Pearson Edexcel Level 3 GCE

Time 2 hours 15 minutes

Paper reference **9HI0/1F**

History

Advanced

PAPER 1: Breadth study with interpretations

Option 1F: In search of the American dream: the USA, c1917–96

Extracts Booklet

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Extracts for use with Section C.

Extract 1: From David Mervin, *Ronald Reagan and The American Presidency*, published 1990.

In his first term, Ronald Reagan was spectacularly successful in bringing about fundamental change to meet his principal objectives: to reduce the size and role of the government, to revive the economy and to strengthen the nation's defences.

Regulatory reform was a major item on Reagan's agenda. By 1982, the Office of Management and Budget was able to claim that the size of the Federal Register, listing regulations, had been reduced by a third. Deregulation brought about savings of $9 billion to $11 billion in once-only costs, and $6 billion in annual recurring costs.

Federal programmes were cut and eliminated, and devolution to the states did occur, although these achievements fell short of their goals. Big cuts in taxation did take place, although the reductions in federal expenditure were insufficient to make balancing the budget possible. The Pentagon's military budget was exempt from such reductions and entered a new era of plenty.

Overall, although limited and uneven, this is an impressive record. In gaining partial acceptance of his programme, Reagan was instrumental in the creation of a new way of thinking about the role of government. The evidence for that is best seen in the extent to which Democratic candidates and elected officials came to accept Reaganite assumptions.

Extract 2: From Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History 1974–2008*, published 2008.

By the time Reagan left office, 138 officials from his administration had been convicted of, or investigated for, official misconduct or criminal activity. These scandals flowed from an attitude of do-nothing inaction. This attitude lay behind the ideologically-driven deregulation that created the Savings and Loans catastrophe. This showed the Reaganites viewed oversight safeguards as one of the evils of "big government". Estimates of the overall costs of Reagan's rigidly-held anti-government ideology, in scandals and corruption, ran into trillions of dollars.

The mania for corporate mergers in the 1980s, applauded by conservatives, contributed to reduced competition and higher prices to consumers. Those behind mergers saw their average annual earnings rise fourfold between 1980 and 1988, as average real hourly income for the nation's wage earners stagnated or fell. Middle-class Americans filled newly-bought homes with all sorts of new appliances. Yet many of these purchases were made with easy credit, while burying their families under a mountain of debt.

The more dramatic efforts to abolish the welfare state stalled during Reagan's second term. As the Democrats' strength grew, Congress defied Reagan, and increased spending on food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and, above all, Medicare.

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Acknowledgements

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Extract 2 from: The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008 By Sean Wilentz © HarperCollins, 2008