

In January of 1982, President Ronald Reagan was preparing to give his State of the Union address to the country. The buildup of this speech was more of a will-he or won't he commit to his economic plans that had circulated in the press and caused suspense that had been running for almost two months prior to his State of the Union address. The question running through the public's minds was the effect of his economic plans on each person's income and livelihood. President Reagan made good on his promises on what his plans were for the. He asked for higher taxes for people who spend an excessive amount of money on cigarettes, luxury cars and boats and possibly people who have sizable medical expenses or run up charge-account bills. Higher taxes would provide much needed revenue to the government ranging from \$40 billion to \$60 billion over the next two fiscal years. The payoff for this plan proposed by President Reagan was the forecast that budget deficits would drop from around \$100 billion during the next fiscal year to a range of \$60 billion to \$80 billion by 1984. Earlier projections of a 1983 deficit of more than \$150 billion had frightened not only Washington but Wall Street and the nation as well.

Reagan also stressed ways to advance the "new federalism:" turning over to the states a portion of the revenues from increased federal taxes to help carry on programs for which Washington had reduced funding. He also proposed further deep slashes in federal social spending, totaling \$31 billion. Reagan also defended his planned economic program. The second stage of his program was a tax cut of 10% to people (which took effect July 1, 1982), which was expected to fuel a strong recovery from the most current recession at that time.

During this point in time of Reagan's Presidency, he had many other proposals that he wanted to follow through with for the benefit of the country. His main issue was to raise taxes on particular items to help reduce the deficit, while providing more take home pay for the average American. The idea was that most Americans would spend this extra money, thus fueling the economy that was also projected in his plans to further reduce the deficit from additional taxes paid by businesses on the additional sales. Reagan's figures and proposals were still unknown at this time as to their reliability and potential for success but were later put into perspective by historians and economists as the key to America's strong economy in later years.

Washington also had problems dealing with Western Europe. Reagan struggled to make the allies speak as one on the communist repression that was occurring in Poland. Western Europe's diplomats had other ideas on how to deal with reducing the repression in Poland. During the month of January 1982, Washington and its NATO allies had developed a joint response to the crackdown in Poland that had seemingly narrowed from their original differences that Reagan had with our allies in Western Europe. Their views began to seem similar in their future plans for Poland's economy and the restraining of the countries communist repression of their people. During this period of crisis surrounding Poland, Reagan met with the West German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt. Nobody during this time had expected this meeting to be warm. From the time when martial law was declared in Poland in December of 1981, Schmidt's criticism of the crackdown had been notably mild. Reagan and the administration did not pay much attention to Schmidt's cautious attitude. In the 2 ½ hour meeting between Schmidt and Reagan, Schmidt spoke about how they observed some disarming within the country of Poland. Schmidt and West Germany had always been against disarming of the military force in Poland. He then apologized for the vote West Germany gave in the United Nations resolution in December of 1981 attacking U.S. policy in El Salvador. Towards the end of the meeting, Schmidt readily agreed to endorse a joint statement that stressed his support for the U.S.

position on Poland. Presidential aides had felt that the meeting went very well and that everyone seemed pleased. They believe that Schmidt left Washington with a different perspective on Poland than he had when he had arrived.

In January of 1952, Harry S. Truman was the 33rd president of the United States. Truman was late in his term and a new candidate was already being considered. Although Truman was late in his term and that he already had dealt with such issues as World War Two, dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the North Atlantic Treaty, he still felt he had work to finish.

In the midst of January 1952, President Truman met with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in the United States to simply discuss a close and intimate understanding between the heads of government on both sides. A warm greeting between the two in public showed the respect and relationship that they both wanted from each other. Everything between the two was on the friendliest of terms. Nobody expected, or hoped for, any big decisions or drastic changes to come from this meeting between the two. Through most of the banquets, luncheons, and conferences, both sides kept their aides close at hand. Dean Acheson, U.S. Secretary of State, was always by Truman's side while Anthony Edon, Foreign Secretary was by Churchill's side the entire time. There was a time when Truman and Churchill were on the presidential yacht, Williamsburg, and had a peaceful after dinner conversation. Fifteen minutes into the conversation, Truman sent for Acheson and Truman sent for Edon.

The main topic of their conversations was about the pressing new threats of Communist aggression, such as the Red Chinese pressure on Southeast Asia. There were differences in tactics on foreign policy, ranging from the handling of the Middle East to Churchill wanting a Big Three conference with Truman and Stalin of Russia. The U.S. opposed this idea of the Big Three coming together again. Churchill also had doubts about General Eisenhower's concept of an international army to combat communism and aggression in the world. Above all, it was felt by many in the world that Britain had lost touch with the U.S. through various financial and foreign affairs crises. From this interaction between the two heads of government, Britain and the U.S. established an intimate understanding and support for each other.

In 1922, the 29th president was in the middle of his term, or so it was thought. President Warren G. Harding was elected in 1921 and died in the middle of his term of a heart attack in San Francisco in 1923. On January 23, 1952, not much was going on in the presidency. The death of Pope Benedict XV was the only time Harding's name was mentioned in the newspapers. On the 23rd, the condolences of the pope's death were dispatched by Secretary Hughes to Cardinal Gasparri, papal secretary of state. The pope's death was the largest news in the New York Times as well as all other newspapers in the United States. The next piece of information that I could gather up was in the earliest issue of Time Magazine that I could find. In March of 1923, President Harding was in the middle of his term and the main focus of an article on the Presidency was an argument for and against Harding. People looked at his achievements and failures instead of to the personality of the man and the theoretical conception of the Chief Executive. Harding's enemies pointed out the predictions of his failures that they had made when he was running for the presidency. Even his supporters seemed to cause Harding concern. Since it had been only four years since the end of World War I, the public was anxious for a return to social and economic prosperity, which was not coming fast enough. A railway strike recently hurt America's agriculture deeply and the economy was stalling. Blame was being poured on Harding for his lack of action.

In conclusion, I feel that Reagan and Truman had more issues to deal with during their terms as President than Harding. Harding was more criticized during his tenure for what was viewed as a lack of action where as the public viewed

Reagan and Truman as men of action. There were many important issues in the world, both foreign and domestic that were impacting the Presidency's of Reagan and Truman while Harding had lesser issues outside the country, which caused the public to constantly be focused on the economy.