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Picking a new roster of key Reagan players

In the early 1930s there was a New York City mayor named James J. Walker. He was a witty, roguish Tammany Hall product. It was he who uttered the line: "There comes a time in every politician's life when he must rise above principle."

There has never been a politician in any democratic country who didn't at some time or other "rise above principle." There isn't a member of the House or the Senate who, in his endeavor to attain office, hasn't at one time or another risen "above principle."

There are times when we have had to swallow hard and accept some amoral compromise in the interest of achieving some desirable moral goal.

Should the United States in the interest of pure morality have refused to come to the aid of the totalitarian Soviet Union when it was attacked by Nazi Germany in June 1941 because Josef Stalin, the Soviet dictator, was in every way as brutal and merciless as Adolf Hitler? That was why Arthur Koestler described World War II as a war against a total lie — Nazism — in the name of a half-truth — an alliance for freedom which included the cruel Josef Stalin.

Every day there is a new revelation that President Reagan has risen "above principle" in some given event. How is it that the administration was making secret overtures to Libya? Why not? Was there a possibility that such overtures would betray American security interests?

Should we, in the interests of morality, stop negotiating with the Soviet Union, a regime far worse than Libya, on human rights, on arms control, on commerce, on cultural exchanges, and on a host of other agreements because there are thousands of forced-labor prisoners in Soviet concentration camps, because Andrei Sakharov for so long was a Soviet prisoner of conscience?

The very critics who sneer at President Reagan for seeking "moderate" elements in Iran or for seeking some breakthrough with Libya are the very critics who condemn him for not trying hard enough to understand the Soviet Union, the greatest enemy of human freedom in modern history.

For six years, the Reagan administration has been free of acts of dishonor, of acts of corruption. The Sam

Donaldsons of this world and their congressional allies couldn't, try as they might, lay a glove on him.

Has President Reagan overnight become a villain, smiling while he commits his acts of villainy? Was he selling the pass when he sought negotiating channels to the enemy in the hope of saving American lives? Was it better to keep bombing Libya? Was it better to do nothing? Was it better to ignore Iran?

They sneer at the naive of seeking "moderates" in Iran but it is, of course, sheer realism to define Mikhail Gorbachev as the moderate, as the sneerers once defined Soviet leaders Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov, and Konstantin Chernenko. Moderates, by left-liberal definition, only exist in Communist dictatorships.

If President Reagan can be faulted — and I do fault him — it is because he has appointed the wrong people to the right places. Running a Wall Street bucket shop (and in the Boesky era, it looks like they're all bucket shops) is no preparation for running the government of the

United States. Successful public relations strategy in the world of industry is no preparation for strategy planning in the White House. Commanding a battleship is no preparation for the intricate problems of national security. Marine heroism is no preparation for undercover diplomacy. Being a successful music contractor is no preparation for the problem of U.S. information policies.

Nice guy-ism makes for fine dinner companionship and little more. Ignorance of Marxism-Leninism and its strategies does not prepare one for the intricate strategies of Marxism-Leninism.

World democratic stability hinges on our realistic understanding of Soviet history, Soviet ideology, Soviet active measures, Soviet nationality problems, the Soviet economy, the future of Eastern Europe. Who in President Reagan's entourage understands how to deal with this militant ideology which claims the right to world domination?

Where is Richard Pipes, one of the

leading experts on Marxism Leninism? After serving a couple of years in the National Security Council he was allowed to return to Harvard. Who allowed him to leave?

Where is Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, one of the finest political minds in contemporary America? Why is she on the outside and George Shultz on the inside? Who allowed her to leave?

Where in heaven's name did Robert MacFarlane get his knowledge of Communism? Why isn't Sen. Malcolm Wallop a suitable candidate to run the CIA should Bill Casey be unable to resume his duties?

To put it as simply as possible: how many knowledgeable, tough-minded anti-Communists (horrid word!) with a firm grasp of Kremlin world strategy are there in the White House today? Put your thumb and forefinger together and you get the answer — Zero!

Because people like Mr. Pipes, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, Mr. Wallop, and others like them are on the outside (oh, yes, they occasionally drop by for a White House chat), the administration's foreign policy is a collec-

tion of hops, skips, and jumps without rhyme or reason.

President Reagan had to cut out his top Cabinet officers, his military advisers, from any intimate knowledge of his Strategic Iranian Initiative (SII). What greater reflection on the quality of his appointments than that he felt he could trust only men like Donald Regan, Vice Adm. John Poindexter, Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North but not his own cherished secretary of state?

There is a still a chance to salvage something out of the Iran-"contra" mess before it becomes an irretrievable disaster for American security. Those of us who have been faithful to U.S. foreign policy, as expounded (but not often implemented) by President Reagan have a right to ask that he clean house and bring in people like Mr. Pipes, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, or Mr. Wallop and give them the power to act, the power to rescue a foreign policy now on the skids. Things can't get any worse. With a little bit of luck and courage, they might even get better.

Mr. President, move. Please.