Y2K and the Man of the Century

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Most Americans have concluded that the media hype about Y2K computer breakdown and terrorism dangers were mostly that, just hype, probably for the purpose of maintaining media ratings since the Monica soap opera is no longer available for titillation. But the media's extolling of Franklin D. Roosevelt as the man or president of the century, or at least as runner-up, was hype of the same magnitude.

We had many a great and noble man in the 20th century, but FDR was not one of them. The myth of his greatness could be swallowed only by those ignorant of history.

FDR was fundamentally what Ronald Reagan was accused of being: an actor. FDR's best talent was reading scripts that were written for him by others and, indeed, he read them very well on radio.

FDR employed a corps of ghostwriters of whom the principal ones were Raymond Moley, Tommy Corcoran and Robert Sherwood. Many men use ghostwriters, but one cannot imagine Jefferson or Madison, Lincoln or Wilson, pretending to be an orator while reciting another man's words.

Ronald Reagan had been an actor, true, but in public life he certainly believed what he was saying. The evidence is massive that FDR didn't believe the oratory for which he is so praised.

The puff pieces about FDR that were prominent in the end-of-the- year editions of magazines such as Time and television talk shows have propagated the myth that he led America out of the Great Depression by putting people back to work.

The truth is that, in 1938 after six years of FDR's New Deal, America had 11,800,000 unemployed, more than were unemployed when he was elected in 1932. Unemployment remained high until millions were

drafted into the army, and the economy didn't improve for the average American until World War II.

Roosevelt's most famous lie was his pledge, "Mothers and fathers, I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again. Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars." His own speechwriter, Robert Sherwood, admitted later, "I burn inwardly whenever I think of those words 'again and again and again.'"

That eloquent phrasemaker, Clare Booth Luce, had it exactly right when, in her Keynote Address at the 1944 Republican National Convention, she charged that he had "lied us into war." FDR's own Secretary of War Henry Stimson described how this was done when he confided to his diary the essence of a White House meeting on November 25, 1941: "The question was how we should maneuver them [the Japanese] into firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves."

When the popular author John T. Flynn started to expose Roosevelt's duplicities, FDR wrote a personal letter declaring that Flynn "should be barred from the columns of any presentable daily paper, monthly magazine, or national quarterly." Fortunately, FDR didn't succeed in his vindictive attempt to silence Flynn.

John T. Flynn's classic best-seller of 1948, "The Roosevelt Myth," was republished last year in a 50th Anniversary edition. It's well worth reading today as an antidote to revisionist history.

"The Roosevelt Myth" details the two great crimes committed by Franklin D. Roosevelt against the nation that honored and trusted him. One was delivering all the gains of World War II to Stalin, the man whom FDR called his friend, "Uncle Joe."

With the Communist spy Alger Hiss at his side at Yalta, President Roosevelt betrayed our allies in Eastern Europe and China and promised Stalin three votes in the United Nations General Assembly plus the right to name the number-two UN official. Those promises were carried out by Hiss a few months later when he served as first Secretary General of the United Nations.

FDR's second crime was his series of performances and devices by which he twisted the fundamental nature of our Republic. FDR launched Harry Hopkins' "tax and tax, spend and spend, elect and elect" political strategy that has been with us ever since, all the time increasing the power of government to spend our money, regulate our lives, and send our sons off to war.

The liberal media obviously couldn't bring themselves to admit that the real man of the century was Ronald Reagan. He was responsible for the greatest achievement in the history of warfare: victory over the giant Evil Empire and the liberation of the Captive Nations.

The decisive battle took place on October 13, 1986 at Reykjavik, Iceland, where Mikhail Gorbachev tried to strike a deal that would have propped up the giant Soviet empire for decades into the future and given Gorbachev the means of competing militarily with the United States indefinitely. Gorbachev demanded that Reagan abandon all plans to build a U.S. anti-missile defense.

When Reagan rejected Gorbachev's deal, the media reported Reykjavik was a failure and that the failure was Reagan's fault. Time's cover screamed "Sunk by Star Wars."

Reagan's personal courage and foresight in rejecting Gorbachev's treaty at Reykjavik started the collapse of the Evil Empire. As Margaret Thatcher summed it up, Reagan won the Cold War "without firing a shot." That's our man of the century.