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Building the  
Conservative  
Movement after  
Ronald Reagan

*By Rep. Newt Gingrich*



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# BUILDING THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT AFTER RONALD REAGAN

by Representative Newt Gingrich

I look out and see here many of the people who, over the years, have done much to make possible the conservative movement. We believe the process of ideas matters. And you matter because you care about ideas and you care about using ideas to change the real world. Let me point out that we have come a long way. In the early 1970s, it was probably inconceivable that you could have an intellectual, activist conservative meeting and fill more than a table. This meeting would have been unthinkable fifteen or twenty years ago.

Clearly new ideas are gaining momentum across this planet. Fundamental breakthroughs in political and social thinking are occurring. Look at Reagan in the U.S., Thatcher in Britain, Kohl and Mitterand on the Continent, and you see that the introduction of market-oriented thinking, the decentralization of government, and the privatization of social services are today's most important new ideas. Look at Hernando De Soto's work in Peru and its implications for the Third World. Look at the economies of Japan and the Four Tigers. Richard Nixon once compared his visit to Asia in the early 1950s with his visits thirty years later. He said the greatest single change was that in 1953, the wave of the future in Asia was Marxism. By 1983, Marxism in Asia was the wave of the past.

Yet in the United States and in the conservative movement, even with all these achievements, we have a sense of anxiety. I suspect almost every one of you has a sense that, somehow after eight years of Reagan, it was not supposed to be quite like this.

**Reasons to Be Anxious.** I want to suggest that there are good reasons to be anxious. Republican politicians seem to be very shocked when every poll asking the question: "Do you think America is on the right track or the wrong track?" produces majorities saying "the wrong track." And Republican politicians and conservatives feel that after seven years of Reagan, these should not be the results.

Conservatives need to understand that there are good reasons for this dissatisfaction. If you sit home for a couple of evenings and watch the news, you will see stories on the twin deficits of the budget and trade, stories on the tougher economic competition we now face in the world, stories on the new dynamic Soviet leadership. You will start to think that the longest economic growth cycle in peacetime also has to mean that a recession will occur at some point. You will see stories on terrorism. What do you think twenty nights of watching the Kuwaiti terrorist action does psychologically to people's sense of control over their immediate world? You look at the AIDS epidemic and at the drug problem and you say to

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yourself, “Gee, do you think America is on the right track or the wrong track?” You would have to be nuts to say the right track.

As a member of Congress, I am struck by the increasing level of anxiety in the House of Representatives — and the House is the nervous system of the body politic. There is a level of anxiety in both parties that I have not seen in the ten years I have been in Congress. And yet I think that this anxiety is warranted. If I were a Democrat and I looked at the track record of Democrats in presidential races since 1964, I would feel enormous anxiety that Edward Kennedy’s state had produced a governor with an ethnic name who was going to a convention in Atlanta which had as its other, largest, single bloc of delegates Jesse Jackson’s followers. I would say to myself if I were a Democrat “I feel a little uncertain about what November could look like.”

**Afraid to Polarize Issues.** On the other hand, if I were a Republican with any sense of historical knowledge, I would have to confront the following realities. In my lifetime, the Republican Party has twice attempted to hold the White House for longer than eight years — 1960 and 1976. Both times it had the advantage of incumbency — incumbent vice president and incumbent president who had been a vice president. Both times the Republican candidates thought of themselves in a bureaucratic model. They were superb bureaucratic politicians. They also tended to have the slowness and the caution associated with bureaucratic politicians. They were surrounded by advisors who thought winning required moving to the Left, crowding the Democratic candidate so that most voters would find a place under their umbrella. These candidates were afraid to polarize the issues or to identify the Democrat with the Left so that voters would support them because they were repelled by the Left. Both candidates lost very close elections, and in both cases the marginal states were probably stolen.

In both campaigns, the Republican candidates early on managed to be so confused about who they were that the conservative activists in the party spent most of the spring and summer worrying about their own nominee rather than defining the Democrat. Almost all their creative energy went into what the platform would look like, what the convention would look like, who the vice president would be, rather than asking the media and the electorate why the Democrats were getting a free ride. In both cases, the candidate thought that because of his incumbency he could run a truth-in-advertising campaign about politics in September and October. In both cases, the Democratic nominee was new, an outsider, a person who could claim achievement and, most important, a person who represented a swing ethnic group — Kennedy with Catholics, Carter with southerners. In both cases, an undefined candidate triumphantly went to the Democratic convention, bonded culturally with voters who then ignored the Republican political ads in September. And in both cases, the ads began to take effect in October — too late.

**Recovering from Jimmy Carter.** In 1960 and 1976 the Republicans assumed that the Democrats were more interested in ideology and personal differences than they were in power. The Republicans said up until Los Angeles that John F. Kennedy would never get Lyndon Johnson on the ticket and that Kennedy would lose the South. Republicans said up until New York that Carter, having humiliated the party regulars, would never get them to back him and that he would not carry the Northeast. Forced to choose between power and ideological politics, it took the Democrats in each case approximately a minute and twelve seconds to decide to put together the optimal ticket, bind the party together, get the machine geared up, and win the election.

Given that history lesson, I would say there are profound reasons why a Republican looking at the current situation should be at least as anxiety-ridden as the Democrats. The Reagan Administration deserves enormous credit for helping this country recover from Jimmy Carter, which I would remind you was no mean achievement. But we are still functionally ill as a nation. To be told as a patient that you have recovered from a heart attack does not mean that your gall bladder problem is not important. The heart attack was real. Carter, by 1980, had really led America to the verge of disintegration. We tend to forget that when we ask why Reagan did not accomplish more; we forget the mess he inherited. But I think there are five profound reasons why we did not accomplish more and why, without regard to the presidential race, we are anxiety-ridden today.

**Explaining Why the Left Was Wrong.** First, no political leader with Reagan's breadth of vision and authority has emerged in the conservative movement. Kemp speaks for economics, DuPont speaks for new ideas, Robertson speaks for social values, but there is no single charismatic articulator of our felt beliefs who binds us together and projects the future in the way that Goldwater did in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and in the way that Reagan did in the 1970s and 1980s.

Second, governing proved to be far more complicated than conservatives were prepared to handle. We had done very well in the 1970s at developing an analysis of the Left and explaining why the Left was wrong. We found two or three large themes that were adequate to govern at least through July of 1981.

We then discovered that the actual daily process of managing America was incredibly more complex than we understood. I would say we are only now beginning to catch up to where we should have been in January of 1981. That is why I am delighted this group is here to look at our system: not only the horizontal complexity of the separation of powers — the Supreme Court, the Legislative Branch, and the White House — but the vertical complexity of our federal system. For instance, to talk about education policy in America, you must begin with voluntarism and parenting, deal with child care and Sunday school, and then consider the varieties of formal schooling. There are approximately 17,000 public school districts alone. So when you talk about changing America, you are talking about an extraordinary system whose complexity we underestimated in the 1970s.

**Politics as Civil War.** Third, our conservative political philosophy calls for fundamental changes in our national culture. That has made our political victories less significant. We are in many ways more analogous to Wesley's "Methodism" and its impact on Britain in the 18th century than we are to a purely political movement. Because when you say "let's talk about voluntarism"; when you say "let's talk about privatization"; when you say "we need the work ethic"; when you say "we need tougher penalties and sanctions for unacceptable behavior like selling cocaine," you are talking about a cultural value shift far more fundamental than a change in politics. And we still have not fully accepted how important that is and what its consequences are.

Fourth, up until the Bork nomination, all of us failed to appreciate that the Left in this country has come to understand politics as civil war. The Left at its core understands in a way that Grant understood after Shiloh that this is a civil war, that only one side will prevail, and that the other side will be relegated to history. This war has to be fought with the scale and duration and savagery that is only true of civil wars. While we are lucky in this country that our civil wars are fought at the ballot box, not on the battlefield, nonetheless it is a true civil war. So the deliberate, systematic smearing and destruction of Bork was normal. It was

precisely what would happen in a civil war. You can expect from here on that the hard Left, which includes Jim Wright and Tony Coelho and many people who do not look hard Left, will try by chameleon-like actions to destroy our country. In fact, these individuals practice being chameleons: they are who they have to be today in order to be acceptable. But they do not represent American values. The hard Left will systematically root us out and destroy us if they can. We underestimated that, and frankly, we underestimated how socially dominant they would be. For instance, there are corporations that insist on funding socialists who then teach their grandchildren to despise them. We also underestimated how dominant and entrenched they would be in academia, the news media, and on Capitol Hill. As a consequence, the Left continues to seize the moral high ground in policy debates.

**The Anti-Religious Left.** Let me give you a couple of quick examples. There is an anti-religious Left in the U.S., and that is what the fight to override the Supreme Court's *Grove City* ruling was all about. The Left is anti-religious — a simple notion, not complicated. In the new liberal child care bill there is a paragraph that says that any institution receiving money under the bill cannot display religious pictures or symbols. They must be either physically removed or physically covered. That is fairly anti-religious. They do not pick on homosexual activist lifestyles. They do not pick on cable rock video. They do not pick on drug use. But in an age when we are concerned about child abuse, they say that to allow a four-year-old into a room displaying the Star of David or the Crucifix is to pollute them for life. But as conservatives we are not allowed to criticize these attitudes. We are ridiculed if we say anything.

Second example: The Democrats, in particular the Left, intend to make this the year of the family. To prove this point, Gore and Dukakis and Jackson all have agreed that there is nothing wrong with homosexual couples adopting children. And yet for us to say, "Now what kind of family do you mean when you say this is the year of the family?" is considered anti-children.

Third example: There is a consistent routine in large cities and in some rural counties in America for political machines to steal votes. Citizens are defeated by people who are dead or have moved out of town. Yet to say that is to be called a racist.

**Cheerful Lies.** One final example: Jesse Jackson has been saying for several months that it is terrible that \$100 million was taken out of the Coast Guard budget that could be used to fight drugs. It is true. Bill Lehman, Democrat from Miami, Chairman of the Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee, took the money out to give it to mass transit. Now nobody in the White House has thought to have the President go on TV and say publicly, "You know, Jesse, I wish you would call Bill Lehman and tell him to put the \$100 million back in as we requested at the time." Instead, we will allow Mr. Jackson to cheerfully lie. And he knows it because Secretary Burnley talked to him personally. We should tell Jackson not to blame us for what some of his allies did to buy off his other allies. We do not even have the nerve to say it. And we wonder about the degree to which we are browbeaten and dominated by the Left.

The fifth major challenge to conservatives is that the scale of global change is dramatically greater than we expected. None of us at any level understands how to deal with that. Frankly, our national experience compounds the problem because we so dominated the world after World War II that it was easy to wish that it would stop changing. And we acquired habits of indolence, dominance, and thoughtlessness that are going to cost us dearly until we drop them. I keep reminding my friends at home, "You want to dominate 53

percent of the world economy? Simple. Bomb Toyota. If you do not want to bomb Toyota, you better roll up your sleeves and start changing.” And as Ross Perot said recently to a Republican conference, “We are permanently in the world market. We cannot withdraw. We are getting our butts kicked and there is a simple rule for getting back in the game. The minimum standard acceptable if you intend to have our standard of living is excellence. Anything below excellence is failure. Because anything below excellence will not sustain the standard of living we’ve had and which we wish to give our children.”

We simply are not ready to deal with these enormous changes, and this Administration was certainly not ready for them. This is the challenge. We are a generation whose solutions are three orders of magnitude smaller than our problems. An order of magnitude is a factor of ten. If we go to lunch expecting to pay \$2, we are off by one order of magnitude if lunch costs \$20. We are off by two orders of magnitude if lunch costs \$200.

**Three Orders of Magnitude Too Small.** In Washington I use this example: Imagine conducting a brainstorming session on how to go from Washington to Los Angeles quickly. Somebody says, “I’ve got it. We can walk west. We can make 2 1/2 miles.” That is three orders of magnitude too small. Anywhere else in America, this answer would be rejected. In Washington, not only would we have two years of public hearings on walking, but the major editorial page debate would concern whether to walk west in Nikes or in Reeboks.

This is true in both parties across both ideological spectrums. We are three orders of magnitude too small. What must we do to address our problems adequately? First, we must begin to teach the simple model of visions, strategies, projects, and tactics. This is particularly important for those of you who are policy entrepreneurs in your own states. If you do not have a vision to define what you are trying to accomplish, how can you have strategies to accomplish it? If you do not have strategies, how can you possibly assign projects? And projects are simply definable, delegatable results. The less skilled the person to whom you are delegating projects, the more you need to provide training. But in the long run, you want to measure the result, not the behavior. Finally, you have to have tactics. But how can you have tactics unless you know what your vision and strategy are?

A specific example from election politics: If you are going to run as a populist, you probably should not have a \$500-a-plate tuxedo dinner on the Monday night before the election. It will look strange to the people who spent the year being told you are a populist. It will be tactically wrong for your vision.

**A Vision-Level Problem.** It is very important to understand this model in order to address issues at an adequate order of magnitude. At what level are we dealing? President Reagan never understood, for example, that the problem of getting the State Department to call Nicaragua a communist state was a vision-level problem. But if he could not solve that one-word problem, he could not win the struggle for public understanding in America. The President did not understand why the State Department rejected the word: they do not believe Nicaragua is a communist country. They do not believe the Soviet Union is a communist country. They think of communism as the strange fantasy of right-wing Neanderthals who occasionally are allowed to occupy the White House. During these periods the State Department believes it is saving the world from the U.S. Because the President could not raise his understanding to the right level, he would just get irritated occasionally about this tactical failing.

We have not solved the drug problem for a similar reason. If you elevate drugs to the vision level, the empire that cocaine and heroin are creating, apart from the Soviet empire, is clearly the largest national security threat the U.S. has faced since World War II. Now what is the normal conservative reaction to a national security threat? Mobilize, spend resources. What is the OMB reaction to the drug war? "We cannot spend very much. What did you have in mind?"

How do we expect our police to react? Police are the only group in America who cannot generate the support they deserve. Liberals do not want to give police money because they do not believe in them, and conservatives do not want to give them money because they do not believe in giving money to anyone. So police are routinely paid less than schoolteachers, take more risks, in small towns always moonlight, become more susceptible to bribes, and have no reason to become organized on our behalf because they do not see us as their allies. They have no allies.

**Flying Upside Down.** Yet a conservative movement that at the vision level considered drugs a true national security threat would say, "Why don't we have at least as big a jump in the national security budget for drugs as we have had in the defense budget? This is a real war." Now you open up all sorts of possibilities. Now you have thousands of police officers out there who are campaigning for you and saying, "Boy, do they understand my problems." Now you have changed the whole arena of what you are fighting over.

So you have visions, strategies, projects, and tactics. I understand you are policy activists and entrepreneurs and you usually worry about projects and tactics. So let me speak about visions and strategies. I want to recommend first that all of you get a book by Joe Gaylord of the National Republican Congressional Committee called *Flying Upside Down*. It is the best working document on how to dominate the news media that has been written. Gaylord is writing for candidates for Congress, but if you just insert "conservative activist" it pertains to you.

Second, you need to be aware of Irving Kristol's rule about conflict. He said, "The reason business leaders are lousy politicians is that businesses gain momentum by avoiding conflict and being internally efficient. Politicians gain energy by fighting. They are contrary relationships. Those behaviors which make most sense in a corporation, make least sense in the political world." All of you are by definition in the political world of ideas, and therefore you have to learn to fight because fighting is the only way you get attention. So have a big vision, pick a grand strategy, and start hitting someone.

**Bad Coverage Beat by No Coverage.** Finally, let me suggest that it does not matter how biased the media is: in the long run it will cover you, because it is in the media's interest to fill up the paper and the air time. Ultimately they will begin to cover your activities. They may not cover you favorably. That does not matter. Bad coverage beats no coverage, and eventually bad coverage leads to better coverage. Hiding from the media because you cannot control what it says never works in America, because the news media is the nervous system of our culture. Sooner or later you will find an audience and you will have communicated with enough people who will like what you are doing despite the bad coverage. You will have the momentum amassed to be important.

Richard Wirthlin makes the following statement of political vision, which I have found very helpful. He says, "That movement or party dominates which is seen by citizens as an engine of change which will produce positive changes in their lives." That is the essence of



the history of the rise of coalitions in American politics for over 200 years. Americans always vote for the future over the past, for change over stability. But they want positive changes in their lives, not in the abstract.

In that context, let me suggest that our movement — a Center-Right coalition against the Left — has been a clear majority for twenty years. In 1968, the Left got 43 percent; in 1972 the Left got 38 percent; in 1976 the Left had no candidate because Jimmy Carter ran as a centrist Southern Baptist reformer who was explicitly against the liberals. In fact, in polling data in October — another warning for George Bush — Carter was seen as slightly to the right of Gerald Ford. In 1980, the Left got 41 percent; in 1984 the Left got 41 percent.

If that is true, why has the Center-Right not been more successful? I think there is a simple reason. The Left dominates because, while they are a minority, they are a community. *The Wall Street Journal* coverage on how the Left organized the anti-Bork fight offers a brilliant case study. It describes Teddy Kennedy calling the head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Joe Lowery, at three o'clock in the morning to get him to organize their annual meeting as an anti-Bork rally. The Left's ability to orchestrate their community enables them to sway approximately one-third of the nation. Because it is organized, it beats the other two-thirds which is disorganized.

**The Loneliest Nation on the Planet.** We will become a community only if we share a common vision and strategy, even as we fight like crazy over projects and tactics. Let me say to all of you quite candidly, I do not expect my dearest friends in this movement to resolve the issue of libertarianism versus social conservatism and cultural conservatism. It is just not going to happen. We are a large coalition of economic, social, and foreign policy conservatives.

I will give you a simple principle. Minorities resolve conflicts, majorities manage them. Healthy majorities develop the creativity to manage conflicts. But they do not resolve conflicts because resolution results in kicking somebody out. And majorities always understand that it is better to be a majority and win while fighting.

Our procedures should be to listen, to learn, to help, and then to lead. You can listen anywhere. You go out and say, "I am thinking about establishing a new foundation in our state that has the following vision level purposes, but first I would like to know about your hospital." You do that for three weeks, and you will know more about your community than any politician. And you will have more important people thinking, "Gee, that was a nice person. He actually listened to me."

Nobody does that in America. We are the loneliest nation on the planet. So you go out and say, "I will listen to you," and people will just fall over themselves. Listen, learn, and then help. After all, we believe in voluntarism, and how can you be a volunteer if you do not know anything? So you help them. You network people together. You get them in the same room. At that point they probably will not need any further help. They are smarter than you, they have more energy and time, and it is their project. Occasionally, they turn and say, "Alright, we can't solve this. You get to lead now because you listen and you learn and you help us." But it is that sequence.

**The Failure of Classic Republicanism.** Let me reiterate: most people are not political, do not want to be, and should not be if the system is working right. Most people want to live their own life. They want to get up in the morning. They want to get their kids off to a decent school. They want to go to a decent job on decent roads. They want to have the

evening off to do something decent, and they do not want to spend five hours arguing about politics. So to organize them, you had better understand their problems. I want to give you a five-step process for dealing with real life problems and show you why the classic Republicanism of the past forty years has been such a dismal failure in organizing the majority.

The first question to ask as you listen and learn is: "Is what you are telling me real?" For example, if somebody says, "Do you know, I'm fifty-eight years old. My mother is eighty-one and we are in a situation where we have too much money to get Medicaid. I don't want to put her in a nursing home and there is no program which allows me to get the oxygen equipment to let her stay here at home, and I have a problem." The first question you should ask is: "Is it real?" Think about it. Congressman Steve Gunderson of Wisconsin said to me today, "If you are a single or divorced woman with a child in a small town in rural Wisconsin, you probably don't have child care and you can't go to work." Is that real or not? Well, that is easy to test. You go out and listen. Because we believe in the market, if you run into people who say they have that problem, you may decide the problem is real.

**Maximizing Quantity, Quality, and Choice.** The second question is: "Do you need help?" There are occasions when the correct answer is "You are a jerk." But you find an amazing amount of the time that people do need help. That does not mean they need government. I said they need help. The homeless are a good example of the conservative movement's failure to ask the right question by failing to address a vision-level problem. There are essentially only two problems with the homeless in America: one is that we never organize volunteer organizations aggressively enough, and the other is that we never figured out what to do with people who are mentally ill but who are no longer locked up. And because we never defined it on our terms as a problem we needed to solve, the Left defined it as our failure to spend enough money on housing.

The third question is: "Can you help others while maximizing quantity, quality, and choice?" This is the breaking point with the Left. We have more than two hundred years of history demonstrating how to do that. It is called the market. It works brilliantly; it is extraordinarily productive. You see that with personal computers. Thank God, we did not have a Department of Computing. The market works.

The fourth question is: "Who chooses quality, quantity, and choice?" The Left has a simple answer. We will choose for you. And furthermore, we will take money away from you in order to have the right to spend that money for you. Now, there will be a little paperwork. You will only get to go to the doctor once a month. The doctor will only be allowed to charge you 80 percent of what he would like, and we will only pay 80 percent of what he charges you. Everybody will be bitching. But, by the way, we have a small committee of experts, none of whom are on Medicare, meeting in a high rise in Washington right now solving this problem for you.

**Herbert Hoover's Worst Legacy.** By and large, the conservative movement has understood the importance of individual liberty and the free market in addressing the third and fourth questions. But now we get to the fifth question. Historically, this was Herbert Hoover's worst legacy to the conservative movement. Hoover was so angry at FDR that the most activist Secretary of Commerce in American history became anti-government. And he said: "How much will it cost and how much can we afford this year?" Now for forty years Republicans have argued, "It will cost too much. We can't afford it. Therefore, you are not allowed to have it." So there has been this great debate. Democrats would say, "I'll bet you

have a real problem.” Republicans would say, “You are not allowed to have that problem because we can’t pay for it. Only really bad people would claim they have that problem.” Given those two choices, you can understand why compassion does not rank as high with us as it does with Jesse Jackson, who may have no ideas about how to solve problems, but at least knows enough to say, “I’ll bet you hurt.” Meanwhile, we say, “No, if you hurt, we would have to buy aspirin and we can’t afford aspirin this year. Shut up about your headache.”

If you will take this five-step model and apply it, you will suddenly discover that from child care to health care to education, we can invent a revolution. Remember, there are two great models in the world today. One model says, “How do humans really behave? Let’s organize rules to reinforce real behavior. So if entrepreneurialism is what works, let’s design a system to encourage entrepreneurialism.” The other system says, “We have power. How do we punish those who are productive until they behave the way we intend?”

**Two Models That Divide the World.** Those are the two central models that divide the planet. You should look at social problems in our cities and states the way De Soto looked at them in Lima, Peru. You should look at the 35 percent of Floridians who drive illegally without insurance much the way he looks at the people who drive taxis in Lima, where 95 percent of taxis and buses in Peru are informal. This is a very important distinction. Informal means doing an illegal act for legal ends, such as building a house without a permit. Illegal means doing an illegal act for illegal ends. And De Soto’s point is simple. All over the Third World, as well as in large segments of U.S. cities, people engage in informal behavior routinely because it is the only sensible way to invest in resources.

And so I would say our movement in part should go out and listen and say, “Tell me what you really do and let’s figure out how we reorganize the laws to make legal what you are doing, as long as it is not fundamentally invalid behavior.” Then let the Left say, “Actually allow street vendors? Actually allow people to build homes?” I think you would find a sudden shift in the public’s perception of who really cares about making the poor prosperous and powerful.

A couple of closing comments. First, I think we have to focus on the basic issues: jobs in the world market; child care; continuing education; Social Security; drugs and crime. We need to think creatively about addressing these issues. For instance, instead of beating up on Mexico and Colombia because they cannot stop production, why do we not establish a demonstration project for a drug-free environment so Colombia can learn how to handle Cartagena? I would suggest the District of Columbia.

**A Collective Act of Self-Immolation.** We could make better use of new technologies. For example, electronic incarceration. The penalty for a first conviction for drug use might be that for six months you have to be within 100 feet of your telephone all day unless you are in school or at work, including all weekend. And the law could require the convicted to pay the costs. The alternative would be time in jail. If this were the punishment, I bet drug use would decline. We are not being creative. We are not being serious. We are faced with a blitzkrieg by the drug trade, and we are talking as though weekend maneuvers by the National Guard is an adequate defense.

Drugs are to 1988 what taxes were to 1980. Seventy-nine percent of this country says it worries about drugs, and because of conservative incompetence, Jesse Jackson is the

leading spokesman on drugs in America. This was not easy. It rivals the 1986 Senate races as a collective act of self-immolation.

In addition, we have to rethink self-government. Why do we allow a bureaucracy to be so complex that it can hire only typists who cannot type? How can we tolerate an IRS so incompetent that 50 percent of its verbal assurances and 35 percent of its written assurances about how to interpret your taxes are wrong. Why do we have school systems which guarantee that not only are the parents impotent, but so is the school board and the state legislature. At every level from the federal legislature to the federal bureaucracy to the local legislature to the local school board, we should use common sense to reinvent government that works.

We must not be anti-government. Conservatives have to understand this: we are for very strong, lean, nonbureaucratic, nonwelfare government. We are for the welfare of the people, but we are not for a welfare state. What do I mean by that? Everybody you know wants to stop drugs. How strong do you think the government is going to be that does that. Very strong. Everybody here wants to contain the Soviet empire. How strong do you think the government is that develops the SDI system? Very strong. If we will agree that we are for strong, lean government, we can then argue about details. And if we do not go out and make this work, it is not going to happen, because the Left has no incentive to make a government strong enough to keep our country free.

**Vigorous Conservatism.** American history offers us great models of leadership. Just read the biography of Benjamin Franklin. He is an inventor of self-government: the creator of our public library, post office, and volunteer fire department. The list of his social inventions includes many that are volunteer or local, some that are national. Look at every great wave of American activism, and think about what it changed. The Republican Party from 1854 to 1928 authored the Homestead Act, which offered a free farm to every man who would settle on it and improve it. The transcontinental railroad: it was built with subsidies, but we did not need a Department of Railroads. Because we wanted productivity on the American farm we established the Land Grant colleges, the agricultural laboratories, and field agents. Opening up the West: government paid for Lewis and Clark's expedition. Building the Panama Canal all of us wanted to keep? We invented a nation, built a canal, manned the canal, cured yellow fever, and had a Navy to protect it.

All I am suggesting is that we have had a remarkably vigorous conservatism that said, "I want to protect individual freedom. I want stability. I want a lean bureaucracy. I will reshape the market to encourage certain behaviors. But within that framework, I want maximum individual liberty." Read the preamble to the Constitution: "... establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. . . ."

The challenge to you is very simple. Ronald Reagan and Barry Goldwater carried us to this evening. It is our turn.

