from Phyllis Sch1af1y

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Yes, Indeed, It’s Time for Finger Pointing

With grace in adversity, President Bush took "full responsibility" for his defeat. But then he added, “There must be no finger pointing.” I beg to differ, first, because we can’t plan the future unless we properly assess the mistakes of the past and, secondly, because Bush failed to take responsibility for the Republican Senators and congressmen he dragged down to defeat.

The lesson of the 1992 Presidential election is that, in order to elect a Republican President in 1996, the Party must return to the tax-cut conservatism of Ronald Reagan. Whereas the eight years of Ronald Reagan successfully mainstreamed the conservative ideology, George Bush spent four years trying to dissociate himself from Ronald Reagan, and finally succeeded.

Bush's fatal mistake was reneging on his “read my lips" campaign promise by going along with the Democrats' tax increase in October l-990. That was morally wrong, politically stupid, and an economic tragedy which was the primary cause of the recession we've been in ever since.

This mistake was exacerbated by Bush/s stubborn refusal to fire his economic adviser Richard Darman, who gave the bad advice, talked disloyally about his boss, and was the culpable architect of Bush's domestic policies. Bush’s campaign advisers poured salt in his political wound by thrusting trim out on the hustings to make “trust” his campaign theme when everyone knows that Bush’s greatest weakness was his failure to keep his solemn promise.

Just think how different the 1992 campaign would have been if Bush had been able to campaign on the platform, “I promised you no new taxes and I kept my word. You know you can trust me.”

Darman was only the most damaging of Bush’s staffing errors that brought him bad policies and personal embarrassment. Another was Bush's appointment to the AIDS Commission of the country’s most notorious example of reckless promiscuity, Magic Johnson.

A third was the country's most notorious example of spending federal funds for obscene “art,” John Frohnmayer, whom Bush retained during long months of bad publicity. A fourth was the grossly overweight chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William Crowe, whose TV image was an embarrassment. Johnson, Frohnmayer and Crowe all endorsed Bill Clinton.

George Bush's foreign policy was as bad as his domestic policy. Henry Kissinger, the author of the disastrous agreements that Richard Nixon signed with the Soviet Union and with Vietnam, had been barred from policymaking during the eight Reagan years. But George Bush brought back the Kissinger associates -- Brent Scowcroft as National Security Adviser and Lawrence Eagleburger to run the State Department.

The guiding hand of the Kissinger group was evident in such bad foreign policy judgements of the Bush Administration as siding with Mikhail Gorbachev instead of Boris Yeltsin during the Russian transition from Communism to freedom, calling for a “New World Order,” aiding Iraq in the months just before the Gulf War, pressing the Senate to ratify the dangerous UN treaties signed by Jimmy Carter and rejected by Reagan, and the petty refusal to credit Rona1d Reagan with winning the Cold War.

The media are working overtime to try to blame Bush’s defeat on the alleged “takeover” of the Republican Party by the so-called “religious right.” That’s ridiculous because the religious and pro- life community was the only part of the Reagan coalition that remained faithful to Bush to the bitter end, and was clearly responsible for Bush carrying Texas, Florida, and North and South Carolina.

The exit polls conducted for the networks on November 3 showed that, by a whopping 68 percent majority, American voters want government to respect traditional family values, rather than show an even greater tolerance for nontraditional values.

The same exit polls showed that the American people did not vote for liberalism, higher taxes, and bigger government (which is what they will get from President Clinton). By 55 percent to 37 percent, the American people said that they want lower taxes and less government services instead of, more government services and higher taxes.

When the modern conservative movement got started with Barry Goldwater, Republican establishment types used to argue that we must be pragmatic and

nominate a Big Government Republican such as Richard Nixon or Gera1d Ford in order to win, because conservatives couldn't be elected. Today, Reagan conservatives not only have the high moral ground, but the pragmatic argument, too. ft is clear that Reagan-style conservatism is the route to victory.

The Republicans should follow the tax-cut philosophy and coalition building politics of a proven winner, Ronald Reagan. To take back the White House in 1996, it’s not enough to say “no new taxes”; Republicans must call for a roll-back of the stupid tax increase of 1990 and work for an across-the board cut in the size of government, government spending, and oppressive government regulations.