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Dionne on Obama & Reagan

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

E.J. Dionne has a very smart column up today at the Washington Post. In addition to correctly noting the similarity between Obama's second and Reagan's first inaugural addresses, Dionne corrects the record about Reagan's relationship with Tip O'Neil. Democrats have cited that relationship to argue against what they perceive as GOP intransigence, and Republicans have cited the Reagan-O'Neill relationship as evidence of what they think is Obama's lack of presidential leadership. Dionne correctly notes that Reagan got his agenda through not by convincing O'Neil of anything, that in fact O'Neil consistently voted against Reagan's policies, but by bringing along more centrist Democrats in the South who saw the handwriting on the wall for their own prospects and backed Reagan. Dionne thinks more centrist Republicans will start doing the same with the Obama agenda. Time will tell if that is how it pans out, but Dionne's correction of the historical record is well done and much needed.

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