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Author: Andrew Rudalevige
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Main content

Article Preview :

The America that Reagan Built by J. David Woodard. Westport, CT, Praeger Publishers, 2006. 296 pp. \$49.95.

Richard Reeves's *President Reagan: The Triumph of Imagination* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005) depicts a former reporter as impressed, yet bewildered, by the elaborate pomp of Ronald Reagan's 2004 state funeral: "The man they're talking about is not the President I covered every day." J. David Woodard suggests that in fact he was. Reagan "not only changed the country, he changed the world," Woodard argues (p. 101), both as republican and Republican. His "rhetoric and character" re-energized America's founding ideals (p. 101); and in partisan terms, "the 1980 election began a rolling political realignment that changed the country from Democratic domination to Republican rule" (p. 248),

Woodard's goal is to recount America's political, social, and cultural history from "malaise" in 1979 to maelstrom in 2005. The impressively coherent narrative encompasses everything from elections and policy debates to trials of the century, hairstyles, and top television shows. If the story...

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Did America's fortieth president lead a conservative counterrevolution that left liberalism gasping for air? The answer, for both his admirers and his detractors, is often "yes." Reagan emerges more as happy warrior than angry ideologue, as a big-picture man better at setting America's mood than implementing his program. With a vigorous Democratic opposition, Reagan's own affability, and other limiting factors, the eighties were less counterrevolutionary than many believe. Ignoring the paisley drapes and the built-in bookshelves, six young grandchildren scurried about, transforming the scene from one of imperial prerogative to "family values," to use a phrase that

would be overused during his presidency. A year later, in August 1988, the Republican Cite this Item. Building a network of supporters, Reagan was elected governor of California in 1966. Ronald Reagan wrote that his mother "always expected to find the best in people and often did." [13] She attended the Disciples of Christ church regularly and was active, and very influential, within it; she frequently led Sunday school services and gave the Bible readings to the congregation during the services. These positions included faith in Providence, association of America's mission with God's will, belief in progress, trust in the work ethic and admiration for those who achieved wealth, an uncomfotableness with literature and art that questioned the family or challenged notions of proper sexual behavior, presumption that poverty is an individual problem best left to charity rather than the state, sensitivity. Its official name is the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Centre and it's located just down the street from the White House. The current White House resident, President Clinton, joined Nancy Reagan on Tuesday to dedicate the 816 (M) million U-S dollar glass-and-stone complex. It was the kind of event that Reagan supporters say the former president would have enjoyed. He is now too ill with Alzheimer's disease to be able to attend the event. The commerce that will be conducted in this great building will be a testament in a truly global economy, America has done so much to create. SUPER CAPTION: Bill Clinton, U-S President This newest monument of sorts to Reagan will do more than house federal entities, such as the Agency for International Development. "Readable and analytical, ^IThe America That Reagan Built^R its billing as a clear and concise account of 'the political history of the United States from the 1980s to the second administration of George W. Bush.' It is a 'must read' for all students of American politics. Indeed, students whose professors do not assign this book should feel short-changed." (Charles W. Dunn^LDean, Regent University). "This book is political science at its best. David Woodard writes with a style that is part spellbinding storyteller and part incisive political analyst. He looks