

John O'Sullivan: I'm going to join my colleagues in a moment in the chair, but just very briefly, to welcome them and say we're very fortunate to have an extremely talented group of Reagan and John Paul observers and historians here. You know more about them already from the program, but I'm just going to briefly introduce. Monika Jablonska, who is the author of a book on John Paul: *The Saint*; Paul Kengor, who has written several books on the alliance and the partnership between John Paul and Ronald Reagan; Peter Robinson, who was, like me, a speech writer— his case for Ronald Reagan, my case for Margaret Thatcher; finally, Craig Shirley, who is a veteran conservative and the author of a number of books on Reagan.

All members of this panel can look at these two men from a deep understanding and personal knowledge. Now, I'm going to begin by asking Monika if she would talk to us about an aspect of these two men that's not normally touched on, and that is the fact that they were both actors. That's known about Ronald Reagan, of course, it was his other great career, but we don't think of the pope in a way, John Paul II as an actor.

Monika J.: Thank you so much. Good morning. Yes, absolutely. John Paul II and President Ronald Reagan were both men of the theater. One became the spiritual leader of the Catholic Church, and the other one became a leader of the free world and American politics. We all know that theater has the potential to transcend the art of the word and gesture and become the art of the pure word. Both those men recognized this instinctively in their own way by using the power of the spoken word. They confront evil and the evil was for them easy to recognize. It had his face and a name: it was that authoritarian communist system. So, in their own way, by speaking simply and clearly, they expressed themselves and they expressed something that they truly stood for. So, they both believed in the power of the spoken word, the word that shaped leaves and changed destinies, changed people's minds and hearts as well.

I truly believe that by being men of the theater it really helped them. Not only in terms of the communication skills, but also to understand the power of the word, the meaning of the words. What's the most important, I would say, to touch the very sensitive and the deep subjects of human being, human dignity, human values, and its possibilities. So, it was an amazing, absolutely amazing aspect for both of those amazing people. As I remember well, President Ronald Reagan and John Paul II didn't speak much about their experience in theater, but I think that they didn't have to because they perfectly understood each other. Each recognized in the other a shared sense of drama of late 20th century's life and the drama of communism.

So, I truly believe that it was very important for them and this power of the pure words, the power of the drama. I believe that really helped them defeat communism and bring freedom not only to Poland, but to the world.

John O'Sullivan: Can I ask you about a particular moment — a very theatrical moment as it turned out — and that is the arrival of John Paul for his first visit as pope to

Poland. When you look at the film of that, he comes onto the stage and he's got a government, a hostile government, meeting him. He's got a large crowd waiting to hear him and it seems to me that he takes command of that moment, and the rest of his trip to Poland, which was a historic event. Here you have somebody who, by means of his own personality, projected like a good actor on the stage, turns the whole event into a triumph, a political triumph in which he never says a word about politics. All his remarks are sermons addressed to Christian virtue. Was that something you remember as having a big impact?

Monika J.: Well, I was a one year old, so I was very little, but I can only say that, for sure, his experience in theater helped him to carry out his mission. He had a magnificent voice and sense of gestures, sense of beauty. John Paul's very characteristic for the homilies, and absolutely yes, because for me, being a priest is also being an actor.

John O'Sullivan: Perhaps I could talk to Paul about the first time these two actors met, because they came from very, very different backgrounds.

Paul Kengor: That's right, John. The first time they met was June 1982 at the Vatican, but Ronald Reagan had wanted to meet John Paul II right away. Lee Edwards mentioned earlier the trip to Poland in June 1979 (just referenced), and Ronald Reagan was watching it on the news. He was watching news clips. He was with Dick Allen, Richard V. Allen, in California at the time. I've talked to him about this a number of times, including just a couple weeks ago. They were talking foreign policy. Allen would be Reagan's first National Security Advisor through all of 1981, and Bill Clark would follow him. They were talking foreign policy in 1979, and they decided to take a break and turn on the evening news to see what was going on. In those days, there were two or three channels on TV kids, right?

I mean, there wasn't CNN, Fox, or MSNBC. So, they turned on CBS or NBC and Reagan saw these massive crowds of people greeting this Polish pontiff. He was indeed so moved that Dick Allen looked over and there were tears in Reagan's eyes and he said, "Dick, that's it. The pope is the key. The pope is the key. The pope is the key. I need to get elected. It's not an easy thing to do, and we need to reach out to this new pope and the Vatican and make them an ally." Reagan, who had already said at that point, as Lee mentioned earlier, or as you mentioned earlier, Peter, "We win and they lose." OK, but how are you going to do that? So, with the election, and all of a sudden, the first non-Italian pope in 455 years, the first Slavic pope ever, and right from the middle of the Soviet block from Poland. This was a complete game changer.

So, now we had that tool to really try to enact change. He wanted to meet with him from the very beginning. It got derailed by a number of things. One, Reagan had to win the election, which he did in November of '80. Then, they started communicating — Dick Allen and others in the Vatican — right away, June and February 1981, and then Ronald Reagan was shot in March of '81. Then, a few weeks after that, John Paul II was shot in May 13th, 1981. They both could have

bled to death. They required respectively six to eight pints of blood to be transfused. If there would have been a delay on the way to George Washington University Hospital over here from the Washington Hilton, or to the hospital in Rome, they could have bled to death in the vehicles.

They finally got together. By the end of 1981, Martin and Annelise Anderson estimate that they exchanged a dozen or so letters between each other. There was a talk last night about whether or not to call this a partnership or an alliance. Well, that's some pretty vigorous activity right there. They hadn't met yet, but at least a dozen letters by the end of 1981. So, they finally met at the Vatican, June 1982. They met alone in the Vatican library for about 50 minutes and they shared their mutual conviction that God had spared their lives for a special purpose, which they believed was to take on this "evil empire," as Ronald Reagan would call it the next year. There was this very significant shared sense of providential purpose, which you would expect of course from a pope, but a lot of people at that time didn't think that way about Ronald Reagan.

Reagan likewise had this very strong sense of the D.P., the "Divine Plan" as he and Bill Clark called it. They had an acronym for it, "the D.P.". So that was the first time they met, June 1982.

John O'Sullivan: Could I just ask two questions about that? At the time, those meetings were very private, so to speak. Has much more come out about what the two men discussed when they were in private, because I know for example, Reagan obviously spoke about them to Frank Shakespeare, who of course kept the confidence that he was given. I wonder what we now know, and in particular, was that a meeting which they each discovered that the other was determined to try to bring an end to nuclear weapons as the main basis of defense?

Paul Kengor: The Vatican Library's records of that event will be released in June 2057. So, they are under 75 years seal and I couldn't get a hold of them, and nobody can, and they don't make any exceptions. The Reagan Library has some material.

Peter Robinson: Make a date.

Craig Shirley: Meet in Rome.

Peter Robinson: Make a date. Yeah if I make it, I'll be 90 at that point.

John will just be warming up.

Paul Kengor: Right, just warming up. So those are still closed, there are some records that the Reagan Library and most of what I learned was from people who were with Reagan, who talked to Reagan immediately on the spot, including Bill Clark. Clark was at Reagan's side throughout all of this. In fact, I recently watched a video of when Reagan's coming out of the building, walking with Bill Clark, and they're going to the limousine and right there, he was telling him the things that

were said. There were also a number of things reported by the pope's aids to journalists, so that's the best that we have. Unfortunately, we don't have, at this point at least, access to anything along the lines of a direct transcript.

John O'Sullivan: Peter, Reagan was an actor, you were a speech writer. You wrote his scripts, so to speak, so let me ask you this. When he gave his great speech in Westminster, predicting the end of communism, he used a teleprompter which was completely new to the Brits. They assumed that the two perspex screens were some kind of security device. Going up to congratulate him, Mrs. Thatcher said, "I congratulate you on your actor's memory, that was a brilliant performance." Reagan said, "Don't you know about the teleprompter? It's a British invention." What did Reagan do to your speeches, Peter? How did he change them? Of course, papal encyclicals are another matter, but we learned it's something interesting last night.

Peter Robinson: Ronald Reagan was the best editor I've ever had. So, for example, I was not in the White House yet when he gave that speech in June of 1982. I joined up the operation a few months later. The principal author of that speech was Tony Dolan. If you go to the Reagan Library, you will discover two things: one, that President Reagan, in his own hand, you'll see him rewriting between a third and half of the speech. Item two: you can, if you know the story beforehand it helps, but even if you don't, you can work out that this speech got to Ronald Reagan over the objections of his staff. Judge Clark, National Security Advisor, walked into the Oval Office with Tony Dolan's draft and the president set aside the drafts that had come up through David Gergen rather than the usual communications route.

That's actually worth noting, I think, the Westminster address in June 1982, Evil Empire address is addressed to the National Association of Evangelicals in March of 1983. I was there, but I'm looking at the historians for confirmation of the times and dates. Then, the Berlin address in June of 1987. All three of those speeches he delivered over the objections — semi violent objections — of his senior staff, the National Security Council, and so forth. So, that's to the point when it gets said: I don't know about the pope, but about Ronald Reagan, that he overrode the instructions and recommendations of his staff. He did so over and over and over again, and there is documentary evidence of that in the archives at the Reagan Library.

Second point that may be of interest here: the 1982 Westminster addresses is early in the administration, and as I say he rewrote in his own hand between a third and a half of that speech. Later on, by the time you get to 1987 and a speech that I had something to do with — the Berlin address — much less rewriting. So, you can see the actor, you can see that he's not just an actor, he's the editor. He's training his speech writing staff in part he's working out exactly how he wants to say what he wants to say, but he's also training the speech writers so that we need more adjustment here earlier on. As the administration goes on, we understand him, he understands us, but it's clear — again, this is

tricky because we speech writers did write the speeches — but the source of the speeches, as well as the ultimate end of the speeches, was Ronald Reagan.

John O'Sullivan:

We don't know about the pope of course, though, last night we heard from President Klaus that he thought that the person who was the main drafter of the Centesimus Annus encyclical was Michael Novak. I'm absolutely certain Michael had enormous input into that. It's fair to say, I think, that encyclicals are like government white papers, they go through many hands. What's interesting about the pope here is that on issues like liberation theology as it affected American policy, and nuclear weapons, he repeatedly refused to endorse drafts sent to him that were very critical of American policy and sent them back.

That is something which has not been written a great deal about but let me now turn to someone who knows about that and with a bias to the question. Craig, can I ask you to talk about that? About Reagan: the conservative on the one hand, and the degree to which John Paul was a conservative in his political opinions; or was he a mixture of anticommunist on the one hand and, so to speak, socially benevolent liberal on the other? How would you describe it?

Craig Shirley:

Well, I'd have to defer to Paul on John Paul's political views. There's no doubt about it that he was an anti-communist; he was violently anti-communist. Here is the first pope in four or 500 years who's not from Italy, he's from the Eastern Bloc and he saw what the Soviets had done to his beloved country. Just as Margaret Thatcher saw what the communists provocateurs had done to the labor and left-wing party movements in England in the '60s and '70s. Just as Reagan saw what communists had done in Hollywood. So, they all had a very refined view of what communism was and what communism provocateurs could do to stable economic systems. I am reminded, and I think it's important, I think symbolism is important.

Early in the Reagan administration, the administration decided to change the diplomatic tags from the Soviet Embassy to begin with the initials FC. Now, nobody needed to guess what that stood for, but I think it crystallized that, unlike Truman, unlike Eisenhower, unlike Johnson Kennedy, is that this was a radical change in policy. It was not going to be containment, it was not going to be a coexistence, it was not going to be detente. Reagan had made clear early in his very first press conference, he said they reserve under the right to lie, cheat, and steal. This was the foreign policy establishment that just came down with the withers. Oh my God, we have an American president saying the honest things about the Soviets, how can he do that? I'm also reminded, too, that John, you asked previously about Reagan being an actor, and of course he was, we all know that.

I think that it's instructive, toward the end of his presidency, he was doing an interview in the Oval Office with Tom Brokaw. I think it was for Tom Brokaw at NBC. Brokaw asked Reagan a very interesting question, one he'd never been asked before. He said, "Mr. President, did you learn anything from your time in Hollywood to become president, or to become what many think is a good

president?" Reagan replied, "I don't know how I can do this job and not be an actor." I thought there was great wisdom in that because he understood what Shakespeare said: "The play's the thing." All great leaders are great actors. George Washington never went before the Continental Congress without his general's uniform and his epaulets brushed, his buttons polished, and his saddle polished to a sheen.

Robert E. Lee pulls out his finest uniform to go to surrender at Appomattox to Grant. All great leaders understand the play is the thing, and the presentation is important. You cannot get people's attention without putting on a good show. You simply can't do that. So, I think that Reagan — and obviously he was intellectual — Martin Anderson estimated that Reagan's IQ may have been as high as 175 (and if anybody would know, it'd be Marty our old dear friend who was there with Reagan for so many years.) It is that his anti-communism started in the 1940s, as we've seen from his letters, his pronouncements, and through his years at the GE Theater where he fought for scripts because there were script writers who were atheist and who refused to write scripts.

In fact, it was mentioned in Paul's book, *A Pope and a President* (which is terrific), about the atheist screenwriters who didn't want to portray a little girl praying. Reagan fought to have that portrayed in this GE Theater episode. So, I think that Reagan understood that being an actor was important, but he also understood that when you have the stage you have to do something with it.

John O'Sullivan:

We all know that Reagan was a great American and it's an important element in his appeal. He was the ideal American. When we turn to look at John Paul II, he was of course first a Pole, and he came from a church which was the most effective in resisting communists and the communist government in Eastern Europe, far more effective than any of the other Eastern and Central European countries. Before John Paul, of course, there was Cardinal Wyszyński, who was a very tough and able leader. After John Paul, it seems to observers that John Paul overrode the clerical bureaucrats who believed in us politic in the Vatican, but also, he overrode the caution of the bishops in Poland in their attitude to solidarity. Is that an accurate picture and where does, in a sense, the pope as a Pole emerge here? He's a specific sort of pope because he's a Pole, isn't he?

Monika J.:

Well, definitely being Polish, actually, to understand the Polish pope, you have to understand Polishness: Polish history, Polish culture, Polish literature. I think that John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła) brought the best of the best from Poland. So, it was not an accident that he became a pope, it was a special purpose. Then it was a special purpose for President Ronald Reagan. So, at the very first beginning, they both needed each other. Probably they couldn't achieve the goal on their own, so President Reagan needed John Paul II and John Paul II needed President Ronald Reagan to get the victory and to succeed. Not only on this political stage, but also as a Catholic. Ronald Reagan also knew that Poland is very strong, and this is why we have the Polish strong Catholic Church.

I can't say that we may use this, but it might help a lot to defeat communism. So, the power of the Catholic Church and John Paul II, and Polish bishops, and Polish people, brought them hope and courage actually to fight against communism, and help to bring you the freedom to Poland. So those two people are no longer with us, but we need their wisdom and the moral clarity.

John O'Sullivan: Yes. Isn't it the case in fact that both men were very unusual in, among the men and statesmen and women of their age, in seeing that communism was actually fragile. That separated them out from the entire establishment — political, foreign policy, and also clerical.

Monika J.: Absolutely, and it was not only a form of government, as President Ronald Reagan said, but it was also a real evil and they needed to make a plan to understand each other. So that's why they met in life and it was a perfect meeting of the minds.

John O'Sullivan: Yes, thank you. I know Paul wants to come in, so why don't you answer this point. I've got another one for you?

Paul Kengor: Yeah, it's very interesting. Reagan referred to Poland as the “martyred nation of Poland.” He had a special love for Poland which seems odd. He wasn't Polish, I think he was Irish.

His sympathy for Poland, and Bill Clark used to say this all the time, went back to Yalta. He believed that the Poland had been sold down the river at Yalta along with a number of other nations in Eastern Europe. So, he probably more than almost any other country, the references that he made to Poland, you go to the public presidential papers, they're all through there. The two largest biographies of Reagan, there's literally half a dozen references to Poland I've seen in the two books combined.

Craig Shirley: Yeah, don't forget, when he was at Liberty State Park launching this fall campaign in 1980, on the dais was Lech Walesa's father.

Peter Robinson: Is that so?

Craig Shirley: Yes.

Peter Robinson: I never knew that.

Paul Kengor: Also, too, the Westminster speech was given the day after he left the Vatican, after meeting with John Paul II. So, the fact that he would leave that meeting with John Paul II, and then go to Westminster and talk about communism ending up on the ash heap of history, is pretty remarkable. On Poland, he talked about Poland so much that one Soviet publication mocked him and said it's only a matter of time before the American president starts speaking Polish. Also, too, I've got to add the Catholic element here. Reagan, of course, was not Catholic,

but he was surrounded by Catholics and probably couldn't have been more pro Catholic. You had Bill Clark, Dick Allen, Al Haig (Al Haig's brother was a priest), a number of speech writers: Tony Dolan, yourself, Peggy Noonan, Jane Wyman; and his ex-wife had converted to Catholicism.

She was a full machine convert. Jane Wyman died a Third Order Dominican nun, buried in the habit. That's how devout Jane Wyman became. His father was Catholic, some people think that he wasn't very devout, but that's hard to say. His brother, Neil, his only sibling, was a daily communicant by the end of his life. So, he was surrounded by Catholics and new Catholicism. Bill Clark used to say that Ronald Reagan understood Catholicism better than most Catholics he knew, which might've been true.

Craig Shirley: I think he was a cultural Catholic — and when Neil and Reagan were children, they were never called by the parents Neil and Ron, but Moon and Dutch, and they always called their parents by their first names, never called them mom and dad even as small children. The parents gave Neil and Dutch a choice when they were children. She was DFC, he was Catholic. You could follow me into the Roman Catholic Church or follow your mother in Disciples of Christ. Neil chose to go into the Roman Catholic church and Reagan chose to go into the DFC, following his mother. Even so, I think Jack Reagan's Catholicism is under research topic. I think that he brought home a parish perspective and that inculcated Reagan with that parish perspective, and it showed up in that he didn't talk like a protestant. He talked like a Catholic.

Craig Shirley: It's eerily reminiscent of John Kennedy. He didn't say “my government”, he didn't choose the Protestant “I, me and my”, but the Catholic, “we, us, and ours.” So, when he talked about the government, he said, “your government, this government.” He didn't say, like Trump says, “my government, my administration, my White House, my Pentagon, my military chief, my everything.” He said, “this government,” like John Kennedy, or “your government” like John Kennedy. I think he was very much a cultural Catholic.

John O'Sullivan: I think we should also remember that when Reagan died, in his message to Mrs. Reagan the Pope referred to Ronald Reagan's “noble soul.” I mean, that's a very powerful and moving message with a lot of implications of an ecumenical kind.

Let me go back, Paul, if I could, and ask you about the fact that on the one hand, one of Reagan's biggest problems in office was the Sandinista regime and on the other hand, one of the biggest problems that the pope faced (and his successor) was liberation theology. To what extent did they form a partnership on that question?

Paul Kengor: It's very interesting. While John Paul II and Ronald Reagan are trying to support the Solidarity movement in Poland to undermine communism in Eastern Europe, you have Jesuits and people in Central America and in Nicaragua, and the Liberation Theology, who were supportive of the Sandinista regime. I don't want to say the Jesuits in mass, but certain people within that order in

particular, right? I don't know if I need to go through all of that, and for John Paul II, he's pursuing this strategy in Eastern Europe of liberating Eastern Europe through the support of the Catholic Church in Poland, and the Solidarity movement, and here all of this is going on in Central America, which was "in our backyard" as Bill Clark, Ronald Reagan, and Dick Allen and others put it.

So, it was very important for John Paul II to repudiate liberation theology, not just from a political or international geo strategic perspective, but he felt it was against the very tenants of Roman Catholicism. It was Pope Pius the XI who said one cannot be a socialist and a true Catholic, and the church had been condemning communism and socialism and encyclicals back to 1846 — two years before the communist manifesto was published. So, he thought it was really critical to reject that.

John O'Sullivan: Perhaps I could turn to Peter and asked him a question, the same kind of about which came up last night. That is the fact that the pope in Centesimus Annus writes an encyclical that comes closer than any other encyclical I can recall, to accepting of looking with some favor at least on liberal economics and capitalism. This is done at a time, or indeed just after Ronald Reagan has not simply revived capitalism in America and worldwide, but to a great degree transformed it. It was a different kind of capitalism, we call it information capitalism. We could give it other names. Would you see links between these two things, or a mere coincidence?

Peter Robinson: Well the link in the person of Michael Novak of course, who was close to the Reagan administration and close to the pope. This may tread — John, just stand up and slap me if I'm moving in a direction that you don't want me to move in, you've already mentioned that the pope overrode his bishops back in Poland. On economics, you will recall because you and I wailed in outrage at the time that the bishops in this country produced two — not encyclicals (thank goodness they didn't have binding authority on Catholics), but a letter on economics — in which they assailed Reaganomics about 27 seconds before the longest peacetime expansion in American history began. The bishops got it all wrong, and they wrote a letter on nuclear weapons and so forth, which is clearly an attack on the Reagan administration, about 28 seconds before the Reagan policy began working and cracking the Soviet regime.

It's my understanding (in fact, I think literally every other person on this panel knows more about this than I do), but it's my understanding that as those documents went back and forth to Rome, the American Bishops Conference wanted stronger statements. They kept coming back from Rome and said, "We reexamined this, reexamined that." Of course, Rome permitted the Bishops Conference in this country to go forward and get it wrong on both counts, but the documents were muted. The pope didn't come roaring in and support those documents. You got the feeling there was distance between the pontiff and the American Bishops Conference. Essentially, that's correct, isn't it?

Craig Shirley: Yes.

Paul Kengor: Especially on the nuclear letter, and it was a fellow by the name of Joseph Ratzinger who even that got involved on that one.

Peter Robinson: The name rings a bell.

Paul Kengor: He wanted one of the American bishops to consider — and Clark in particular pushed this point.

Peter Robinson: Judge Clark.

Paul Kengor: Judge Clark — as did Clare Boothe Luce at the time — that they wanted to know Ratzinger pushed the American bishops to consider if deterrence, because Clark said, "you really need to understand, we're building up in order to build down. We're building up this nuclear arsenal in order to get the Soviet to come to the table so that they will then remove their weapons." The idea isn't to build these up to use them, and so Ratzinger wanted the bishops to consider if that sort of deterrence was moral, and John Paul II himself got involved. They did revise the statement — and Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago did revise it — and they came up with a letter that was much more in line with what the Reagan administration was intending.

Craig Shirley: The economic side of the equation: during the '80 campaign (it's been overlooked), but he talked about what was his grand strategy. There are three elements to it: that the United States was morally right, and the Soviet Union was morally wrong; that you needed sufficient weapons to defeat or bargain with the Soviets; and to produce the weapons, you needed a strong economic system. Reagan was an early advocate of Jack Kemp's, what was then called the Jobs Creation Act first introduced in September of 1976. Reagan did two or three radio commentaries about it very quickly (Trump cut taxes, but I think that this is a thought that probably alludes him), but Reagan understood it intensely: It is that power can neither be created nor destroyed; It can only be moved around.

In early '81, he was meeting with a group of conservatives and he was pitching the tax cut plan, which eventually became Gramm-Rudman. He said, yeah, it's about jobs and it's about this, that, and the other thing. He said, but really, it's about reordering man's relationship to the State. Now A, that's a very profound thought and B, who in American politics talks like that anymore? He understood that Washington had accumulated too much power and the power had been taken away from the people, which is where the Framers and Founders intended it to be. It was his intention to drain power away from Washington and send it back to the people where he thought it should belong. So that was the real purpose; it was the philosophical commitment to the tax cuts, which was to return power to the States — and ultimately the individual — and take away from Washington.

Peter Robinson: John, just a tiny point. President Reagan never spoke on behalf of capitalism; he spoke on behalf of freedom, including economic freedom. Unless I'm mistaken, that was the formulation of Centesimus Annus that the pope quite explicitly was speaking. He did not support any particular political economic system, but human liberty as it applied to economics. That strikes me as there you see them both using the same formulation.

John O'Sullivan: I think he talked about three independent but mutually supportive sectors of society: the government, the economy, and on the private sector (so to speak, in all its variety), then thirdly, the cultural sector — the legal and cultural environment and organizations all of which influenced the other. It's a long time since I read Centesimus Annus. I wanted to raise a different question, Craig. We're talking at the moment a lot in this city and in America about nationalism and patriotism. Good, bad, virtue or danger, and yet both Reagan and the pope, in different ways, expressed views about nationhood and nationality. To what extent of those views, the same views toward what do they differ in your view?

Craig Shirley: Well, it's interesting. I noticed yesterday Trump in his speech at the UN used the word “sovereign” on a number of occasions, and I was happy to hear that because Reagan used to talk about the sovereign country and the sovereign states. He used to talk about “these 50 States.” He recognized the individual nature of all the states. Individual identity, the individual government, the individual economic systems of each State. Reagan was no isolationist, that's clear. He wasn't an internationalist either. Nationalism to me connotes something far different than patriotism. Nationalism borders on something anti-intellectual like, “my country, right or wrong”, where is that Reagan would recognize that the country had been wrong on a number of occasions.

He said that they were wrong, made mistakes in Vietnam, but mostly this failure will, not the failure of the men in fields and the battlefields, that we made other mistakes over the years. Reagan was no blind nationalist articulating what I would almost consider to be anti-intellectualism as far as the country, but he believed that America was here for a divine reason. He said this “island of divine freedom.” He said that on a number of occasions, he believed that the country was Godly inspired. He believed that about the individual, too. Paul would know better than I. Probably Peter too, you would know. I think that Reagan's two favorite philosophers, oddly enough, were Thomas Paine and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. He quoted them often, and you laugh, he said, “Well, how can that be?” Here's Paine, the very flower of the Enlightenment and here's Solzhenitsyn, who gives a speech at Harvard in '79 and this rated in the Enlightenment.

Reagan uses a very curious phrase in the 1980 campaign. He doesn't say, “we all say man and God.” He says, “man with God.” I think that that's very, very revealing where his mind is. The age-old argument who's at the center of the universe: God or man? I think Reagan rejected that. He hated mutually assured destruction or submission. He found a third way with SDI. He liked other options and I think he thought that if man was at the center of the universe, it was as a spiritual being because God wanted him there at the center of the universe.

John O'Sullivan: I think one of the WHAT IS THIS has got many different definitions, hasn't it?

Craig Shirley: Yes.

John O'Sullivan: It can mean as you said, anti-intellectual policy and it can mean a hyper intellectual concept in the hands of German philosophers, as indeed almost nothing else can.

Paul Kengor: Well, his two favorite Thomas Paine quotes were: "these are the times that try men's souls," and "we can begin the world all over again." So, that way he was applying that to the international battle of this time. It's interesting speaking of nationalism and patriotism because in the Evil Empire speech, he doesn't get to the Soviet Union until about two-thirds into the speech. The first part of it, he's condemning American slavery, racism, bigotry, antisemitism, ethnic hatred. So, it's a sustained attack on the sins of America first, and everybody forgets this. The press coverage at the time was in fact it was — who was it at *The New York Times*? Anthony Lewis, right? who said that it was simplistic. Henry Commager at Columbia says it's the worst presidential speech ever written.

Craig Shirley: Shallow, simplistic.

Paul Kengor: I think Cowan at *The Washington Post* have also made the point that: "What did Ronald Reagan and my grandmother have in common? They're both bigots." He said after, which was a curious take on the whole-

Peter Robinson: I hope she slapped him.

Paul Kengor: Right? But they didn't read the whole speech. I mean, he went through the speech and first laid out America for its sins, and then got to what he called barring from Whittaker Chambers in *Witness*, the focus of evil in the modern world, which was the Soviet Union. He said to beware of the temptation to blithely put yourself above it all and say we're both equally at fault. So, we're not one system is worse than the other. America has its sins, but what's going on in Moscow and the Kremlin right now in the '80s is evil. Another religious statement he said as Christians, we are enjoined by scripture in the Lord Jesus to oppose sin and evil with all of our might. So, for that reason, he's opposing it.

Peter Robinson: John, an observation that I don't know what to do with, but you or Monika might. It's just occurring to me. The pope being pope, any holder of that office, one would think would feel tremendous temptation to say, "tut, tut, these little nations don't really matter. What we're after here is global government." He runs an international institution, but John Paul II dealt with nations as nations. We forget it, but it was so powerful. He lands in a country for the first time, he gets off the airplane, and he falls to his knees, and kisses the ground. To him, nationhood mattered. That was not only a useful unit, but in some ways a sacred unit. A sacred grouping of people. I have no idea what to do with that, but it's striking.

John O'Sullivan: It's also in line with traditional Catholic teaching. Monika, you're nodding.

Monika J.: Yes. I just wanted to add that memory and identity actually says a lot about that. I wouldn't say nationalism because there are different definitions, but it says a lot about Poland. Poland as a marginal land as a country, and the beauty of this place, and about Catholicism, and of course communism. I am encouraging you to check this book, because I think that it explains a lot.

Paul Kengor: Well, Poland disappeared from the map for over a full century, Karol Wojtyła said that what kept Poland alive, in a sense, was culture, and this your area of the stage, and poetry, and writing, and literature.

Monika J.: Also, he shows his love to his country. I think that Poland actually traveled and went everywhere with him, and he was mentioning about Poland above the communism and not only communism, but it was a great reflection and to bring Poland to each and every single country and conversation and people he used to meet and talk and ...

Craig Shirley: I just want to point out that everybody's right in that Poland had a special place in Reagan's heart. There's no doubt about it. He went to Philadelphia and gave a Polish greeting, which I wouldn't attempt. Then he mentioned at the time the Eagles quarterback was Ron Jaworski, then the third-baseman slugger was Gregory Luzinski for the Philadelphia Phillies, and the Polish audience just went wild. On his last trip to Europe, he made a special side trip to Warsaw to meet with Lech Walesa and there, a 100,000 shipyard workers serenaded Reagan with song, "may you live a thousand years", 1,000 years or 100 years? That was such a special moment for Reagan.

John O'Sullivan: We're painting a picture as we go along of a very strong, effective, and generally harmonious relationship between these two men, and the things in which they believed. They weren't identical, but there was a large overlap. There must've been matters in which they deeply disagreed. What are the areas in which Reagan and the pope were at variants? There may not be many, and they may not be crucially important, but there must have been some. Perhaps I can begin with Craig and come down the line.

Craig Shirley: Well, I'd be hard pressed to say, I don't know fully as much as Paul does, his views of supply-side economics. I suspect that may have been a point of disagreement, more of a social obligation on the part of government to the common good than Reagan. Not that he wasn't committed to helping people believe ultimately that people should help themselves. So, I'm probably flying a little bit blind here on that question.

John O'Sullivan: Peter.

Peter Robinson: I just don't know of disagreements between the president and the pope. I know that the American bishops were a problem, but they-

Peter Robinson: Cardinal Hickey was the Archbishop of Washington at the time. Some nuns were killed in Nicaragua, if I recall. Some nuns that he had sent, and he was called to testify, and he made statements against the administration. Just a matter of weeks later, I got a call from his then secretary who's now Archbishop Lori, the Archbishop of Baltimore. We had known each other, and it turned out the Cardinal Hickey was appalled by the way that his statements had played out in the press. He felt that he had been used by the left and asked if... The point is that it ended up with Cardinal Hickey having lunch with Vice President George H. W. Bush to actually sort out and think through what was really happening in Central America. So, there's that kind of thing was taking place, but there's no doubt. I just am not aware of conflict between the pope and the President, but the American bishops, it just never stopped.

John O'Sullivan: It certainly was. Paul.

Paul Kengor: Well, I would add here too. I really did not see many areas of disagreement. I thought I would find more, but a couple of areas of agreement that we haven't talked about. One, Reagan and John Paul II both thought about subsidiarity, the principle of subsidiarity. That word is even I think in the Notre Dame speech. I don't know if he actually said it, but it's in one of the handwritten transcripts of the speech. The idea that local control is best. You go to the local source to try to deal with issues of poverty, whether through the town, the state, the county, all before you go to Washington, all before you go to the federal. Another was on what they both referred to constantly as a sanctity and dignity of human life.

They used those words all the time and Reagan very often quoted John Paul II on that. Finally, if you get a chance, watch on YouTube the video of the two of them speaking together in September 1987 in Miami when John Paul II gets off the plane. They're both standing there quoting the American founders. Reagan quotes Jaques Maritain, he uses line about how the founding fathers weren't metaphysicians and John Paul II's admiration of America. So, they really both had this mutual admiration of the founding fathers.

John O'Sullivan: Thank you. Monika, you have 10 seconds.

Monika J.: Thank you, you're so generous. I also can't remember about any disagreements between both of them. I think it was a great and they created a great alliance, a great collaboration and partnership that really changed the world.

John O'Sullivan: Thank you very much. By the way, a terrific partnership between these four people. I want to thank them very much indeed.