

Pity President Reagan

Lou Cannon consistently writes hard facts about President Reagan with a truly touching gentleness. Cannon's June 6 column about the president's unawareness of his own "metamorphosis for the better," portrays a man who seems more deserving of pity than of admiration or even anger.

How else but as pathetic can we view a man who, even as he takes actions which are radically contradictory to his earlier rhetoric, can imagine only that others have changed, and that he alone has remained steadfast and true to his eternal verities?

What else but pathetic is a man who cannot be reached by arguing the merits of a case, but whose opinions can nevertheless be manipulated by whispering the right buzzwords into his ear? A man who, according to some White House sources (cited in the June 6 issue of Newsweek), holds fixed and strong views, but without the knowledge to back them up? A man who would rather be effective than right?

The headline for Cannon's analysis was misconceived, for a "metamorphosis for the better" implies a certain minimum self-awareness and understanding of the world. It is clear that the president is sadly lacking in these qualities.

Perhaps we will learn from our mistakes (electing him twice to the presidency) even while he retires into a romantic dream.

6-13-88

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