

THE STRATEGY OF CAMPAIGNING

The Strategy of Campaigning

Lessons from
Ronald Reagan & Boris Yeltsin

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Foreword by
George P. Shultz

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Foreword

George P. Shultz

The authors of *The Strategy of Campaigning* have done us a great service. They have done careful research, and lots of it. They present detailed accounts of three successful campaigns—Richard Nixon’s in 1968, Ronald Reagan’s in 1980, and Boris Yeltsin’s in 1991—along with a considerable amount of reference material to other campaigns. The writing is clear and the material is lively. That makes the book interesting and readable. What makes the book important is the ability of the authors to relate this rich factual material to ideas about strategy—ideas from which future campaigners can benefit.

I was especially fascinated by the book because of my personal involvement: I was a participant in the Nixon and Reagan campaigns and in the negotiations with the Soviet Union and Mikhail Gorbachev in the 1980s, and I was an observer of the fall and rise of Boris Yeltsin. I served in the administrations following the two successful U.S. campaigns. The result is that I almost instinctively react to the strategies of campaigns with an eye on the subsequent success of the campaigners as holders of the office of president.

From this standpoint, I would judge Ronald Reagan to be a clear success. His ideas prevailed, they worked, and the outcome produced changes for the better in the United States and in the world, very much as he said they would during his campaign. Richard Nixon and Boris Yeltsin leave records that have positive elements, but in the end, each left us with a more ambiguous legacy. This raises the question: Does the nature of the campaign have any impact on the process of governance that comes afterward?

Richard Nixon was exceptionally gifted intellectually and well informed, with a great knowledge of world affairs. As the description of his successful campaign brings out, he was also a master of maneuver who could readily shift his gears. My own experiences with him were mostly positive, as he supported what I regarded as good positions in the effort to deal with discrimination in employment and education, to revive the vitality of the collective bargaining process, to stand up to the pressures involved when he created the volunteer armed forces, and to move toward a system of flexible exchange rates. I was deeply disappointed, however, when he imposed wage and price controls, a move that in the end damaged the U.S. economy, much as I, and many of my economist colleagues, predicted it would. However, the maneuver worked politically in the 1972 election. I also saw a dark side as Nixon tried unsuccessfully to persuade me, as secretary of the Treasury, to use the IRS in ways that I regarded as improper.

Ronald Reagan's basic views and the principles from which they were derived stayed much the same through his presidential campaigns described in this book. The fascinating point is the way he put them to the electorate in his dramatically successful 1980 campaign. Basically, he didn't change, but he changed the way the electorate saw issues. Knowing him as a campaigner and as a president, I can't imagine him trying to use the IRS improperly or imposing wage and price controls, as Nixon did despite his earlier promises not to do so. The reason is that Reagan took positions in the campaign based on principles that he well understood, and he stuck to those principles during his presidency. His rhetoric came from the strength of his ideas.

I don't have the same feel for Boris Yeltsin, although I did have a ringside seat in the evolution of Soviet affairs and the dramatic change that took place during the latter part of the 1980s and the early 1990s. The authors develop Yeltsin's role, as opposed to that of Mikhail Gorbachev, in a way that I found revealing and extraordinarily interesting. His "Russian" instinct had more to do with the breakup of the Soviet Union than I had realized. Gorbachev got the "blame" in the eyes of the Russian people, but it was Gorbachev who opened the political process that made possible both Yeltsin's rise and the end of the Cold War. Sadly, Yeltsin didn't govern effectively, didn't develop any lasting political structure, and didn't leave a lasting legacy, even though he had hit on a winning campaign strategy.

All of this is simply to say once again how intriguing and stimulat-

ing *The Strategy of Campaigning* is. That shouldn't be too surprising because the authors possess an extraordinary mixture of talent, with scholarly credentials as well as deep experience in the process of governance. I tip my hat to them for producing this volume, and I know that readers will enjoy, as well as learn from, reading this book. I include those readers who may aspire to high office.

Acknowledgments

The Strategy of Campaigning began as a casual conversation in Condoleezza Rice's office at the Hoover Institution many years ago. Our discussion of the success of Ronald Reagan and Boris Yeltsin despite their seeming remoteness from their respective society's political mainstream led us to undertake what we thought would be a modest project culminating in a brief article. Thanks to the encouragement of many colleagues, friends, and the University of Michigan Press, and following hundreds of conversations among various mixes of the four authors, our project has grown into a book that explores our original question and many others. We owe, therefore, a deep debt of gratitude to the many people who encouraged the development of this work.

We are indebted to the Hoover Institution at Stanford University for its unflagging support of our effort. John Raisian, the Director, has been a source of support throughout. We benefited greatly from the expertise, wisdom, and guidance of Richard V. Allen, Annelise Anderson, Martin Anderson, Jeff Bliss, David Brady, Rita Ricardo Campbell, John Dunlop, Morris Fiorina, John Lewis Gaddis, Gordon Hahn, Charlie Hill, Stephen Krasner, Ed Meese, Charles Palm, Thomas Schwartz, Richard Sousa, and especially George Shultz. Kiron Skinner thanks Tad and Dianne Taube and the Taube Family Foundation for generous funding for her research on Ronald Reagan.

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We also presented a very early draft at the Council on Foreign Relations. Peter Katzenstein served as an outstanding commentator. Leslie Gelb, then the President of the Council, was generous with his time and in making the Council available to us as a forum for presenting and developing our ideas.

This book could not have been written without the able assistance of numerous archivists and other experts on our subject. We are grateful to James Cannon, Lou Cannon, William P. Clark, Hank Cooper, Peter Hannaford, and Tom Reed as well as to numerous people at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. We especially thank Duke Blackwood, Joanne Drake, and Sherrie Fletcher. We cannot adequately express our appreciation to Nancy Reagan for making President Ronald Reagan's papers available to the public. We also thank the staff of the other libraries and archives cited in this book.

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We beg the forgiveness of anyone we have neglected to mention, and we, of course, remain solely responsible for any errors of omission or commission in this work.