

WASHINGTON

Reagan's Startling Victory

By James Reston

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4 — After the celebrations over Ronald Reagan's spectacular victory, come the hangovers. It would be pleasant to think everybody would now close ranks and get on with the nation's business. The sad thing about this election, however, is that it has not clarified the nation's problems but deepened them; not unified the people but divided them.

At the Presidential level, it was too personal and negative. Despite the long months of fierce campaigning and Governor Reagan's sweep of the major states, it has not produced any general agreement, even within his own party, about the policies that should guide the American people through the first half of the 1980's.

Instead, it has left Mr. Reagan with no clear policy mandate, and President Carter, despite his overwhelming defeat, without much public regret. And it has also left our allies and adversaries with profound doubts about Reagan's leadership in the future.

There are some consolations despite these gloomy reflections. The campaign, with its preposterous assumption that somehow Carter or Reagan would personally determine the future of the Republic, is finally over.

We will have a one-term President, without fear that Reagan, at his age, will try for a second term. This campaign has been such a disappointment, not only to the American people but to the leaders of both parties, that there is now a chance for a reappraisal of our political life, and particularly for reform of the election process.

When this campaign started — if you can remember that far back — there was considerable anxiety in both parties about the rise of special-interest politics, and the loss of national purpose. It was recognized that the Seventies had been a time of drastic change. At home, all relationships were changing: between management and labor; between races and regions; even between men and women, parents and children.

Abroad, the economic competition among the industrial nations was changing, to the detriment of the United States, adding to the unemployment and inflation. And the military challenge of the Soviet Union and its threat to the essential oil supplies of the Middle East created a host of intri-

cate problems within the free world.

It was hoped that maybe one of the justifications of a long Presidential campaign was that it would make clear this revolution in the economic and military balance of global power and help the parties and the people adjust to the dangers of economic anarchy and the threat of nuclear weapons. Despite Mr. Reagan's victory, the campaign did no such thing. In general it was fought out by slogans, personal attacks, and appeals to special interest groups of the right and left: to blacks, Hispanic people, Jews, big unions, big business, etc. Franklin Roosevelt complained 50 years ago about the Forgotten Man. The problem now is the Forgotten Nation.

It will take some time even to think about all this. Mr. Reagan is undoubtedly exhausted by the struggle and stunned by the magnitude of his victory and will need time to rest and reflect on the consequences of the vote and the implications of his promises.

Meanwhile, there is much unfinished business that must be faced before the inauguration of President Reagan on Jan. 20. The Congress will have to deal with the appropriations bills it avoided for political reasons before the election. President Carter will now have to deal, as a defeated candidate, with the release of the hostages.

One thing is fairly clear about all this and has been dramatized by the Reagan victory. None of these problems can be resolved in ideological, personal or partisan terms. Certainly not by the arguments Mr. Reagan made in the campaign.

It is clear that the problems now facing Mr. Reagan require a philosophy of cooperation rather than confrontation between the contending forces at home and abroad, and a change in the attitudes of the people toward the irresistible changes brought about by science, machinery and the turbulent shifts of population in the industrial world and the rise in power of the oil-producing nations.

It will be surprising if Governor Reagan and his supporters, after their celebrations, try to insist on the policies they pronounced during the campaign or assume they can govern without the help of those they defeated.

Obviously there has been a conservative sweep of opinion in the nation — not only against Mr. Carter but in Congress with the defeat of such liberals as George McGovern and Birch Bayh. But it does not follow that a Reagan Administration can impose a dramatic, conservative set of policies on a Congress still dominated by Democrats.

Indeed, Mr. Reagan and his supporters may be terrified by the promises they have made in this campaign, and after they get over their justified jubilation, be looking around for some way to bring the White House, the Congress and the other separate principalities of the nation into some kind of an agreement on how to cooperate in the coming four years.

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