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**STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESSES AND THEIR IMPACT
ON POPULARITY AND CREDIBILITY**

By
Lea L. Shapiro

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
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at
Rowan University
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Approved by _____

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ABSTRACT

Lea L. Shapiro

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESSES AND THEIR IMPACT ON POPULARITY AND CREDIBILITY

2003

**Dr. Suzanne D. Sparks-Fitzgerald
Master of Arts in Public Relations**

This is a study of the impact of presidential messages and style upon the American public following the annual State of the Union address. This researcher focused on two similar presidents, Ronald Reagan and William J. Clinton. The State of the Union addresses used were for the years 1982 and 1984, respectively. The impact was measured by the poll results taken before and after each State of the Union speech.

A content analysis of each address was done to determine the major themes and messages and to determine which of those messages resulted in increased poll numbers.

Additionally, this researcher cited sources which revealed that Reagan did not, in fact, have the high approval ratings of the American public as claimed by the media.

Reagan's three sub-systems of discourse are evaluated in the context of the 1982 State of the Union address. Clinton's rhetoric is also evaluated and found to be similar to Reagan's but with higher polling results.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to those people whose contributions of time, energy and assistance, made this study possible.

To my wonderful family who saw a side of me they never imagined existed. My apologies for all the times I complained about the workload. You were there for me, listening and comforting me.

To my husband Harold, my life long friend and companion, thank you for months of support and faith in me. I love you for your guidance and direction. To my daughter Sara, who gave me such wonderful advice and encouragement, thank you. To my son Louis, who has the real gift in public relations, thank you, too. To my son-in-law, Justin, who always sided with me, thank you for listening and caring.

To Dr. Suzanne D. Sparks-Fitzgerald, thank you for your guidance and direction in shaping this research into the acceptable work that it has become. I had no clue as to which topic to choose or the scale of work necessary to complete such an ambitious project. Your words of encouragement masked the true task at hand.

“Language, according to Samuel Johnson, is the dress of thought. But politically, it has become, at best, a costume, and at its worst, a disguise.”

Mary E. Stuckey

from Playing the Game: The Presidential Rhetoric of Ronald Reagan

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Introduction

Style Over Substance

Speeches and speech making comprise an important part of any president's job. A few presidential speeches stand out in the minds of Americans because of their unparalleled meaning or delivery. For example, John Fitzgerald Kennedy's first inaugural speech is by far a standout. The famous words, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country" became a model for all future speeches. Similar themes, reworded, appear in other presidential messages. Both Presidents Reagan and Clinton relied on this theme in some of their State of the Union addresses.

Delivery and the effective use of television also impacts presidential speeches. The tone and delivery of a president's speech gives impetus to political commentators as well as public reaction regardless of the message. Referring to style and substance, *The New York Times* recognized "Mr. Reagan's gift to project them both in his husky whisper so they seem to mingle as one." Polls at that time indicated a majority of the electorate held opposite views on many issues, yet the electorate chose Reagan to lead the country (*The New York Times*, 1984).

From the hundred speeches a president gives, only the State of the Union is a constitutional requirement (*The U.S. Constitution*, Article 2, Section 3). From the birth of our nation to the present, the importance of this speech remains constant in its purpose (*Annals*, 1990). The State of the Union message is just that. It reveals the condition of the state; whether the health of our nation is good or bad.

Because the speech is specifically designed for domestic political consumption, all presidents use this time to highlight their successes and hide their failures as much as possible (*Annals*, 1990). This can also be a time for presidents to make the messages “eye-catching and spectacular” as Reagan first revealed to some newspaper reporters in Oklahoma.

The message behind the message gives the media an avenue for analyzing public opinion as evidenced by the numerous polling studies before and after each speech or address. “These addresses are attractive to researchers because they represent highly visible and important messages to the American public.” (*Annals*, 1990). Analyzing the texts of political speeches dates as far back as ancient times. Even Aristotle “recognized the natural kinship of politics and communications in his writings *“Politics and Rhetoric,”* (Trent and Friedenber, 2000). “In the latter, he began his systematic analysis of persuasion,” (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts 1954).

Speeches and speech writing go hand in hand. During ancient times, even great statesmen such as Julius Caesar and Nero received help in preparing their speeches. In more recent times, presidents like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover relied on expert help for their public speeches. “It was not until the administration of president Franklin Delano Roosevelt that the public at large became fully aware of the pervasive use of speech writers by political figures” (Trent and Friedenber, 2000).

Knowing that presidents make frequent use of speech writers for The State of the Union message, and other speeches as well, brings us to the importance of this thesis or the problem of does “the man make the message or does the message make the man?” Judging from the media and the polls, The State of the Union address can be a defining moment for any president.

Importance of the Problem

According to *The Washington Post*, the State of the Union messages are seldom memorable. They tend to be optimistic and dull with a long list of self-proclaimed achievements and promises by the current administration. State of the Union addresses are filled with promises of great things to come.

Reagan’s former speech writer concedes, “ the only thing more forgettable than a State of the Union is the other party’s response.” If that is in fact so, why are numerous polls conducted following the speech?

Furthermore, some media sources view the State of the Union address as the most important speech for a president. Yet, the actual speech writers believe delivery is more important than substance (*The Washington Post*, 1983).

With these two incongruent thoughts in mind, this researcher wanted to find the answer to the following questions. What does and doesn’t make the State of the Union address memorable and what skills and qualities must a president possess which in turn enhances his credibility and popularity with the public?

Talk of the Nation on *NPR*, stated that “Americans have a deep-seated fear of public speaking.” This may be why the media scrutinizes and analyzes each speech

immediately following the address. Furthermore, the media brings in experts or former speech writers to interpret and extrapolate the meaning of the president's agenda. Do these key messages or "sound- bytes" become the trademark of a president?

By comparing and contrasting The State of the Union address of two presidents, this researcher will investigate the popularity and credibility of each president, according to the polls taken at the time. In addition, this researcher will examine the abilities and competency level of a president as reflected in the polling questions.

Presidents Reagan and Clinton were selected to make the study balanced; the first, being a Republican and the latter a Democrat. Both men served for two terms or eight years and each president faced dark moments in his term of office. These dark moments became an impetus for reflection on their ability to govern.

For Reagan, the assassination attempt appears to have "enhance(d) the public reputation of the victim." As evidenced in the Gallup poll following this assassination attempt, Reagan's approval rating jumped 8 percent. (*Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2000). Toward the end of his second term, the notion of his incompetency surfaced.

Clinton, in contrast, faced rumors of infidelity with Jennifer Flowers and others prior to election. Yet polls taken after the Monica Lewinsky debacle revealed confidence in his ability to govern the country, but his numbers plummeted in the area of governing his private life.

Information gathered from this research paper should serve other public relations specialists, practitioners, and speech writers in carving out the proper message for their political campaigns. These messages(substance) together with style could in turn be used

for increasing both the popularity and credibility among those they represent.

Delimitations

This paper will not analyze other speeches by presidents Reagan and Clinton. Only one State of the Union speech for each will be analyzed and compared. The hundreds of other speeches given by each president will not be used because of the massive numbers and difference in nature and audience. The State of the Union address consistently remains the same over the years even with different presidents. Additionally, this message tends not to be about a crisis situation.

Hypothesis I

It is expected that because of President Reagan's State of the Union message, his popularity and credibility increased with the American public.

Following his 1983 State of the Union address, Reagan commented on what a television poll revealed. He was encouraged to discover that 59% of the people believed the country was on the mend and there was a 15% increase in his job approval ratings. (*Business Week*, 1983). Prior to giving this address, only 35% of those surveyed felt the president was in control of his administration (*The New York Times*, 1983). This increase demonstrates that the American people support the president even though the economy continues in a recession. The prior year, the president boasted of a 60% approval rating. Clearly this speech was different from the previous year. The political climate had changed and Reagan knew his new message would need to change as well. The 1983 State of the Union address reflected those changes. What didn't change was Reagan's persuasive performance (*The Washington Post*, 1983).

Hypothesis II

It is expected that because of President Clinton's State of the Union message, his popularity and credibility increased.

Following his 1994 State of the Union address, a *New York Times/CBS News* Poll gave Mr. Clinton a 54 percent approval rating. In a poll taken six months prior to this address, he qualified as the most unpopular first-year President in 60 years (*The New York Times*, 1994). This surge in the polls coincided with a rise in the number of Americans expressing confidence in the economy (*The New York Times*, 1994).

Not only did Clinton win the approval of three of four Americans participating in this poll, but a further CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll revealed a boost for Clinton, with 84% saying he is leading the country in the right direction, compared with 67% pre-speech (*Denver Rocky Mountain News*, 1994). These polling numbers show Clinton's numbers increased more than Reagan's. What messages caused this dramatic increase is the subject of this paper.

Hypothesis III

It is expected that a president's speech making ability and delivery along with certain messages in The State of the Union addresses increased the popularity and credibility of a president.

The vast majority of political pundits and other experts recognize the strengths and success of Ronald Reagan's messages. Even President Bill Clinton recognized it by reaffirming Reagan's message of "the era of big government is over" in his 1996 State of the Union address. Reagan consulted polls to craft out a successful message. Clinton's

greatest critics say he lived by the polls and wouldn't make an important move without one. Similarly, Reagan wanted to identify areas where a majority of the people disagreed with him, in order to use his power of persuasion to change their minds (Cooper, 2002).

Other expert sources revealed that Reagan had a tenacity, vision and communication skills that could turn his critics into an admirer (Cooper, 2002).

These are just some of the areas that helped shape the State of the Union address and other speeches as well by President Reagan and will be utilized by this researcher to test Hypothesis III.

Procedure

This researcher will conduct a content analysis of two different State of the Union addresses by presidents Reagan and Clinton for the years 1982 and 1994, respectively. Using appropriate articles culled from major newspapers, periodicals, polling results and various historical books, this researcher will compare and contrast the findings. In addition, this researcher will identify the messages that enhanced or decreased the popularity and credibility of these two men based on polling results at that time in history.

The final procedure will involve an intercept study on the speech making ability of the two presidents using a Likert style format. The purpose of conducting an intercept study is to see whether the results obtained in the study mirror the polling data of that time.

The next chapter, a literature review, will serve as a basis for reinforcement of the three proposed hypotheses.

Terminology

Content Analysis - A research method that involves objective description or analysis of the language content of news releases, newspaper stories, speeches, videotapes and films, or other publications (Newsom, Turk, Kruckeberg 2000).

Intercept Study - Opinions gathered from a random group of people.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The vast amount of information found on the topic of speeches and speech writing and in the area of polling as it relates to State of the Union messages helped to answer the question of what messages contribute to the popularity and credibility of Presidents Reagan and Clinton following their State of the Union address. Further topics revealed the individual strengths and qualities of each president that additionally enhanced their poll numbers regardless of their message. The major categories this section reviews include:

~Political Communication: This body of research includes an examination of political and presidential communication and the function it serves. In this age of television, the manner in which each president uses this knowledge to persuade his constituents reflects in the polling numbers as popularity and credibility.

Communication styles and strategies of each president are also found in this section of research. This in turn, helped to formulate the premise that style is more important than substance. Further reading on this topic revealed communication styles and strategies used by each president that translated to success as a speaker. This, in turn, later translated to increases in percentage points in the polls and represented increased popularity and credibility with the American public.

~Speech Making and Writing: Presidential speech making is defined in this body of research. What went into writing the various speeches of the presidents from former speech writers and experts in the field is detailed in this section of research. Clinton's speech writing capabilities are analyzed and evaluated. Reagan's speech making abilities are detailed here. Additionally, this section gives evidence of Clinton's copying Reagan's style, by using some of the same speech writing team as Reagan. According to the sources found here, Reagan was a natural for the part, given his acting capabilities. As for Clinton, he had oratory skills like a preacher, which enhanced his popularity as well.

~State of the Union Addresses: This section documents the actual State of the Union Addresses given by Presidents Reagan and Clinton. This hard copy of each address helped to reveal its word length, the word content and messages each president employed. The addresses are for the years 1982 (for Reagan) and 1994 (for Clinton)

~Messages and Style: This area reviews themes and messages found in State of the Union address along with reactions on the same. Here is the clearest picture of political rhetoric. An intense examination of each president's rhetoric and the messages found within each State of the Union address shows how each respective president used this art form to make a difference in his poll numbers.

~Polling: Poll numbers tell it all. Interpretations of the polls along with the sample

polling questions helps to formulate the popularity and credibility issue for each president.

~*Popularity and Credibility*: An analysis of Clinton's popularity and credibility as it relates to his 1994 State of the Union message confirms the ability of this president to overcome some of the worst case scenarios. The same could be found for Reagan who did not have a favorable relationship with the press and had a failing economy. This section of research also gives focus as to the expectations of the American public on the Presidency and what qualities are believed to be necessary to handle the job. This background helps to understand the popularity and credibility which in turn is reflected in the polling numbers for each president.

Political Communication

To better understand the written and spoken words of a president, it is essential to review what constitutes political or presidential communication and the function it serves.

According to Denton (1986), political language is not the particular vocabulary but the substance of the information it conveys, the setting in which the interaction occurs and the function it performs.

When a president speaks, the nation listens. The symbolic nature of the presidency, conveys the importance of his words and actions. A president's words, according to Denton, can shape ideas and stimulate action, provide rationale for action and justification for decisions. Their words can inspire, comfort and motivate us. These words can also

connect us as a social entity, providing the feeling of a human relationship with our leader. They can also do good or evil.

Denton (1998) cites Graber as to the purposes of political language. According to Graber, political language performs five major functions: information dissemination, agenda-setting, interpretation and linkage, projection for the future and the past and lastly, action stimulation. The State of the Union address embodies all these functions.

The presidents who deliver such addresses are greatly influenced by public opinion (Edwards, 1983). Ronald Reagan, more so than any other president before him, realized this. Labeled the “Great Communicator,” he had skilled public relations staff and media experts, sophisticated polling techniques, [and] carefully staged media events...(Hart, 1984).

Clinton spent more time, money and energy tracking opinion polls than previous presidents. For his 1997 State of the Union message, Clinton’s media people tried out drafts of this speech on cooperative shoppers in rented stores in a mall. The results showed the speech was voted a conspicuous success by the public (Campbell, 2000).

Because public approval plays such a vital role in presidential rhetoric, it is important to examine the persuasive language which Presidents Reagan and Clinton used which in turn enhanced their popularity and credibility as evidenced in the polls following their respective State of the Union addresses.

For a speaker to be persuasive with an audience, he must somehow align himself with that audience’s predispositions. Good public speaking is not enough. Reagan’s use of path metaphors may explain the achievement of his status as the “Great

Communicator.” His use of everyday metaphors sounds reasonable and does not arouse suspicion. They also suggest movement and action. An example of his use of path metaphors is found in his 1983 State of the Union address. ...”It is the only path that will lead to a strong sustained recovery.” This example also uses his second use of metaphors; the disease/health metaphors. This one taps directly into the U.S. psyche. Denton further suggests that Reagan was both popular and persuasive because his metaphoric language taps into fads and feelings and beliefs of the average person on the subconscious level. Reagan was more popular than Reaganomics even when he was caught in lies, misstatements and distortions (Denton, 1986).

Clinton’s 1993 and 1994 State of the Union Addresses were considered long because they hit the hour mark. Because of the length, his voice would go hoarse. Even with the occasional voice strain, Halford (1995), writes that Clinton’s delivery is still dynamic. Halford recognizes Clinton’s use of different styles of delivery for different types of audiences. For town meetings and interviews, his style is casual. On the political trail, his style is more powerful and persuasive. In televised addresses, the style is formal and somber. Clinton also has, according to Halford, a good command of vocal emphasis and variety. Clinton’s use of a lightly clenched fist with his index finger bent, not quite pointing at his audience, became his trademark.

Clinton’s rhetoric was influenced by the speeches of John and Robert Kennedy, in addition to speeches by Martin Luther King, Jr. According to Halford, this is a common practice by other contemporary politicians. The difference with Clinton’s use of their speech patterns is, Halford believes, that he was genuinely moved by their ideas and

words. His rhetorical slogan of “renewal” and “beginning anew” originates from these speeches.

Other characteristics about Clinton’s rhetoric include his good sense of self-deprecating humor and his use of “I am humbled” rhetoric. Even though he was not wealthy, his elite education afforded him the opportunity to be in the more elite circles of society. He played each part to his advantage (Halford, 1995).

From his speech writers, Clinton mostly wanted material he could improvise. A voracious reader, Clinton could talk at length on many topics and knew detailed statistics of various issues. He had boundless energy and his meetings could last until three a.m. (Halford, 1995).

During the 1993 State of the Union address, Clinton tapped into an issue that worried many Americans--the economy. He had sparked cautious optimism by emphasizing that the Washington establishment could not continue the business-as-usual attitude. Following this speech, Clinton sent out administration officials on his team to speak to groups of Americans everywhere. This move extended and refined the rhetorical strategy inspired by the Reagan administration (Halford, 1995).

Speech Making and Writing

Presidential speech-making differs from other public figures in three ways. First, presidents mention themselves and their actions with great frequency. Secondly, the speech tends to be more optimistic and less complex than addresses by other leaders. Thirdly, humanity, practicality and caution are the special sound of presidential discourse

(Hart, 1984).

Prior to 1968, presidents spoke the words they wrote, but after 1969 presidential words were drafted by writers. Once known as ghosts and hidden in the presidential closet, rhetoric makers since Franklin Roosevelt have been openly employed, some even becoming media celebrities (Gelderman, 1997).

Relegating presidential speech writing to a team of word smiths has become the standard for all presidents and research confirms that presidents are making even more speeches now than ever before (Figure 1). This puts an even greater burden on the a president's team of speech writers. The quest becomes how to capture the president's voice in combination with policy and the issues at hand. Depending on each president's mode of operation, a speech writer may or may not have direct access to either critical component. As in the case for Reagan, he came to office with a folder of speeches he had compiled during his career as Governor of California and more importantly as touring spokesman for General Electric. As spokesman for General Electric Reagan toured more than 100 company plants talking to workers in rather formal settings, which served him well in office.

In contrast, Clinton posed a different problem for his team of speech writers. Clinton preferred to write his own current speeches not based on any previously written.

According to former director of speech writing for President Clinton, David Kusnet, the role of the speech writer is to "try to draft speeches that presidents would have written themselves." Kusnet also stated that Clinton's talent for extemporaneous speaking influenced their work. "All we really did was just take notes on what Clinton

was saying and just type(d) it up and give it back to him and then he'd change it again”
 (*The Hoya*, 2002).

Figure 1

Frequency of Speech making, 1945-1985

<i>President</i>	<i>Total Speeches</i>	<i>Monthly Average%</i>	<i>“N” National Addresses per Year on Radio or Television</i>
Truman	1407	15.1	11.3
Eisenhower	925	9.6	9.6
Kennedy	771	22.0	13.3
Johnson	1636	26.8	12.9
Nixon	1035	15.2	19.8
Ford	1236	42.6	22.5
Carter	1322	27.5	23.0
Reagan	1637	27.3	52.8

SOURCE: Hart (1987: 8 and 53).

Carol Gelderman notes, that “Bill Clinton, in his first year as president, spoke publicly three times as often as Reagan did in his first twelve months.” (Waterman, 1999)

In preparing for his State of the Union address, Clinton scavenged for ideas. One year he loaded vans with leading thinkers and brought them to Camp David for a seminar with his senior staff and vice president. Another year he had them to dinner in the executive mansion (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 2002).

The two key components of effective rhetoric, according to Stuckey, are preparation and saturation. Based on Stuckey’s assessment, Clinton did neither.

For Reagan's 1992 State of the Union address, the process began well before Thanksgiving with Michael K. Deaver, the President's deputy chief of staff, conferring with Cabinet members and top White House aides.

Since a mention in the State of the Union message confers instant status on a government project, each department head wants his/her pet programs included which results in long heated debates and reams of suggestions (Stuckey, 1990).

After collecting all these thoughts and documents, the task of the team of speech writers is to create a central theme or message that would define the President's goals for the upcoming years. Next, there is the catch slogan or ringing phrase. A fourth aspect to the address is to include a stirring quote from previous presidents. More recently, the speech writers have added 30 to 35 pauses for applause. This is done to demonstrate to the television audience that the President has a lot of support in Congress. Finally, at the end of the speech, there is an appeal to God. When the address is complete, as a last tradition in the Congressional Chambers, the President's side stands and gives him a rousing ovation (*The New York Times*, 1982).

Polling

The development of political polling began during the 1930s by George Gallup, Elmo Roper and Archibald Crossley. With the support of media organizations, these three men recognized the power of polling as a research tool in their own field of advertising. What began as a tool to determine the product preference of consumers, these men envisioned polling as a more responsive leadership tool of governance (Lavrakas, 1995).

It wasn't until the 1960 presidential election, where nearly every poll indicated that John Kennedy would win the election, did the polling industry become credible. Newspapers and print media saw the need to compete with special interest groups. They also recognized the ease at which a news story could be generated. This eventually led news organizations to develop their own data collection services (Lavrakas, 1995).

Gallup and Harris polls archive their data with the Roper Center and the increase in individual questions has gone from 9,157 to 132,000 questions in their database (Bowman, 2002).

Richard Wirthlin, polling for Ronald Reagan, conducted sixty-four separate state polls, more than a half dozen national surveys, and several small-sample surveys in response to critical campaign events. Additionally, he used a sophisticated computer program to track the voting intentions of more than 10,000 likely voters (Bowman, 2002).

Wirthlin met with Ronald Reagan more than twenty-five times in the first twenty-nine months of the administration and delivered memoranda on the results of over forty public opinion studies to the president's top three aides (Bowman, 2002).

Stanley Greenberg, polling for President Clinton in his first term, said that early in the administration he did monthly tracking surveys and met with the president about once a week for fifteen minutes during Clinton's first year in office (Bowman, 2002).

Gallup asked the presidential job-approval question 135 times during Reagan's term of office. For the Clinton presidency, Gallup had asked the same question 201 times with still one more year of the presidency remaining (Bowman, 2002).

With the help of advanced technology, CBS news in conjunction with

InterSURVEY, conducted an online poll of views on President Clinton's January 27, 2000 State of the Union address and reported the results that same night (Bowman, 2002). Technology has changed, but the basic questions after the State of the Union address remain the same.

The results of the popularity and credibility issues, as well as trust, for both presidents are recorded in the poll results in this portion of the research paper.

Popularity and Credibility

To analyze the popularity and credibility of Presidents Reagan and Clinton, one must understand their use of political rhetoric together with their personality type, as well as the times during which it was spoken. The State of the Union addresses would be the ideal place for this analysis because of the nature of such an address. This is the best example of an agenda-setting speech for each year a president is in office.

For the purposes of this paper, expert definition of popularity and credibility is defined in relation to the American people's trust in the leadership abilities of a particular president. Also important to note are the qualities that the American public feels a president should possess in order to lead the country. In a 1979 Gallup poll, 82% of the respondents said intelligence in a president is foremost followed by 81% identifying sound judgment in a crisis to be the next criterion. Competence and ability to get the job done rated 74% and 66% rated high ethical standards as the next necessary quality in a President. A clear 50% judged a sense of humor as an important characteristic followed by 42% for imagination and 33% for personal charm, style, and charisma (Waterman, 1999).

This information is helpful in interpreting the Gallup poll surveys which track the popularity of a president on a continuous basis. Respondents are asked “Do you approve or disapprove of the way the president is handling his job as president?”

Public expectations of presidential abilities and performance are also important to consider in the ratings equation. When a president fails to satisfy the public’s expectations even a partial policy success is defined as a failure according to scholar Lowi. (Waterman, 1999)

Waterman defines presidential success in terms of re-election and policy achievement. In 1981, Reagan succeeded in advancing a broad conservative economic program through Congress, while Clinton successfully worked with a Republican-dominated Congress to balance the budget.

What the public expects and what a president can achieve is referred to by scholars as the “Expectations Gap” and Waterman feels that presidents since Nixon have adopted a new strategy to compensate for this expectation gap. This new strategy, aided by television, is to create an image of success. These images are influenced by the political concerns of the time. Reagan provided an image of cheery optimism while Clinton effectively created an image of feeling the nation’s collective pain (Waterman, 1999).

The notion of popularity and credibility also serves as a barometer to a president about public views when he is trying to sell his policy goals. Governing in and of itself is difficult, but without a message or plan, the process is even more difficult (Waterman, 1999).

The research in this area suggests that the popularity and credibility numbers tell a

different story especially in the case of President Reagan. In “The Myth of the Great Communicator,” Elliot King and Michael Schudson suggest that while the media were trumpeting the president’s phenomenal skills as a communicator, the polls revealed that for the first two years of his administration, he was, in fact, one of the least popular presidents in the post-World War II period.

Right about the time when Reagan’s legend of the “Great Communicator” grew, Reagan’s average approval rating was significantly lower than his predecessors’ (King, 1987).

This fact was noted in poll after poll and also in professional publications in political science and public opinion research. The news media interpreted this by saying that Reagan remained personally popular even if his policies did not. According to King and Schudson, this wasn’t true either. They quote that Gallup reported on May 20, 1982 that “contrary to widely held belief, Reagan’s personal popularity is not disproportionately greater than his predecessors’.”

During the first two years of the Reagan administration, the press coverage from three leading newspapers and two leading magazines, found that the press consistently assumed a degree of popularity that was not reflected in the polls (King, 1987) .

On March 18, 1981, *The New York Times* ran a brief report on the Gallup poll which stated, “President Reagan’s handling of his job after eight weeks in office wins less approval from the public than any newly elected president in 28 years. It further stated that not only were Reagan’s “approval” ratings the lowest, but his “disapproval” ratings were nearly three times higher than the ratings of other presidents (King, 1987).

The Washington Post on April 25, assessed the first hundred days of the Reagan administration, attributing Reagan's high job approval rating to his "magnetism." The Gallup poll at that time showed an approval rating for Reagan of 67 percent, which many say coincided with a sympathetic rally-round-the-president response to the March 30 assassination attempt on Reagan (King, 1987).

According to King and Schudson, *Newsweek* reported, without any mention of the surprisingly low approval ratings for Reagan's first months in office, that Reagan's presidency was wrapped in a "blanket of personal goodwill unmatched since Dwight Eisenhower." *Newsweek* continued to state that Reagan's popularity ratings in some surveys "are the highest in polling history." *Newsweek* cited a Robert Teeter poll in which 48 percent of the public held the country to be on the wrong track, compared to 82 percent in 1979 (King, 1987).

Newsweek reported on May 18 that "a swell of personal sentiment and political support for Reagan in the outlands" had settled the congressional battle over the budget. No source for its assessment of public opinion in the outlands by *Newsweek* was available (King, 1987).

Later in the fall of 1981, *The New York Times* reported on its poll that "President Reagan's once solid grip on public support appears to be loosening somewhat because of worries about the economic situation...." According to King, there is no polling evidence that Reagan ever had such a grip.

The year 1982 brought a new poll and new interpretations. In a new Gallup poll, a *New York Times* reporter wrote on January 10, "Public approval of President Reagan has

slipped below 50 percent for the first time and he now stands lower than President Carter did four years ago.” According to King, the use of “now” made it out to be a new development, where in fact, Reagan trailed Carter during most of his first year in office.

The press continued to report on Reagan’s unusual magnetism and popularity and attributed low poll numbers to the downturn in the economy. According to King, the lack of evidence in poll numbers for Reagan’s popularity could be attributed more to Reagan’s ability to establish genial relations face-to-face with the Washington political and media establishment.

According to a *Newsweek* report on November 17, 1980, the Carter administration and the Washington establishment hated each other. Reagan captivated the White House press corps even though they did not go along with his conservative politics (King, 1987).

King further notes that a *New York Times Magazine* on April 26, 1981 held that official Washington had been captivated by Reagan’s affability. King suggests that the Washington society, Congress and the media, all projected their personal liking of Reagan onto the American public.

King also suggests that Reagan’s electoral victory overwhelmed Washington. His margin of 51 to 41 over Carter was impressive. King believes this victory is not a vote of confidence for Reagan or his policies, but more a result of Carter’s poor performance.

King believes that Reagan was also an effective manager of the press and the Congress. According to King, the victory of his budget battle with Congress in May 1981 was due, in part, to Reagan’s ability to establish a good working relationship with Congress. Reagan wined and dined Congress in steep contrast to the Carter years.

Reagan's success at mobilizing a highly efficient right wing who wrote letters and sent telegrams and turned up at public meetings when legislators visited their constituents, could also have influenced Congressional support. King suggests an error by Congress by viewing Reagan's minority support as general public approval and then transmitted this sense to the media.

King also suggests that there was an enormous subconscious desire in Washington for the president to succeed after a string of failed presidencies which in turn, they projected onto the American people. King offers proof of this in an article written in *The Washington Post* on January 24, 1982. A reporter wrote "Americans do not want to see another failed presidency." "Everybody wants our president to be up on a pedestal a little." Further evidence can be found in a quote from *Time* in a July 11, 1983 story, where Lou Cannon cited the lowest antagonism between the press and the presidency in twenty years.

King suggests the skills of the Great Communicator were amplified by the news media and in turn helped to establish a myth as truth.

Gallup polls in 1989 show that Reagan left office with the highest approval rating of any president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Reagan's 63 percent approval rating is followed by Roosevelt's 66 percent, Eisenhower's 59 percent and Kennedy's 58 percent.

In contrast, Clinton enjoyed the highest continual approval ratings of any president since Roosevelt, despite the personal problems and allegations during both terms, by 1998. Yet, only about half of the American people personally trusted the president and thought he was routinely honest. Clinton was well liked by the public and viewed as competent,

but historians may not view him as a good leader (Denton, 1998).

Messages and Style

To answer the question of what messages contributed to the popularity and credibility of Presidents Reagan and Clinton, a close examination of the rhetoric of each president is necessary.

Reagan, known as the “Great Communicator,” used three subsystems of discourse: populism, civil religion and national security. From these three subsystems, he also appealed to American’s worst fears and at other times to their optimistic and nostalgic natures (Weiler, 1992).

Using these subsystems, Reagan’s State of the Union address included props. His administration was the first to use heroes. In his first State of the Union address, Reagan pointed out in the House gallery a young man who had jumped into the frigid Potomac and saved some passengers from a crashed jetliner. Mr. Reagan noted Sergeant Trujillo “as a person who reminds us what it means to be Americans” (*New York Times*, 1982).

Reagan repeated this practice in his 1984 State of the Union address by recognizing a Cuban-born businessman as one of the “heroes of the 80’s” for his climb from poor refugee to a millionaire exporter.

In another State of the Union address, super model Christine Brinkley showed up (*The Buffalo News*, 1995). *The New York Times* referred to this Presidential practice of saluting heroes as human props.

So successful was this technique, Clinton imitated Reagan by also saluting heroes in the House gallery during his State of the Union addresses.

Another technique employed by Reagan was his use of anecdotes. Complex issues about foreign policy or fiscal analysis were reduced to parables, which fit in perfectly with the television viewing audience. Here he could rely on visual images, employ easy-to-grasp slogans and endearing anecdotes and articulate a moral vision that was more comforting than comprehensive (Weiler, 1992).

Reagan's rhetoric also relied on visual images and scenic accompaniments. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, a communications scholar, called this method the "effeminate" style.

The messages found in his State of The Union address as well as other speeches were crafted by a pack of skilled speech writers. They employed a sophisticated array of market-research techniques to guide the work of sculpting a presidential image and message (Weiler, 1992).

The use of populism, civil religion and national security are evident in Reagan's State of the Union addresses. This becomes apparent when a content analysis is done on the 1983 and 1984 State of the Union address.

Populism refers to a strategy of identifying with the majority of the population, being "one of them" or "of the people." Reagan's use of this strategy is not unique to him, but what is unique was his saturation of it. He never stopped attacking the bureaucratic, congressional, and journalistic elites "inside the Beltway" (Weiler, 1992). Other research points to Reagan's use of negative populism. If he is the good guy, there must be a bad

guy. Thus the term “evil empire” was born. Throughout his State of the Union addresses Reagan portrays the Soviet Union as the bad guy and communism as the number one enemy. To get people to love him, he had to get them to hate someone else (Weiler, 1992). This negative populism became his trademark throughout his eight years. So ingrained was this strategy that even after the Iran/Contra incident, his popularity remained high because people still believed he was one of them.

Reagan successfully influenced public opinion through the use of persuasive language by invoking civil religion in his State of the Union addresses as well as other speeches. In his 1982 State of the Union address, when Reagan made his case for double-digit inflation, he asks Americans to have “faith” in their government. This message is repeated later in the same address when he says “This administration has faith in state and local governments....” Further into the speech, Reagan promises truth to the world, with these words “ the rule of law under God.” Next he celebrates his hero concept by speaking of bringing the P.O.W.’s home. When Jeremiah Denton came slowly down the ramp, he caught sight of our flag, saluted it, said, God Bless America and thanked us for bringing him home (State of the Union Address 1982). It wasn’t until the following year that Reagan ended his State of the Union address with his “Thank you and God Bless America” theme.

Reagan also appealed to the doctrines of America’s “civil religion” to invest his policy agenda with divine approval, thus demonizing his opponents rather than confronting their objections (Weiler, 1992).

Reagan invoked the national security rationale, the third subsystem of rhetoric, for

his military budget proposals and foreign adventures, thus placing these topics outside the realm of partisan political discussion.

All three subsystems of rhetoric come with a price. According to Weiler, this Presidential discourse “impoverized” the public sphere by substituting for the possibility of rational discussion within it an intellectually un nourishing form of talk. His was a rhetoric that announced decisions and called on the faithful for support.

While Reagan came to the presidency with a varied background of experiences, writing, acting, and government, he also came with a folder full of his previous speeches and asked his speech writing team to use them as the core for all other speeches. He wanted his style copied and after his first year in office, never met on the weekly basis with this team again. Reagan’s team had successfully captured his manner and message.

Clinton on the other hand, never had a speech writer until his first presidential campaign. (Gelderman, 1997). More than any other president, Clinton lost control of his message early on. Compared to Reagan, Clinton was understaffed (by choice) and chronically disorganized. An inexperienced staff and no central core of authority resulted in chaos. (Gelderman, 1997) After a full year, Clinton finally acknowledged this lack of discipline and apologized in his 1995 State of the Union address two times. He put the blame on his absorption in passing legislation (Gelderman, 1997).

Even though he used Reagan’s Initial Action Plan for the first hundred days of his presidency, Clinton could not duplicate Reagan’s skillful handling of national symbols.

Two national tragedies and heavy losses in the midterm congressional elections brought Clinton into rhetorical reality. He imitated Reagan’s use of values (also Franklin

D. Roosevelt's) and wrapped his own agenda around it, taking back Reagan's style. His new speeches now were called "common ground" speeches and their themes were new covenant and common ground.

Twice in his State of the Union, he copied Reagan, by stating "The era of big government is over," and portrayed himself as a reasonable man who shared many of the Republican goals. He offered to cut back programs but in a more compassionate way (Gelderman, 1997). Clinton's poll numbers soared. He had reinvented himself through his speech making, reinforcing his title as "the comeback kid."

According to Henderson, Clinton's State of the Union addresses were symptomatic of the same problems that the President had focusing on policy agenda. In contrast to Reagan, Clinton's speeches were laundry lists of major initiatives with no underlying sense of conviction or direction.

Even within the administration, the need for a clearer focus was understood. Yet Clinton continued in this direction as evidenced in his 1995 State of the Union message. It was a full eighty minutes in length to which *The St. Louis Post Dispatch* remarked as a "litany of initiatives on education" which came to ten separate and distinct programs (Henderson, 1997).

Henderson also noted other messages in this address as running the gamut of all the great problems of the modern age and then some. In this same address, Clinton railed at Congress for accepting free football tickets from lobbyists, promised to get tough on terrorists's bank accounts, debated whether the government ought to be studying tick infestations and told us how much he liked to hunt. Clinton's reach was scattered,

ungainly and typical of an overachiever (Henderson, 1997).

In contrast to Reagan, Clinton loved the details, giving him the title of a “policy wonk.” Clinton could not delegate authority to others and could immerse himself in lengthy discussions on a topic without resolve. This micro-managing style had its pitfalls for Clinton. His State of the Union addresses had no clear focus, but lots of initiatives. Instead of highlighting a few strong issues and fighting to accomplish them, Clinton had a lengthy to-do list. The press took issue with Clinton for his lack of focus and one headline captured this problem. Following his 1997 State of the Union address, the headline read, “Clinton Covers the Waterfront, Seeking a Theme” (Henderson, 1997). It was not until Clinton hired Dick Morris did his messages and themes become clearer. Morris advised Clinton to change his image to a more fatherly figure and eschew family values (Waterman, 1999). As a result, Clinton’s poll numbers improved.

Halford takes a different view of Clinton’s State of the Union rhetoric. He notes three main themes--comprehensive welfare reform, national health care reform and crime. In the 1994 address, Halford states that Clinton continued the inaugural theme of “renewal and reform.” The hour-long address was filled with similar type metaphors. Using a prop likened to Reagan’s style, Clinton brandished a pen to emphasize his point of vetoing legislation on universal health care that did not cover every American.

Clinton invoked a touch of Reagan-style pathos when he used anecdotes, letters and living visual symbols during this same State of the Union address. The President told a heartfelt story of a father and his ill child while on a visit to the White House who praised Clinton and others for making a difference. Clinton invoked a living symbol from the

Reagan administration by acknowledging Jim Brady in the House gallery while referring to the passage of the Brady gun control bill. Again like Reagan, Clinton recognized everyday heroes such as a New York City police officer who “restores the sanity and safety and a sense of values and connection to the people whose lives he protects.” Emotionally these concrete and specific examples formed the powerful bonding agents in the rhetorical cement (Halford, 1995).

Another unique feature of this 1994 address according to Halford, was Clinton’s use of humor. Clinton begins by saying “I’m not sure what speech is in the teleprompter tonight.” Rarely would a president make such a reference to this widely used practice. Halford also found Clinton’s interaction with the Congressional audience during a portion of the address unique, all to the chagrin of Congress.

In summary, the research literature confirms for this study that Reagan had a made-for-television style and appearance, which he used successfully with the media. Reagan’s poll numbers did not reflect reality according to the research found. Clinton tapped into the right messages as evidenced in his favorable poll numbers, but the research shows the media was harsh on Clinton.

The next chapter will detail the design of this study.

Chapter Three

Study Design

An Overview

To test the three hypotheses posed in the previous chapters, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. These methods fall into three categories.

Part one of the research design seeks to define what messages are found in the respective State of the Union addresses that evoked a positive or negative response by the public. These responses were reflected in the polling data conducted at that time.

Part two of the research design seeks to determine the speech length and word frequency count, through a content analysis of each respective address. Words mentioned most often are the words that reflect the greatest concern.

Part three of the research design consists of an intercept study of random groups of people using a Likert type scale to determine the effectiveness of each president's State of the Union address.

Data Needed

Polling data was gathered from sources on the internet via search engines. These were polls taken by professional organizations for the leading newspapers following the respective State of The Union Address by Presidents Reagan and Clinton.

Additionally, the actual texts of The State of the Union messages were needed that corresponded to the polling data, in order to conduct the content analysis for each speech selected. The speeches used were for the years 1982 and 1994, respectively.

Finally, this researcher wanted to triangulate the data by including analyses from scholarly sources; highly recognized people with advanced knowledge on the topic, who had analyzed the oratory skills of Presidents Reagan and Clinton in professional journals, magazines or in the media. These scholarly works served to interpret the data at an expert level.

Data Sources

For part one of the research design, this researcher used polling results conducted by CNN, Harris Polls, The Odium Institute, The Roper Institute, USA Today Polls, and CBS/The New York Times Poll. Samples of the polling questions used after the State of the Union address, revealed categories of both credibility and popularity of the president.

For the second part of the research design, a content analysis was conducted on one speech for presidents Reagan and Clinton, respectively. For Reagan, the 1982 State of the Union address was used and for Clinton, the 1994 State of the Union speech was used. A content analysis was completed by a computer-aided program called VBPro for the 1994 speech only. A content analysis of Reagan's 1982 address was done manually.

For the final section of the research design, the scholarly journals, articles and text used were found on the internet, the on-line Questia library, and in the Rowan University library. These sources are recognized experts in their field and give valuable insight into each president's capabilities.

Research Method

Because the topic of research is not a current event, this researcher used research or data already conducted by nationally recognized polling organizations.

Information was gathered that already existed in archival form. These sources were cited earlier.

The polls conducted by these news organizations were in the form of surveys which focused on respondents' reactions to President Reagan or Clinton's State of the Union address. They further probed the respondents' trust in the respective president on various issues. Also, the respondents were asked to rate the president's overall competence. These surveys measure popularity and credibility with the public which are interpreted as a percentage; i.e. 57% approval rating.

The second method of research used was a computer-aided content analysis of the respective State of the Union message. These addresses tend to be lengthy (up to 7,000 words) and using a computer-aided program becomes more manageable than human coding.

The computer-aided content analysis was found in completion of President Clinton's State of the Union message given on January 25, 1994. This analysis was accessed on the web site-<http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/socio/kuechler/341/f95/caho.html>. According to the web site, the VBPro is particularly helpful when a large amount of textual data needs to be analyzed. This researcher analyzed President Reagan's address manually. The results are included in Figure 2.

Figure 2

*Computer-Aided Content Analysis
of Clinton's 1994 State of the Union*

Terms and Frequency

Welfare>94
America>54
Family>53
Law & Order>51
Budget>32
Actor(Congress)>29
Action>29

Economy>19
International>13
Security>11
Education>9
Groups>7
Ecology>6

*Manual Content Analysis of Reagan's
1982 State of the Union Address*

Terms and Frequency

Government>29
America>27
Economy>18
Groups>13
Congress>11
International>11

Data Collection Method

As stated in the previous heading, the data collected was in the form of archival research. This researcher had to find the research and reproduce the findings. The sampling size and sample surveys are listed in each section.

A content analysis of President Reagan's 1982 State of the Union address was done April 12, 2003. The content analysis of President Clinton's 1994 State of the Union address was found on the web site previously listed and was download as part of the research on January 29, 2003.

The intercept study was conducted on May 11, 2003. This group consisted of a

variety of age groups and party affiliations. Only two questions were asked of the respondents. After reading Reagan's & Clinton's 1982 and 1984 State of the Union addresses, what is your reaction? The respondents could check one of three boxes; whether they liked it, did not like it or had no opinion. The results of the intercept study are found in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Intercept Study Results

After reading Reagan's 1982 State of the Union Address, what is your reaction?

<i>Liked it</i>	<i>Did not like it</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
50%	25%	25%

After reading Clinton's 1994 State of the Union Address, what is your reaction?

<i>Liked it</i>	<i>Did not like it</i>	<i>No opinion</i>
100%	0%	0%

Data Analysis Method

This researcher will use Rowan University's SPSS program to conduct a data analysis.

Chapter Four

Findings

The results of this research paper reveal the popularity and credibility of Presidents Reagan and Clinton, respectively, following their 1982 and 1994 State of the Union addresses.

The study also revealed messages and styles that each president embodied which in turn translated into polling data.

General Findings for Reagan following his 1982 State of the Union Address

General findings while conducting this research paper revealed that Reagan's job performance following his 1982 address fluctuated from 47 percent approval rating to 49 percent approval rating depending upon which poll was selected. A national poll conducted by Louis Harris & Associates showed 49 percent approved of the job Reagan was doing, while 50 percent did not approve. Only 1 percent were not sure. (Figure 4) A Gallup poll for that same year which tracks the presidential approval ratings, reveals that 47 percent approved of President Reagan's job performance, with 42 percent disapproving and 11 percent having no opinion. (Figure 5)

Intercept Study Findings

Results from the intercept study conducted found 50 percent of the respondents liked Reagan's 1982 State of the Union address; 25 percent of the respondents said they did not like it and 25 percent of the respondents had no opinion. They further commented

that the address had no impact on their opinion of the President. These views are mirrored in the actual poll results conducted by the pollsters at the time.

Figure 4

Source: Louis Harris & Associates, Poll Results taken after President Reagan's 1982 State of the Union address

How would you rate the job President Reagan is doing - - excellent, pretty good, only fair or poor?

49% Positive
50% Negative
1 % Not Sure

Methodology: conducted on January 27-January 30, 1982 and based on telephone interviews with a national adult sample of 1,251.

Figure 5

Source: The Gallup Organization - Presidential Approval Ratings for President Reagan following the 1982 State of the Union address

Date	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	Sample
1/22-25 /1982	47%	42%	11%	1511
2/05-08 /1982	47%	43%	10%	1547

Several hypothesis formed the basis of this research paper. The results of the re-search correlating to each of the hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis I:

It was expected that because of President Reagan's State of the Union message, his popularity and credibility increased with the American public.

Following the 1982 speech, the Gallup poll shows Reagan's poll numbers at a 47 percent approval rating, 42 percent disapproval rating and 11 percent having no opinion. This reflects no change from his pre-speech polling data. Similar results are evident in both the 1987 and 1989 State of the Union addresses. In both years, 48 percent of the respondents polled said the address had no effect on them. (Figure 6) After reviewing the Gallup poll numbers, Hypothesis I was not supported.

Figure 6

Source: Newsweek and Gallup Poll - Confidence in Reagan after his 1982 State of the Union speech

Date	More Confident	Less Confident	No Effect	Don't Know
1/1987	22%	29%	48%	1%
1/1989	22%	29%	48%	1%

The Roper Center 1987, 1989.

Content Analysis of Reagan's 1982 State of the Union address

Given on January 26, Reagan's 1982 State of the Union address was 5,140 words long. The main themes running through this address include Government, Economy, Groups, Congress, Welfare, and Soviets. To a much lesser extent the themes of Ecology and Education are almost obscure. The theme of Partnerships is the common thread that ties his message together. Government was used 29 times; Economy was repeated 18 times and Groups were mentioned 13 times. International refers to foreign policy which was mentioned 11 times with the term Soviets. Congress was found 11 times in the text

and Welfare was found 9 times. Lastly, Ecology and Education were mentioned only two times. (Figure 7)

The main thrust of Reagan's State of the Union address was cutting government spending by eliminating waste and fraud. Economy was the largest topic of reference in this address. Cutting taxes to improve the economy was the constant theme in this speech. Lastly, Reagan focused on foreign policy (International). The major issue in this portion of the address later became an area Reagan could pride himself on and is credited for bringing down the wall of communism.

This address is noted for its theme of "big government is over," a theme which would later be echoed years later by Clinton in his State of the Union address.

Messages and Styles used by Reagan

This study also revealed messages and styles that each president embodied which translated into valuable polling data.

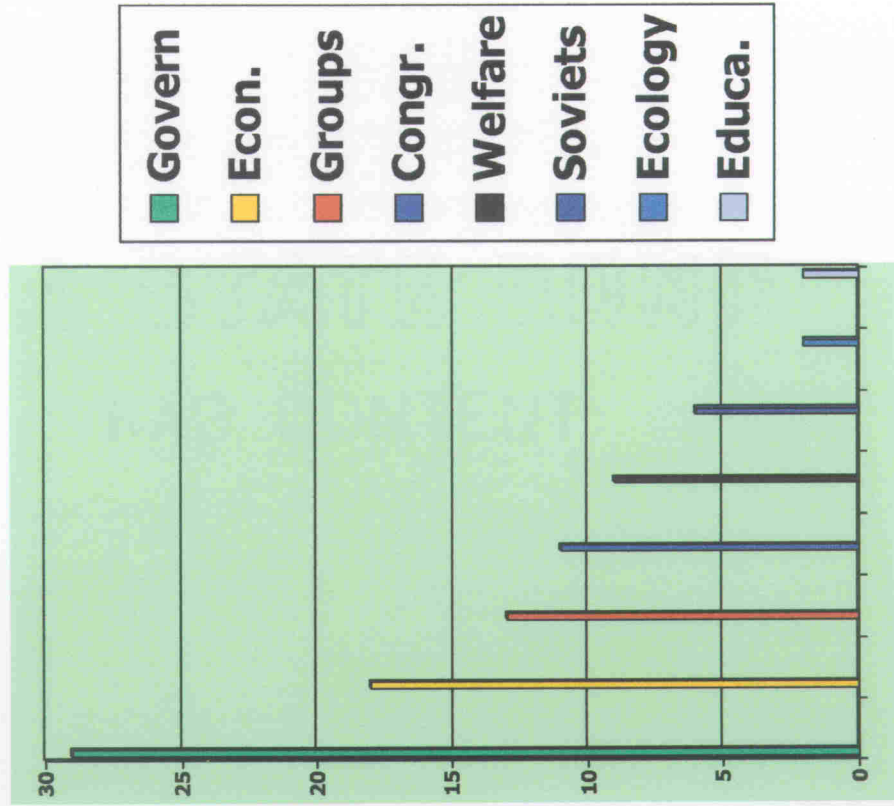
Reagan's rhetoric in his 1982 State of the Union address was based on several messages or themes found throughout his presidential speeches. One such message was his anti-government position (Houck, 1993).

Reagan states: "Together, after 50 years of taking power away from the hands of the people in their states and local communities, we have started returning power and resources to them." This theme "the end of big government" was copied by Clinton in his 1994 State of the Union address. Reagan's "anti-government" message was modified in his 1986 State of the Union address because of the recession of 1981-82.

Content Analysis of Reagan's 1982 State of the Union

Figure 7

- 7 Categories
- Government, Economy and Groups were the three largest
- Soviets used 6 times
- Economy/domestic policy main thrust of speech
- 5,140 words



Another message used by Reagan in the 1982 State of the Union speech as well as other ones, was a message of “historical determinism.” In the address, Reagan says: “...because we Americans have the capacity now, as we’ve had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to preserve this last and greatest bastion of freedom.” Houck defines historical determinism as the principles of governing established by America’s founders.

Reagan also used a style or strategy of deflecting blame from him to someone or something else. An example directly from the 1982 address, he states: “... First, we must understand what is happening at the moment to the economy. Our current problems are not the product of the recovery program that is only just now getting under way.... They are the inheritance of decades of tax and tax, spend and spend.”

Reagan’s style and messages were always presented as a rosy picture of America despite the reality of the times. In the 1982 address, Reagan states: “...That is why I can report to you tonight that in the near future the State of the Union and the economy will be better—much better—if we summon the strength to continue on the course we have charted.”

Reagan’s world was one of hope and vision, according to Houck. This is evident in his address when he states: ...“The record is clear, and I believe history will remember this as an era of American renewal, remember this administration as an administration of change and remember this Congress as a Congress of destiny.” And later in the speech he states..“Don’t let anyone tell that America’s best days are behind her that the American

spirit has been vanquished. We've seen it triumph too often in our lives to stop believing in it now."

Only in his 1986 address, did Reagan revert back to a tone reminiscent of his pre-gubernatorial speeches. This address according to Houck was different and unique because it was straightforward and lacked the typical optimism and vision themes.

An additional use of messages used by Reagan included a lack of solutions to solve the problems the nation faced or his solutions lacked specifics (Houck, 1993). An example is found in his 1982 address when Reagan states... "Let us solve this problem with a single, bold stroke—the return of some \$47 billion in federal programsThen further into the speech, he states again:... "In a single stroke, we will be accomplishing a realignment that will end cumbersome administration and spiraling costs...." And once again in the speech, he states: ...I will shortly send Congress a message describing this program. I want to emphasize, however, that its full details will have been worked out only after close consultation with congressional, state, and local officials."

Reagan also invoked civil religion as part of his style in the 1982 speech. He states ..."Our faith in the American people is reflected in another major endeavor." At another point in the speech he states... "A year ago, American's faith in their governmental process was in a steady decline."

Lastly, Reagan's use of recognizing everyday heroes in his 1982 State of the Union message became his trademark. He states... "We don't have to turn to our history books for heroes. They're all around us. One who sits among you here tonight epitomized that heroism at the end of the longest imprisonment ever inflicted on men of our armed

forces....the scene of that first plane landing at Clark Field in the Philippines bringing our P.O.W.'s home. The plane door opened and Jeremiah Denton came slowly down the ramp. He caught sight of our flag, saluted it, and said, "God bless America," and then thanked us for bringing him home."

Findings from experts such as former speech writers and scholars on the subject are important to add here as well. These experts and scholars reveal that a president usually includes a famous quote from another famous president. Additionally, the State of the Union address has one large theme or catchy phrase which emulates throughout this speech.

Reagan quotes Lincoln in his 1982 speech and states... "We cannot escape history," Abraham Lincoln warned. "We of this Congress and this Administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves." The "trial through which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation." The theme reiterated often in this 1982 address was a theme of renewed trust in the government and a new partnership for America. He states this early in the speech when he states... "I proposed a new spirit of partnership between this Congress and this Administration and between Washington and our state and local governments." Later he tells of his accomplishments in this new partnership when he states... "Together, we not only cut the increase in government spending nearly in half..." and then again... "Together, after 50 years of taking power away from the hands of the people..." Next he states... "Together, we have cut..." "Together, we have created..." "Together, we have begun to mobilize the private sector..." "Together, we have begun to restore that margin of military safety..." and

finally... “Together we have made a new beginning, but we have only begun.

Several hypotheses formed the basis of this research paper. The results of the research correlating to each of the hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis II:

It was expected that because of President Clinton’s State of the Union message, his popularity and credibility increased with the American public.

Gallup polls in 1994 showed President Clinton’s job approval ratings with pre-speech ratings of 54 percent approval, 38 percent disapproved and 8 percent had no opinion. Post-speech data revealed 58 percent approved of the president’s job performance, 35 percent disapproved and 7 percent had no opinion. (Figure 8) After reviewing the Gallup poll numbers, Hypothesis II was supported.

Similar increases in approval ratings were found in the 1994 poll conducted by The Pew Research Center. (Figure 9) According to The Pew Research Center report, the boost in Clinton’s poll numbers is attributed to a “strong State of the Union address combined with public anger at the news media.”

Figure 8

Source: The Gallup Organization- Presidential Approval Ratings for President Clinton

Date	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	Sample Size
1/15-17/1994	54%	38%	8%	1023
1/28-30/1994	58%	38%	4%	1010

Figure 9

Source: Roper Center/I Poll

Thinking about the policies of President Clinton and his administration, in your view is Bill Clinton leading the country in the right direction, or in the wrong direction?

Date	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	No Opinion
Pre-speech 1994 Jan. 24	67 %	27 %	6 %
Post-speech 1994 Jan. 25	84 %	11 %	5 %

General Findings for Clinton following his 1994 State of the Union Address

General findings show that Clinton's job performance ratings fluctuated also. A Gallup poll published in January 1994, shows 67 percent of the public felt President Clinton was leading the country in the right direction. This number represents pre-speech data. Post-speech data shows in the same poll shows Clinton's ratings jumped to 84 percent after his speech. (Figure 9) Yet the Gallup poll indicates President Clinton has a 54 percent approval rating prior to the 1994 address, which jumped to 58 percent after his address. (Figure 8)

Intercept Study Findings

Results from the intercept study found 100 percent of the respondents liked Clinton's 1994 State of the Union address. Respondents commented that Clinton's address had a vision and a passion as opposed to Reagan's address which lacked substance. Respondents further stated that they liked Clinton more after this address. These

results also mirrored the actual findings of the polls taken at that time.

Content Analysis of Clinton's 1994 Address

Clinton's 1994 State of the Union address was a full 6,853 words delivered on January 26, 1994. A content analysis reveals that 14 categories were found including: Groups, Economy, Budget, Education, Law & Order, Family, Security, International, Welfare, Ecology, Actor, Patterns and Action. Under each category, are sub-categories. The three largest themes were Welfare, Family, and Law & Order. The largest theme Welfare with sub-categories of welfare, health, health care and Medicare came to a total of 94 words. The next largest category was Family with sub-categories of child, family, parent, mother, and father for a total of 53 words in this group. The third largest theme was Law & Order with sub-categories of crime, drug, police and guns for a total of 51 words. Budget was the fourth largest category with sub-categories of tax, budget deficit, budget and deficit for a total of 33 words in this group. The fifth largest category was Action with sub-categories of reform and change mentioned 29 times. Under the category ACTOR, the sub-categories were Congress mentioned 25 times. Education ran as the sixth largest category with 19 words. The category of International received 13 words as did the Categories of economy and budget. Security was next with only 11 mentions. The final two categories were Ecology which received 7 mentions and the Groups category receiving only 6 mentions. Clinton used the term America 54 times, but is not included as a separate category. (Figure 10)

Messages and Style used by Clinton

Clinton's use of messages and style included humor. Because he worked on the 1994 State of the Union speech moments before it broadcast, his speech did not get into the Teleprompter until seven minutes after Clinton began speaking. Clinton stated this fact to millions of viewers and Congress. He states... "I'm not sure what speech is in the Teleprompter tonight." Later in the same speech, he interacted with the Congressional audience by stating... "another issue where the people are way ahead of the politicians." He further improvised when he says... "That may not be popular with either party, but it happens to be the truth." And again when Clinton said ... "This April 15th, the American people will learn the truth about taxes" to which the President improvised when he reminded the audience " that the tax increase already passed was limited to the wealthy" (Ryan, 1995).

Clinton used path metaphors, common to Reagan's style, in his 1994 State of the Union address. He stated ... "let us resolve to continue the journey of renewal." Later on the speech he states... "Let us weave these sturdy threads into a new American community..." Similar to Reagan-style, Clinton used anecdotes, letters and living visual symbols. In the touching story, Clinton states comments made by a father with his ill child as ... "Don't you people up here ever think that what you do doesn't make a difference, it does." Clinton referred to a letter of a man who had to declare bankruptcy because of his wife's illness. Clinton states... "It was to help the Richard and Judy Andersons of America that

the First Lady and so many other have worked so long and so hard on the health reform issue.” Clinton invoked a living symbol from the Reagan administration while praising the recently passed Brady gun control bill. He acknowledged Jim Brady sitting in the House gallery which copied Reagan’s method of recognizing everyday heroes. He continued this message by recognizing a police officer as an everyday hero when he states... “Everyday he restores some sanity and safety and a sense of values and connection to the people whose lives he protects.”

In the 1994 address, Clinton used a pen as a prop to emphasize his veto power over an insufficient health care bill. Clinton says ...“If you send me legislation that does not guarantee every American private health insurance that can never be taken away, you will force me to take this pen, veto the legislation, and we’ll come right back here and start all over again.”

A major theme or message in Clinton’s 1994 State of the Union address was the theme of change when he used the phrase “journey of renewal.” He states... “And so tonight, let us resolve to continue the journey of renewal, to create more and better jobs, to guarantee health security for all, to reward welfare work over welfare, to promote democracy abroad and to begin to reclaim our streets from violent crime and drugs and gangs, to renew our own American community.” This also reveals his entire agenda for 1994 and is evident in the content analysis as well.

Even though experts and scholars on this topic say that a good speech includes a famous quote from a previous president or leader together with a theme, this 1994 address by Clinton does not contain such a quote.

Figure 11

*Common Themes of Presidents Reagan and Clinton in The State of the Union addresses
1982 and 1994 Respectively*

President Reagan

1. Path Metaphors +
2. Humor +
3. Partnership
4. Heroes +
5. Civil Religion
6. Anti-Government
7. Historical Determinism
8. Deflect Blame to Others
9. Hope and Vision
10. Lack of Solutions
11. Famous Quote

President Clinton

1. Path Metaphors*
2. Humor*
3. Journal of Renewal
4. Heroes*
5. Use of a Pen as a Prop
6. Solutions to Problems
7. Anecdotes*
8. Living Symbols*
9. Letters*

+ reflects messages copied by Clinton in the 1994 State of the Union address

* reflects messages used by Reagan in other State of the Union addresses

Hypothesis III:

It was expected that a president's speech making ability and delivery along with certain messages in the State of the Union address, increased the popularity and credibility of a president with the American public.

The poll results previously stated for presidents Reagan and Clinton reflected job

approval ratings and success of that particular speech. This data also revealed whether the public approved of the agenda proposed by the respective presidents. Based on these results, Hypothesis III was only partially supported. Only President Clinton's 1994 State of the Union address measured an increase in the polls. President Reagan's messages in his 1982 State of the Union speech did not result in increased numbers in the polls. Therefore, these results did not support Hypothesis III. Both presidents were recognized by experts for their oratory skills. Yet the themes and messages used by President Clinton resounded more successfully with the public as evidenced in the polling data.

Chapter Five

Interpretation

Having the title of the “Great Communicator,” it appeared at first glance to be a foregone conclusion that Reagan would have overwhelming poll numbers following his State of the Union address. The research challenged these initial expectations.

Having lived through the “Clinton Years,” this researcher expected that the poll numbers following Clinton’s State of the Union address would also be favorable. The initial research was surprisingly contradictory.

Lastly, one unexpected finding discovered in the research was the compliant role the media played during Reagan’s presidency.

Messages and styles of presidents Reagan and Clinton presents a picture of many more similarities than contrasts.

The State of the Union speech appears to be nothing more than a president’s boastful successes. Yet the polling practices associated with this speech tell a different story.

Known as a constitutional requirement, the State of the Union address has become a litmus test for a president based on his oratory skills, media know-how, and opinion-based knowledge as to what the public wants to hear. What was once a simple hand-written message to Congress has now become a polling apparatus. Polling has developed

into big business. Use of polls by a president is a necessary tool for success.

As a yearly duty, the State of the Union speech tends to be similar to past addresses with some room for adjustment. A president's speech writing team reworks the basic themes to fit the president and the times. The State of the Union addresses can be compared to a beautiful dress. Its appearance changes with the wearer.

Hypothesis I:

It was expected that because of President Reagan's State of the Union message, his popularity and credibility increased with the American public.

Reagan's poll numbers for the 1982 State of the Union address did not increase following his speech. They, in fact, remained steady at a 49 percent approval rating. These numbers did not support Hypothesis I.

Reagan's address had little effect on the public in 1987 and 1989. In 1983, his poll numbers dropped two points as well following his annual State of the Union address. Pre-speech data shows 37 percent approval rating for Reagan prior to the address and post-speech data dropped to 35 percent approval rating.

With these figures in mind, why did the media continuously provide coverage to the contrary? Research points clearly to the skills which Reagan possessed combined with the public relations model or apparatus advanced during Reagan's presidency. Reagan was a B-grade actor but knew the significance of role playing in combination with television. Reagan also possessed a sense of humor and affable demeanor. Reagan endeared himself to the White House Press Corps by wining and dining them which was in stark contrast to the previous administration.

Significant credit must be given to Reagan's communications team for their role in garnering positive news coverage. David Gergen, Michael Deaver, Richard Wirthlin and James Baker were responsible for the extensive public relations apparatus referred to as the "Reagan Model." Many scholars believe this model has impacted the quest for the presidency and the mode of governing once in office.

The "Reagan Model" refers to the mode of news management introduced by Deaver and Gergen which limited and controlled to the maximum extent possible, what news reports said about the president and his policies (Hertsgaard, 1988). The White House public relations team would meet each morning to set "the line of the day" that would later be fed to the press. Regular phone calls to the television networks were made to influence coverage of Reagan on the evening news. Deaver's job was to provide a constant supply of visually attractive, pre-packaged news stories that were irresistible to television journalists. These pre-packaged stories combined with Reagan's Hollywood actor qualities shaped the press coverage in Reagan's favor even though his agenda was at odds with popular sentiment (Hertsgaard, 1988). This practice resulted in the press accepting "the line of the day" as standard. The media didn't have to work as hard for a story and the Reagan public relations team always provided phone numbers of pre-selected sources where the media could call to verify the story or issue of the day.

The Gallup polls presented in this study are consistent with the information from experts and from former Reagan staff members as recorded in their memoirs. The results reveal Reagan's popularity and credibility did not increase, but the media made it feel as though it did.

Hypothesis II:

It was expected that because of President Clinton's State of the Union message, his popularity and credibility increased with the American public.

Clinton's 1994 poll ratings show that Clinton did in fact enjoy an increase in approval ratings following his State of the Union address. Pre-speech data reveals an approval rating of 54 percent and post-speech data reveals a four point increase to a 58 percent approval rating.

During his first year of presidency, Clinton had significantly low approval ratings and unfavorable press coverage. With this combination, what were the factors that contributed to his survival and success as measured in his high approval ratings following his State of the Union address as well as during his remaining tenure in office?

This question can be answered by reviewing what the American public believes to be important qualities a president should possess to lead the country. The three major qualities listed by the American public in a 1997 Gallup poll were intelligence, sound judgment in a crisis, and competence and ability to get the job done. Number four was high ethical standards.

Given these qualities and their order of importance explains in part why Clinton enjoyed such high approval ratings even though he experienced poor press coverage because of his many personal problems.

Expectations for any president are generally high until proven otherwise. In Clinton's case, these expectations diminished to a degree prior to his election. Clinton's extra-marital affairs surfaced early on which lowered the bar somewhat as to Clinton's

moral character. Even though many people believed this to be a political mud-slinging tactic by his opponents, the door had already been left open. Polls show that the American public could separate the man from his deeds as long as the nation's business was not affected. This may have been the "spin" Clinton's public relations team devised. In fact, immediately after the Monica Lewinsky affair broke, Clinton took to the air to remind the American public why they had elected him.

Based on the material read and research gathered, Hypothesis II was supported. Clinton tapped into the issues of the American public in his 1994 address. The public was concerned about health care, they wanted reform in the welfare system and they wanted reductions in the budget deficit. These were the resounding messages in Clinton's 1994 State of the Union address. Clinton had perfected the "Reagan Model" and it was evidenced in his poll numbers.

Hypothesis III:

It was expected that a president's speech making ability and delivery along with certain messages in the State of the Union addresses increased the popularity and credibility of a president with the American public.

Similarities in messages and style found in the State of the Union addresses mark the presidencies of both Reagan and Clinton. Reagan's successful public relations apparatus became a model for Clinton. Clinton recognized this tool and hired part of Reagan's team to join his group of communications experts. Clinton took Reagan's model to the next level.

Reagan's style was made for television and he knew it. With his acting experience, all he needed was someone to direct him and feed him his lines. Enter Gergen and Deaver. In addition, he had a friendly personality and delivered an address in an "effeminate" manner. This is a style of speaking where visual images surround you to soften the speaker. Jamieson, a communications scholar regards Reagan as a master storyteller.

The Reagan public relations model which helped to perpetuate a myth as reality also cast a shadow over the media's true purpose. Benjamin C. Bradlee, an executive editor of the *Washington Post*, stated in 1994... "We have been kinder to President Reagan than any President that I can remember since I've been at the *Post*" (Hertsgaard, 1988).

A former top aid to Senator Edward Kennedy, captured Reagan's essence best. "His personal gifts - an amiable personality, sincere manner, perfect vocal delivery and photogenic persona made him the television era equivalent of the Pied Piper of Hamelin; he played a tune" (Hertsgaard, 1998).

Clinton, on the other hand, surfaced to the presidency with a stain on his moral character. In contrast to Reagan, Clinton could speak on a variety of topics and issues with great detail. His background as a lawyer provide the backdrop as a man with an agile mind and a capable leader. His elite education enabled him to enjoy a dialogue of debate with members of his staff as well during his famous "Renaissance Weekend." This asset became a liability when he faced the press. They often baited him on issues for comment

making his improvised conversations the news story of the day. This resulted in his team trying to develop last minute strategies or damage control. That first year in office revealed low poll numbers which may be attributed to Clinton's style and unsuspecting nature as to the power of the media.

Enhancing "Reagan's Model" proved a successful tactic that resonated well with the public. According to Colin Campbell, "Clinton has almost made it a principle to respond to the most popular opinions or the most powerful constituencies, whether liberal or conservative, on each issue." Campbell also states... "The result has been clear, from the standpoint of maximizing public support, the strategy works."

Based on the research in this study including scholarly viewpoints, Hypothesis III was partially supported. Only after Clinton's 1994 State of the Union address did the data support the premise of Hypothesis III; that a president's speech making ability and delivery along with certain messages in The State of the Union address increased the popularity and credibility of a president with the public. Both Reagan and Clinton had great oratory skills, but polling data only partially supports this third premise in favor of Clinton's 1994 State of the Union messages.

Conclusions

Use of polls to carve out messages for presidents and political figures will continue to invade all phases of campaigning and governing. Its success in Reagan's and Clinton's presidency can not be ignored.

The use of polls to determine public opinion will impact the method of governing even more in future presidencies. If political leaders ignore public sentiment and opinion,

their job as a leader may be short lived. Their legacy very well may be that “they were out of touch.”

For now, image is reality. Substance can be substituted by style and the correct image. Governing is quite different as Clinton so harshly discovered. This too can be overcome by having an experienced team as part of the public relations effort. A seasoned and capable staff can make all the difference for success.

The State of the Union address will remain the steadfast barometer for a president’s agenda and from this speech, the media and pollsters will continue to ask the public the often used question “Do you approve of the way the President is handling his job?” The greater task for polling organizations will be to determine how honestly people reply to these polls.

The intercept study findings complement the findings of the hypotheses found in this research study. Reagan’s 1982 State of the Union address was acceptable to most of the respondents polled. It received strong support with one respondent saying “ I like the way he tells us that we can work together to face the problems.”

In contrast, Clinton’s 1994 State of the Union address was soundly received. All respondents polled favored this address .One respondent commented “I remember this speech.”

These results could be interpreted to mean that Clinton represented a hope and vision for many Americans, but like Reagan, his presidency was a reflection of the times in which he governed.

Contribution to the field of Public Relations

Public relations practitioners will be able to use successful styles and messages from this research to carve out the correct message for their clients. Research is key to any successful campaign. The research found in this paper points to a president who was a B-grade actor, who found his niche and succeeded in becoming president for two terms. Reagan's made for television style and his three sub-systems of discourse can be copied by any public relations entity that specializes in political campaigns.

The research found in this paper also points to a president who had a great deal of personal baggage and still managed to get elected to a second term. One can conclude that the public may overlook the extra-marital affairs of political leaders under certain circumstances.

Clinton copied Reagan's style and messages. Public relations practitioners should feel free to copy these same messages, styles and methods of discourse to enhance their clients' image.

In the past, all a political leader needed to gain public approval was to be seen kissing babies. Today, the power of research can do much more. By researching public opinion, a president or political leader can have a greater impact honing in on the mood of the country.

Citizens may not vote in greater numbers, but they give their opinions to polling organizations more readily. This may be their way of participating in government in some form.

Further Research

In an effort to find the necessary research to test the proposed hypotheses, this researcher found a limited number of scholarly works on the topic. To improve this situation, a more thorough study of all the U.S. Presidential State of the Union addresses would be beneficial from a historic perspective. Analyzing these addresses would supplement the works already in the field.

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Appendix A

Reagan's 1982 State of the Union

[26 January 1982]

Today marks my first State of the Union address to you, a constitutional duty as old as our Republic itself.

President Washington began this tradition in 1790 after reminding the nation that the destiny of self-government and the "preservation of the sacred fire of liberty" is "finally staked on the experiment entrusted in the hands of the American people." For our friends in the press, who place a high premium on accuracy, let me say: I did not actually hear George Washington say that, but it is a matter of historic record.

From this podium, Winston Churchill asked the free world to stand together against the onslaught of aggression. Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke of a day of infamy and summoned a nation to arms. Douglas MacArthur made an unforgettable farewell to a country he had loved and served so well. Dwight Eisenhower reminded us that peace was purchased only at the price of strength and John F. Kennedy spoke of the burden and glory that is freedom.

When I visited this chamber last year as a newcomer to Washington, critical of past policies which I believe had failed, I proposed a new spirit of partnership between this Congress and this Administration and between Washington and our state and local governments.

In forging this new partnership for America we could achieve the oldest hopes of our Republic--- prosperity for our nation, peace for the world, and the blessings of individual liberty for our children and, someday, all of humanity.

It is my duty to report to you tonight on the progress we have made in our relations with other nations, on the foundations we have carefully laid for our economic recovery and, finally, on a bold and spirited initiative that I believe can change the face of American government and make it again the servant of the people.

Seldom have the stakes been higher for America. What we do and say here will make all the difference to auto workers in Detroit, lumberjacks in the Northwest, and steelworkers in Steubenville who are in the unemployment lines, to black teen-agers in Newark and Chicago; to hard-pressed farmers and small businessmen and to millions of everyday

Americans who harbor the simple wish of a safe and financially secure future for their children.

To understand the State of the Union, we must look not only at where we are and where we are going but at where we've been. The situation at this time last year was truly ominous.

The last decade has seen a series of recessions. There was a recession in 1970, another in 1974, and again in the spring of 1980. Each time, unemployment has increased and inflation soon turned up again. We coined the word "stagflation" to describe this.

Government's response to these recessions was to pump up the money supply and increase spending.

In the last six months of 1980, as an example, the money supply increased at the fastest rate in postwar history--13%. Inflation remained in double digits and government spending increased at an annual rate of 17%. Interest rates reached a staggering 21 1/2%. There were 8 million unemployed.

Late in 1981, we sank into the present recession---largely because continued high interest rates hurt the auto industry and construction. There was a drop in productivity and the already-high unemployment rate increased.

This time, however, things are different. We have an economic program in place completely different from the artificial quick-fixes of the past. It calls for reduction of the rate of increase in government spending, and already that rate has been cut nearly in half. But reduced spending alone isn't enough. We've just implemented the first and smallest phase of a three-year tax-rate reduction plan designed to stimulate the economy and create jobs.

Already interest rates are down to 15 3/4%, but they must go still lower. Inflation is down from 12.4% to 8.9% and for the month of December was running at an annualized rate of 5.2%.

If we had not acted as we did, things would be far worse for all Americans than they are today. Inflation, taxes and interest rates would all be higher.

A year ago, Americans' faith in their governmental process was steadily declining. Six out of 10 Americans were saying they were pessimistic about their future.

A new kind of defeatism was heard. Some said our domestic problems were uncontrollable-- that we had to learn to live with the seemingly endless cycles of high inflation and high unemployment.

There were also pessimistic predictions about the relationship between our administration and this Congress. It was said we could never work together. Well, those predictions were wrong.

The record is clear, and I believe history will remember this as an era of American renewal, remember this administration as an administration of change and remember this Congress as a Congress of destiny.

Together, we not only cut the increase in government spending nearly in half, we brought about the largest tax reductions and the most sweeping changes in our tax structure since the beginning of this century. And because we indexed future taxes to the rate of inflation, we took away government's built-in profit on inflation and its hidden incentive to grow larger at the expense of American workers.

Together, after 50 years of taking power away from the hands of the people in their states and local communities, we have started returning power and resources to them.

Together, we have cut the growth of new federal regulations nearly in half. In 1981, there were 23,000 fewer pages in the Federal Register, which lists new regulations, than there were in 1980. By deregulating oil, we have come closer to achieving energy independence and helped bring down the costs of gasoline and heating fuel.

Together, we have created an effective federal strike force to combat waste and fraud in the government. In just six months it has saved the taxpayers more than \$2 billion, and it's just getting started.

Together, we have begun to mobilize the private sector--not to duplicate wasteful and discredited government programs but to bring thousands of Americans into a volunteer effort to help solve many of America's social problems.

Together, we have begun to restore that margin of military safety that insures peace. Our country's uniform is once again being worn with pride.

Together, we have made a new beginning, but we have only begun.

No one pretends that the way ahead will be easy. In my inaugural address last year, I warned that the "ills we suffer have come upon us over

several decades. They will not go away in days, weeks or months, but they will go away ... because we Americans have the capacity now, as we've had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to preserve this last and greatest bastion of freedom."

The economy will face difficult moments in the months ahead. But, the program for economic recovery that is in place will pull the economy out of its slump and put us on the road to prosperity and stable growth by the latter-half of this year.

That is why I can report to you tonight that in the near future the State of the Union and the economy will be better-- much better-- if we summon the strength to continue on the course we have charted.

And so the question: If the fundamentals are in place, what now?

Two things. First, we must understand what is happening at the moment to the economy. Our current problems are not the product of the recovery program that is only just now getting under way, as some would have you believe. They are the inheritance of decades of tax and tax, spend and spend.

Second, because our economic problems are deeply rooted and will not respond to quick political fixes, we must stick to our carefully integrated plan for recovery. That plan is based on four common-sense fundamentals: continued reduction of the growth in federal spending, preserving the individual and business tax reductions that will stimulate saving and investment, removing unnecessary federal regulations to spark productivity and maintaining a healthy dollar and a stable monetary policy---the latter a responsibility of the Federal Reserve System.

The only alternative being offered to this economic program is a return to the policies that gave us a trillion dollar debt, runaway inflation, runaway interest rates, and unemployment.

The doubters would have us turn back the clock with tax increases that would offset the personal tax-rate reductions already passed by this Congress.

Raise present taxes to cut future deficits, they tell us. Well, I don't believe we should buy their argument. There are too many imponderables for anyone to predict deficits or surpluses several years ahead with any degree of accuracy. The budget in place when I took office had been projected as balanced. It turned out to have one of the biggest deficits in history. Another example of the imponderables that can make deficit

projections highly questionable: a change of only one percentage point in unemployment can alter a deficit up or down by some \$25 billion.

As it now stands, our forecasts, which we are required by law to make, will show major deficits, starting at less than \$100 billion and declining, but still too high.

More important, we are making progress with three keys to reducing deficits: economic growth, lower interest rates, and spending control. The policies we have in place will reduce the deficit steadily, surely and, in time, completely.

Higher taxes would not mean lower deficits. If they did, how would we explain that tax revenues more than doubled just since 1976, yet in the same six-year period we ran the largest series of deficits in our history. In 1980 tax revenues increased by \$54 billion, and in 1980 we had one of our all-time biggest deficits.

Raising taxes won't balance the budget. It will encourage more government spending and less private investment. Raising taxes will slow economic growth, reduce production and destroy future jobs, making it more difficult for those without jobs to find them and more likely that those who now have jobs could lose them.

So I will not ask you to try to balance the budget on the backs of the American taxpayers. I will seek no tax increases this year and I have no intention of retreating from our basic program of tax relief. I promised the American people to bring their tax rates down and keep them down-- to provide them incentives to rebuild our economy, to save, to invest in America's future. I will stand by my word. Tonight I am urging the American people: seize these new opportunities to produce, save and invest, and together we will make this economy a mighty engine of freedom, hope and prosperity again.

The budget deficit this year will exceed our earlier expectations. The recession did that. It lowered revenues and increased costs. To some extent, we are also victims of our own success. We have brought inflation down faster than we thought we could and have thus deprived government of those hidden revenues that occur when inflation pushes people into higher income tax brackets. And the continued high interest rates last year cost the government about \$3 billion more than anticipated.

We must cut our more nonessential government spending and root out more waste, and we continue our efforts to reduce the number of employees in the federal work force by 75,000.

The budget plan I submit to you on Feb. 8 will realize major savings by dismantling the departments of Energy and Education, and by eliminating ineffective subsidies for business. We will continue to redirect our resources to our two highest budget priorities--a strong national defense to keep America free and at peace and a reliable safety net of social programs for those who have contributed and those who are in need.

Contrary to some of the wild charges you may have heard, this administration has not and will not turn its back on America's elderly or America's poor. Under the new budget, funding for social insurance programs will be more than double the amount spent only six years ago.

But it would be foolish to pretend that these or any programs cannot be made more efficient and economical.

The entitlement programs that make up our safety net for the truly needy have worthy goals and many deserving recipients. We will protect them. But there is only one way to see to it that these programs really help those whom they were designed to help, and that is to bring their spiraling costs under control.

Today we face the absurd situation of a federal budget with three-quarters of its expenditures routinely referred to as "uncontrollable", and a large part of this goes to entitlement programs.

Committee after committee of this Congress has heard witness after witness describe many of these programs as poorly administered and rife with waste and fraud. Virtually every American who shops in a local supermarket is aware of the daily abuses that take place in the food stamp program--which has grown by 16,000% in the last 15 years. Another example is Medicare and Medicaid--programs with worthy goals but whose costs have increased from \$11.2 billion to almost \$60 billion, more than five times as much, in just 10 years.

Waste and fraud are serious problems. Back in 1980, federal investigators testified before one of your committees that "corruption has permeated virtually every area of the Medicare and Medicaid health care industry." One official said many of the people who are cheating the system were "very confident that nothing was going to happen to them."

Well, something is going to happen. Not only the taxpayers are defrauded--the people with real dependency on these programs are deprived of what they need because available resources are going not to the needy but to the greedy.

The time has come to control the uncontrollable.

In August we made a start. I signed a bill to reduce the growth of these programs by \$44 billion over the next three years, while at the same time preserving essential services for the truly needy. Shortly you will receive from me a message on further reforms we intend to install--some new, but others long recommended by your own Congressional committees. I ask you to help make these savings for the American taxpayer.

The savings we propose in entitlement programs will total some \$63 billion over four years and will, without affecting Social Security, go a long way toward bringing federal spending under control.

But don't be fooled by those who proclaim that spending cuts will deprive the elderly, the needy, and the helpless. The federal government will still subsidize 95 million meals every day. That's one out of seven of all the meals served in America. Head Start, senior nutrition programs, and child welfare programs will not be cut from the levels we proposed last year. More than one-half billion dollars has been proposed for minority business assistance. And research at the National Institutes of Health will be increased by over \$100 million. While meeting all these needs, we intend to plug unwarranted tax loopholes and strengthen the law which requires all large corporations to pay a minimum tax.

I am confident the economic program we have put into operation will protect the needy while it triggers a recovery that will benefit all Americans. It will stimulate the economy, result in increased savings, and thus provide capital for expansion, mortgages for home building and jobs for the unemployed.

Now that the essentials of that program are in place, our next major undertaking must be a program-- just as bold, just as innovative-- to make government again accountable to the people, to make our system of federalism work again.

Our citizens feel they have lost control of even the most basic decisions made about the essential services of government, such as schools, welfare, roads, and even garbage collection. They are right.

A maze of interlocking jurisdictions and levels of government confronts average citizens in trying to solve even the simplest of problems. They do not know where to turn for answers, who to hold accountable, who to praise, who to blame, who to vote for or against.

The main reason for this is the overpowering growth of federal

grant-in-aid programs during the past few decades.

In 1960, the federal government had 132 categorical grant programs, costing \$7 billion. When I took office, there were approximately 500, costing nearly \$100 billion-- 13 programs for energy conservation, 36 for pollution control, 66 for social services and 90 for education. The list goes on and on. Here in Congress, it takes at least 166 committees just to try to keep track of them.

You know and I know that neither the president nor the Congress can properly oversee this jungle of grants-in-aid. Indeed, the growth of these grants has led to a distortion in the vital functions of government. As one Democratic governor put it recently: "The national government should be worrying about "arms control, not pot-holes."

The growth of these federal programs has--in the words of one intergovernmental commission--made the federal government "more pervasive, more intrusive, more unmanageable, more ineffective, more costly, and above all more unaccountable."

Let us solve this problem with a single, bold stroke--- the return of some \$47 billion in federal programs to state and local government, together with the means to finance them in a transition period of nearly 10 years to avoid disruption.

I will shortly send Congress a message describing this program. I want to emphasize, however, that its full details will have been worked out only after close consultation with congressional, state, and local officials.

Starting in fiscal 1984, the federal government will assume full responsibility for the cost of the rapidly growing Medicaid program to go along with its existing responsibility for Medicare. As part of a financially equal swap, the states will simultaneously take full responsibility for Aid to Families with Dependent Children and food stamps. This will make welfare less costly and more responsive to genuine need because it will be designed and administered closer to the grass roots of people it serves.

In 1984, the federal government will apply the full proceeds from certain excise taxes to a grass-roots trust fund that will belong, in fair shares, to the 50 states. The total amount flowing into this fund will be \$28 billion a year.

Over the next four years, the states can use this money in either of two ways. If they want to continue receiving federal grants in such areas as

transportation, education, and social services, they can use their trust fund money to pay for the grants or, to the extent they choose to forego the federal grant programs, they can use their trust fund money on their own, for other purposes. There will be a mandatory pass-through of part of these funds to local governments.

By 1988, the states will be in complete control of over 40 federal grant programs. The trust fund will start to phase out, eventually to disappear, and the excise taxes will then be turned over to the states. They can then preserve, raise or lower taxes on their own and fund and manage these programs as they see fit.

In a single stroke, we will be accomplishing a realignment that will end cumbersome administration and spiraling costs at the federal level while we insure these programs will be more responsive to both the people they are meant to help and the people who pay for them.

Hand in hand with this program to strengthen the discretion and flexibility of state and local governments, we are proposing legislation for an experimental effort to improve and develop our depressed urban areas in the 1980s and 1990s. This legislation will permit states and localities to apply to the federal government for designation as urban enterprise zones. A broad range of special economic incentives in these zones will help attract new business, new jobs, and new opportunity to America's inner cities and rural towns. Some will say our mission is to save free enterprise. I say we must free enterprise so that, together, we can save America.

Some will say also our states and local communities are not up to the challenge of a new and creative partnership. That might have been true 20 years ago before reforms like reapportionment and the Voting Rights Act, the 10-year extension of which I strongly support. It is no longer true today. This administration has faith in state and local governments and the constitutional balance envisioned by the Founding Fathers. We also believe in the integrity, decency and sound good sense of grass-roots Americans.

Our faith in the American people is reflected in another major endeavor. Our private-sector initiatives task force is seeking out successful community models of school, church, business, union, foundation and civic programs that help community needs. Such groups are almost invariably far more efficient than government in running social programs.

We are not asking them to replace discarded and often discredited government programs dollar for dollar, service for service. We just want

to help them perform the good works they choose, and help others to profit by their example. Three-hundred Eighty Five Thousand corporations and private foundations are already working on social programs ranging from drug rehabilitation to job training, and thousands more Americans have written us asking how they can help. The volunteer spirit is still alive and well in America.

Our nation's long journey towards civil rights for all our citizens--once a source of discord, now a source of pride--must continue with no backsliding or slowing down. We must and shall see that those basic laws that guarantee equal rights are preserved and, when necessary, strengthened. Our concern for equal rights for women is firm and unshakable.

We launched a new Task Force on Legal Equity for Women, and a 50-state project that will examine state laws for discriminatory language. And for the first time in our history a woman sits on the highest court in the land.

So, too, the problem of crime--one as real and deadly serious as any in America today--demands that we seek transformation of our legal system, which overly protects the rights of criminals while it leaves society and the innocent victims of crime without justice.

We look forward to the enactment of a responsible Clean Air Act to increase jobs while continuing to improve the quality of our air. We are encouraged by the bipartisan initiative of the House and are hopeful of further progress as the Senate continues its deliberations.

So far I have concentrated largely on domestic matter. To view the State of the Union in perspective, we must not ignore the rest of the world. There isn't time tonight for a lengthy treatment of foreign policy--a subject I intend to address in detail in the near future. A few words, however, are in order on the progress we have made over the past year reestablishing respect for our nation around the globe and some of the challenges and goals we will approach in the year ahead.

At Ottawa and Cancun, I met with leaders of the major industrial powers and developing nations. Some of those I met were a little surprised that I didn't apologize for America's wealth. Instead I spoke of the strength of a free marketplace system and how it could help them realize their aspirations for economic development and political freedom. I believe lasting friendships were made and the foundation was laid for future cooperation.

In the vital region of the Caribbean basin, we are developing a program of aid, trade and investment incentives to promote self-sustaining growth and a better more secure life for our neighbors to south. Toward those who would export terrorism and subversion in the Caribbean and elsewhere, especially Cuba and Libya, we will act with firmness.

Our foreign policy is a policy of strength, fairness, and balance. By restoring America's military credibility, by pursuing peace at the negotiating table wherever both sides are willing to sit down in good faith, and by regaining the respect of America's allies and adversaries alike, we have strengthened our country's position as a force for peace and progress in the world.

When action is called for, we are taking it. Our sanctions against the military dictatorship that has attempted to crush human rights in Poland--and against the Soviet regime behind that military dictatorship--clearly demonstrated to the world that America will not conduct "business as usual" with the forces of oppression.

If the events in Poland continue to deteriorate, further means will follow.

Let me also note that private American groups have taken the lead in making Jan. 30 a day of solidarity with the people of Poland-- so, too, the European Parliament has called for March 21 to be an international day of support for Afghanistan. I urge all peace-loving peoples to join together on those days, to raise their voices, to speak and pray for freedom.

Meanwhile, we are working for reduction of arms and military activities. As I announced in my address to the nation last Nov. 18, we have proposed to the Soviet Union a far-reaching agenda for mutual reduction of military forces and have already initiated negotiations with them in Geneva on intermediate-range nuclear forces.

In those talks it is essential that we negotiate from a position of strength. There must be real incentive for the Soviets to take these talks seriously. This requires that we rebuild our defenses.

In the last decade, while we sought the moderation of Soviet power through a process of restraint and accommodation, the Soviets engaged in an unrelenting buildup of their military forces.

The protection of our national security has required that we undertake a substantial program to enhance our military forces.

We have not neglected to strengthen our traditional alliances in Europe and Asia, or to develop key relationships with our partners in the Middle East and other countries.

Building a more peaceful world requires sound strategy and the national resolve to back it up. When radical forces threaten our friends, when economic misfortune creates conditions of instability, when strategically vital parts of the world fall under the shadow of Soviet power, our response can make the difference between peaceful change or disorder and violence. That is why we have laid such stress not only on our own defense, but on our vital foreign assistance program. Your recent passage of the foreign assistance act sent a signal to the world that America would not shrink for making the investments necessary for both peace and security. Our foreign policy must be rooted in realism, not naiveté or self-delusion.

A recognition of what the Soviet empire is about is the starting point. Winston Churchill, in negotiating with the Soviets, observed that they respect only strength and resolve in their dealings with other nations.

That's why we've moved to reconstruct our national defenses. We intend to keep the peace we will also keep our freedom.

We we have made pledges of a new frankness in our public statements and worldwide broadcasts. In the face of a climate of falsehood and misinformation, we've promised the world a season of truth the truth of our great civilized ideas: individual liberty, representative government, the rule of law under God.

We've never needed walls, or mine fields or barbwire to keep our people in. Nor do we declare martial law to keep our people from voting for the kind of Government they want.

Yes, we have our problems; yes, we're in a time of recession. And it's true, there's no quick fix, as I said, to instantly end the tragic pain of unemployment. But we will end it the process has already begun and we'll see its effect as the year goes on.

We speak with pride and admiration of that little band of Americans who overcame insuperable odds to set this nation on course 200 years ago. But our glory didn't end with them Americans ever since have emulated their deeds.

We don't have to turn to our history books for heroes. They're all around us. One who sits among you here tonight epitomized that heroism at the end

of the longest imprisonment ever inflicted on men of our armed forces. Who will ever forget that night when we waited for television to bring us the scene of that first plane landing at Clark Field in the Philippines bringing our P.O.W.'s home. The plane door opened and Jeremiah Denton came slowly down the ramp. He caught sight of our flag, saluted it, said, "God bless America," and then thanked us for bringing him home.

Just just two weeks ago, in the midst of a terrible tragedy on the Potomac, we saw again the spirit of American heroism at its finest the heroism of dedicated rescue workers saving crash victims from icy waters.

And we saw the heroism of one of our young Government employees, Lenny Skutnik, who, when he saw a woman lose her grip on the helicopter line, dived into the water and dragged her to safety.

And then there are countless quiet, everyday heroes of American life parents who sacrifice long and hard so their children will know a better life than they've known; church and civic volunteers who help to feed, clothe, nurse and teach the needy; millions who've made our nation, and our nation's destiny, so very special unsung heroes who may not have realized their own dreams themselves but then who reinvest those dreams in their children.

Don't let anyone tell that America's best days are behind her that the American spirit has been vanquished. We've seen it triumph too often in our lives to stop believing in it now.

A hundred and one hundred and twenty years ago the greatest of all our Presidents delivered his second State of the Union Message in this chamber. "We cannot escape history," Abraham Lincoln warned. "We of this Congress and this Administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves." The "trial through which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation."

Well, that President and that Congress did not fail the American people. Together, they weathered the storm and preserved the union.

Let it be said of us that we, too did not fail; that we, too, worked together to bring America through difficult times. Let us so conduct ourselves that two centuries from now, another Congress and another President, meeting in this chamber as we're meeting, will speak of us with pride, saying that we met the test and preserved for them in their day the sacred flame of liberty this last, best hope of man on Earth.

Appendix B

United States 1994 State of the Union Address United States 1994 State of the Union Address

President William Jefferson Clinton
Address Before
A Joint Session of Congress On The
State of the Union
January 25, 1994

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the 103rd Congress,
my fellow Americans:

As we gather to review the State of the Union, I recall the memory of the giant who presided in this Chamber with such force and grace. Tip O'Neill liked to call himself "a man of the House." And he surely was that. But -- even more -- he was a man of the people, a bricklayer's son who helped build the American middle class. Tip O'Neill never forgot who he was, where he came from, or who sent him here.

We too must remember who we are, where we come from, and who sent us here.

We must return to the principle that if we give ordinary people equal opportunity, quality education, and a fair shot at the American dream, they will do extraordinary things.

We gather tonight in a world of changes so profound and rapid that all nations are tested.

Our American heritage has always been to master change, to expand opportunity at home, and provide leadership abroad.

But for too long, and in too many ways, that heritage was abandoned, and our country drifted.

For thirty years, family life in America has been breaking down. For twenty years, the wages of working families have been stagnant, or declining. For twelve years of trickle-down economics, we tried to build a false prosperity on a hollow base. Our national debt quadrupled. From 1989 to 1992, we experienced the slowest growth in a half century.

For too many families, even when both parents are working,

the American dream has been slipping away.

In 1992, the American people demanded change. One year ago I asked you to join me and accept responsibility for the future of our country. Well, we did. We replaced drift and deadlock with renewal and reform.

I want to thank all of you who heard the American people, broke gridlock, and gave them the most successful teamwork between a President and a Congress for thirty years.

This Congress produced:

A budget that cut the deficit by half a trillion dollars, cut spending and raised income taxes only on the very wealthiest Americans.

Tax relief for millions of low income workers to reward work over welfare.

NAFTA.

The Brady bill . . . which is now the Brady law.

Tax cuts to help nine out of ten small businesses invest more and create jobs.

More research and treatment for AIDS.

More childhood immunizations.

More support for women's health research.

More affordable college loans for the middle class.

A new national service program for those who want to give something back to their community and earn money for higher education.

A dramatic increase in high tech investments to move us from a defense to a domestic economy.

A new law, the Motor Voter bill, to help millions of people register to vote.

Family and Medical Leave.

All passed. All signed into law with no vetoes. These accomplishments were all commitments I made when I sought this office, and they were all passed by this Congress. But the real credit belongs to the people who sent us here, pay our salaries, and hold our feet to the fire.

What we do here is really beginning to change lives. I will never forget what Family and Medical Leave meant to one father who brought his little girl to visit the White House last year. After we talked and took a picture, he held on to my arm and said, "my little girl is really sick, and she's probably not going to make it. But because of the Family and Medical Leave law I can take time off without losing my job. I have had some precious time with my child, the most important time I have ever had, without hurting the rest of my family. Don't you ever think that what you do up here doesn't make a difference."

Though we are making a difference, our work has just begun. Many Americans still haven't felt the impact of what we have done. The recovery has still not touched every community or created enough jobs. Incomes are still stagnant. There is still too much violence and not enough hope. And abroad, the young democracies we support still face difficult times and look to us for leadership.

And so tonight, let us continue our journey of renewal: to create more and better jobs, guarantee health security for all, reward work over welfare, promote democracy abroad, and begin to reclaim our streets from violent crime and drugs, and renew our own American community.

Last year, we began to put our house in order by tackling the budget deficit that was driving us toward bankruptcy.

We cut \$255 billion dollars in spending, including entitlements, and over 340 budget items. We froze domestic spending, and used honest numbers.

Led by the Vice President, we launched a campaign to reinvent government. We cut staff, cut perks, and trimmed the fleet of federal limousines. After years of leaders whose rhetoric attacked bureaucracy, but whose actions expanded it, we will actually reduce it, by 252,000 over five years. By the time

we have finished, the federal bureaucracy will be at its lowest level in thirty years.

Because the deficit was so large and because they had benefitted from tax cuts in the 1980s, we asked the wealthy to pay more to reduce the deficit. So April 15th, the American people will discover the truth about what we did last year on taxes. Only the top 1.2% of Americans will face higher income tax rates. Let me repeat: Only the wealthiest 1.2% of Americans will face higher income tax rates, and no one else will.

The naysayers said our plan wouldn't work. Well, they were wrong.

When I became President, the experts predicted next year's deficit would be \$300 billion. But because we acted, the deficit is now going to be less than \$180 billion -- forty percent lower than predicted.

Our economic program has helped to produce the lowest core inflation rate and the lowest interest rates in twenty years. And because those interest rates are down, business investment in equipment is growing at seven times the pace of the previous four years. Auto sales are way up. Home sales are at a record high. Millions have refinanced their homes. And our economy has produced 1.6 million private sector jobs in 1993 -- more than were created in the previous four years combined. The people who supported this economic plan should be proud of its first results.

But there's much more to do.

Next month, I will send you the one of the toughest budgets ever presented to Congress.

It will cut spending in more than 300 programs, eliminate 100 domestic programs, and reform the way government buys its goods and services. This year, we must make the hard choices again to live within the hard spending ceilings we have set.

We have proved we can bring down the deficit without choking off the recovery, without punishing seniors or the middle class, and without putting our national security at risk. If you will stick with our plan, we will post three consecutive years of declining deficits for the first time since Harry Truman lived in

the White House. Once again, the buck stops here.

Our economic plan also bolsters America's strength and credibility around the world.

Once we reduced the deficit, and put the steel back in our competitive edge, the world echoed with the sound of falling trade barriers.

In one year, with NAFTA, GATT, our efforts in Asia, and the National Export strategy, we did more to open world markets to American products than at any time over the last two generations. That will mean more jobs and rising living standards for the American people.

Low deficits, low inflation, low interest rates, low trade barriers and high investment -- these are the building blocks of our recovery. But if we want to take full advantage of the opportunities before us in the global economy, we must do more.

As we reduce defense spending, I ask Congress to invest more in the technologies of tomorrow. Defense conversion will keep us strong militarily and create jobs.

As we protect our environment, we must invest in the environmental technologies of the future which will create jobs. And this year we will fight for a revitalized Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act, and a reformed Superfund program.

And the Vice President is right: We must work with the private sector to connect every classroom, every clinic, every library, and every hospital in America to a national information superhighway by the year 2000. Instant access to information will increase productivity, help educate our children, and provide better medical care and create jobs, I call on Congress this year to pass legislation to establish the information superhighway.

As we expand opportunity and create jobs, no one can be left out. We will continue to enforce fair lending and fair housing and all civil rights laws, because America will never complete its renewal unless everyone shares in its bounty.

We can do all these things, put our economic house in order,

expand world trade, and target the jobs of the future. And we will. But let's be honest: this strategy cannot work unless we also give our people the education, training and skills they need to seize the opportunities of tomorrow.

We must set tough, world-class academic and occupational standards for all of our children -- and give our teachers and students the tools to meet them. Our Goals 2000 proposal will empower individual school districts to experiment with ideas like chartering their schools to be run by private corporations, public school choice -- so long as we measure every school by one high standard: Are our children learning what they need to know to compete and win in this new economy. Goals 2000 links world class standards to grass roots reforms. Congress should pass it without delay.

Our school-to-work initiative will for the first time link schools to the world of work, and will provide at least one year of apprenticeship beyond high school. After all, most of the people we're counting on to build our economic future do not graduate from college. It's time to stop ignoring them and start empowering them.

We must transform America's outdated unemployment system into a reemployment system. The old system just kept you going while you waited for your old job to come back; but we have to have a new system to move people into new and better jobs, because most people don't get their old jobs back.

The only way to get a real job with a growing income is to have real skills and the ability to learn new ones. We simply must streamline today's patchwork of training programs and make them a source of new skills for people who lose their jobs. Reemployment, not unemployment, will be the centerpiece of our program for economic renewal, and I urge you to pass it this year.

Just as we must transform our unemployment system, we must also revolutionize our welfare system. It doesn't work. It defies our values as a nation.

If we value work, we cannot justify a system that makes welfare more attractive than work.

If we value personal responsibility, we cannot ignore the

\$34 billion in child support that absent parents ought to be paying to millions of mothers and children.

If we value strong families, we cannot perpetuate a system that penalizes those who stay together. Can you believe that a child who has a child gets more money from the government for leaving home than for staying with a parent or a grandparent?

That's not just bad policy; it is wrong. And we must change it.

I worked for years on this welfare problem, and I can tell you: the people who most want to change welfare are the very people on it. They want to get off welfare, and get back to work, and support their children.

Last year, we began. We gave the states more power to innovate -- because we know that great ideas can come from outside Washington -- and many states are using it.

Then, we took a dramatic step. Instead of taxing people with modest incomes who are working their way out of poverty, we dramatically increased the Earned Income Tax Credit to lift them out of poverty, to reward work over welfare, to make it possible for people to be successful workers and successful parents.

But there is much more to be done.

This spring, I will send you comprehensive welfare reform legislation that builds on the Family Support Act and restores the basic values of work and responsibility.

We will say to teenagers, "If you have a child out of wedlock, we will no longer give you a check to set up a separate household. We want families to stay together."

To absent parents who aren't paying child support, we'll say: "If you're not providing for your children, we'll garnish your wages, we'll suspend your license, we'll track you across state lines, and if necessary, we'll make some of you work off what you owe. People who bring children into this world can't just walk away."

And to all those who depend on welfare, we offer this simple compact: We will provide the support, the job training, the

child care you need for up to two years. But after that, anyone who can work must work -- in the private sector if possible, in community service if necessary. We will make welfare what it ought to be: A second chance, not a way of life.

We must tackle welfare reform in 1994, yes, as we tackle health care. A million people are on welfare today are there because it's the only way they can get health care coverage. Those who choose leave welfare for jobs without health benefits find themselves in the incredible position of paying taxes that help pay for health coverage for those who choose to stay on welfare. No wonder many people leave work and go back on welfare to get health care coverage. We must solve the health care problem to solve the welfare problem.

Health Care

This year, we will make history by reforming our health care system. This is another issue where the people are way ahead of the politicians.

The First Lady has received almost a million letters from people all across America and all walks of life. Let me share one of them with you.

Richard Anderson of Reno, Nevada lost his job and, with it, his health insurance. Two weeks later, his wife Judy suffered a cerebral aneurysm. He rushed her to the hospital, where she stayed in intensive care for twenty-one days.

The Anderson's bills exceeded \$120,000. Although Judy recovered and Richard went back to work, at eight dollars an hour, the bills were too much for them. They were forced into bankruptcy by high medical costs.

"Mrs. Clinton," he wrote to Hillary, "no one in the United States of America should have to lose everything they have worked for all their lives because they were unfortunate enough to become ill."

It was to help the Richard and Judy Andersons of America that the First Lady and so many others have worked so hard on the health care issue, and we owe them our thanks.

There are others in Washington who say there is no health care crisis. Tell that to Richard and Judy Anderson. Tell it to the 58 million Americans who have no coverage at all for some time each year that there is no health care crisis. Tell it to the 81 million Americans with "pre-existing" conditions who are paying more, can't get insurance, or can't change jobs. Tell it to the small businesses burdened by the skyrocketing cost of insurance. Tell it to the 76 percent of insured Americans whose policies have lifetime limits -- and who can find themselves without any coverage just when they need it most -- tell them there is no health care crisis. You tell them . . . because I can't.

The naysayers don't understand the impact of this problem on people's lives. They just don't get it. We must act now to show that we do.

From the day we began, our health care initiative has been designed to strengthen all that is good about our health care system. The world's best health professionals. Cutting-edge research and research institutions. Medicare for older Americans. None of this should be put at risk.

We're paying more and more money for less and less care. Every year fewer and fewer Americans even get to choose their doctors. Every year doctors and nurses spend more time on paperwork and less on patients because of the bureaucratic nightmare the present system has become. The system is riddled with inefficiency, abuse and fraud.

In today's health care system, insurance companies call all the shots. They pick and choose whom they cover. They can cut off your benefits when you need your coverage most. They are in charge.

And so every night, millions of well-insured Americans go to bed just an illness, an accident, or a pink slip away from financial ruin. Every morning millions more go to work without health insurance for their families. And every year, hard-working people are told to pick a new doctor because their boss picked a new plan, and countless others turn down better jobs because they fear losing their insurance.

If we let the health care system continue to drift,

Americans will have less care, fewer choices, and higher bills. Our approach protects the quality of care and people's choices.

It builds on what works today in the private sector. To expand the employer-based system and guarantee private insurance for every American -- something proposed by President Richard Nixon more than twenty years ago. That's what we want: guaranteed private insurance.

Right now, nine out of ten people who have private insurance get it through employers -- and that must continue. And if your employer is providing good benefits at reasonable prices -- that must continue, too.

Our goal is health insurance you can depend on: comprehensive benefits that cover preventive care and prescription drugs; health premiums that don't jump when you get sick or get older; the power, no matter how small your business is, to choose dependable insurance at the same rates government and big companies get; one simple form for people who are sick; and, most of all, the freedom to choose a health plan and the right to choose your own doctor.

Our approach protects older Americans. Every plan before Congress proposes to slow the growth of Medicare. The difference is this: We believe those savings should be used to improve health care for senior citizens. Medicare must be protected, and it should cover prescription drugs. And we should take the first steps toward covering long-term care. To those who would cut Medicare without protecting seniors, I say: the solution to today's squeeze on middle-class working people is not to put the squeeze on middle class retired people.

When it's all said and done, insurance must mean what it used to mean. You pay a fair price for security and, when you get sick, health care is always there. No matter what.

Along with the guarantee of health security, there must be more responsibility: parents must take their kids to be immunized; we all should take advantage of preventive care; and we all must work together to stop the violence that crowds its victims into our emergency rooms. People who don't have insurance will get coverage -- but they'll have to pay something. The minority of business that provide no insurance and shift the costs to others, will have to contribute something. People who

smoke will pay more for a pack of cigarettes. If we want to solve the health care crisis in this country, there can be no more something for nothing.

In the coming months, I want to work with Democrats and Republicans to reform our health care system by using the market to bring down costs and to achieve lasting health security.

For sixty years, this country has tried to reform health care. President Roosevelt tried. President Truman tried. President Nixon tried. President Carter tried. Every time, the powerful special interests defeated them. But not this time.

Facing up to special interests will require courage. It will raise critical questions about the way we finance our campaigns and how lobbyists peddle their influence. The work of change will never get easier until we limit the influence of well financed interests who profit from the current system. So I call on you now to finish the job you began last year by passing tough, meaningful campaign finance reform and lobbying reform this year.

This is a test for all of us. The American people provide those of us in government service with great benefits -- health care that's always there. We need to give every hard-working, tax-paying American the same health care security they give us.

Hear me clearly. If the legislation you send me does not guarantee every American private health insurance that can never be taken away, I will take this pen, veto that legislation, and we'll come right back here and start over again.

But I believe we're ready to do it right now. If you're ready to guarantee to every American health care that can never be taken away, now is the time to stand with the people who sent you here.

As we take these steps together to renew America's strength at home, we must also continue our work to renew America's leadership abroad.

This is a promising moment. Because of the agreements we have reached, Russia's strategic nuclear missiles soon will no longer be pointed at the United States, nor will we point ours at

them. Instead of building weapons in space, Russian scientists will help us build the international space station.

There are still dangers in the world: Arms proliferation; bitter regional conflicts; ethnic and nationalist tensions in many new democracies; severe environmental degradation; and fanatics who seek to cripple the world's cities with terror.

As the world's greatest power, we must maintain our defenses and our responsibilities. This year we secured indictments against terrorists and sanctions against those who harbor them. We worked to promote environmentally sustainable economic growth. We achieved agreements with Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. We are working to achieve a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons. We will seek early ratification of a treaty to ban chemical weapons world-wide. And earlier today we joined with over 30 nations to begin negotiations on a comprehensive ban to stop all nuclear testing.

But nothing is more important to our security than our nation's armed forces. We honor their contributions, including those who are carrying out the longest humanitarian airlift in history in Bosnia, those who will complete their mission in Somalia this year, and their brave comrades who gave their lives there.

Our forces are the finest military our nation has ever had, and I have pledged that as long as I am President, they will remain the best trained, the best equipped and the best prepared fighting force on the face of this earth.

Last year I proposed a defense plan that maintains our post Cold War security at lower cost. This year, many people urged me to cut our defense spending again to pay for other government programs. I said no. The budget I send to this Congress draws the line against further defense cuts and fully protects the readiness and quality of our forces.

Ultimately, the best strategy to ensure our security and build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy. Democracies do not attack each other; they make better partners in trade and diplomacy.

That is why we have supported the democratic reformers in Russia and in the other states of the former Soviet bloc. I

applaud the bi-partisan support this Congress provided last year for our initiatives to help Russia, Ukraine, and other states through their epic transformations.

Our support of reform must combine patience and vigilance. We will urge Russia and the other states to continue with their economic reforms. And we will seek to cooperate with Russia to solve regional problems, while insisting that if Russian troops operate in neighboring states, they do so only when those states agree to their presence, and in strict accord with international standards. But, as these new nations chart their own futures, we must not forget how much more secure and more prosperous our nation will be if democratic and market reforms succeed across the former communist bloc.

That is why I went to Europe earlier this month: to work with our European partners to help integrate the former communist countries into a Europe unified for the first time in history, based on shared commitments to democracy, free market economies and respect for existing borders. With our allies, we created a Partnership for Peace that invites states from the former Soviet bloc and other non-NATO members to work with NATO in military cooperation. When I met with Central Europe's leaders -- including Lech Walesa and Vaclav Havel, who put their lives on the line for freedom -- I told them that the security of their region is important to America's security.

This year we will provide support for democratic renewal, human rights and sustainable development around the world. We will ask Congress to ratify the new GATT accord. We will continue standing by South Africa as it makes its bold and hopeful transition. We will convene a summit of the western hemisphere's democratic leaders -- from Canada to the tip of South America -- and we will continue to press for the restoration of democracy in Haiti. And as we build a more constructive relationship with China, we will insist on clear signs of improvement in that nation's human rights record.

We will also work for new progress toward peace in the Middle East. Last year, the world watched Yitzakh Rabin and Yassir Arafat at the White House in their historic handshake of reconciliation. On the long, hard road ahead, I am determined to do all I can to help achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace for all the peoples of the region.

There are some in our country who argue that with the Cold War over, America should turn its back on the rest of the world. Many around the world were afraid we would do just that. But I took this office on a pledge to keep our nation secure by remaining engaged in the world. And this year, because of our work together -- enacting NAFTA; keeping our military strong and prepared; supporting democracy abroad -- we reaffirmed America's leadership and increased the security of the American people.

While Americans are more secure from threats abroad, we are less secure from threats here at home.

Every day, the national peace is shattered by crime. In Petaluma, California, an innocent slumber party gives way to agonizing tragedy for the family of Polly Klass. An ordinary train ride on Long Island ends in a hail of 9-millimeter rounds. A tourist in Florida is nearly burned alive by bigots simply because he is black. Right here in our nation's capital, a brave young man named Jason White -- a policeman, the son and grandson of policemen -- is ruthlessly gunned down.

Violent crime and the fear it provokes are crippling our society, limiting personal freedom, and fraying the ties that bind us. The crime bill before Congress gives you a chance to do something about it -- to be tough and smart.

First, we must recognize that most violent crimes are committed by a small percentage of criminals, who too often break the laws even on parole. Those who commit crimes must be punished, and those who commit repeated violent crimes must be told: Commit a third violent crime and you'll be put away, and put away for good. Three strikes and you're out.

Second, we must take steps to reduce violence and prevent crimes, beginning with more police officers and more community policing. We know that police who work the streets, know the folks, have the respect of the kids, and focus on high crime areas, are more likely to prevent crime as well as catch criminals.

Here tonight is one of those policemen: a brave, young detective, Kevin Jett, whose beat is eight square blocks in one of the toughest blocks in New York City. Every day he restores some sanity and safety and a sense of values to the people whose lives he protects.

That's why we must hire 100,000 new community police officers, well trained and patrolling beats all over America; a police corps; and move retiring military personnel into police forces across America. We must also invest in safe schools, so that our children can learn to count and read and write without also learning how to duck bullets.

Third, we must build on the Brady bill, and take further steps to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. When it comes to guns, let me be clear: Hunters must always be free to hunt, and law abiding adults should be free to own guns and protect their homes. I respect that part of American culture. I grew up in it.

But I want to ask sportsmen and others who lawfully own guns to join us in a common campaign to reduce gun violence. You didn't create this problem, but we need your help to solve it. There is no sporting purpose on earth that should stop us from banishing the assault weapons that outgun our police and cut down our children. So, I urge you to pass an assault weapons ban.

Fourth, we must remember that drugs are a factor in an enormous percentage of crimes. Recent studies indicate that drug use is on the rise again among young people. The crime bill contains more money for drug treatment for criminal addicts and boot camps for youthful offenders. The Administration budget contains a large increase in funding for drug treatment and drug education. I hope you will pass them both.

The problem of violence is an American problem. It has no partisan or philosophical element. Therefore, I urge you to set aside your partisan differences and pass a strong, smart, tough crime bill now.

But, further, I urge you: As we demand tougher penalties for those who choose violence, let us also remember how we came to this sad point. In America's toughest neighborhoods, meanest streets, and poorest rural areas, we have seen a stunning breakdown of community, family and work -- the heart and soul of civilized society. This has created a vast vacuum into which violence, drugs and gangs have moved. So, even as we say no to crime, we must give people -- especially our young people -- something to say yes to.

Many of our initiatives -- from job training to welfare reform to health care to national service -- will help rebuild distressed communities, strengthen families, and provide work. But more needs to be done. That is what our community empowerment agenda is all about: Challenging businesses to provide more investment through Empowerment Zones; insuring that banks make loans in the same communities their deposits come from; and passing legislation to unleash the power of capital through Community Development Banks to create jobs, opportunity and hope where they are needed most.

Let's be honest. Our problems go way beyond the reach of any government program. They are rooted in the loss of values, the disappearance of work, and the breakdown of our families and our communities. My fellow Americans, we can cut the deficit, create jobs, promote democracy around the globe, pass welfare reform, and health care reform, and the toughest crime bill in history, and still leave too many of our people behind. The American people must want to change within, if we are to bring back work, family and community.

We cannot renew our country when within a decade more than half of our children will be born into families where there is no marriage.

We cannot renew our country when thirteen year old boys get semi-automatic weapons and gun down nine year old boys -- just for the kick of it.

We cannot renew our country when children are having children and the fathers of those children are walking away from them as if they don't amount to anything.

We cannot renew our country when our businesses eagerly look for new investments and new customers abroad, but ignore those who would give anything to have their jobs and would gladly buy their products if they had the money to do it right here at home.

We cannot renew our country unless more of us are willing to join the churches and other good citizens who are saving kids, adopting schools, making streets safer.

We cannot renew our country until we all realize that governments don't raise children, parents do -- parents who know

their children's teachers, turn off the TV, help with the homework, and teach right from wrong -- can make all the difference.

Let us give our children a future.

Let us take away their guns and give them books. Let us overcome their despair and replace it with hope. Let us, by our example, teach them to obey the law, respect our neighbors, and cherish our values. Let us weave these sturdy threads into a new American community that can once more stand strong against the forces of despair and evil, and lead us to a better tomorrow.

The naysayers fear we will not be equal to the challenges of our time, but they misread our history, our heritage, and even today's headlines. They all tell us we can and we will overcome any challenge.

When the earth shook and fires raged in California, when the Mississippi deluged the farmlands of the Midwest, when a century's bitterest cold swept from North Dakota to Newport News, it seemed as though the world itself was coming apart at the seams. But the American people came together -- they rose to the occasion, neighbor helping neighbor, strangers risking life and limb to save strangers, showing the better angels of our nature.

Let us not reserve those better angels only for natural disasters, leaving our deepest problems to petty political fights. Let us instead be true to our spirit -- facing facts, coming together, bringing hope, moving forward.

Tonight, we are summoned to answer a question as old as the Republic itself. My fellow Americans, what is the State of the Union? It is growing stronger. But it must be stronger still. With your help and with God's, it will be.

Thank you. And may God Bless America.

Appendix C

*Questionnaire for Ascertaining Public Reaction to State of the Union
Addresses of Reagan and Clinton*

**After reading Reagan's 1982 State of the Union address, what is your
reaction?**

Liked it _____ Did not like it ____ No opinion_____

**After reading Clinton's 1994 State of the Union address, what is your
reaction?**

Liked it _____ Did not like it ____ No opinion_____

Thank you for your response.