

developing strains that are disease resistant. We have to continue to do that in order to keep our production up. The same thing is true in our corn, soybeans, barley, and some other feedgrains. So we need to make that investment in the Agriculture Research Service.

The Export Enhancement Program, I am not a great fan of that, but it is retained in this bill. That is to ward off unfair competition in the international market. I think those dollars ought to go directly to the people who produce the grain, not the people who handle the grain or the big grain companies. It should get back to the farmer some way or other.

So, no, it is not a perfect bill. On the conservation end of it, the CRP is very successful, taking marginal land out of production, the development of wetlands. I know in Montana our bird population, our wildlife numbers have increased since CRP, the Conservation Reserve Program, has been put into effect. That is very good in taking some marginal land out of production that should never have been in production in the first place. We have noticed that. It has great support.

So here is a program that is supported by agriculture. Farmers are telling me, "Let's go with it." It sends us in a new direction. But we are also talking about a time when agriculture commodities are doing very well with the exception of the cattle business. And there is some room for development here in our part of the country.

So I urge a "yes" on this cloture vote. Let us proceed with this bill and debate it like it should be debated and pass those programs that can be passed, but let us at least give agriculture a program to which we can pin our future.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. DOLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. DOLE. We are about to get an agreement on the cloture vote here.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—CLOTURE VOTE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote on the substitute occur at 4:10 today, the time between now and then to be equally divided between the distinguished chairman, Senator LUGAR, and Senator LEAHY, or their designees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. LUGAR. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IN HONOR OF GENE FISCHER

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, the job of a news photographer is not an easy one. For every picture of a child enjoying building a snow man with her parents—there is a picture of a crime scene or a picture of a car wreck. Only the photographers themselves truly understand how tough this job is, with the long hours and never knowing when or where they will have to go to do their job.

I rise today to honor one of the best news photographers our country has—Gene Fischer of the Helena Independent-Record—who retires today after 35 years to the day of chronicling the lives of Helenans and Montanans on the front page and sports pages of our newspapers.

My home town is Helena. Gene is the type of hard-working Montanan I have in mind when I say that we in public service need to focus on every day folks who work hard to make a living and serve their community. From his first job stuffing papers for the Billings Gazette in 1951, to his promotion to chief photographer for the Independent Record in 1974—Gene has kept his nose to the grind stone and worked hard.

He has achieved goals and worked hard to become the best he can be. His career and his drive are excellent examples for our children and students as they search for their mission and role in their lives.

It has become a popular thing to criticize the news media these days. Whether it be the hype of the O.J. Simpson trial, the goofy scandal-sheet shows, the Mc-News newspapers or hate-radio talk shows—I myself have been critical and remain critical of certain folks in the so-called news media.

But Gene Fischer is a newsman like few in the journalism and news industry of today. He is solid. He is compassionate. And he understands that the picture he takes and the images he publishes are those of his neighbors, friends, and family. It is a tough job, and he does it fairly and professionally.

When a Gene Fischer photograph publishes in the Helena Independent Record, Gene's name is very small—printed at the very bottom, almost unreadable. But in Montana journalism, Gene Fischer is a giant name. And I thank him for his years of dedication and service.

HONORING THE WEISS' FOR CELEBRATING THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, these are trying times for the family in America. Unfortunately, too many broken homes have become part of our national culture. It is tragic that nearly half of all couples married today will see their union dissolve into divorce. The effects of divorce on families and

particularly the children of broken families are devastating. In such an era, I believe it is both instructive and important to honor those who have taken the commitment of "til death us do part" seriously and have successfully demonstrated the timeless principles of love, honor, and fidelity, to build a strong family. These qualities make our country strong.

For these important reasons, I rise today to honor Donald and Mattie Bell Weiss who on January 20 celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and will renew their wedding vows. My wife, Janet, and I look forward to the day we can celebrate a similar milestone. Don and Mattie's commitment to the principles and values of their marriage deserves to be saluted and recognized. I wish them and their family all the best as they celebrate this substantial marker on their journey together.

AMERICA'S WORKFORCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, Markley Roberts, the Assistant Director of the Economic Research Department of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, recently gave the last of the 1995 Benedum Lectures on the subject "America's Workforce in the 21st Century" at West Virginia University.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of his remarks, along with biographical material, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

REMARKS BY MARKLEY ROBERTS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH, AFL-CIO, IN THE 1995 BENEDUM LECTURE SERIES, UNIVERSITY OF WEST VIRGINIA, MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA—DECEMBER 6, 1995

AMERICAN WORKERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

I appreciate this opportunity to talk with you about American workers in the 21st Century. I bring to this discussion 40 years as a union member, elected union officer, and speaker for the AFL-CIO, a federation of 79 unions representing 13 million workers. So it's obvious that I have pro-worker, pro-union instincts.

We all share a common concern for political democracy, even though we may have differing views on how political democracy should affect social and economic justice. I hope you share these concerns, and also my concern for human rights and human welfare generally, as well as worker rights and workers' welfare.

We are blessed in the United States of America with wonderful traditions of freedom, democracy, and a drive for justice. Let me assure you that I appreciate what we have in America—but there's no resting place, there's no stopping the endless search for freedom, democracy, and justice, no stopping the endless battle against injustice.

It's not easy to define justice. I envy the judge who said "I can't define pornography, but I know it when I see it." Well, you have to look at a lot of pornography to know it when you see it—and you have to look at a lot of injustice—political, economic, and social injustice—so you can recognize justice when you see it.

LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS

Our search for justice is endless because America is always changing. The racial

make-up of our population and our labor force is changing. Diversity, civil rights, and equal opportunity are continuing challenges in our search for justice.

Let me lay out some projections on the American labor force in the 21st Century.

Population growth, labor force participation, and immigration are key factors in determining the size of our labor force.

White, non-Hispanic people will be a smaller part of our total population in the 21st Century (they have lower fertility rates)—and blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and American Indians will have a bigger share of America's population.

By the year 2005 our total labor force will be well over 150 million. This is men and women 16 years and older who are working or looking for work.

Four out of five workers will be white—(82%).

One out of eight will be black—(12%).

One out of 16 will be Asian, Pacific Islander, or American Indian—(6%).

One out of 9 workers will be Hispanic, (11%)—but Hispanics also appear in white, black, and other categories.

The labor force participation of women has gone up so much over the past 30 years that the numbers of men and women in the labor force are already very nearly equal. But the Bureau of Labor Statistics expects a continuing increase in women's labor force participation (to 63%)—and a slight drop in men's labor force participation (to 75%).

Immigration is a big question mark for the future. There is now an unfortunate tendency to scapegoat legal as well as illegal immigrants for some of America's economic and social problems. There are proposals in Congress to cut back legal immigration and to deny various benefits to legal immigrants. My guess is that legal immigration will drop from 800,000 a year now to about 600,000. No one knows exactly how much illegal immigration there is. It may be 1 million a year. But immigration—past, present, and future—legal and illegal—will continue to add more Hispanics and Asians to America's labor force.

The message I draw from all this—more women permanently in the labor force, more diversified racial composition of the labor force, continuing legal immigration—

Diversity and equal opportunity issues are here to stay in the 21st Century—and they will continue to challenge our sense of justice.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

A healthy economy and a healthy society should be creating enough good-paying jobs for every American who needs a job and wants to work. The Employment Act of 1946 and the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act of 1978 reflect America's belief that the opportunity to work at a decent-paying job is an important component of economic justice.

What jobs will be available in the 21st Century? Where are the jobs going to be? Who will get available jobs?

Most of the new jobs are going to be in the service-producing sector of the American economy. Already 70 percent of jobs are in the service sector—but 95 percent of the new jobs created in the next 15 or 20 years will be in the service sector.

Most of the job creation will come in health care, business services, retail trade, government, and FIRE (finance, insurance, and real estate).

Goods-producing industries—manufacturing, mining, and construction—will have no job growth. In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects fewer and fewer jobs in coal mining—in spite of growing foreign demand for coal from the U.S.A.—Why so? Because

technology and high productivity in coal mining go up even faster than demand for coal is going up.

The best jobs in the 21st Century—as in the 1990s—will be the high-skill, high-pay jobs that require more and more education and training. There will be more of these jobs. The biggest rewards will go to the symbol analysts and symbol manipulators, the people who can manipulate words and ideas and computer systems and financial systems.

Does that sound like politicians, computer whiz kids and Wall Street buccaneers? I think so.

Unfortunately, although the high-skill, high-pay, symbol manipulator jobs have the fastest percentage growth, in fact the biggest number of jobs opening up are low-skill, low-pay jobs—janitors and cleaners, waiters and busboys, food preparation jobs, security guards, nursing aides and orderlies and other low-paid hospital and health service workers.

Many of these janitors and security guards will have high school diplomas and some will have college degrees because they can't find higher-level, higher-pay jobs. It will take more education and training to get a job—but there's no guarantee it will be a high-level, high-pay job.

Unfortunately, it is a polarized occupational distribution that is developing—more high-skill, high-pay, professional jobs at the top—but many more low-skill, low-pay jobs at the bottom, and fewer and fewer middle-range, middle-class jobs—jobs which have been a solid foundation for a mass production economy based on widely dispersed mass buying power, the foundation for a stable middle-class society, the foundation for a stable democratic political system.

Polarization in our distribution of job skills and polarization in earnings from work will continue to challenge our sense of justice in the 21st Century.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Some years ago Dr. Harvey Brenner of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health did a very scholarly study which showed that increases in unemployment have a clear negative effect on workers and their families and on local communities—more murders, more suicides, more heart ailments, more mental illness, more drug abuse, more family violence, more family breakdown, more community crime. (1% UE, 2% heart, 5.6% homicide)

Unemployment is a personal tragedy, a human tragedy for the workers without a job and for their families. Most workers are paying on a mortgage, paying on a car, paying for their children's dental care, paying for food on the table. When they lose their jobs, they often lose also their medical care plan and their pension rights. This violates our sense of justice.

The human costs of unemployment are huge. It's almost impossible to quantify the human costs and human hardship. That's why I am so grateful for Dr. Brenner's study. But the economic costs are also huge. Economists have estimated unemployment costs at hundreds of billions of dollars, the difference between actual output and potential output. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that each 1 percent of unemployment costs the American economy \$150 billion—\$100 billion in lost output and another \$50 billion in extra costs of unemployment compensation and welfare payments. And this does not take into account the extra health and crime costs that Harvey Brenner found.

Economists often distinguish different kinds of unemployment: frictional unemployment when you are just between jobs; seasonal unemployment related to the time of year; cyclical unemployment related to ups and downs of the business cycle; and structural unemployment related to such

problems as changing technology, changing education requirements, discrimination based on age, race, sex; and trade policies that wipe out American jobs.

Whatever the reasons for unemployment—and there are many of them—the key policymakers in the American economy seem to be tolerating higher and higher levels of unemployment. A misguided and excessive fear of inflation lies behind the powerful economic judgments and decisions of the banker-dominated Federal Reserve Board which makes key decisions on interest rates and money supply. Inflation is not the problem. It's the Federal Reserve that's the problem.

The Federal Reserve wrongly operates on the discredited theory that there is some "natural rate of unemployment" and if unemployment goes below the so-called "natural rate" then inflation will mess up the economy. This is [a] wrong view of how the American economy operates, and it deserves a thorough critique—but I am going to spare you what is a very abstract, abstruse argument and simply say that there are some very distinguished economists—including Nobel prize-winners James Tobin and Robert Solow—who disagree with the theory of a "natural rate of unemployment."

Unfortunately, unless we have a major, catastrophic economic breakdown, the anti-inflation zealots at the Federal Reserve will continue to use their money-and-interest-rate power to hold back job-creating economic growth. Why so? Because the general public and most political leaders don't understand monetary policy—and because the banker interests that dominate the Federal Reserve are more concerned about having a stable dollar than they are about having full employment.

This violates my sense of justice—even if it doesn't bother the bankers.

WORKERS IN POVERTY

Poverty in America is another challenge to our sense of justice. Michael Harrington and Hubert Humphrey deserve a lot of credit for awakening America's conscience on poverty. Humphrey gave an education to Jack Kennedy in West Virginia's 1960 primary campaign and laid the groundwork for Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty.

But poverty is still here. Most poverty is related to unemployment and low wages. We have in the United States almost 40 million Americans in poverty, about 15 percent of the population. That's one out of seven Americans living in poverty—and one out of every five children in America lives in poverty.

Unemployment compensation and welfare payments are part of the social safety net system that we have put together to protect Americans who need help—but training and decent-pay jobs are also necessary. The so-called welfare reform bills now before Congress will do little or nothing to relieve poverty—and may even increase poverty by forcing more and more welfare recipients into low-wage labor markets where they will drive down [the] wages and earnings of America's working poor.

Census figures show 10 million working poor—people who work at least part of the year, but cannot find full-time, year-round work to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

But what I find even more outrageous is the fact that two-and-half million Americans work full-time year-round at such low wages that they still cannot pull their families up out of poverty. This is a powerful argument for raising and indexing the minimum wage.

Raising the minimum wage helps reduce poverty. So do employment and training programs, Medicaid, food stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and other safety-net programs that help low-income people and many

middle-income people. But I remind you—in a non-partisan way—that the Republican-dominated Congress is cutting and killing most of these programs that help poor people rise up out of poverty.

Is this social or economic justice? I think not.

The result of these slash-and-burn tactics is that poverty will remain a challenge to our sense of justice well into the 21st Century.

INEQUALITY IN INCOME AND WEALTH

Let me turn now to America's widening gaps in income and wealth. The rich are getting richer. The poor are getting poorer. And our middle class is getting smaller. Is this economic justice?

The richest 5 percent of America's families got real income gains of 40 percent between 1979 and 1993. Families in the middle lost 2.6 percent in real income—and the poorest 20 percent of American families lost 15 percent in real income.

This is not news. You can read about it in Time or Newsweek, in Forbes, Fortune, or Business Week. It is the subject of concerned editorials, especially now that Congress is cutting programs that help middle-class and low-income people and preparing to heap \$240 billion in tax cuts on rich folks and big corporations.

The distribution of wealth is even more unequal than the distribution of income—and it has become more unequal in the last 15 years. The top 1 percent, the richest in the country, own 40 percent of all wealth and 50 percent of all financial wealth in the United States. For most of us, our biggest wealth holding is in our home—but for the top 1 percent most of their wealth is in stocks and bonds.

Between 1983 and 1989, the richest 1 percent got more than 60 percent of the nation's entire increase in financial wealth—and between 1989 and 1992 the top 1 percent got 68 percent of the nation's increase in financial wealth.

In fact, America has never been an egalitarian society—but the last 15 years have produced more and more economic, social, and political polarization—polarization that will bring social and political troubles in the 21st Century.

Is this economic justice? I think not.

BIG BUSINESS POWER

Let me turn to big business. Americans are ambivalent about big business. We want the benefits of bigness—but we are right to fear the concentration of economic power.

It's no secret that the decisions of giant multinational corporations and big banks dominate huge sectors of the American economy, dominate much of our politics, dominate much of economic policy-making.

If you take the top 10 companies in banking, energy, manufacturing, telecommunications, retail and service, or transportation, you will find a tremendous concentration of economic power—and a lot of overlapping, interlocking controls through banks and board of directors.

Big business decisions affect the nation's prosperity and the jobs and earnings and living standards of all Americans—but there's little or no accountability to the general public.

The Mine Workers learned this in their fight with Pittston. The Steelworkers learned this in their fight with Ravenswood. And thousands of laid-off bank workers learned this after the Chase-Chemical bank merger.

Is this economic justice?

Suppose your employer decides to be lean and mean, to downsize and layoff workers or shift production from West Virginia to Mississippi—or to Mexico. Unless you have a

union to represent you there's not much you can do about it. When Congress passed the WARN law requiring 60 days advance notice of plant closing, big business fought tooth-and-nail to get weakening loopholes in the law—even though some of those same companies have union contracts requiring even more advance notice.

Top executive pay in big corporations is out-of-sight to the average American worker. Business Week reports these top executives averaged \$3 million last year—120 times the \$25,000 earned by the average factory worker—and often executive pay raises bear no relation to company profits.

Is this economic justice? Do we want the American economy, American society, and American politics in the 21st Century to be so heavily dominated by unaccountable, overpaid corporate executives who are out of touch with the hopes and fears and living standards of average American families. I think not.

UNIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

I turn now to the role of American labor unions in the 21st Century. With or without labor law reform, unions are here to stay because they meet a basic human need, the need to participate in the decisions that shape your life and your future, the need to have justice on the job.

That's why almost all union-management agreements require fair treatment on pay and benefits and job security, and due process for grievances, including outside arbitration.

Our national labor policy is supposed to guarantee working men and women the right to organize and the right to bargain collectively so that workers, acting through freely chosen, independent labor unions, can jointly negotiate the terms and conditions of their employment.

This is the way we achieve some degree of democracy in the workplace. This is the way we have built up a system of industrial jurisprudence, a way of making labor-management relations more civilized.

Unfortunately, the reality too often is that these basic worker rights are violated by anti-union employers determined to thwart workers' efforts to form a union and bargain collectively.

The business of union-busting—and it is big business—is a major part of the explanation for the decline of union membership in the U.S.A. from a 1955 high of 35 percent of the labor force to the current rate of 16 or 17 percent.

There are additional reasons, of course. Trade policy and imports have decimated union jobs in manufacturing. The big increase of jobs has been in state and local government and in the hard-to-organize service-sector industries. John Sweeney, the new President of the AFL-CIO, was formerly President of the fast-expanding Service Employees Union, so I expect a heavy emphasis in the future on Union organizing in the service sector and growth of white-collar and pink-collar unionism.

Why do I expect unions to grow in the 21st Century? One reason is what I have described as the human need to participate in the decisions that shape your working life. I see this as a basic human right.

Also, with more and more women and minorities and older workers there will be more and more need for on-the-job quick response to discrimination and harassment based on sex, age, and race. A union in the workplace can help defend workers with this quick response.

Most important, perhaps, is the self-interest of enlightened employers who will empower their workers and enlist their unions in raising quality, raising efficiency and productivity, lowering costs, and raising profits.

The first and foremost role of unions in the U.S.A. is to represent their members in bargaining with management for better wages and working conditions. To many people this looks like an adversary relationship between unions and management, and in some respects it is just that during the negotiation of a contract as unions try to get more for the workers.

But most contracts run for two to three years. During the life of the contract, the union will be protecting its members from arbitrary or unfair actions by management, protecting the safety and health of workers—but the job security and economic security of the workers depends on the employer's profitability and continued existence.

That's why you find more and more enlightened employers and unions working together in joint labor-management committees in a wide variety of worker training and "mutual gain" productivity-raising programs, with more and more emphasis on restructuring work and empowering workers to participate in the decisions that affect their working lives and affect profitability of the employer.

Co-operation of this kind is not a one-way street. It depends on trust and mutual commitment. Management cannot attack unions and expect co-operation.

Many management people feel threatened by the idea of giving workers more information about company production and financial affairs. They feel threatened by shared decision-making. But there's a lot of evidence that "empowering workers" not only increases democracy in the workplace—it also raises workers' commitment and motivation, raises quality of the product or service, raises efficiency, productivity, and profits.

Justice on the job includes a unionized workplace—and a unionized workplace can raise productivity and profits.

POLITICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

I suggested earlier that big business dominates the democratic political process in America, but that's only a partial truth. In addition to the big money of big business, in addition to our two major political parties, we have a lot of political activity by organized labor at the local, state, and national level.

I want to pay my respects here to one of labor's most respected, most effective leaders, Joe Powell, President of the West Virginia AFL-CIO Labor Federation. I have known him for many years. He is a tower of strength in America's labor movement.

The labor movement can never come close to matching the huge flow of political money from big business disguised as personal contributions from business executives and their spouses and children. But fortunately we have among our 13 million union members thousands and thousands of political activists who distribute voting records, who punch doorbells to get out the vote, who are committed to the democratic process, who are committed to bringing more democracy and more justice to America.

Unions and union members will be there in the 21st Century, pushing for democracy and justice in city and county councils, in the halls of the state legislatures and in the halls of Congress.

And unions and union workers will be there in the 21st Century at the ballot box, at the bargaining table and in the workplace, pushing for justice on the job and for more justice in all aspects of American life.

BIOGRAPHY OF MARKLEY ROBERTS

Markley Roberts is a distinguished economist at the ALF-CIO labor union federation with a long list of professional accomplishments and publications. He is currently Assistant Director of Economic Research and

Director of the AFL-CIO Office of Employment and Training.

Born in Shanghai, China, in 1930, the child of missionary teachers, Roberts graduated from Princeton University in 1951 with an A.B. in Public Affairs. He received an M.A. in Economics in 1960 and the Ph.D. in Economics in 1970 from American University. He worked at the Washington Star newspaper from 1952 to 1957. From 1958 to 1961 he was a legislative assistant to Senator Hubert H. Humphrey. Since 1962 he has worked at the AFL-CIO, first as a legislative assistant in the AFL-CIO Department of Legislation and, since 1971, as an economist in the AFL-CIO Department of Economic Research. In 1985 he was named Director of the AFL-CIO Office of Employment and Training. In 1989 he also became Assistant Director of Economic Research.

In recognition of his experience and achievements in the field of industrial relations and collective bargaining, Roberts was elected to the executive board of a national professional association, the Industrial Relations Research Association in 1977. In recognition of his accomplishments in the field of unemployment compensation, he was elected to the National Academy of Social Insurance in 1991.

Mr. Roberts is a publications consultant to Economics America, the National Council for Economic Education, and a member of the advisory board for "The Senior Economist."

He has a long list of publications which include "Making Sense of Federal Employment and Training Policy for Youth and Adults" and "Labor's Key Role in Workplace Training."

RONALD REAGAN AT 85: A BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, today was a very special day at the Senate Republican policy lunch, as we spoke with President Reagan on the phone, and wished him a very happy 85th birthday.

Last week, the Senate passed a resolution paying tribute to President Reagan on this occasion, and I have seen a variety of other salutes in recent newspapers.

One of the best of these was written by long time White House correspondent Trude Feldman, and is published in today's Wall Street Journal.

Trude first met Ronald Reagan when, as the then-president of the Screen Actors Guild, he signed her SAG card. She also covered the Reagan presidency, as she has so many others. And her portrait of him is rich in personal recollections and fond memories. In short, it captures the essence of this remarkable man.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the article by Trude Feldman be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The Wall Street Journal, Feb. 5, 1996]

RONALD REAGAN AT 85: A BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE

(By Trude B. Feldman)

Tomorrow Ronald Reagan celebrates his 85th birthday, thus becoming the fifth American president to reach that milestone. "The anniversaries of my birth aren't important," he once told me. "What is important is that I've tried to lead a meaningful life, and I think I have."

The meaning of his extraordinary life goes beyond his various achievements as our 40th president. Those achievements would not have been possible were it not for a moral fiber and affability that most Americans expect but seldom get from their presidents. While Ronald Reagan's ethics and principles played a major role in his efforts to balance economic growth with true human needs, his courage and steadfast convictions helped set a new, positive direction for America—lifting it from a feeling of discouragement, and giving the people renewed confidence and pride in their nation. His commitment also served as the necessary catalyst in developments that led to the end of the Cold War.

In an era of cynicism about the character and veracity of political leaders, Mr. Reagan's integrity and vision warrant particular attention on this, the 85th anniversary of his birth.

THE "GREAT COMMUNICATOR"

His courage as the "Great Communicator" was evident in his dramatic open letter 15 months ago in which he revealed that he had been diagnosed with the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. His handwritten letter was poignant, and vintage Reagan. Afflicted with the irreversible neurological disorder, he wrote that "In sharing the news, it might promote greater awareness of this condition. . . I intend to live the remainder of the years God gives me, doing the things I've always done. I now begin the journey that will lead me into the sunset of my life."

Colin Powell is among the millions who were moved by Mr. Reagan's gesture. "It was a beautiful personal letter to everyone," Gen. Powell told me. "Frankly, that action made it easier for me to deal with my wife's depression when it became public."

During a conversation I had with Ronald Reagan last year, he wondered aloud whether he had inherited the illness from his mother. Alzheimer's may have somewhat diminished his spark, but Mr. Reagan's genuineness and charisma still shine through. Away from the Oval Office for seven years now, he still looks presidential. Routinely working in his office, he continues to captivate visitors with his inimitable personality and attentiveness.

His dark brown hair is now tinged with a bit of gray, and he remains the model of good grooming and fashion. One day last week, he was his old handsome self attired in a blue pinstripe suit and blue tie, accentuated by a gold tie clip in the shape of the state of California, where he served eight years as governor. "The reason I'm doing as well as I am," he says, "is because of loving support from Nancy [his wife of 44 years]. She is my comfort, and has enhanced my life just by being a part of it. She has made it so natural for us to be as one that we never face anything alone."

Mr. Reagan's close brush with death 15 years ago changed his attitude toward life and death. It was on his 69th day as president when, from a distance of 13 feet, I saw him shot by a would-be assassin. Mr. Reagan told me the traumatic experience had given him a greater appreciation of life that he had previously taken for granted. "My survival was a miracle," he said. "The ordeal strengthened my belief in God and made me realize anew that His hand was on my shoulder, that He has the say-so over my life. I often feel as though I'm living on the extra time God has given me."

When Ronald Wilson Reagan was born in Tampico, Ill., his delivery was so complicated that his mother was cautioned not to bear more children. So she doted on him and soon became the primary influence in his life. From her, he acquired the stability and confidence that later enabled him to

weather personal and political storms with equanimity. She fostered in him and his brother an incentive to work hard, and to live by the Ten Commandments and by the Golden Rule.

"My parents were rich in their love and wisdom, and endowed us with spiritual strength and the confidence that comes with a parent's affection and guidance," the former president told me. "The Reagans of Illinois had little in material terms, but we were emotionally healthy."

The Rev. Billy Graham describes Ronald Reagan as a man of compassion and devotion, a president whom America will remember with pride. "He is one of the cleanest, most moral and spiritual men I know," Mr. Graham told me. "In the scores of times we were together, he has always wanted to talk about spiritual things."

On many occasions over the past 21 years, Mr. Reagan shared with me his philosophies and his views on politics, foreign affairs, religion and human nature. "I believe that each person is innately good," he observed. "But those who act immorally do so because they allow greed and ambition to overtake their basic goodness."

These beliefs, while the source of many of his greatest triumphs, also set the stage for some of his disappointments. One regret was that he did not demand greater accountability from his staff—"especially those who abused their power with arrogance." He acknowledged that the tendency not to fire anyone had serious ramifications. "For instance, any errors in our dialogues with Iran resulted because some of my subordinates exceeded their instructions without reporting back to me," he stressed. "When I read the Tower Commission Report, it looked as if some staff members had taken off on their own."

Another issue that troubled him was the public perception that he was prejudiced against minority groups and not concerned about the poor. He maintains that he had fought for legislation that would make welfare programs more effective. "My economic program was based on encouraging businessmen to create more jobs and to better the conditions of their employees," he noted. "I think I succeeded."

On the day before his presidency ended, Mr. Reagan granted me his last interview in the Oval Office. He told me that the saddest day of his eight-year tenure was on Oct. 23, 1983, when 241 U.S. servicemen died in a terrorist bombing in Beirut, Lebanon. "To save our men from being killed by snipers from private armies that were causing trouble in Lebanon, it was decided to shelter them in a concrete-reinforced building," he recalled. "But no one foresaw that a suicide driver with a truckload of explosives would drive into the building and blow it up."

At the close of that Oval Office interview, I asked him to describe his presidency in one line. "We won the Cold War," he said without hesitation. "That phrase didn't originate with me, but I'll settle for it. What counts is that there is an end to the Cold War, and I now feel justified in my theme of 'Peace Through Strength.'"

Former President George Bush adds: "Ronald Reagan's foresight put us in a position to change our relationship with the Soviet Union and to make it possible for the changes that took place in Eastern Europe. And he certainly helped bring democracy to our hemisphere."

Mr. Bush, having worked closely with Mr. Reagan as his vice president, also told me: "True, he was a man of principle on the issues. But, even more than that, the American people loved him for his genuine decency, his unfailing kindness and his great sense of humor. He is a true believer in the goodness of America."