

# Reaganland: America's Right Turn, 1976-1980

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 marked a watershed moment in American politics. Reagan's victory signaled the end of the liberal era that had dominated American politics since the New Deal. It also marked the beginning of a new era of conservative dominance that would last for decades to come.



## Reaganland: America's Right Turn 1976-1980

by Rick Perlstein

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Reagan's victory was the culmination of a long-term shift in American politics that had begun in the 1960s. The civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the counterculture movement had all contributed to a growing sense of unease among many Americans. They were looking for a change, and Reagan offered them a clear choice.

Reagan's message was simple: America was in decline, and he was the only one who could save it. He promised to cut taxes, reduce government

regulation, and restore American values. His message resonated with many Americans who were frustrated with the status quo.

Reagan's victory was a major turning point in American history. It marked the end of the liberal era and the beginning of a new era of conservative dominance. Reagan's policies would have a profound impact on American society, both domestically and internationally.

## **Domestic Policy**

Reagan's domestic policy was based on the belief that government was the problem, not the solution. He argued that the government should get out of the way and let the free market work its magic. Reagan's policies led to a significant reduction in the size and scope of government.

One of Reagan's most significant domestic policy initiatives was the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981. This act cut taxes across the board, with the largest cuts going to the wealthy. Reagan argued that these tax cuts would stimulate economic growth. However, critics argued that the tax cuts would lead to increased deficits and would benefit the wealthy at the expense of the poor.

Reagan also reduced government regulation of business. He argued that regulation was stifling economic growth. However, critics argued that deregulation would lead to increased pollution and consumer harm.

Reagan's domestic policies had a mixed impact on the American economy. The economy did experience significant growth during the Reagan years. However, the growth was not evenly distributed, with the wealthy benefiting

the most. Reagan's policies also led to increased deficits and a widening gap between the rich and the poor.

## **Foreign Policy**

Reagan's foreign policy was based on the belief that America was a superpower and should use its power to promote its interests around the world. Reagan took a hard line against the Soviet Union, which he called the "evil empire." He increased military spending and developed new weapons systems, such as the MX missile.

Reagan also intervened in several conflicts around the world, including the invasion of Grenada and the bombing of Libya. He also provided support to anti-communist rebels in Nicaragua and Afghanistan.

Reagan's foreign policy was controversial. Critics argued that he was too confrontational with the Soviet Union and that his interventions in other countries were counterproductive. However, supporters argued that Reagan's policies were necessary to protect American interests and to promote democracy around the world.

## **Legacy**

Reagan's legacy is complex and contested. He is remembered as a charismatic leader who restored American confidence. However, he is also criticized for his policies, which led to increased inequality and a decline in the social safety net.

Reagan's impact on American society is still being debated today. However, there is no doubt that he was a transformative figure who changed the course of American history.

- Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
- Richard Nixon Presidential Library
- Jimmy Carter Presidential Library



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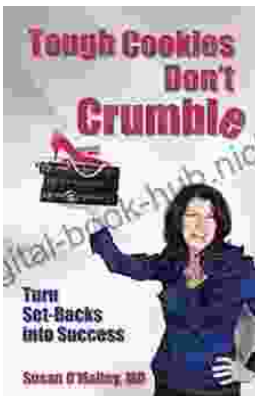
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