

## Eye on Washington by Freyda Greenberg

### Latter-day astrologers

Richard Beal, who is President Reagan's Special Assistant in Charge of Planning and Evaluation (you'll find out what that is in a minute), has been busy outside his usual quarters in the White House basement lately. *EIR* ran into him at the World Futures Society conference in Washington in July, where he gave a briefing on the White House situation room, located in the basement. He came above ground again a few days later in Boston, where he addressed a seminar at the Taft School of Government of the University of Massachusetts.

For anyone who wonders why the American voters elected a Reagan administration in November 1980 and still don't have a Reagan administration, creatures like Richard Beal are important to watch. Unelected, unscrutinized by Congress, Beal and his cohorts whom the reader will meet in this column wield a power comparable (as the enthusiastic *Boston Globe* put it in covering Beal's Boston speech on Aug. 1) to the witch doctor in a primitive society, or the phenomenon readers consulted by the Caesars in the temples of ancient Rome. (The *Globe* also loved the Washington Futures conference.)

Beal is a "computerized prophet" whose policies sound more like California Governor Jerry Brown than President Reagan, and who conceives his job, according to his recent speeches, as convincing the

President that the United States is on the edge of changes that negate most of the traditional liberal or conservative beliefs.

The message, carried in opinion polls and other orchestrated "perceptions," is that in order to survive the elections, Reagan should turn over major policy decisions to outside "experts" and ditch the traditional constituencies that rejected Jimmy Carter for Reagan in 1980.

Beal told the Boston seminar that the economy of the future will favor merchants of information (like himself, of course) rather than producers of hard goods. "Productivity" will become irrelevant, as will organized labor, he said.

Beal is only one of the latter-day astrologers who work down in the White House basement. *EIR*'s investigation of these shadowy gnomes reveals that Beal is a protégé of pollster Richard Wirthlin, whose power in the Reagan administration has won the awe of the court astrologer of the most synthetic President ever to reach the White House. Patrick Caddell, Jimmy Carter's pollster, has said, "I could kiss them [Wirthlin's team] for using thematic approaches. They really do understand the importance of themes as the great projecting force of political management."

### Who is Richard Wirthlin?

Wirthlin, so the story goes, was teaching economics at the University of California in 1964. By 1980 he headed a polling and public relations firm, Decision Making Information, Inc., which grossed \$3 million from corporate banking and GOP clients. One special account involved reviving the flagging finances of Southwest Savings and Loan of Arizona.

By 1980 Richard Wirthlin was top campaign strategist for Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign. His October 1980 paper, "Seven Conditions for Victory," outlined what Reagan's image should be going into the elections. After the election, he became director of planning for Reagan's transition team. He created the Office of Planning and Evaluations and placed his employee of eight years, Richard Beal, in charge.

Then Wirthlin spawned the "Initial Action Plan" which begat the "First 90 Days Project" headed by George Bush's presidential campaign operative, David Gergen. Gergen compiled records of the first 100 days of every President since FDR, concluding: 1) this is the period to establish the President's "persona" and thus the "character of the administration"; and 2) the President must be kept from making any "big mistakes."

To accomplish this, Gergen recommended that Reagan "keep a simple focus and go strong on the economy." The team of Gergen-Wirthlin-Beal has been consistent in hammering away with this advice. Reagan should leave foreign policy and other "complicated" matters to experts, and focus on pursuing an economic recovery by means of the "supply-side" or other varieties of quackish wizardry being offered up by economic experts. Judging from results, the experts are determined to make the astrologers' prediction of an economy with no hard goods produced come true!

Wirthlin warned again in the fall of 1981 that Reagan "has to be careful not to diffuse his presidential power by getting tangled in too many diverse issues . . . managing the economic recovery will remain at the top of his agenda."

*To be continued.*