Reagan’s ‘Brain Trust’—A Candidate Is Known by the Company He Keeps

With the GOP nomination seemingly within his grasp, Ronald Reagan has put together a star-studded cast of advisers to guide him as he seeks the presidency.

BY DOM BONAFIDE

Ronald Reagan, the former movie actor who symbolizes the affluence between show business and electronic era politics, is surrounding himself with a star-studded supporting cast.

Already performing like the 1980 Republican presidential nominee, perhaps with good reason in view of his comfortable lead over struggling rivals, Reagan has cultivated an advisory “brain trust” composed of many of the most prominent figures in economics, domestic policy matters and national security affairs.

Included are representatives of the defense and intelligence community, such as Frank R. Barnett, president of the National Security Council; Lt. Gen. Daniel O. Graham, co-chairman of the Coalition for Peace Through Strength and former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency; and Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

From academia come Nathan Glazer of Harvard University, Jeane Kirkpatrick of Georgetown University and Eugene V. Rostow, a Yale University law professor.

Economists include Milton Friedman, former Federal Reserve Board chairman Arthur F. Burns and Arthur Laffer. (For a list of key advisers, see box, pp. 6-7.)


Coordinating the advisory operations for the Reagan campaign are Richard V. Allen, president of Potomac International Corp. and former senior staff member of the National Security Council, who directs the foreign affairs and defense policy input; and Martin Anderson, former White House aide and Columbia University economics professor now at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, who oversees the domestic issues area.

They work with Edwin Meese, Reagan’s chief of staff and principal issues adviser, under campaign manager William J. Casey.

Predictably, as the national convention draws near, the number of candidates dwindles and the early hoopla of the campaign subsides, candidates are obliged to be increasingly specific about their policy positions. Comparative analyses are made by the press and by recognized specialists in particular areas.

A candidate’s advisers constitute a wellspring of ideas and proposals. They conduct research and define the issues. They keep him abreast of the latest developments in certain fields. They may suggest courses of action. And they may even recommend a particular book or research paper.

The quality and prominence of the advisers a candidate attracts reflect his political philosophy, directly bear on his leadership capability and provide a measure of credibility to his campaign.

As Anderson observed, “People around a candidate give an idea of what kind of person he is.”

Many campaign advisers, almost all of whom are acknowledged authorities in their fields, possess their own special constituencies and followers and hence may also serve as drawing cards. Conversely, a controversial figure could well be a liability instead of an asset. A candidate must therefore be careful in the advisers he chooses.

A Carter White House aide, for instance, reported that an offer by former Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy, D-Minn., to help in the President’s reelection campaign was rejected because of McCarthy’s well-known liberal orthodoxy.

And although former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger has been in telephone contact with Reagan, he is noticeably missing from the candidate’s public list of advisers. Aides have cautioned Reagan that Kissinger would be a disruptive presence because of controversy over his conduct of U.S. foreign policy while in the White House and State Department, as well as his close relationship with Richard M. Nixon and his reported involvement with David Rockefeller in efforts to find a suitable home-in-exile for the deposed Shah of Iran.

There is also the possibility that Kissinger might undermine the candidate. One of the tact campaign rules is that no single adviser may loom larger in the public eye than the candidate. Furthermore, policy positions must always be identified with the candidate, regardless of their origin.

Until recently, Reagan’s “outside” advisers dealt with him or through his campaign staff, in an ad hoc manner. The sudden dismissal in February of campaign manager John Sears, national political director Charles Black and press secretary James Lake led to a campaign staff reorganization and a revision in the internal operations. Whereas Sears
sought to exert tight control over access to Reagan, his successor, broadened the lines of communication to the candidate.

Then, on the eve of the Pennsylvania primary, the advisory system was, in effect, institutionalized. Reagan announced he was establishing a 12-member policy council, augmented by two groups of specialized advisers, one on foreign affairs and another on defense policy — in all, 67 "distinguished experts."

"Their experience," said Reagan, "will be of great assistance to me as the presidential campaign addresses issues of crucial importance to the future of our country."

Allen said some of the advisers were Democrats or independents and that agreement to serve did not constitute political endorsement. Nonetheless, the great majority can be presumed to be Reagan supporters.

In one case, Paul H. Nitze, a former deputy Defense secretary and a leader of the Committee on the Present Danger, who is not among the 67, reported that he was available for advice to any candidate who requested it. "It doesn't mean I'm for or against Reagan," he said. "I have intentionally tried to address myself to issues and not personalities."

He acknowledged, however, that Reagan's defense policies were compatible with his own and said he expected to "see him again."

Citing a political maxim, Anderson said, "It becomes easier to attract people once they are convinced the candidate has the nomination." That is apparent with Reagan, considering the large number of experts anxious and willing to offer him professional advice.

It is not lost on at least some of them that if Reagan wins in November, they stand an excellent chance of being rewarded with a presidential appointment. Though many undoubtedly are motivated by a sense of public service, it is not unlikely that the personal horizons of others reach as high as a Cabinet post, a job in the White House or the directorship of a federal agency.

THE ADVISORY SYSTEM

Special advisers, normally grouped in task forces according to issues, have long been a functional ingredient of presidential campaigns. But only in recent national elections have they been expanded and refined as a campaign force.

The complexity of contemporary social and economic issues, the demands on the candidate to offer possible solutions to difficult problems and the incessant focus of the news media on the candidate's proposed policies have made it incumbent upon presidential aspirants to rely on the expertise of outsiders. Today, it would be almost unthinkable to wage a presidential campaign without a "brain trust."

Anderson, who served as Nixon's research director in the 1968 campaign, recalled that he supervised 20 issue-oriented task forces involving about 250 advisers.

Last year, he took nine months off to help set up Reagan's advisory arm:

"I first developed an account of Reagan's record while he was governor of California," Anderson reported. "Next, I put together a basic issues file. This meant collecting background material on hundreds of issues. Third, I began to build up contacts among people who would agree to advise Reagan irrespective as to whether they would politically support him."

Allen, meanwhile, started rounding up national security specialists.

Commenting on his coordinating role, Allen said: "The advisers' views go unrestricted to the Governor. I have strong feelings about that. If they know their ideas aren't going direct to the candidate and been considered, they aren't likely to stay on."

Allen, however, may send material to Reagan with a cover letter summarizing the information or directing the candidate's attention to certain sections or even giving his opinion of the work and making recommendations.

Still another aspect of Reagan's campaign operations involves an executive advisory committee, headed by former Treasury Secretary William E. Simon, with Michael K. Deaver, a longtime Reagan associate, as vice chairman.

"Essentially, the committee is made up of a small group of close Reagan friends who have been advising him for years," said Deaver, a public relations consultant whose firm, Deaver & Hannaford, has offices in Los Angeles and Washington. "Its function has expanded with the campaign and it now serves as a sounding board for Reagan, recruits personnel and assets in fund raising."

Among those on the committee, he said, are Holmes Tuttle, a wealthy California automobile dealer; Justin Dart, president of Dart Industries; William French Smith, a partner in one of California's largest law firms and Reagan's personal attorney; and Joseph Coors of the Coors beer family.

Once again serving as Reagan's adviser, now on a part-time basis, is Franklin (Lyn) Novitzer, a former Washington political reporter for the Copley newspapers and Reagan's press secretary when he was governor. Novitzer, who had a falling out with Sears early in the campaign, left and went back to his political consulting firm. Once Sears was dropped, Novitzer was invited to rejoin.

"I've got commitments to my clients, but I help out whenever I can, perhaps a day or two each week," he said.

Among the responsibilities of Meese, Allen, Anderson and others on the Reagan campaign staff is to assure that the candidate is fully briefed on issues and to deter him from making the verbal blunders and factual misstatements for which he has become known.

Reagan also has a tendency to profess ignorance about matters that a public figure normally would be acquainted with, as with his publicized admission that he was not informed about farm parity prices.
Ronald Reagan won't be suffering from any lack of advisers in the domestic and national security areas. The front-running Republican presidential candidate has formed a 12-member policy council to give him "advice and counsel on a broad range of key national policy issues," and has also named 41 foreign policy and 26 national defense advisers who, he said, would provide him with policy and research guidance during his campaign.

Heading the policy council is former Treasury Secretary William E. Simon. The other members are:


Alan Greenspan, chairman and president of Townsend-Greenspan & Co. Inc. and chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers under President Ford.


Irving Kristol, professor of social thought, New York University Graduate School of Business, and senior fellow of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI).

John Mcketta, professor of chemical engineering, University of Texas.

William P. Rogers, lawyer and former Secretary of State and Attorney General.

Donald Rumsfeld, chairman of G. D. Searle & Co. and former Defense Secretary and ambassador to NATO.

George P. Shultz, president of the Bechtel Group and former Treasury and Labor Secretary and director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Charles E. Walker, chairman, Charles E. Walker Associates Inc. and former Treasury undersecretary.

Murray L. Weidenbaum, director, Center for the Study of American Business, Washington University, and former assistant Treasury secretary.

Caspar Weinberger, vice president and general counsel of Bechtel Power Corp. and former Health, Education and Welfare Secretary, OMB director and Federal Trade Commission chairman.

FOREIGN POLICY

Kenneth L. Adelman, senior policy analyst, SRI international, and former assistant to the Defense Secretary.

Adda B. Bozeman, professor emeritus of international relations, Sarah Lawrence College.

W. Glenn Campbell, director of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University.

Lev Dobriansky, economics professor, Georgetown University.

Peter Duignan, senior fellow and director of African and Middle East studies, the Hoover Institution.

Charles H. Fairbanks, assistant professor of political science, Yale University, and fellow, AEI.

Roger W. Fontaine, director of Latin American studies, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University.

Jeffrey B. Gayner, director of foreign policy studies, the Heritage Foundation.

Nathan Glazer, professor, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University.

Mose L. Harvey, director of the Advanced International Studies Institute, University of Miami.


Fred C. Ikle, consultant and former director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

David C. Jordan, professor of government and foreign affairs, University of Virginia.

James J. Kirkpatrick, professor of government, Georgetown University, and resident scholar, AEI.

Ernest W. Lefever, professor of government, Georgetown University.

Carnes Lord, assistant professor of government and foreign affairs, University of Virginia.

Edward N. Luttwak, research professor, Georgetown University, and senior fellow, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University.

Charles Burton Marshall, consultant on foreign policy and former member of the State Department policy planning staff.

Constantine Christopher Menges, consultant to the Hudson Institute.

Henry R. Nau, associate professor of political science, George Washington University.

Robert G. Neumann, senior research fellow, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University and former ambassador to Afghanistan and Jordan.

Robert Osgood, professor, School of Advanced International Studies, and director of the security studies.

This has always been characteristic of Reagan. During a controversy over the size of a proposed national redwoods park in California, while he was governor, Reagan is reported to have stated: "A tree's a tree. How many do you have to see?"

In an admittedly non-objective book, *Reagan, the Political Chameleon* (Prager 1976), former California Gov. Edmund G. (Pat) Brown suggests that Reagan's semantic lapses are attributable to his dependence on "quick and simple answers to the complex questions of government and society." Brown, a Democrat, further notes that "Reagan is used to working from a script. He is a 'quick study,' as they say in the acting business, and he made a very handsome living for years playing roles that required only that he memorize his lines, not plumb beneath them for hidden meanings, subtleties or nuances."

Brown, defeated for reelection by Reagan in 1966, may have been guilty of a personal bias, but other Reagan watchers have observed the same qualities.

The current practice, as laid down by Casey, who has become a more forceful campaign manager than anticipated, is to have one or more issues specialists travel with Reagan at all times. This is in addition to Meese, who accompanies Reagan almost constantly. The assignment may go to Anderson or Allen, or others such as Roger W. Fontaine of Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies and a member of a newly appointed panel of foreign policy advisers.

"We will be doing more cycling of people on the campaign plane," said Allen. "It will depend on the issues."

Recently hired to assist Meese on the campaign circuit was James Brady, a veteran press-public relations adviser, who had previously worked for former budget director James T. Lynn, Sen. William V. Roth Jr., R-Del., and John B. Connally during his unsuccessful bid for the GOP nomination. Brady will
program, The Johns Hopkins University
Robert L. Pfaltzgraff Jr., professor of international politics, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University
Walter L. Pforzheimer, former legislative counsel to the Central Intelligence Agency
Richard E. Pipes, professor of history, Harvard University
Uri Ra'anan, chairman of the international security studies program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
Edward Rozek, professor of comparative government, University of Colorado
Pedro A. Sanjuan, director, Hemispheric Center, AEI
Frank Shakespeare, president of RKO General Inc. and former director of the U.S. Information Agency
Laurence H. Silberman, executive vice president, Crocker National Bank and former ambassador to Yugoslavia and deputy Attorney General
Richard F. Starr, director of the international studies program, Hoover Institution
William L. Stearman, professor and director of the Russian studies program, Georgetown University
Robert Strausz-Hupe, former ambassador to NATO, Sweden and Belgium
Raymond Tanter, professor of political science, University of Michigan, and fellow, the Wilson Center, Smithsonian Institution
James D. Theberge, international business consultant and former ambassador to Nicaragua
Robert W. Tucker, professor of political science, The Johns Hopkins University
Charles E. Walker
Richard L. Walker, director of the Institute of International Studies, University of South Carolina
Richard J. Whalen, author, and business consultant and chairman of Wires Ltd.
Aaron Wildavsky, professor of political science, University of California (Berkeley)
Curtin Winsor Jr., associate director, Alliance for Free Enterprise
DEFENSE
Frank R. Barnett, president, National Strategy Information Center
David A. Burchinal, retired Air Force general and former deputy commander in chief, U.S. Forces in Europe
Joseph Chirba, president, Institute for International Security
Jacquelyn K. Davis, consultant and strategic analyst
John Davis, retired Army lieutenant general and former assistant director of the National Security Agency
Russell E. Dougherty, retired Air Force general and former commander in chief, Strategic Air Command
Leon Goure, associate director, Advanced International Studies Institute, University of Miami
Daniel O. Graham, co-chairman of the Coalition for Peace Through Strength and former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency
Walter F. Hahn, defense analyst
Martin R. Hoffman, attorney and former Army Secretary
Peter C. Hughes, defense analyst
William R. Kintner, professor of political science, University of Pennsylvania, and former ambassador to Thailand
Charles M. Kupperman, defense analyst
John F. Lehman Jr., president of the Abington Corp. and former deputy director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
J. William Middendorf II, president of Financial General Bankshares Corp. and former Navy Secretary
Thomas H. Moorer, retired admiral and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Patrick J. Parker, chairman, National Security Affairs Department, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School
Jeffrey Record, consultant and strategic analyst
Edward L. Rowny, retired Army lieutenant general and former Joint Chiefs of Staff representative to SALT negotiations
William R. Schneider, consultant to the Hudson Institute
Harriet Fast Scott, consultant and writer on Soviet military affairs
William F. Scott, consultant and writer on Soviet military affairs
William R. Van Cleave, director of the Institute for International Studies, University of Southern California
John W. Vogt Jr., retired Air Force general and former commander in chief, U.S. Air Forces in Europe
Lewis Walt, retired general and former commandant of the Marine Corps
Seymour Weiss, vice president of the Abington Corp. and former ambassador to the Bahamas

focus on the issues and help deal with the press.

A WHITE HOUSE AGENDA

Not unnaturally, Reagan, who has had his eye on the White House for more than four years, has made plans should he arrive there.

Notwithstanding Reagan's assaults on federal social welfare programs and big government in general, Allen predicted, "He will not go to Washington with animosity toward the federal bureaucracy."

He would, however, seek conceptual changes in the governmental structure, especially in the national defense, foreign policy and intelligence sectors.

"My own view is that he would replace the foreign policy machinery down to the assistant secretary level," Allen said. "Singed out for a complete overhaul, according to Allen's scenario, would be the National Security Council's staff operations and its characteristically competitive relations with the State Department."

"Do we need a huge NSC staff in the White House?" Allen asked. "Is it a policy maker or a policy facilitator? Maybe its 150 or so people ought to be put back into the federal bureaucracy, giving the State Department a new lease on life."

He questioned whether a President "should be inundated with the latest cable traffic and overburdened in sheer volume of minute-to-minute details. Should he not be allowed to concentrate on longer range, critical problems worthy of presidential attention?"

"There is latent bureaucratic strength in the department. Why should there be a competing organization within the White House, one that constitutes a massive backchannel?"

Reagan, in line with similar projections, would also reestablish "a strong economic component" within the foreign policy-national security complex somewhat like the defunct Council on International Economic Policy. Es-
tablished as an executive agency by
President Nixon in 1971 to coordinate the
work of U.S. agencies dealing with
foreign economic affairs, the council was
disbanded early in the Carter Ad-
ministration.

A second executive agency discon-
tinued by Carter, the Foreign Intelligence
Advisory Board, would also likely be
revived by Reagan. The panel, created by
President Eisenhower in 1956, was
intended to review the various activities
of the Central Intelligence Agency and
other units within the American in-
telligence community. In abolishing the
board in May 1977, Carter maintained
that its work was rendered redundant by
monitoring services performed by the
NSC and the Senate Intelligence
Committee.

A forceful advocate of a strengthened
U.S. military posture, Reagan is reported
to favor an enhanced role for the Joint
Chiefs of Staff in defense strategy
planning, as well as greater involvement
in policy development by the Defense
State Department that would review
matters of mutual concern to the three
North American countries and help
establish and implement North-South
accords.

PAST PERFORMANCE

One of the unresolved political
questions is whether the campaign and
a candidate's past performance as a public
figure offer satisfactory clues to his
probable behavior as President.

"They approach it but you don't get a
complete picture," said political analyst
Richard M. Scammon. "They give an
indication of how a candidate handles
himself under fire, how organized he is
and how he feels about certain issues. But
the presidency is so unique, so un-
duplicated that you can't get a perfect
picture. A candidate's record and
previous service can sometimes be deceiv-
ing. Look at Harry Truman! But it all
helps."

Be that as it may, Reagan aides and
associates stress that he hasn't changed
to listen and delegate authority. While
governor, he met with the cabinet
members about once a week and they
would talk and kick things around. His
approach to the cabinet was, 'You guys
are my men in the departments; you're not
the department's advocate. You will
run the department as if it is mine, not
yours, and this is administration policy
and you will carry it out.'"

Despite the fact that both Reagan and
Carter aspired to the presidency without
having had Washington experience and
that each assumes a rather aloof attitude
toward the nitty-gritty of politics, Reagan
aides insist that if he reaches the White
House, he will not make the same
mistakes that Carter has in the past three
years.

One of the things Paul Laxalt and I
feel strongly about is that the errors of the
Carter Administration aren't repeated," said
Schweiker, who serves as Reagan's
Northeast campaign coordinator. "Every
time Gov. Reagan comes to Washington,
we hold a meeting with his initial
supporters on the Hill and with prospec-
tive supporters for the specific objective
of establishing liaison with Congress."

Deaver recalled that one of the first
moves by the Reagan forces in Sacramen-
to was to get together with a bunch of
old political hands who knew how to deal
with the legislature; I assume it would be
the first thing we would do in
Washington. We certainly would not
ignore the legislators like Carter."

Anderson and Nofziger are convinced
that a lack of direct Washington ex-
perience would not hurt Reagan political-
ly.

"So much depends on having a good
staff and Cabinet," Nofziger said. "If they
know what they're doing they'll sit down
with the congressional leadership. The
California Legislature comes closest to
being similar to the U.S. Congress; it
works full time, has a big staff and a lot of
research assistance. And Reagan's people
got along with the Legislature while he
was governor."

In response to questions about
Reagan's lack of foreign policy ex-
perience, Nofziger noted, "Jerry Ford
didn't have foreign experience when he
became President."

Besides, argues Anderson, the debate
over Washington experience is a specious
one. If experience were so important, he
said, "the ideal President would come
into office after having been Vice Presi-
dent, Secretary of State, a U.S. Senator, a
Member of Congress and be 35 years old.
He just doesn't exist."

"Reagan has spent a lot of time in and
around Washington and he knows many
people there. That's indicated by the
people he has around him."