



# Reckoning with Reagan: America and Its President in the 1980s

*Michael Schaller*

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At the height of Ronald Reagan's popularity in July 1986, *Time* magazine wrote glowingly of how he had "found America's sweet spot." Reagan seemed a "magician who carries a bright, ideal America like a holograph in his mind and projects its image in the air." Not since the rhapsody about "Camelot" that surrounded John F. Kennedy in the wake of his assassination had a president been spoken of so reverently. Reagan pledged to bring Americans a "little good news" and during the next eight years, through recession and recovery, cold war and detente, success and scandal Reagan forged a powerful bond with the public. His popularity appeared so unrelated to actual achievements and so undiminished by failure that Colorado Representative Pat Schroeder dubbed him the "Teflon president." Providing a brief but comprehensive and non-polemical overview of what exactly took place during the Reagan years, Michael Schaller presents a lively account of the Reagan presidency, weighing the president's great personal and political popularity against the effects of his economic, social, diplomatic, and strategic decisions.

Much more than an account of Reagan the *man*, Schaller offers us a fascinating evaluation of the Reagan *phenomenon*, providing an accessible introduction for Americans struggling to understand the illusory and actual impact of the Reagan administration on the 1980s and on years to come.



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