 11 percent disapproved; 4 percent had no opinion.) It would appear that given their choices, Hondurans believe the U.S. presence in their country is by far the lesser of two evils. Another possible interpretation is that Hondurans are deeply ambivalent about the relationship, and that under a given set of circumstances the bottom line could change radically in short order. Honduran politicians have recently expressed consternation at the Iran-Contra hearings, which they see as a sign of profound policy incoherence in Washington, and they have wondered aloud if they are too closely identified with a policy that may soon be abandoned.

Public vs. Private Opinions

The one question the data raise is: If this is what Central Americans think of the situation in the region —of the Sandinistas and their allies and the United States—why do their presidents, particularly Arias in Costa Rica, so strongly oppose our policy, especially continued funding for the Nicaraguan resistance? One possibility is that in three of the four countries surveyed, democratic traditions are extremely weak, and foreign policy has always been the province of a tiny elite. Even in sturdily democratic Costa Rica, interest-group politics is poorly developed except for key economic groups and the labor movement. It should be recalled, however, that even in the United States, the Reagan administration has prevailed over well-organized and well-funded opposition constituencies; insofar as Central America is concerned, since 1981 anywhere from two to three out of four Americans have opposed American policy, and two out of three object to U.S. assistance to the Contras. So perhaps the disjunction between opinion and policy in Central America is not so exotic.

Another is that with the entry of West European political internationals into Central America, local politicians have become far more sensitive to continental opinion, which tends to be generally critical of the United States and inclined to give its enemies in the region (and often, indeed, elsewhere) the benefit of the doubt.[2] This is particularly true of the Socialist International, whose Costa Rican affiliate, Liberacion Nacional, is the party of President Arias. So enthusiastic was the SI about the Nicaraguan revolution that Arias's predecessor, Luis Alberto Monge, found it necessary in 1981 to make a special trip to Western Europe to remind his comrades that the Costa Rican version of democratic socialism, not the Sandinista dispensation, was closest to their own values and practices. The West European countries also loom larger in the foreign policy perspectives of the Central American countries

because they are seen as an alternate source of foreign aid, and if not precisely as a substitute for the United States, at least another leg to stand on to balance that perennial bugaboo, U.S. "hegemonism." At a minimum, West European countries—whether governments, parties, or institutions like the European parliament—offer Central American politicians and intellectuals new opportunities for travel, residence, and economic benefit, often in places quite a bit nicer than Miami, provided that they do not appear to be too closely identified with the U.S. world view.

A third possibility—which does not necessarily exclude the first two—is that the leaders of the Central American four take positions in private at considerable variance from those they assume in public. The Reagan administration has rather undiplomatically suggested as much, but it may be true anyway, since many private American citizens who have discussed matters with Presidents Arias, Duarte, Azcona, and Cerezo—as well as Nicaraguan resistance leaders who have visited with Venezuelan President Jaime Lusinchi—have come away with some fairly sensational tales. Probably the basic difference between the U.S. position on aid to the Nicaraguan Contras and the presidents of the four Central American democracies is that the latter do not believe—in contrast to their citizens—that the resistance forces can win. What is needed is a full-scale U.S. military invasion to displace the Sandinistas from power. This is a posture no Latin American president can assume publicly, however, so that it is far easier to oppose Contra aid without specifically recommending an alternative. There is a strong assumption in all four Central American countries—in both the government palaces and public opinion—that the United States will "take care" of the Nicaraguan problem one way or the other, and there is no particular need to get too far out in front of it. This allows leaders to take purposely vague positions that are not fundamentally at variance with public opinion, *given the implicit understanding*.

All of this may be too sophisticated, of course. Perhaps, indeed, as critics of Reagan policy in the United States insist, the Central American presidents and foreign ministers favor a diplomatic solution in the region because they sincerely believe it is the only one that has a chance to work. Perhaps so, but if that is the case, it runs strongly against the conventional wisdom at all levels of society in all four countries. Only time will tell who is right—"public opinion" as represented at the top of the pyramid of power, or public opinion as generally understood in the United States and other democratic societies. ☑

[1]At the time this question was asked, all four countries had democratically elected governments, so that there could be no confusion about the political import of a favorable U.S. disposition toward the local government.

[2]For a fuller discussion, see my article, "Why Europeans Support the Sandinistas," *Commentary*, August 1987.

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THE VERDICT ON FEDERAL JUDGES

by Althea K. Nagai, Stanley Rothman, and S. Robert Lichter

Judges on both the left and right generally see themselves as the public sees them: first and foremost as judges, not partisan political actors who use the bench to further a president's political platform. It is the mystique of the independent judiciary that acts as the basis of the courts' legitimacy. And it was this presumption of independence that was challenged when President Reagan proposed Robert Bork for the Supreme Court. Critics of the Bork appointment charged that Reagan was using a court selection to wage political warfare. They warned of a judiciary polarized by right-wing ideologues and legal decisions dictated by conservative dogma.

Neither side in the Bork battle was innocent of political motives. But just how independent of partisanship have past judicial appointments been? A survey of federal judges offers some answers. First, ideology has played its part in the past, and it appears that it's played a bigger part in Democratic than Republican appointments. In fact Democratic presidents have appointed self-described liberals to the courts more often than Republicans have appointed conservatives. Second, Democratic appointees are more willing to translate their own perspectives into legal principles than are their Republican counterparts, who put greater stress on judicial precedent and legislative discretion.

These findings emerge from a 1984 survey of federal district and appellate judges. Fifty-six percent of those contacted completed the questionnaire. Our sample consists of 111 judges—47 appointed during a Republican presidency and 64 appointed during a Democratic administration. As far as we know, this is the first study to analyze the relationships between judges' social backgrounds, political attitudes, and the jurisprudential values they apply when making decisions.

Background

Like most other elite groups, American federal judges are predominantly white (89 percent) and male (95 percent). At a median age of sixty, they are also relatively old. One in four earns $100,000 a year or better, with over twice as many Democratic appointees (32 percent) as Republican appointees (15 percent) reaching this figure.

Table 1
SOCIAL AND PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF FEDERAL JUDGES

Background	Republican appointees	Democratic appointees	Total
White	89%	89%	89%
Male	100	91	95
Median age	61	60	60
Current personal income ($100,000+)	15	32	25
Attended selective college	62	52	56
Parents' income below average	19	28	24
Parents' income above average	53	40	46
Father's education college+	48	45	46
From a metro area	63	71	68
Discussed politics at home			
frequently	62	49	55
sometimes	31	43	38
never	6	8	7
Father a Democrat	23	61	44
Republican	77	38	56
Father a liberal	24	35	30
moderate	24	26	25
conservative	51	37	43
Political ideology			
liberal	28	75	54
moderate	35	14	23
conservative	37	11	23

Federal judges come from politically active homes. Fifty-five percent report that they had discussed politics "frequently" at home while growing up, about eight times the proportion of those who never did so. Proportionately more Republican than Democratic appointees learned about politics at home: 62 percent of the Republican compared to 49 percent of the Democratic judges claim to have discussed politics frequently with their parents.

Most judges appointed by Democrats had fathers who were Democrats (61 percent), and those appointed by Republicans tended to have Republican fathers (77 percent). Party affiliation, however, is not necessarily the same as ideology. We asked the judges to rate their fathers' political ideology on a seven-point scale, with one being extremely conservative, four being moderate, and seven being extremely liberal. Only 35 percent of Democratic appointees recall their fathers being politically liberal (a ranking of five or more); half of the Republican appointees (51 percent) label their fathers as conservative.

Our data demonstrate that judges' political ideolo-

gies do not necessarily correspond to the party affiliation of the presidents who appointed them. While the Democratic appointees are mostly liberal, the Republican appointees are almost evenly divided ideologically. Seventy-five percent of the Democratic appointees classify themselves as liberal, 14 percent regard themselves as moderate, and 11 percent see themselves as conservative. Of the Republican appointees, 28 percent think of themselves as liberal, 35 percent as moderate, and 37 percent as conservative.

Voting and Political Issues

Voting records closely match party appointment. In overwhelming numbers, judges appointed by Democratic presidents have voted for Democratic candidates, and judges appointed by Republican presidents supported Republican candidates.

Table 2
VOTE FOR PRESIDENT

		Republican appointees	Democratic appointees
1968			
	Nixon	79%	14%
	Humphrey	20	86
1972			
	Nixon	93	25
	Humphrey	7	75
1976			
	Ford	91	14
	Carter	9	86
1980			
	Reagan	85	23
	Carter	10	75
	Anderson	5	2

Federal judges, regardless of party, are firm believers in rewarding individual merit. An overwhelming majority of both Republican and Democratic appointees believe that those with more ability should earn more money (98 percent and 86 percent, respectively). The Democratic appointees, however, are more pessimistic about the rewards of hard work. While 85 percent of the Republican appointees think that hard work pays off, a significantly smaller majority of those appointed during Democratic administrations (59 percent) agree. Given their views, it is no surprise to find the latter less likely to hold the poor responsible for their economic plight. Fifty percent of them compared to one-third (33 percent) of the Republican appointees believe the condition of the poor is a result of circumstances beyond their control.

Not surprisingly, economic ideology divides federal judges. Republican appointees are more receptive to laissez-faire principles while most Democratic appointees support an expansive welfare state. Large majorities of both groups agree that private enterprise is fair to workers (87 and 70 percent, respectively). But while 85 percent of judges appointed by Republican presidents believe that less regulation of business is good, only a slight majority (54 percent) of those appointed by Democratic presidents agree. Seventy percent of the Republican appointees think that the government should not guarantee jobs for all—twice that of the Democrats.

On the other side of the coin, 57 percent of those appointed by Democratic presidents endorse the idea of having the government insure a good standard of living for all, compared to a little over one in four (27 percent) of those appointed by Republican presidents. An even larger percentage of Democratic appointees (78 versus 44 percent of Republicans) want the government to substantially reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor. One in ten Democratic appointees, but only 2 percent of Republican judges, agree that big corporations should be taken out of private ownership, while almost one in five Democrats (19 percent) versus 4 percent of the Republicans, think that the United States "should move toward socialism."

Support for the welfare state does not translate into alienation from American society as a whole. Less than half of the Democratic appointees (41 percent) and a slightly smaller percentage of Republican judges (37 percent) believe that the American legal system favors the wealthy. Only 24 percent of the Democratic judges and 13 percent of the Republican appointees agree that American institutions need to be overhauled, although 38 percent of the Democrats (compared to 22 percent of the Republicans) believe that American society alienates its citizens.

Sex and Morality

Republican appointees hold more conservative attitudes toward sexual behavior and the moral codes that surround it than do Democrats, although some surprising similarities emerge. Seventy-one percent of the Republican appointees, as well as 63 percent of the Democratic judges, believe that adultery is wrong. Sixty percent of Republicans hold the position that gays should not teach in public schools, compared to only 22 percent of those appointed by Democratic presidents, while 77 percent of the Republican appointees versus 59 percent of the Democratic judges agree that homosexual relations are wrong. On the hotly debated abortion issue, however, four out of five from both groups agree that a woman has the right to decide for herself whether or not to have an abortion. The question wording may be tapping a factual understanding of *Roe v. Wade* rather than personal pro-choice attitudes.

Minorities and Women

Democratic appointees express somewhat more liberal attitudes toward minorities and women than do Republicans. Fifty percent of the Republican appointees and 57 percent of the Democratic judges believe that blacks don't have the chance for the education it takes to rise out of poverty, while only 25 percent of the

Table 3
ATTITUDES ON SELECTED ISSUES

Economics	Republican appointees	Democratic appointees
Agree:		
The more able should earn more	98%	86%
U.S. offers opportunity for financial security to all those who work hard	85	59
The poor are such due to circumstances beyond their control	33	50
Private enterprise fair to workers	87	70
Less regulation of business is good for country	85	54
Government should not guarantee jobs	70	36
Government should insure good standard of living	27	57
Government should reduce the income gap between rich and poor	44	78
Big corporations should be taken out of private ownership	2	10
U.S. would be better off if it moved toward socialism	4	19
American legal system favors wealthy	37	41
U.S. institutions need complete restructuring	13	24
Social structure causes most to feel alienated	22	38
Sex and morality		
Extramarital sex is wrong	71	63
Homosexuals should not teach in public schools	60	22
Adult homosexual relations are wrong	77	59
A woman has right to decide on abortion	80	81
Blacks and Women		
Almost all blacks' recent gains have come at expense of whites	6	3
Special preference should be given to blacks in hiring	41	62
Blacks don't have the chance for education it takes to rise out of poverty	50	57
Blacks don't have motivation or willpower to pull themselves out of poverty	25	14
Special preference should be given to women in hiring	22	47
Women with young children shouldn't work unless financially necessary	47	34
The Environment		
Environmental problems not as serious as thought	47	19
Foreign Policy		
U.S. morally obligated to prevent destruction of Israel	69	83
U.S. foreign policy's main goal to protect business	24	33
We should be more forceful with USSR even at risk of war	47	21
American military should be strongest no matter what cost	43	20
Sometimes necessary for CIA to undermine hostile governments	66	33

Republican appointees and 14 percent of the Democratic appointees believe that blacks lack the motivation to advance. Judges almost uniformly reject the notion of a zero-sum conflict between blacks and whites: only 6 percent of the Republican judges and a mere 3 percent of the Democratic judges view black gains in recent years as coming at whites' expense. The biggest gap appears in a question about affirmative action for blacks. Sixty-two percent of the Democratic judges but only 41 percent of the Republicans believe that blacks should receive special preference in hiring.

Judges are less supportive of special hiring preferences for women. Forty-seven percent of Democratic appointees and less than a quarter of the Republicans (22 percent) favor special hiring preferences for women. Nor are judges wholehearted supporters of the working woman. Forty-seven percent of the Republican judges and one in three Democrats (34 percent) believe that women with young children should not work outside the home unless financially necessary.

Who Rules and Who Should Rule?

The survey asked judges to rate several leadership groups in terms of the influence each wields over American life. We then asked them to rate the same groups according to the amount of influence they believe each *should* exert. The ten groups include black leaders, feminists, consumer groups, intellectuals, business leaders, labor unions, the military, the federal government, religious leaders, and the news media.

The judges show a remarkable consensus in their

Table 4
JUDICIAL PERCEPTIONS OF INFLUENCE IN AMERICA

Republican appointees	Democratic appointees
1) News media	1) News media
2) Business	2) Business
3) Federal government	3) Federal government
4) Labor	4) Military
5) Intellectuals	5) Labor
6) Consumer groups	6) Intellectuals
7) Religious leaders	7) Religious leaders
8) Military	8) Consumer groups
9) Feminists	9) Black leaders
10) Black leaders	10) Feminists

JUDICIAL PREFERENCES CONCERNING THE DISTRIBUTION OF INFLUENCE IN AMERICA

Republican appointees	Democratic appointees
1) Business	1) Intellectuals
2) Intellectuals	2) Consumer groups
3) Religious leaders	3) Business
4) Consumer groups	4) Labor
5) Black leaders	5) Black leaders
6) News media	6) News media
7) Labor	7) Feminists
8) Feminists	8) Religious leaders
9) Federal government	9) Federal government
10) Military	10) Military

sense of who exercises influence, but some partisan differences emerge over who should wield it. Both Republican and Democratic appointees rate the news media as the most influential group in America, followed by business leaders and bureaucrats in the federal government. Both view labor, intellectuals, consumer groups, and religious leaders as having moderate influence, although in somewhat different order. The only notable difference concerns the military, which Democratic appointees rate as substantially more influential than do their Republican counterparts. Both groups see blacks and feminists as having the least influence.

When listing their preferences, Republicans and Democrats alike indicate a desire to change the current influence hierarchy in America. Both groups would drastically reduce the influence of the media—the media drops from first to sixth. As expected, Republican judges end up wishing to give business more power than do Democratic appointees. Business leaders rank first among the Republican judges, but only third among Democrats. Intellectuals also do well among the judges. They come out second among Republican appointees, first among Democratic judges. Both groups would increase the influence of consumer groups and black leaders, but only the Republican appointees would give a boost to religious leaders and reduce the labor movement's clout.

Finally, Republican and Democratic judges agree on which groups should be least influential. They both rank federal government agencies and the military at the bottom of the list.

Heroes and Villains: Judges Rate Public Figures

Judges' political ideologies are further reflected in their ratings of major public figures. We asked them to rate a number of figures on a scale of one (strongly disapprove) to five (strongly approve).

As table 5 shows, differences in party appointment roughly match differences in approval of various public figures and political movements. Republican judges hold mainstream conservative public figures and groups in higher esteem than they do liberal or radical individuals or groups (although the conservative Moral Majority emerges at the bottom end of the scale). Republican judges' strongest approval goes to such conservatives as Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, Milton Friedman, and Jeane Kirkpatrick.

Those appointed by Democratic presidents, in contrast, give their highest marks to liberals. Their favorite is John Kenneth Galbraith, followed by Ted Kennedy, Ralph Nader, Andrew Young, and Gloria Steinem. They rate Ronald Reagan just above the Sandinistas and Fidel Castro, and the Moral Majority dead last.

Table 5
JUDGES' APPROVAL RANKINGS FOR PUBLIC FIGURES

Republican appointees	Democratic appointees
1) Margaret Thatcher	1) John Kenneth Galbraith
2) Ronald Reagan	2) Ted Kennedy
3) Milton Friedman	3) Ralph Nader
4) Jeane Kirkpatrick	4) Andrew Young
5) John Kenneth Galbraith	5) Gloria Steinem
6) Andrew Young	6) Jeane Kirkpatrick
7) Gloria Steinem	7) Margaret Thatcher
8) Ralph Nader	8) Milton Friedman
9) Ted Kennedy	9) Ronald Reagan
10) Moral Majority	10) Sandinistas
11) Sandinistas	11) Fidel Castro
12) Fidel Castro	12) Moral Majority

What Do Judges Read?

Last, we wanted to know what judges read and what news sources they trust. We asked our sample to rate the reliability of a dozen media sources of fact and opinion, including journals of the left and right (*The Nation* and *Commentary*) for example, as well as avowedly nonpartisan sources of information (*New York Times*, nightly network news, PBS). They rated each outlet on a scale from one (lowest reliability) to seven (highest reliability). We then ranked the news sources on the basis of their mean scores.

Table 6
ESTIMATES OF RELIABILITY OF VARIOUS NEWS SOURCES

Republican appointees	Democratic appointees
1) *U.S. News*	1) *New York Times*
2) PBS	2) PBS
3) *New York Times*	3) *New York Review of Books*
4) *Commentary*	4) *Newsweek*
5) *Time* magazine	5) *Washington Post*
6) *Newsweek*	6) *U.S. News*
7) *New York Review of Books*	7) *New Republic*
8) *National Review*	8) *Time* magazine
9) *Public Interest*	9) *Public Interest*
10) *New Republic*	10) *The Nation*
11) *The Nation*	11) *Commentary*
12) *Washington Post*	12) TV Network News
13) TV Network News	13) *National Review*

As in all other comparisons, the Republican judges tend to trust conservatives while the Democratic judges generally trust liberals. However, many judges felt that they were not in a position to rate opinion journals such as *Commentary*, *National Review*, *The Nation*, and *Public Interest*.

Republican judges view *U.S. News & World Report* as the most reliable source of news, followed by PBS, the *New York Times*, and the conservative opinion magazine *Commentary*. They consider *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *New York Review of Books* moderately reliable, but rate the conservative *National Review* as more reliable than television news or the *Washington Post*.

Mainstream newspapers fare better among Democratic judges. The Democrats hold the *New York Times* in highest regard, followed by PBS, and then the *New York Review of Books*. The weekly magazines, the *Wash-*

ington Post, and *The New Republic* (a liberal-to-moderate journal of opinion) receive lower reliability ratings. *Commentary*, television network news, and *National Review* receive the lowest ratings of all news sources.

Judges on Judging

To what extent do judges consciously *make* law, and how much should they? To what extent are they constrained by precedent, and to what extent do they regard it as legitimate to read their personal conceptions of justice into law?

Table 7
INFLUENCES ON JUDICIAL DECISIONS*

Republican appointees	Democratic appointees
1) Precedent	1) Your views of justice in the case
2) Your views of justice in the case	2) Precedent
3) The needs of the public	3) The needs of the public
4) Community values	4) Community values
5) Views of law clerks	5) Views of law clerks
6) Views of respected members of the Bar	6) Views of respected members of the Bar
7) Amicus curiae briefs	7) Amicus curiae briefs

* The judges were asked: In reaching your decisions, how influential do you consider the following factors. Please rate each item on a scale of one to seven where one is "very little," four is "moderate," and seven is "a great deal."

Our sample of judges provides a unique opportunity to look at the relationship between the presidential party under which a judge was appointed, his political ideology, and his judicial philosophy. Most Republican appointees hold to the belief that their job is to apply the law, not to make it, while Democrats are about evenly split on this question. Sixty-nine percent of Republican appointees, compared to 51 percent of Democratic appointees, agree that judges should just apply the law and leave the rest to legislators. In at least some concrete cases, however, the majority of both Republican and Democratic justices believe judicial intervention may be necessary. Despite general advocacy of judicial restraint, a majority of both groups also agree that judges often must supervise the activities of public bureaucracies like schools, mental health institutions, and prisons. Republican appointees, however, are less enthusiastic about this (64 percent versus 81 percent for the Democrats). The largest difference is a conflict over the treatment of criminals in court (see table 8). In seeming dissent from the judicial innovations of the Warren court, nearly half the Republican appointees (44 percent) believe that there is too much concern in court for criminals. Only one in six Democratic appointees (16 percent) believe that. All told, these findings support the thesis that judges appointed by Democratic presidents tend to have a more liberal set of attitudes, not only on substantive issues, but on basic ideas of legal philosophy and procedure as well.

Judges show a similar mixture of judicial restraint and judicial activism in their descriptions of judicial decisions. Our sample of judges was asked, "In reaching your decisions, how influential do you consider the following factors: *amicus curiae* briefs, community values, the needs of the public, precedent, the views of law clerks, the views of respected members of the bar, and the judge's personal view of justice in the case?" Table seven gives the rankings of each factor.

Table 8
ATTITUDES ON JUDICIAL ISSUES

	Republican appointees	Democratic appointees
Too much concern in court for criminals	44%	16%
Judges should just apply the law, leave the rest to legislators	69	51
Judges need to supervise public bureaucracies	64	81

Republican judges claim legal precedent to be the most influential factor in judicial reasoning and put their personal view of justice second. Democratic judges reverse this order. They hold personal views of justice as the most influential factor, followed by precedent. Republican and Democratic appointees rank other factors in identical order.

This difference in judicial reasoning should not be exaggerated; both groups acknowledge their incorporation of personal values into decisions. That most Republicans and Democrats claim to rely heavily on their own views of justice attests to this. A widely acknowledged reliance on precedent, on the other hand, curtails the indiscriminate exercise of judicial power. Such adherence forms a foundation for judicial authority by framing the judicial act in history and tradition, as opposed merely to power or current opinion.

Again, judges appointed by both Republican and Democratic presidents strongly adhere to precedent. Nonetheless there is a difference in degree, with Republican appointees giving greater weight to precedent and Democratic appointees placing their own views above past decisions.

Judicial appointments have often had a strong political component. Yet a central assumption of the American political culture is that the Court is above politics. Both things can be true. What we have yet to learn is whether federal judges transmit their individual political beliefs into their judicial decisions. ☑

This is part of a larger study of social and political change directed by Stanley Rothman, sponsored by Smith's Center for the Study of Social and Political Change.

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percent advantage on making America "more competitive in the world." Though respondents felt that big business and the rich benefited during the Reagan years, by a 48-35 percent plurality they felt they had fared well, too.

Those results suggest the Democrats face many of the same problems they did in 1984. As it did then, the public today prefers the Democrats on a host of secondary issues—protecting the environment, safeguarding women's rights, helping farmers, caring for the elderly—but on the bedrock issue of running the economy, the Republicans hold a clear lead. That lead may wither in light of the market decline, but for now, like Mondale, most of the Democratic contenders have been reduced to arguing that things are not as good as people think.

In that, they are not without facts to muster, a point hammered home by the market's uncertainty. Economists worry that the twin pillars of debt—the budget deficit and the trade imbalance—threaten long-term prosperity. Even the current picture has its flaws: there is distress in parts of the country, the recovery has not reached all groups, millions of Americans remain mired in unacceptable poverty, and the economy has its problems, including the market's erratic performance.

Pessimistic Prospects

Even before the stock slide put the word "panic" into the headlines, the public was not Panglossian about the economy. Surveys find that voters worry about the economy's long-term health and its ability to produce quality jobs for their children. These anxieties represent what Democratic pollster Gregory W. Schneiders calls "a low-grade fever about the economy." But those concerns haven't yet solidified into fear that a recession is imminent, and so they lack political bite. The stiff challenge for the Democrats—unmet at present—is to make those unfocused anxieties relevant without overstating the case and undercutting their credibility. Dramatic and visceral, the frightening stock market decline may provide the Democrats with the opportunity they lacked to convince voters that things aren't quite as rosy as they seem. The market *might* do that, but even the cautionary note sounded in New York could well have only limited impact on the voters unless it is in fact reveille for a coming recession.

No matter how skillfully the Democrats marshal their arguments about unstable prosperity—or how relentlessly they draw their analogies to 1929— most voters will continue to see the future through the lens of the present. Voters tend to vote on their immediate economic experience; they don't reach back, or look forward, very far. "The condition of the economy is far and away the single most important factor in this election; whatever is second is in eleventh place," says Republican pollster Robert M. Teeter. So if the market collapse does not produce an economic collapse, and the nation remains both peaceful and prosperous, the Democrats will probably have a hard time regaining the White House. But if the doom the Democrats and some market analysts are predicting arrives before next November, the Republicans will have heavy debts to pay.

This summer's Louis Harris survey for the Democrats decisively underscores the point: those who felt they had done well during the Reagan years planned to vote Republican in 1988 by 66-29 percent; the smaller group, who felt they had been neglected, looked to the Democrats by 69-22 percent. Particularly troubling for the Democrats is that most of the voters they need to reclaim identify with the group that has enjoyed prosperity. "Among those key groups who especially feel they have benefited during the Reagan tenure are residents of the South, people under thirty, Yuppies, those with a college education, men, whites, professional and business executives, white-collar people, and those who earn over $25,000 a year," Harris wrote. Clearly the stock market crash left many of those people feeling less wealthy. Whether it has also left them less satisfied with Republican stewardship of the economy won't be clear until next fall.

Global Gloomers

Ironically, while the public has been at peace, opinion leaders and intellectuals of varied ideological stripes are bubbling with concern about America's place in the world. In the late 1950s, when a similar divergence between elite and mass opinion occurred, liberal intellectuals argued that the United States was not assuming world leadership aggressively enough; now a diverse assortment of analysts maintains that the United States must adjust to an inexorable decline in its relative power and influence. Call this phenomenon the emergence of global gloom. Striking for its repudiation of Reagan's basic message, the global gloom school has been popularized by Republican political analyst Kevin Phillips in his well-read political newsletter, by author David Halberstam in his best-selling book, *The Reckoning*, and author Walter Russell Mead in his book *Mortal Splendor: The American Empire in Transition*. The global gloom school warns that the inexorable diffusion of economic power now underway will force the retrenchment of U.S. international influence; many of them also see threats to the U.S. living standard from our profligate accumulation of private and public debt, excessive defense spending, and failure to respond to the challenge of ascendant trading partners. By seem-

ing to underscore these analyst's deepest fears, the stock market turbulence can only add to their prominence in number. (Indeed, one way to analyze the events of Black Monday is that the market itself converted, in a sudden shudder, to the global gloom analysis.)

In a recent *Atlantic Monthly* cover story entitled *The (Relative) Decline of America*, Yale University historian Paul Kennedy, another global despondent, summarized the case. Kennedy argued persuasively that the United States' military commitments, made in the triumphant flush of post-World War II enthusiasm, now exceed our economic capacity. "Ultimately, the only answer to whether the United States can preserve its position is no," Kennedy wrote, "for it simply has not been given to any one society to remain permanently ahead of all the others. . . ."

Kennedy's argument has the ring of both historical inevitability and common sense, but it is not an easy concept for politicians to embrace. Jimmy Carter seemed to acknowledge limits on America's ability to influence world events, called for sacrifice, and paid for it dearly when the Iran hostage crisis fused those heresies into an image of weakness and impotence. Reagan may go down in history as the president who came to office telling America that it could regain unquestioned world preeminence and then decisively proved that it couldn't. Still, Reagan has never backed away from his insistence that America is standing tall, even though the unprecedented trade deficits and the transformation of the United States from the world's largest creditor to its largest debtor suggest otherwise. Reagan's untethered optimism has never lost its appeal, largely because the visible indicators of economic health have reinforced it since 1982. The huge trade and budget deficits stand as monuments to the contradictions in Reagan's claim, but until the stock market sank, most economists believed that the bill on those debts would not come due in time to help the Democrats next year.

Now the campaign in some sense has been reduced to a race against time for the Republicans. As long as the economy that directly touches people's lives—inflation, interest rates, unemployment—remains healthy, voters may see the stock market's fall as an isolated event. But if the pain radiates from Wall Street to Main Street, it will connect the voters' immediate experience with the concerns of those who see America facing a reckoning for living beyond its means. In recent months, Americans have seemed to share those fears at a gut level, but good times prevented them from rising to the surface. The flow of good times may be evaporating. If it does, the gloomy Democrats are well-positioned. If not, like Mondale, they will find their experience with gloom an unhappy one. ☑

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(Continued from page 19)

in Reagan's overwhelmingly favorable personal image. Before November 26, 78 percent described Reagan as a strong leader, but only 69 percent felt the same after that fateful day.

Public approval of Reagan's job performance hit bottom immediately after the Tower Commission report appeared. Only 40 percent gave him a positive rating in the late February Gallup poll. The ratings recovered gradually; in mid-June Gallup found that 53 percent approved and 40 percent disapproved of the way the president was handling his job.

While there is no doubt that the Iran-Contra affair has rocked faith in Reagan's leadership, evaluations of specific aspects of his job performance vary. A February 1987 *Los Angeles Times* poll showed that 53 percent rated the president's management of the economy favorably, but far fewer approved his handling of America's foreign relations (45 percent), Central American policy (38 percent), and the Iran-Contra incident itself (26 percent).

Table 3

CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS OF REAGAN'S IMAGE

Adjectives describing Ronald Reagan	November 1986-January 1987	May-June 1987
Decent	89%	86%
Inspiring	60	58
Moral	82	77
Intelligent	75	55
Compassionate	65	60
Provides strong leadership	75	56

Note: Entries are percent saying that an adjective describes Reagan "well" or "extremely well." Panel study = 459 interviews.

Source: Survey by Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, National Election Study, panel back study, 1987.

The most compelling evidence about how the Iran-Contra affair damaged Reagan's image comes from an NES panel study in which a subset of 459 respondents in the 1986 postelection survey were reinterviewed in May and June 1987. As table 3 shows, the public had absorbed the sustained criticism of the president's flawed management style. There was a net decline of fully 20 percentage points in the perception of Ronald Reagan as "intelligent" or "able to provide strong leadership." Significantly, this change in Reagan's image occurred among Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike. Still the public's reassessment was discriminating. Even though skepticism about his competence grew, there were only slight changes in evaluations of the president as "inspiring," "moral," and "compassionate."

The verdict of the polls, then, is that the aura of invincibility that surrounded President Reagan has faded. The Iran-Contra affair was a blow to his image not because the events themselves were so traumatic to the public, but because the revelations about the president's behavior were so clearly discrepant with his distinctive reputation for self-confidence, decisiveness, and strength. Although still widely admired, Ronald Reagan now is regarded as fallible. Whereas in March 1986, Gallup reported that 62 percent of the public predicted history would judge Reagan as either an outstanding or above average president, only 39 percent felt this way in July 1987.

Even so, the Iran-Contra affair's negative impact on Reagan's standing has been minor in comparison to Watergate's effect on Richard Nixon's. The main reason for this, of course, is the lack of definitive evidence that the president knew of or approved the diversion of money from Iran to fund the Contras. In the absence of a smoking gun, Republican backing for Reagan slipped but did not collapse. In July 1987, approximately 75 percent of his party's followers continued to approve of the president's job performance.

It is already obvious that the Iran-Contra affair has emboldened the president's opponents. The narrowing of support for Reagan thus undermines his familiar strategy of appealing directly to the public in the administration's protracted conflict with congressional Democrats.

The Impact on Trust in Government

Approval of the incumbent president and trust in government are strongly interrelated. Given that the Iran-Contra affair lowered support for Ronald Reagan, one would anticipate a concomitant decline in trust. The Harris survey that was conducted right after the bombshell about the diversion of funds found that only 19 percent of the public still had "great confidence" in "the people running the White House," a drop of 11 percentage points from the previous year's measurement. But it does not appear that the first wave of truly bad news resulted in a renewed sense of malaise about government as a whole. In fact, the media polls tracked in table 1 indicate a small *rise* in political trust between September 1986 and January 1987. And in the 1986 NES survey, the level of trust among respondents interviewed before and after November 26 was virtually identical.

More detailed analysis of the NES data confirmed that news about Iran-Contra did not immediately lower faith in government. Relying on a content analysis of relevant *New York Times* and CBS News stories generously provided by Richard Brody of Stanford University,[3] we grouped respondents surveyed in November according to the volume of news and the tone of the stories about the scandal published or aired during the week preceding their interview. In the first month of revelations, neither the amount nor the content of media coverage altered people's trust in government. This held true regardless of party identification, education, or political sophistication.

Did trust decline as news about the scandal accumulated? Unfortunately, evidence about later trends in

political confidence is fragmentary. The CBS News/*New York Times* survey conducted right after the Tower Commission's severe critique of White House policy making registered an 8 percentage point drop in political trust from its late November measurement. But the more recent ABC News/*Washington Post* poll recorded a 4 percentage point increase in trust between January and June 1987.

The NES panel study also suggests that confidence in government rose over the first half of 1987. Belief in the trustworthiness of the "government in Washington" spread from 42 percent to 54 percent of these respondents, with Democrats, Independents, and Republicans all moving in the same direction. The panel study also found that 10 percent fewer people felt that public officials don't care about what they think.

The polls consistently show that the trend in public opinion becomes increasingly negative when the survey questions focus on the institutions or actors involved in the Iran-Contra affair. This is hardly surprising. What is puzzling is the hint that trust in government and evaluations of the president may have moved even temporarily in opposite directions.

What might account for this? It is not that the public was unaware of or uninterested in the Iran-Contra affair. A July *Los Angeles Times* poll found that 56 percent of the public said they were following the story closely. The CBS News/*New York Times* poll indicated that 77 percent said they were at least somewhat interested in the hearings, and Gallup reported that a bipartisan majority felt the hearings were "good for the nation."

This suggests that news coverage of the incident might have reinforced rather than eroded confidence in government by showing that the political system worked, that error could be detected and corrected. This, after all, was a frequent reaction of fundamentally patriotic citizens to the Watergate affair. When Reagan adopted a low profile after responding to the Tower Commission, the televised congressional hearings thrust the legislature into the spotlight. In this unusual context, it is plausible that the term "government in Washington" elicited attitudes toward institutions and authorities beyond the president and his administration.

Finally one must consider the impact of the economic situation on maintaining the level of trust in government. Between January and July 1987, the seasonally adjusted index of leading economic indicators rose by an impressive 6 points. Consumer confidence, which had dipped in the last half of 1986, also rose steadily during this period (*Public Opinion*, Sept/Oct 1987, p. 28). Unemployment and inflation remain low. While the fundamentals of the economy appear sound, what reverberations—if any—the stock market's performance will have on confidence simply can't be known yet. Only the most preliminary indicators of public reaction to the stock market's fluctuations of late October are now available, and thus it is not possible to assess the effect on confidence. An October 19 ABC News/*Washington Post* poll found that 70 percent of Americans said it was unlikely that the country would suffer a depression in the next year or two. In another question, 58 percent said the stock market's fall would not lead to an economic downturn, while 37 percent said it would. A *USA Today*/CNN/*Detroit News* poll of October 20-22 found only 4 percent were very frightened about the future, while 23 percent were somewhat frightened. Just as Ronald Reagan's personal appeal boosted trust in government in the midst of the 1982 recession, reassuring economic news could do so even as his personal hold on the public recedes.

What is the likely future for public trust in government as the Reagan presidency draws to a close? History suggests that important political events, approval of the president's leadership, and confidence in government do not stay uncoupled for long. Even if the Iran-Contra affair has played itself out, the preservation of faith in government, especially in the current climate of partisan bickering, will depend on success in achieving the uncontroversial goals of international harmony and economic prosperity.

In this regard, a summit meeting with Mr. Gorbachev presents President Reagan with an obvious opportunity to bolster his image. And until the dramatic collapse of stock prices, most experts were predicting continued economic growth through 1988, which would have shored up confidence in national leadership. The economic future now looks more cloudy, and if the blow to Wall Street is followed by a recession in early 1988, one should expect more erosion in the president's standing and a subsequent decline in political trust.

Despite these uncertainties, we see little prospect of a return to either the pervasive malaise of the Carter years or the euphoria of late 1984. Thus, Ronald Reagan's legacy should include a higher sense of national morale and confidence in government than when he took office. This inheritance can be a mixed blessing, however. Recent presidents have made their greatest blunders when the reservoir of popular support was relatively full. ☑

The authors gratefully acknowledge Eric Ruder's assistance with research for this article. We also thank Graham Hueber of *Public Opinion* for help in compiling the polling data and the *Los Angeles Times* for furnishing the results of their surveys. The State Data Program of the Survey Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley, provided access to the NES data.

[1]Jack Citrin and Donald P. Green, "Presidential Leadership and the Resurgence of Trust in Government," *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 16, no. 4, 1986, pp. 431-453.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Richard A. Brody and Catherine R. Shapiro, "Policy Failure and Public Support: Reykjavik, Iran and Public Assessments of President Reagan," unpublished paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1987.

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HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH TO DRINK IF YOU'RE DRIVING?

USING THIS CHART MAY HELP YOU KNOW YOUR LIMIT.

First, you should understand that drinking any amount of alcohol can impair your ability to drive.

The generally accepted way to measure intoxication is by your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). In most areas, the legal definition of intoxication is .10 percent BAC and above. However, long before you reach .10 percent BAC, your judgment and motor skills deteriorate rapidly. In fact, some states include the definition of impaired driving ability, which usually begins at .05 percent.

Important factors to keep in mind are how much you've drunk in a given period of time, how much you weigh and whether you've been eating. Your age, individual metabolism and experience with drinking are also factors. However, it simply is not true that beer or wine is less likely to make you drunk than so-called "hard" drinks. A 4-ounce glass of wine, a 12-ounce can of beer or 1.2 ounces of 80-proof whiskey have about the same amount of alcohol and will have about the same effect on you.

How to estimate your Blood Alcohol Concentration. Although the effects of alcohol vary a great deal, the average effects are shown in the accompanying chart prepared by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Find your weight in the left-hand column and then refer to the number of drinks you have had or intend to have over a two-hour period. For example, if you weigh 160 pounds and have had four beers over the first two hours you're drinking, your Blood Alcohol Concentration would be dangerously beyond .05 percent, and your driving ability would be seriously impaired—a dangerous driving situation. Six beers in the same period would give you a BAC of over .10 percent—the level generally accepted as proof of intoxication.

It is easier to get drunk than it is to get sober. The effects of drinking do taper off as the alcohol passes through your body, but the drop is slow. In the example above, the person who had six beers would still have significant traces of alcohol in his blood six hours later. Having a full stomach will postpone somewhat the effects of alcohol, but it will not keep you from becoming drunk.

Black coffee, cold showers, or walking around outdoors will do nothing to make you sober. Of course, someone who claims, "I'll be okay as soon as I get behind the wheel," may be making a fatal misjudgment.

Today, you the driver, have to know your limits and when you've gone beyond them. If you have any doubts, don't drive.

Even if you're not drinking, other drivers may be. Your best protection is still the safety belts in your car. Accidents do happen, and wearing lap and shoulder belts doubles your chances of coming through one alive.

DRINKS (TWO-HOUR PERIOD)

Weight	1.2 ozs. 80-Proof Liquor or 12 ozs. Beer											
100	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
120	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
140	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
160	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
180	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
200	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
220	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
240	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

BE CAREFUL DRIVING BAC TO .05% | **DRIVING IMPAIRED .05-.09%** | **DO NOT DRIVE .10% & UP**

Source: NHTSA

The chart shows average responses. Younger people generally become impaired sooner, while older people have more vision problems at night. Tests show a wide range of responses even for people of the same age and weight. For some people, one drink may be too many.

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