

# Ronald Reagan



# Background

- Born in 1911, raised during the Great Depression.
- Radio sports announcer turned actor. By 1964, Reagan had appeared in over 50 films and was quite famous.
- Married in 1940, 2 kids, divorced in 1948. Remarried to an actress in 1952. Had 2 more children.
- Enlisted in WWII (near-sightedness kept him from the front. Instead he worked for the Motion Picture Army Unit making training and propaganda films.)

THEATER  
RONALD REAGAN

# Before National Politics – Reagan the Actor



He was a Hollywood film star and he knew how to use television as no president before him.



# Background (cont.)

- Originally a Democrat, Reagan switched parties in 1962.
- In 1966, Reagan successfully ran for governor of California and served 2 terms.
- Considered for the Republican nomination in both 1968 and 1974, won the nomination in 1980.
- Ronald Reagan was sixty-nine when elected president in 1980. The oldest president ever elected. He topped that record again when he won re-election in 1984.
  - “Thomas Jefferson once said, ‘We should never judge a president by his age, only by his works.’ And ever since he told me that, I stopped worrying.”



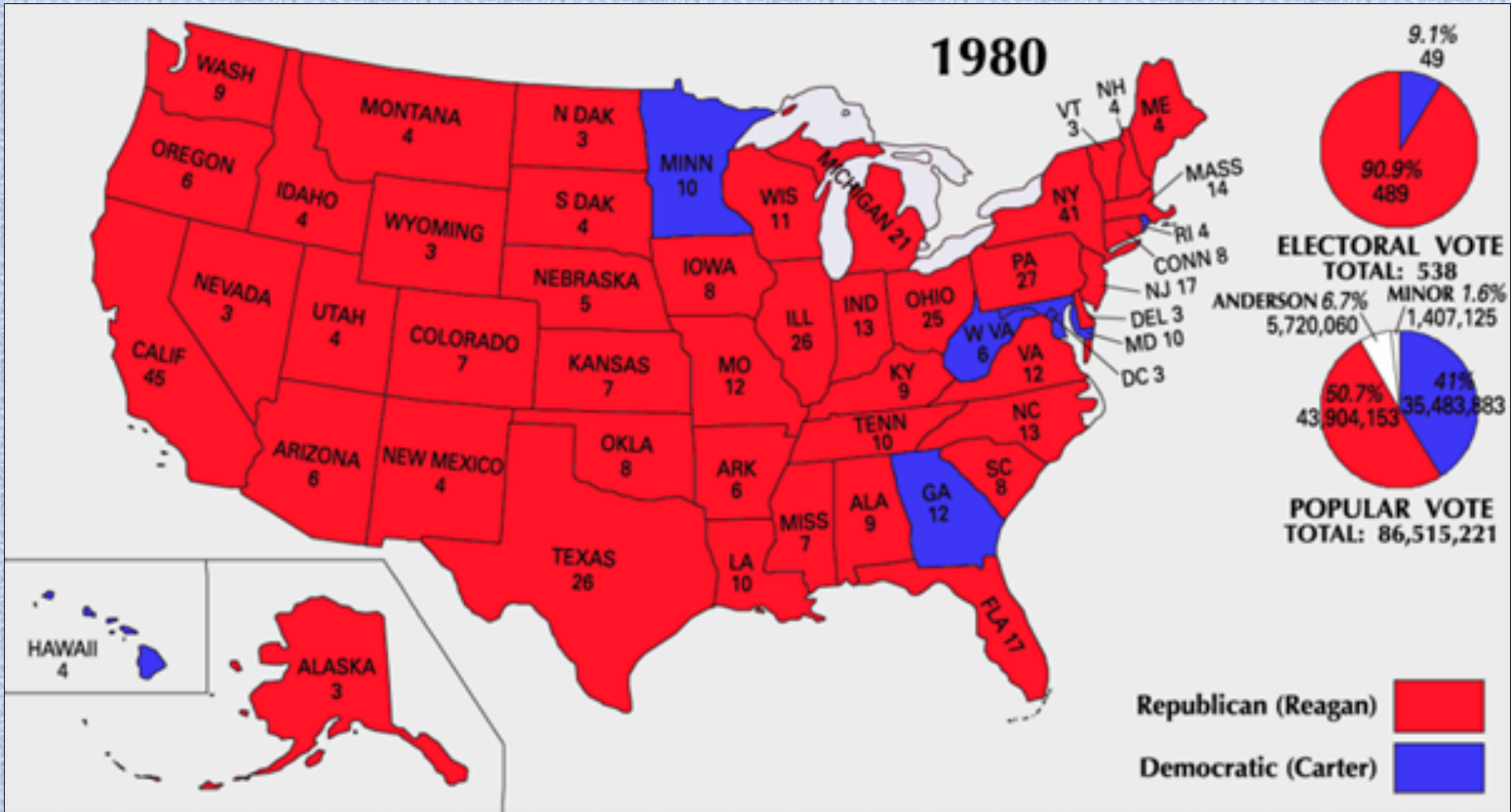
In 1980, Republican Reagan ran on conservative issues, the weak economy, and the Iran crisis. Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter in the presidential election.

Re-Elect  
**Carter  
Mondale**

**Reagan  
& Bush**



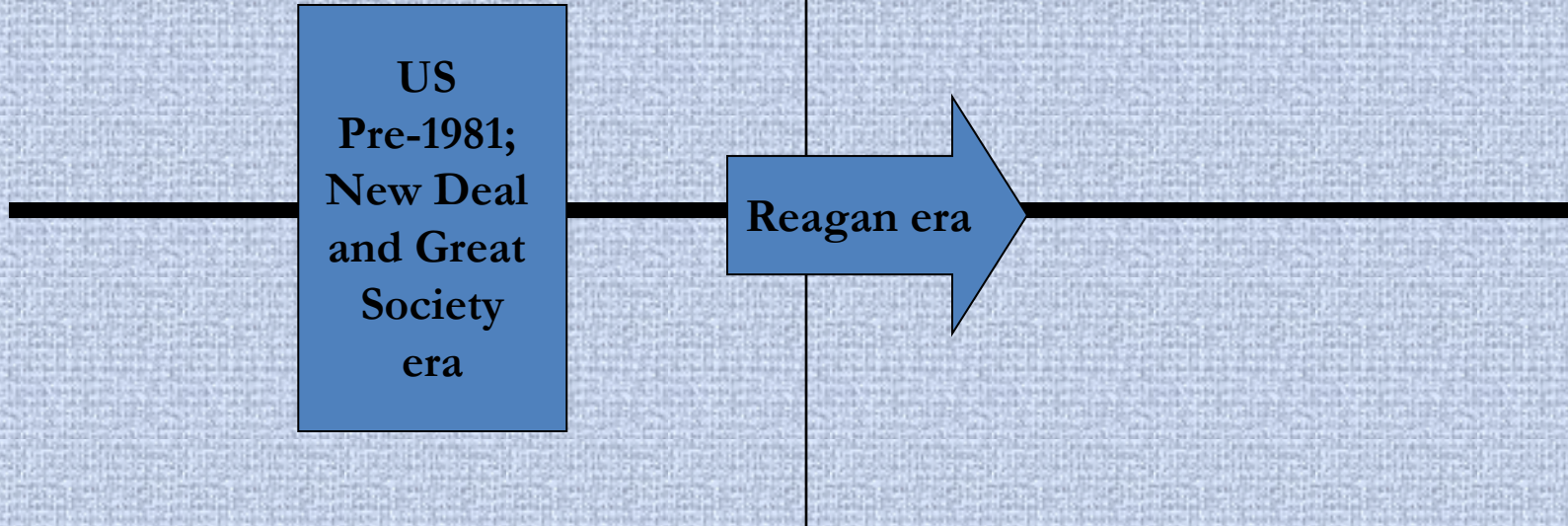
# Results: Election of 1980



# Significance of Reagan's election: signaled the rise of the political Right

**Left**

**Right**



Left = more gov't intervention,  
liberal

Right = less gov't intervention,  
conservative





Two months after he took office, a would-be assassin, John Hinckley, Jr., took aim at the president on a Washington street and put a bullet into his lung.



As Reagan is wheeled into the operating room, he says to his wife, Nancy. “Honey, I forgot to duck.”



Reagan apparently also said to surgeons who were about to operate on him, “Please tell me you’re all Republicans.”



# The Great Communicator



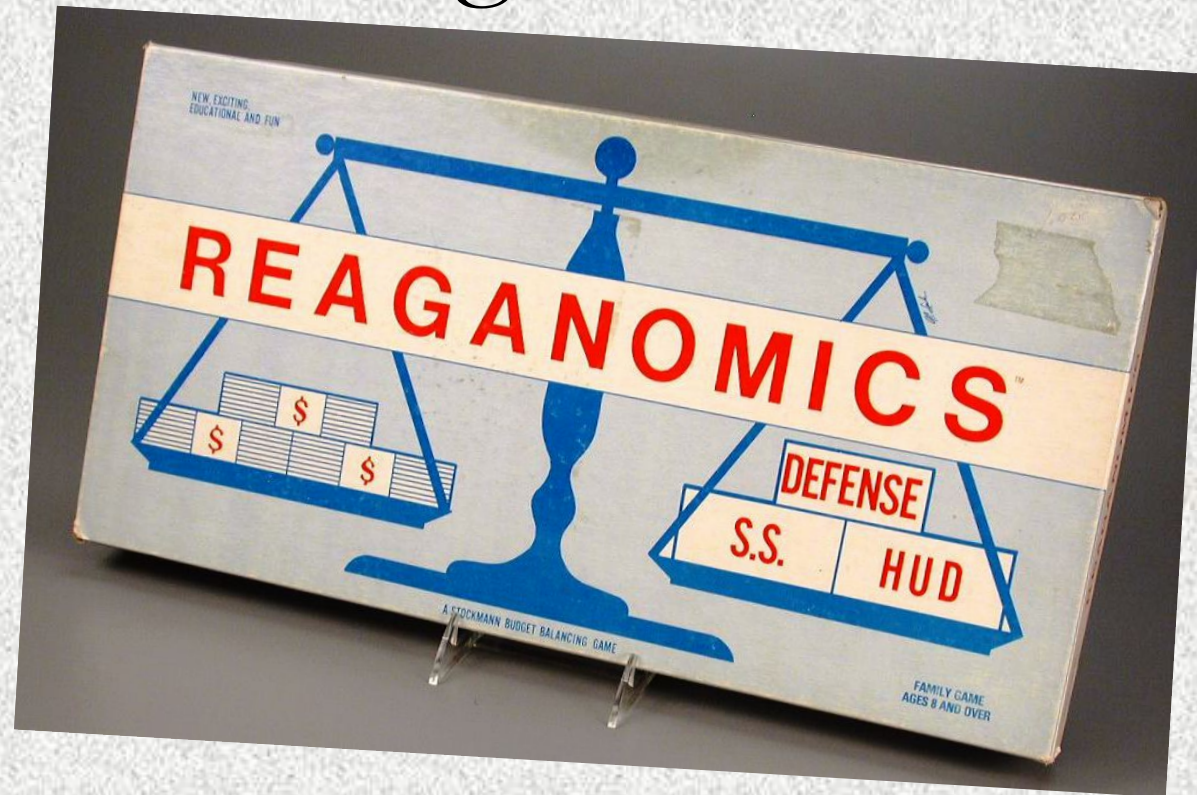
- While known for his comfort with the press and humor, Reagan did not joke when it came to his ideas. He knew exactly what he believed, and he explained those beliefs clearly and simply.
- In a complex world that was harder and harder to understand, he seemed reassuring and honest and old-fashioned.

[YouTube: Reagan on Limited Govt.](#)  
As you listen, consider why his words  
appealed to many Americans...

# The Reagan Revolution

1. **Balance the Budget**
2. **Gov't was the problem, not the solution.**  
Solution: shrink the gov't (cut taxes, cut spending)
3. **Conservative social agenda** (anti-abortion, family values, “Just Say No” to drugs)
4. **Large military build-up & aggressive foreign policy vs. the Soviet Union**

# Reaganomics



Reagan believed that if he could cut taxes and public welfare programs and eliminate as much regulation of business as possible, it would stimulate the economy and tax revenues would increase.

# Reaganomics: “Trickle Down” Theory



- ◆ Cutting taxes for businesses & wealthiest Americans would encourage investment, create business and jobs, and put more money into the economy.
- ◆ Wealth would "trickle down" / find its way into the middle and poorer classes making everyone better off (more jobs, opportunities)
  - ◆ *Refresher: How did this work for Herbert Hoover in the early 1930s?*

# The Three Tiers of Reaganomics

1. Tax Cuts: Believed that lower taxes result in investment, greater productivity, more supply, lower prices
2. Budget Cuts: maintained entitlement programs that benefited the middle class while cutting programs that benefited the poor, urban populations
3. Increased Defense Spending: Defense Dept. budget almost doubled; offset cuts in social programs.

Garry Shandling

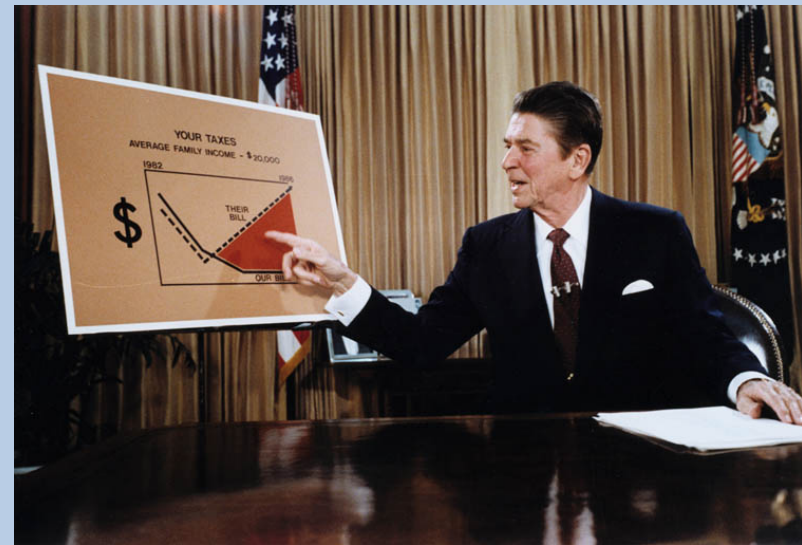
THE ANNAPOLIS STAR  
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SEE, MY PLAN  
GETS US OFF  
THE GROUND



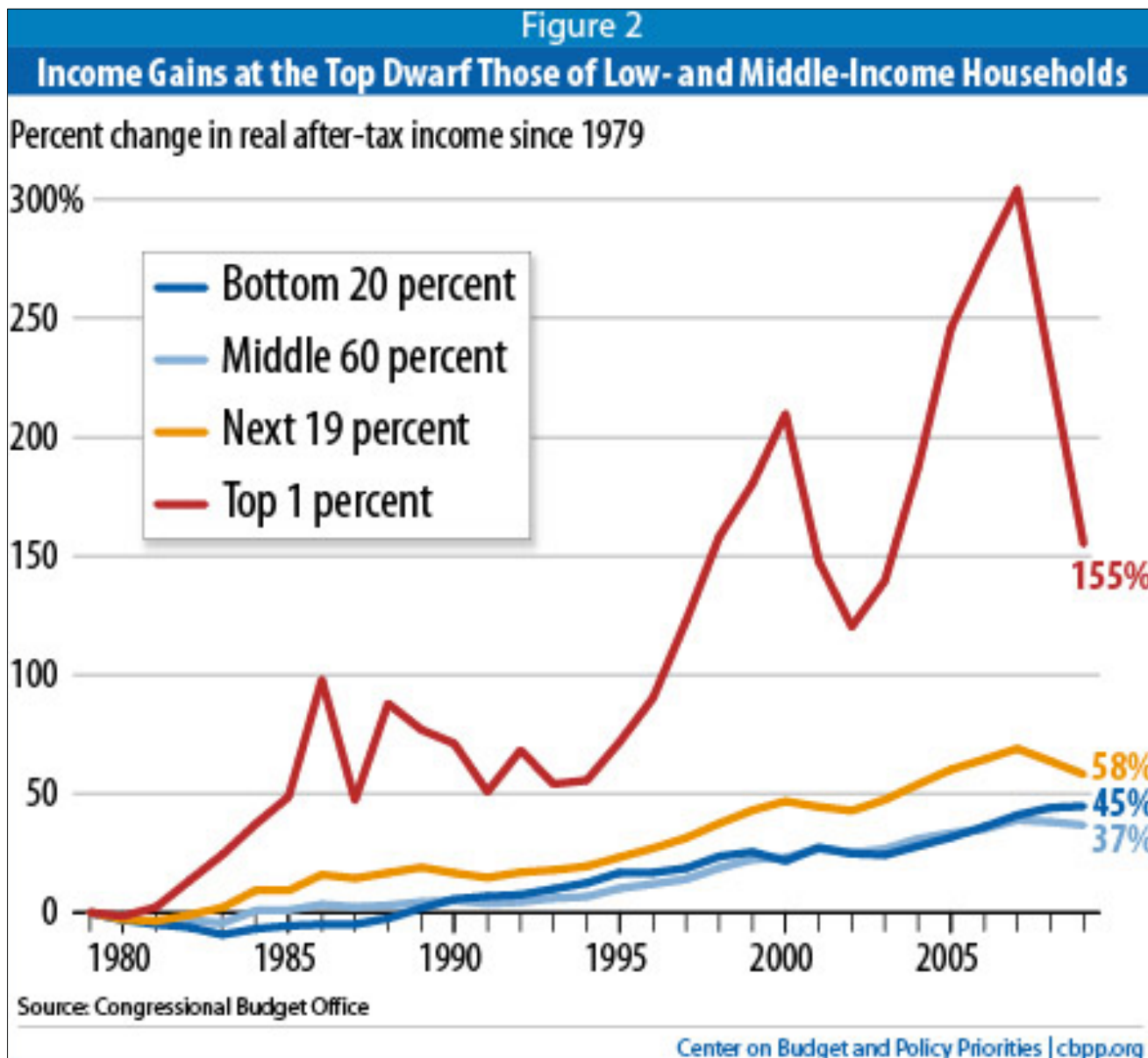
# TAXES: Under Reagan, Congress enacted the single largest tax cut in history.

- Lowered federal income tax rate by 25%, raised taxes on lower incomes, eliminated many deductions, and reduced tax rates on the wealthy.
- Before Reagan's tax reform, of each dollar the government collected in taxes, thirteen cents came from corporations, afterwards, the corporate share is eight cents.
- It did stimulate the economy, which increased tax revenues and the total taxes paid by those in the higher income range. At what cost?





# What happened to incomes during the Reagan era?



# Growth Of Family Income

+261%

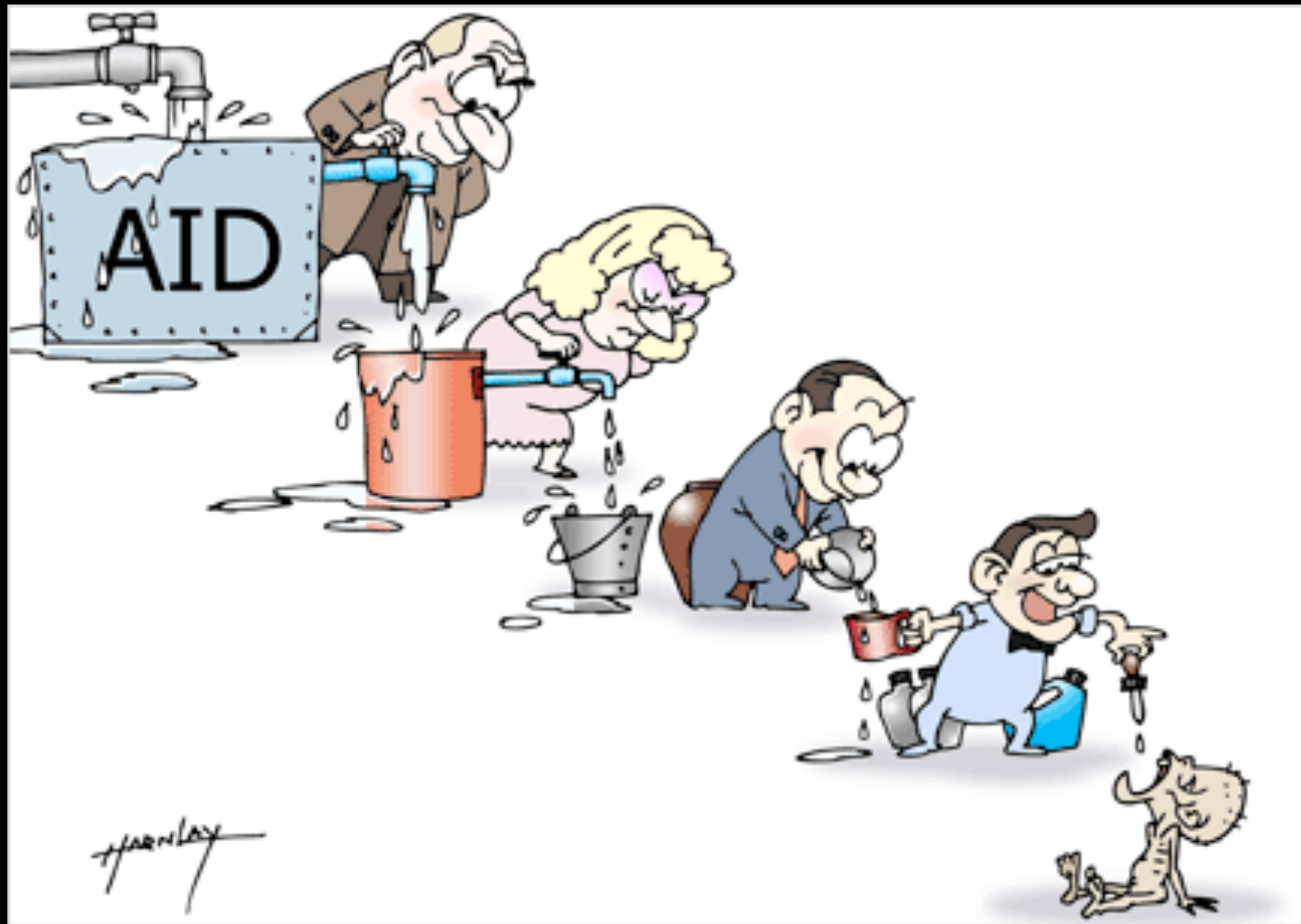


1947-1979 Source: United for a Fair Economy ([www.FairEconomy.org](http://www.FairEconomy.org)): Based on analysis of US Census Bureau data  
1980-2007 Source: Congressional Budget Office, Average Income Pretax ([www.cbo.gov](http://www.cbo.gov)): 2007 Dollars

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**BUDGET CUTS:** Reagan pledged to reduce the size of the federal government. Programs directed at the poor and middle class were reduced by \$41 billion. As a result, the gap between rich and poor grew tremendously.





THEY SAID IF  
THE RICH GOT TAX  
CUTS, THEY'D USE THE  
MONEY TO CREATE  
JOBS.

YOU GOT  
TAX CUTS,...

I AM  
CREATING  
JOBS!

THEY'RE  
IN CHINA.

PLANT  
CLOSED

HELP  
WANTED

WIDGET

AMERICAN WIDGET WORKS

1-18-07

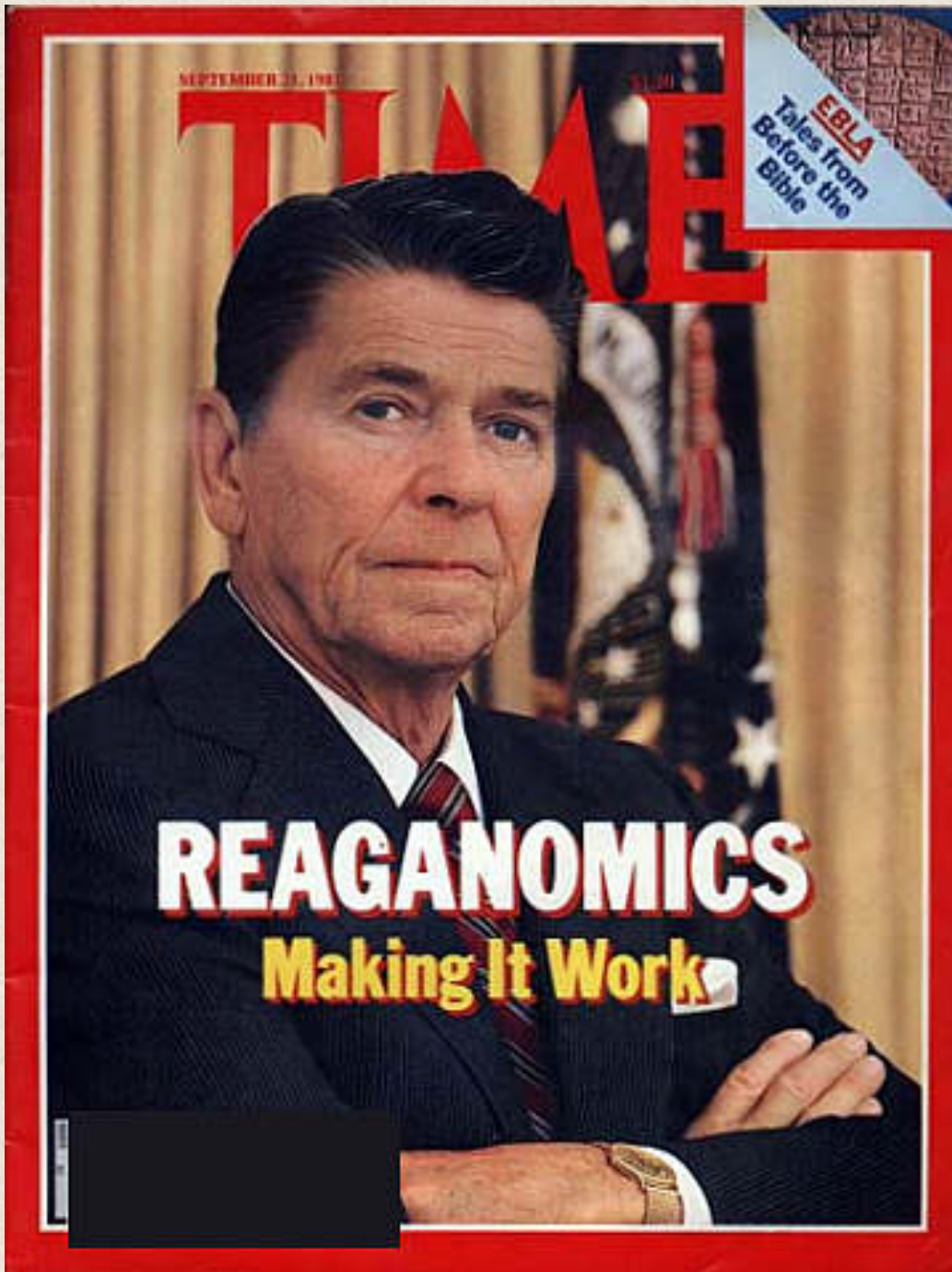
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LAHEY

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Balancing the budget was one of Reagan's key goals. He is very critical of the deficit (U.S. debt), which, under Carter in 1979, seemed very high.





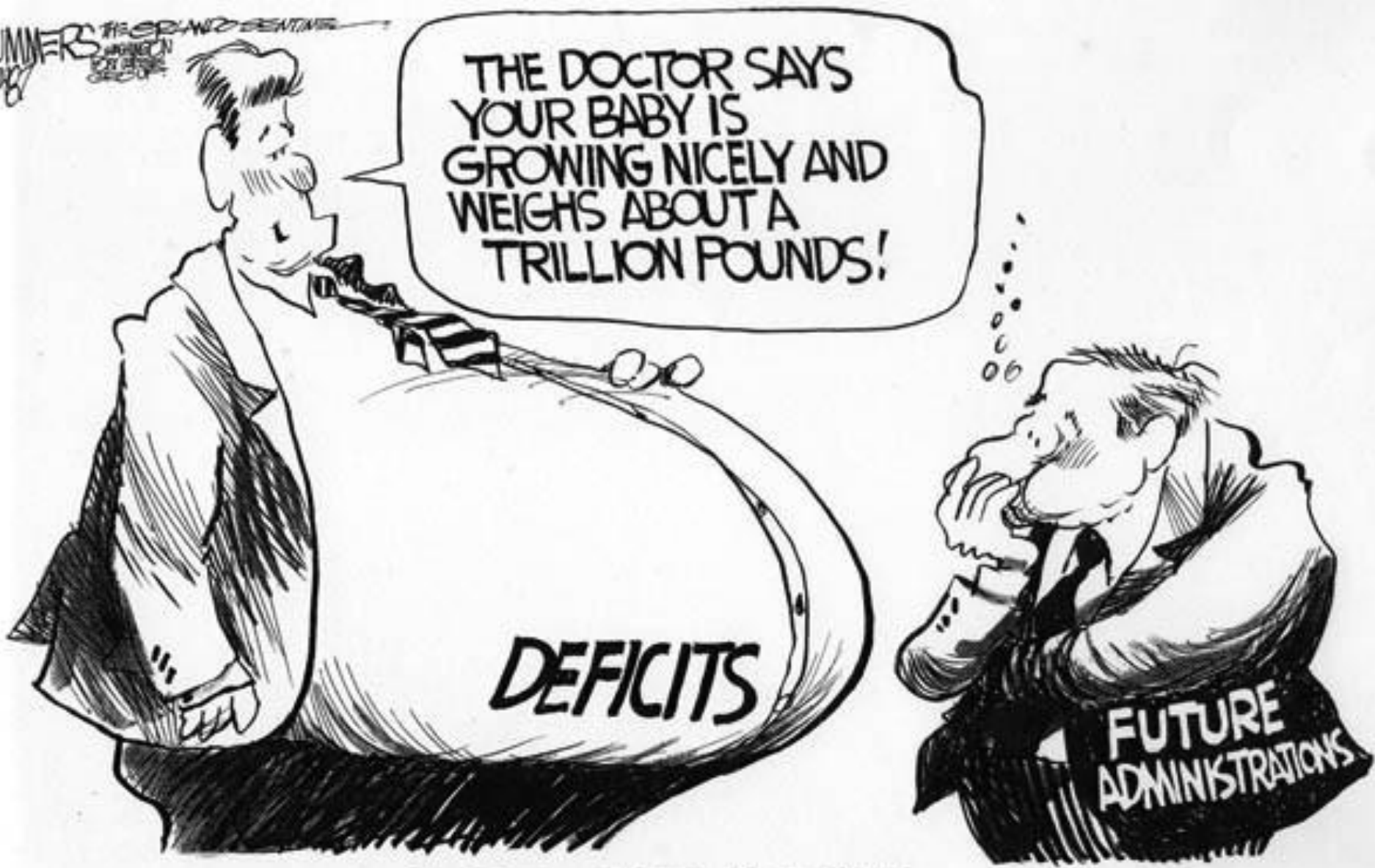
What happens to the national debt?

It went from \$994 billion in 1981 to \$2.9 trillion in 1989.

*(As a point of reference, we're over \$21 trillion today.)*

*(Reagan's deficits total more than the deficits of all the presidents before him combined.)*

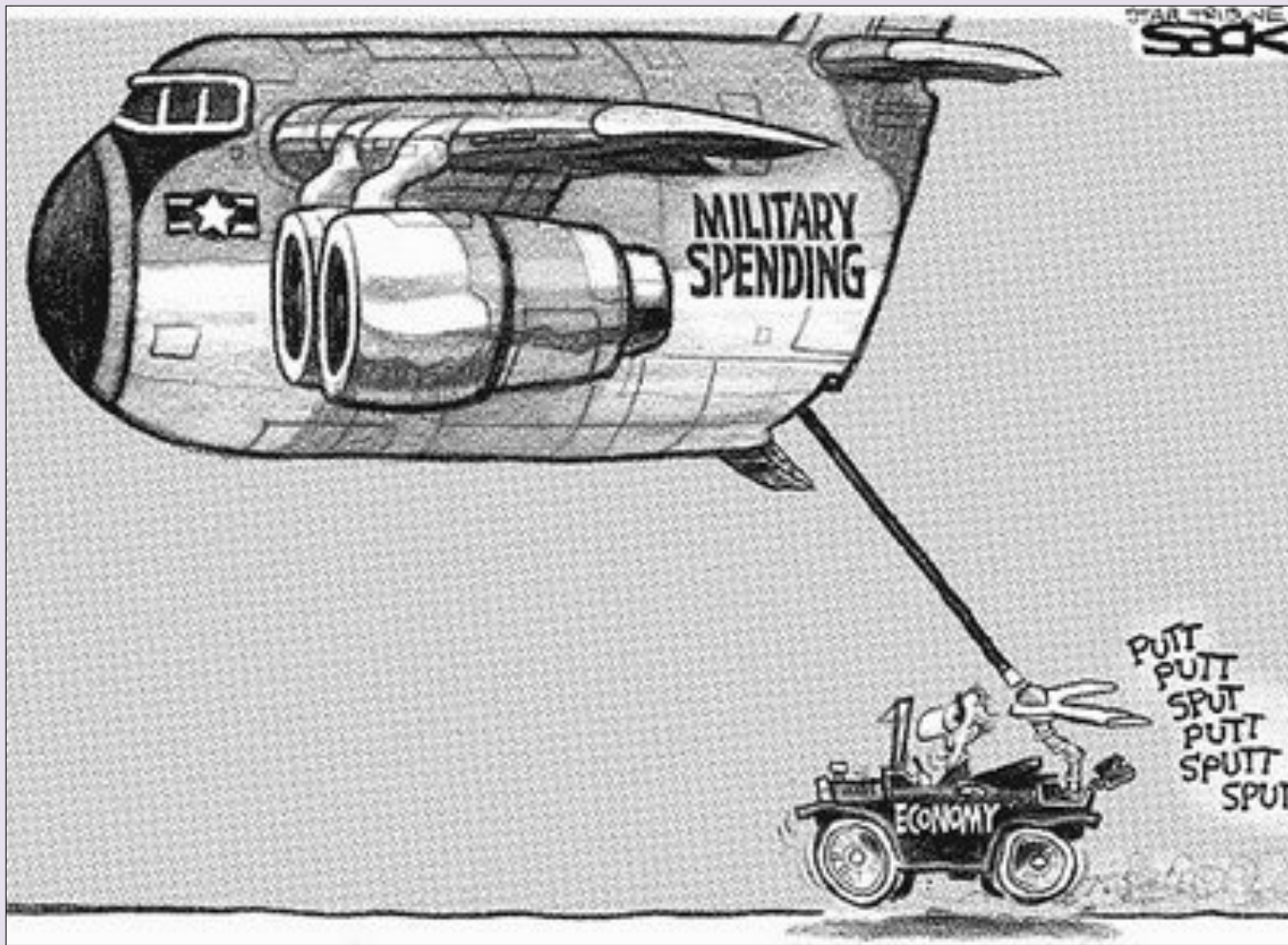
SUMMERS THE GRAND SENTENCE  
MAYBE IN  
THE SECT



SURROGATE MOTHER



DEFENSE SPENDING: Increased revenues would pay for the huge increase in military spending that Reagan believed were necessary to continue to fight the Cold War.

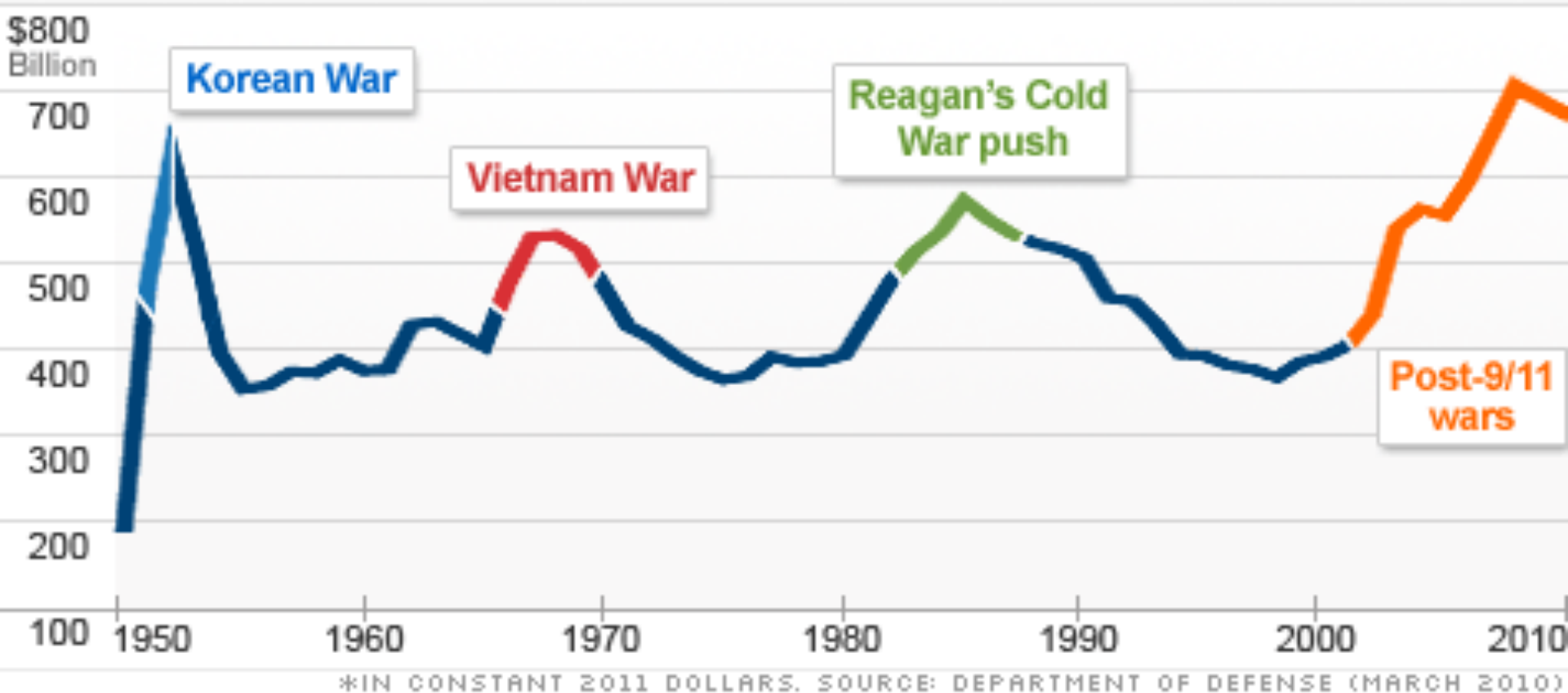


Reagan built up the armed forces and increased military spending.

Congress embarked on a \$1.6 trillion military expansion.



## DEFENSE DEPARTMENT SPENDING\*



# Reagan's Cold War Efforts

- Reagan repeatedly spoke out about the dangers of Russian communism. He called the Soviet Union an “evil empire.”
- Remember, his commitment to maintaining a large military & aggressive foreign policy vs. the Soviet Union?



In 1985, President Reagan and Prime Minister Mikhail Gorbachev began to talk to each other about the dangers of nuclear war, family, etc.



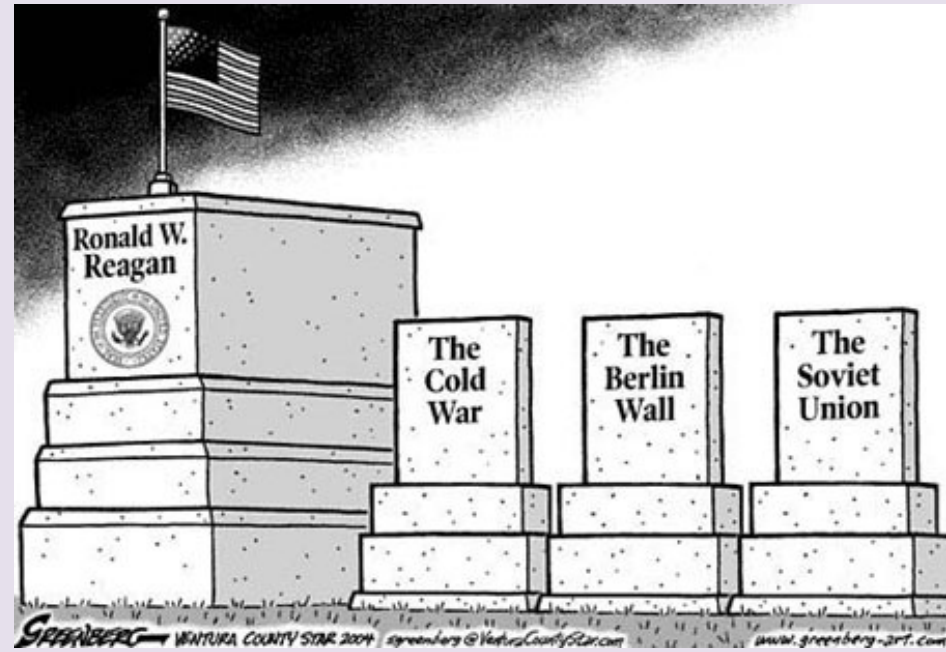


- The discussion led to productive arms-control agreements.
- The following year, Reagan visited Berlin, Germany. The city has been divided since 1961.
  - Remember that since 1961, a well-guarded wall had divided the city, keeping East Germans (communist controlled) from visiting friends & family in the West. It is the symbol of the Cold War.
- Ronald Reagan stood before it and said bluntly, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”

- Reagan is often credited with ending the Cold War, however,
  - economic forces in eastern Soviet-bloc nations contributed to the fall
  - Gorbachev, who was a communist was also a realistic leader who was aware that Russia needed to change.
- Reagan was anxious to make peace. In 1988, Reagan went to Moscow and the two leaders continued talks begun months earlier on nuclear disarmament.



- 3 years after Reagan and Gorbachev first met in Moscow, the Cold War had officially ended.
  - The Soviet Union split into independent republics
  - Gorbachev reduced Soviet control of E. Europe & urged democracy
  - The Berlin Wall was torn down (1989)
  - The U.S. & Soviets signed a treaty to reduce the number of nuclear arms





How do things turn out for Reagan and the nation by the end of the 1980s?



Well, by the end of the 1980s, the United States is the world's greatest superpower, and very wealthy.

But in most inner cities, schools, bridges, roads, and buildings are falling apart. Urban crime is soaring. Some education statistics are in a free fall.



# An analysis of Reaganomics: the unemployment rate



How might supporters of Reaganomics use this chart to show that his economic plan was a success?

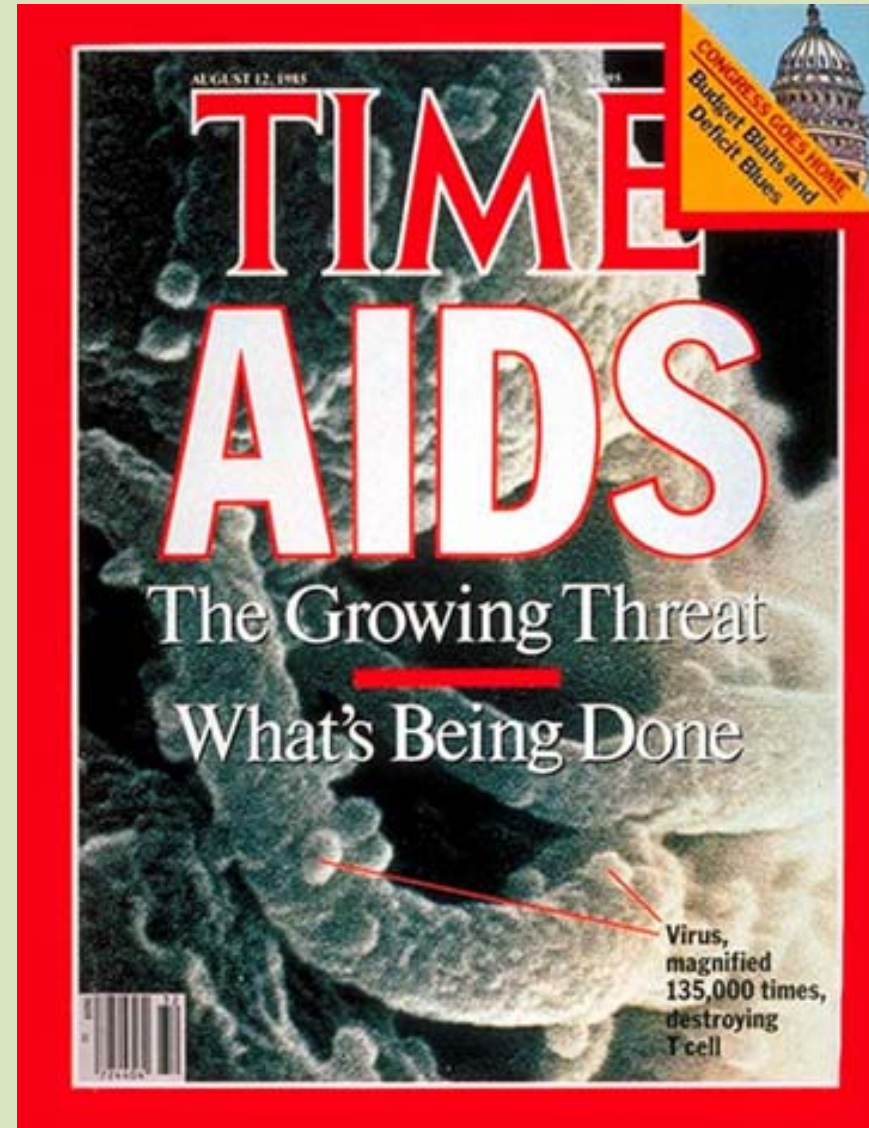
# Pressing Social Concerns in the 1980s

- Health Issues

- AIDS: destroys immune system, makes body prone to infections, cancer
  - 1980s, epidemic grows; increasing concern over prevention, cure
  - Access to good health care is not equal to that in most developed nations. AIDS is ignored as it develops into a national epidemic.

- Abortion

- 1980s, battle over abortion intensifies
- 1989, conservative Supreme Court rules states may place restrictions on abortion



# Social Concerns in the 1980s (cont.)

- Drug Abuse

- Reagan administration prosecutes drug users, dealers
- First Lady Nancy Reagan has “Just say no!” to drugs campaign

- Education

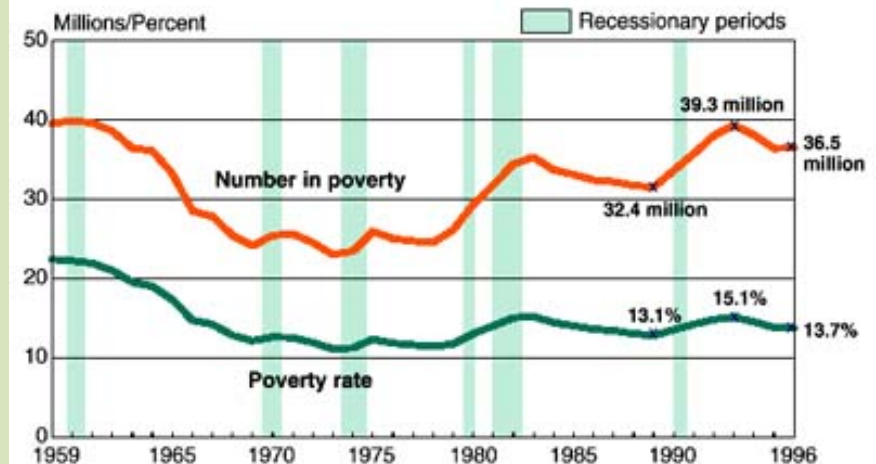
- 1983 commission: U.S. students lag behind students in other nations

- Poverty and the Urban Crisis: cities deteriorate as whites move to suburbs; businesses follow

- Homelessness is a visible problem
- In the closing weeks of his presidency, Reagan told the *NYT* that the homeless “make it their own choice for staying out there.”
- Poverty level rose from 13% in 1980 to 15.2% in 1988.



## Poverty: 1959–1996



- Reducing the Size of Federal Government:
  - Reagan reduces government by deregulation (less industry regulation)
  - Hope is that it will increase competition, resulting in lower prices

- Cuts:
  - Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (cut by 40%)
  - Dept. of Commerce (cut by 32%)
  - Dept. of Agriculture (cut by 24%)
  - Dept. of Education (cut by 19%)
  - Dept. of Transportation (cut by 18%)

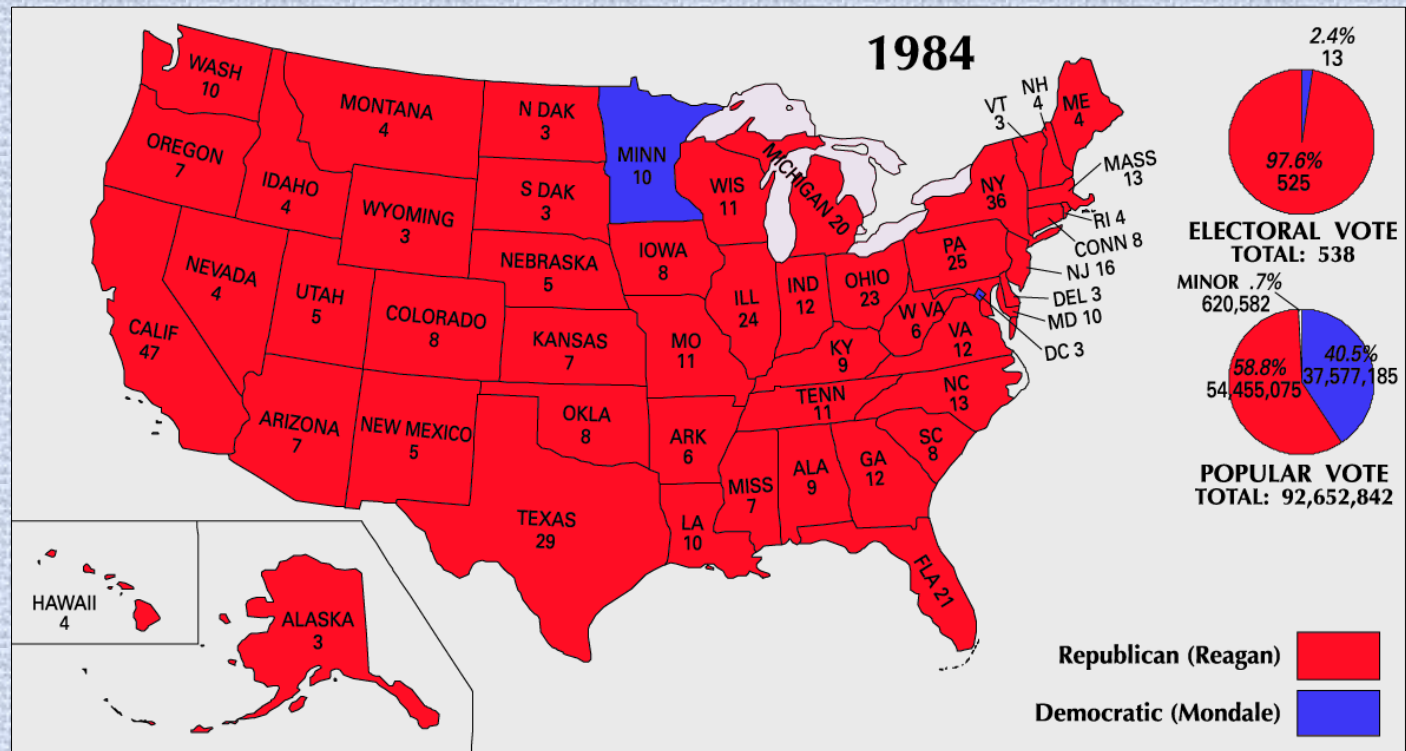
# Deregulating the Economy



# Re-election 1984

- The Reagan Coalition: diverse group of supporters included businesspeople, Southerners, Westerners, Reagan Democrats
- Democrat Walter Mondale chooses Geraldine Ferraro as running mate (first woman on major party's presidential ticket)

Reagan/Bush  
wins by  
landslide.



# 1988 STATE-BY-STATE RESULTS

## The 1988 Presidential Election

- Most Americans economically comfortable and attributed that comfort to Reagan/Bush
- Republican candidate George Bush stresses conservatism
  - promises “no new taxes”
- Gets 53% popular vote, 426 electoral votes
  - electoral victory seen as conservative mandate

◆ BUSH (REPUBLICAN)  
◆ DUKAKIS (DEMOCRAT)





# Presidential Hall of Fame/Shame



Design a poster for Reagan to announce his induction to the Presidential Hall of Fame OR the Presidential Hall of Shame.

Your poster should cite his accomplishments or failures while in office, promises (both kept or broken) while in office, and should be colorful, include visuals, and be as creative as possible.