

AP US History Document Based Question

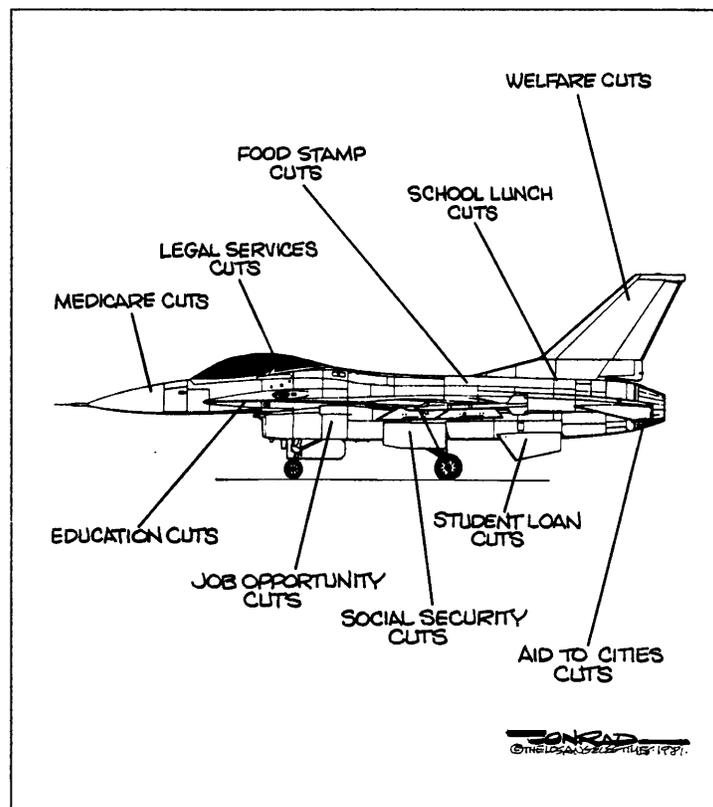
Directions: In the essay you should strive to support your assertions both by citing key pieces of evidence from the documents and by drawing on your knowledge of the period.

PROMPT: To what extent did the presidency of Ronald Reagan achieve the economic, and foreign policy goals of New Right conservatives?

Document 1

"A decade of taxflation (inflation and rising marginal tax rates) had taken most of the gains in individual incomes, leaving people no recourse but to turn to debt to finance their gains in consumption. Since the interest on debt is tax-deductible, being in debt was the only way for people to get some of their income back from the government and experience a rise in living standards. Businesses were equally encouraged by the tax system to go into debt. The only way out of this dilemma is to improve production incentives and the cash flow of individuals and businesses, while gradually reducing the rate of money growth." *The Supply Side Revolution: An Insiders Account of Policymaking in Washington* by Paul Craig Roberts, 1984, pp. 20-25, 89-94, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press"

Document 2



Paul Conrad in the *LA Times*, 1982

Document 3

“Now, let me explain what the situation is and what's at issue. With our budget cuts, we've presented a complete program of reduction in tax rates. Again, our purpose was to provide incentive for the individual, incentives for business to encourage production and hiring of the unemployed, and to free up money for investment. Our bill calls for a 5-percent reduction in the income tax rates by October 1st, a 10-percent reduction beginning July 1st, 1982, and another 10-percent cut a year later, a 25-percent total reduction over 3 years....

There are deductions to encourage investment and savings. Business gets realistic depreciation on equipment and machinery. And there are tax breaks for small and independent businesses which create 80 percent of all our new jobs. This bill also provides major credits to the research and development industry. These credits will help spark the high technology breakthroughs that are so critical to America's economic leadership in the world....Our bill is, in short, the first real tax cut for everyone in almost 20 years. . . I've not taken your time this evening merely to ask you to trust me. Instead, I ask you to trust yourselves. President Reagan Address to the Nation, August 3, 1981.

Document 4

“To shape such an effective U.S. defense strategy and a meaningful negotiating posture, President Reagan's SDI needs to be redefined. We must show the Soviets both that we can deploy a strategic defense system soon and that we will negotiate over its deployment if they are willing to make stabilizing reductions in their offensive missile forces. In the event of Soviet unwillingness to accept such an arrangement, we would be in position unilaterally to achieve strategic security for ourselves. And because the SDI would not be accompanied by a massive deployment of disarming first-strike offensive U.S. systems, we would in no way increase our strategic threat to the Soviets. Either way SDI promises a genuinely stabilized nuclear equilibrium between the United States and the Soviet Union. It is time to act.” *A Star Wars Solution* by Zbigniew Brzezinski in The New Republic, July 8, 1985, pp. 16-18.



LATimes, 1980

Document 6

“Behind me stands a wall that encircles the free sectors of this city, part of a vast system of barriers that divides the entire continent of Europe. From the Baltic, south, those barriers cut across Germany in a gash of barbed wire, concrete, dog runs, and guard towers. Farther south, there may be no visible, no obvious wall. But there remain armed guards and checkpoints all the same—still a restriction on the right to travel, still an instrument to impose upon ordinary men and women the will of a totalitarian state. Yet it is here in Berlin where the wall emerges most clearly; here, cutting across your city, where the news photo and the television screen have imprinted this brutal division of a continent upon the mind of the world. Standing before the Brandenburg Gate, every man is a German, separated from his fellow men. Every man is a Berliner, forced to look upon a scar....

There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” President Reagan's Remarks at the Brandenburg Gate, 1987.

Document 7

“ Reagan told the United Nations flatly, “the free market...works.” Conservatives thus needed to be freedom fighters. According to Reagan, conservatives should not simply be anti-big government or anti-communist or against high taxes and burdensome regulations, but, in the positive, “keepers of the flame of liberty.” By Reagan’s recounting, a conservative conserved freedom.”

In his [Reagan's] partings words from the Oval Office, he said that he wanted an “informed patriotism,” and asked, “Are we doing a good enough job teaching our children what America is and what she represents in the long history of the world?...”...Reagan feared “an eradication of the American memory that could result, ultimately, in an erosion of the American spirit. Let’s start with some basics: more attention to history and a greater emphasis on civic ritual.” He hoped that not only educators but also parents would not fail the essential civic task, a task he saw as quintessentially American. With a smile for his national audience, Reagan gently asked children to hold their parents accountable, chiding, “And let me offer lesson number one about America: All great change in America begins at the dinner table. So, tomorrow night in the kitchen I hope the talking begins. And children, if your parents haven’t been teaching you what it means to be an American, let ‘em know and nail ‘em on it. That would be a very American thing to do. A very American thing to do. For Reagan, it was as American as a shining city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed. An exceptional America. That’s how Ronald Reagan saw it.” The Blaze “Reagan and the New Conservatives”