FROM: Phyllis Schlafly

68 FAIRMOUNT, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002 / (618) 462-5415

RELEASE: MAY 22, 1986

REALIGNMENT AND REAGANISM

Political commentary during the decades of the '50s, '60s, and '70s included repeated demands for "realignment" of the political parties so that conservatives would be in one party and liberals in the other. Many people argued that political parties had no ideological base and no responsibility about issues, and that it was confusing to the voters to have conservatives and liberals in both parties.

This was in the period when true conservatives were dismayed at having to support Nelson Rockefeller for Governor of New York and Earl Warren for Governor of California, with the possibility that they might be on the national ticket, and Republicans like Jacob Javits in the U.S. Senate. The ideology of the two parties remained blurred through 1976 when Jimmy Carter campaigned for President as the anti-Washington candidate, and some people thought he was more conservative than his opponent, Gerald Ford.

The newspapers of the Republican liberal establishment kept repeating the line that Barry Goldwater's nomination in 1964 was a great mistake, and that his crushing defeat "proved" that America could never elect anyone as conservative as Goldwater, so we had to accept the likes of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

Then came Ronald Reagan who dispelled all those myths. Not only did he prove that the most conservative candidate since Calvin Coolidge could be elected and reelected in a landslide. Not only did Ronald Reagan prove that the conservative ideology is synonymous with mainstream America.

But Ronald Reagan has also brought about the party realignment that, a few years ago, appeared hopelessly beyond our grasp. Political reality now dictates that one MUST be a conservative who adheres to Reagan economic and social principles in order to be nominated for President or Vice President on the Republican ticket, and that in order to be nominated on the Democratic ticket one MUST be a liberal certified by the litmus tests on issues of a half-dozen special-interest leftwing lobbies.

Of course, there still exist some liberal/moderate Republicans such as Senators

Charles Mathias, Arlen Specter, and Lowell Weicker. But they are not running for President, and it's obvious that they wouldn't have a chance. Even Howard Baker is no longer a credible candidate; anyway, he voted for the Panama Canal giveaway, and that's the kiss of death for any Republican nominee for President.

The eager candidates seeking the Republican nomination are trying to shore up their conservative credentials well in advance of the election of Delegates to the 1988 Republican National Convention. George Bush is sounding in conservative rhetoric while hoping it won't be noticed that he has not appointed any "movement conservatives" to his staff. Bob Dole is appointing some known conservatives to his staff while hoping that it won't be noticed that he hasn't really adopted a conservative ideology.

Jack Kemp and Paul Laxalt are easily identifiable as true believers in conservatism; Kemp is the author of the Reaganomics that is the mainspring of our economic recovery. Neither one needs to impress conservatives with new rhetoric or staff.

The same kind of jockeying for position is going on in the Democratic party. Although there are many conservative Democrats in Congress and in state and local politics, once a Democrat gets the Presidential bug, he starts peeling off conservative ideas like the layers of an onion.

The most notable example is Rep. Richard A. Gephardt (D-MO) who, having received heady local publicity, has begun to believe he can be tapped for the national Democratic ticket. There was just one fly in the ointment of his national ambitions: he was a long-time supporter of a proposed constitutional Human Life Amendment to ban abortions.

This year, for the first time, when Gephardt filled out the Right to Life questionnaire, he refused to promise to vote for a Human Life Amendment. He had always answered yes in previous campaign years.

A weary-looking Gephardt recently emerged from a three-hour conference with pro-life leaders at the Cheshire Inn in St. Louis. The pro-lifers called his change of position a "dramatic reversal" and said he had sold himself out "for personal political ambitions."

Gephardt was merely following the lead of Jesse Jackson who did the same thing when he started running for the Democratic nomination in 1984. Jackson changed his position on abortion because he knew that a pro-life candidate would never get past the self-appointed Democratic Party censors, including the National Education Association and the National Organization for Women, and other assorted radical pressure groups.