



the  
brunswickan

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# OPINION...

## Reagan's

### "Practical Statesmanship"

Over the years, it's been really easy to become disillusioned with liberals. When they've been in power, liberals have so often compromised their stated ideals that scepticism seems to be the only intelligent response to their rhetoric.

Back in 1980, when Carter was replaced by Reagan, it looked as though things might change. Whereas Carter was a decent man who had trouble with the overwhelming responsibility of the White House, Reagan's apparently simplistic views looked refreshing, if somewhat dangerous. (To quote Joe Jackson on his impression of the President, "We're not talkin' 'bout right and left/ We're talking 'bout right and wrong".)

Now to give Reagan some credit, he hasn't always acted as irresponsibly as he's spoken. Grenada & Nicaragua aside, Reagan hasn't been as awful as he could have been. He's played politics very well by not allowing his words to get in the way of his practical needs.

When liberals do that, it's easy to get disgusted - the Great Society, in whatever form, is still-born. When the extreme conservatives bend and compromise, a sigh of relief seems called for. Up to a point, anyway.

Reagan's actions towards Iran are a good example of where "practical statesmanship" backfires and pleases no one.

It's no secret that Iran's military is based on American weapons. Nor is it surprising that the US hopes, in a sort of perverted way, that Iran will win the Gulf War. But when the American government by-passes the spot market and deals directly with the Khomeini regime, then you really must begin to wonder what's going on. Hypocrisy on that level is staggering.

Maybe the only good thing about this situation is that Americans might really begin to critique Reagan's years in office. There are a lot of horror stories that have been glossed over in the last 6 years. Iran is too much of a tender spot for Americans to let the President pass this latest travesty into limbo.

The split in the Reagan cabinet is also something to watch. Many of the people who may have otherwise fallen in with George Bush for the '88 candidacy will probably head over to the likes of Al Haig. And god only knows where that'll head.

I suppose this is one of those occasions when all you can do is shake your head, order another drink and wonder whatever happened to the - what? Integrity? - of the Republicans. What a thought.

BARRY PARKINSON



Political Winds of Change