

Ideology and Political Culture: The Intellectual Practice of Heritage Foundation

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Abstract—Think tanks is an important witness and symbol of American intellectuals' response to the "climate of opinion" and ideological transformation during the Cold War. As a pioneer of civil think tanks and their transitions, Heritage Foundation, characterized by quick response, object-oriented research and *Mandate for Leadership*, symbolized the birth of advocacy think tank. At the same time, Heritage Foundation functioned as a mediator and practitioner of neo-conservatism, which merged diverse opinions into a more feasible plan. Relying on Ronald Reagan's reform, during the 1970s and 1980s, Heritage Foundation turned the decision-making of American government towards neo-conservatism. The birth, development and practice of Heritage Foundation engaged implicit and explicit influence on the modern policy process, presenting a prism of a "knowledge-power" relationship.

Index Terms—Advocacy tank, heritage foundation, ideology, policy making.

I. INTRODUCTION

Heritage Foundation was founded in 1973. As a conservative think tank, the institution made a refreshing contribution to the intellectual practice of American civil think tanks during the Cold War. The emphasis on academic research, which had been held by think tanks like Brookings Institution, Council on Foreign Relations and Rand Corporation, was left behind by Heritage Foundation; the focus was transferred onto the communication with and advocacy towards policymakers. The practice of Heritage Foundation mainly included policy briefs, direct inquiry and media propaganda, and the institution did not hesitate to get in private touch with political parties. Meanwhile, Heritage Foundation behaved as a promoter for neo-conservatism. The think tank drew together right-wing economists, political scientists and philosophers, forming a powerful group that affected the formation and development of neo-conservatism. The intellectual practice of Heritage Foundation challenged the boundary of think tanks and to some extent symbolized the birth of advocacy tanks. Some scholar believe that some British think tanks modeled Heritage Foundation in the 1970s and 1980s. [1] In a word, in terms of either practice and structure, or Cold War policy-making and ideological dynamics, Heritage Foundation bore a transitional significance and functioned as a reference for examining the relationship between decision-makers and public opinion.

The literature and researches on the transformation of capitalism and Cold War ideologies are abundant, with

emphasis respectively on the political adjustments of Reagan government,[2] the comparison between the policy-making of Reagan and Thatcher governments,[3] specific reforms and their influences,[4] etc. However, comparatively, Heritage Foundation, a unique function as it presents, has been rather left in the corner.[5] Thus from the perspective of the beginning, reformation and practice of the think tank, this paper would discuss the correlations among Heritage Foundation, Reagan reform and neo-conservative movements.

II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HERITAGE FOUNDATION

1973 was a tricky year. In the 1970s, after 20 years of expansion, American economy reached a point of transformation. Since the reform of Roosevelt government, businessmen and capitalists had been challenging the legitimacy of government's intervention in economic and social activities. Therefore, in context of oil crisis and economic depression in the 1970s, commercial conservatism rose to suggest taking back the protection of the vulnerable and encouraging competition thus to promote economic recovery. In comparison with the active "New Leftists", however, Lewis Powell claimed that "business, including the boards of directors and the top executives of corporations great and small and business organizations at all levels, often have responded - it at all - by appeasement, ineptitude and ignoring the problem (the default and attack on business)". According to Lewis Powell, American business had shown "little stomach for hard-nose contest with their critics, and little skill in effective intellectual and philosophical debate", [6] which excluded them from mainstream political discussion. Some conservatives responded to Powell's appeal and formed a "counter-intelligentsia" which drew in William E. Simon, Irving Kristol and other activists. The group run a few journals to share opinions and kept close touch with conservative supporters, meaning to reshaping the "climate of opinion". [7] Meanwhile, other than journals and public discussion, conservatives sought to expand their outlets to policymakers and the public, thus forming the premise of Heritage Foundation. In other words, the birth of Heritage Foundation was a representation of transforming conservatism.

Before the 1970s, New Deal literals had established a firm collaboration with Brookings Institution, and the think tank had made significant contributions to the policy-making of post-war governments. As a result, "the liberal idea would become law, a new government agency would be created, a new social experiment would begin, and taxes would be raised." [8] (p. 71) In terms of activities and

influence, American Enterprise Institute was the closest to Brookings, but the intentional delay of AEI's intellectual production after the IRS investigation disappointed conservative activists such as Paul Weyrich and Edwin Feulner. The situation drove them to build up a "conservative Brookings". They aimed at a "think tank that was more activist than academic; nimbler in responding to policy debates; more in tune with the desires of conservative activists in Washington and at the grass roots; and more willing to criticize Republicans for not being forthrightly conservative". [8](p. 72)

Edwin Feulner and Paul Weyrich sought to establish a spiritual and practical platform for all conservatives. When it came to the task of the newly-formed institution, Feulner used a phrase "honest broker" to imply their willingness to promote collaboration among different groups of conservatives. In a memorandum, Fritz Rensch talked about the features and philosophy of Heritage Foundation: it was "socially acceptable" for conservative groups to promote their agendas and positions aggressively; such organizations should be managed "adhering to business principles"; "timely" aggressive marketing was necessary and would work; hands-on "public action"; a "sane", logical and well-crafted presentation of ideas was a must. [9](p. 75)

Based on the operating philosophy described by Fritz Rensch, Heritage Foundation actually leaned towards the New Rights. In late 1976, Heritage Foundation published *Secular Humanism and the Schools*, a case study of local public schools' tendency towards humanity education and parents inhibition. The brochure soon became popular and republished. [10] Other than publication, the legal adviser of the foundation, James McKenna, went to Kanawha County in West Virginia many times to assist local parents' movement to resist liberal textbooks. On the right track as it seemed, especially in terms of publication, some members of Heritage Foundation soon became aware of what was lacking in their practice. As a matter of fact, Heritage Foundation had not built an efficient access to policymakers - congressmen - thus to make it hard for their intellectual production to concentrate. As remembered by Richard Odermatt, who was the director of publication for a long time, he had to visit 20 congressmen every two weeks to pass the fresh researches. This kind of blind visit turned out not systematic and efficient. In a word, the newly-founded Heritage Foundation was still finding its own way of making itself heard.

III. THE CONTRIBUTION OF EDWIN FEULNER

As an experienced political activist, Edwin Feulner developed a perception that if not presented to the right Policymaker at the right time, the most proper idea would fail to influence public policies. Base on this perception, Feulner put extreme focus on the promotion and sale of ideas and made himself an "intellectual entrepreneur". [9] In the June of 1977, Feulner was elected the president of Heritage Foundation. His rich experience of Congress work and social relations guaranteed a full awareness of the demands of congressmen. Thus conservatives and Republicans showed full beliefs in Feulner. Paul Bauer, Feulner's supervisor and professor of LSE, believed that he

"will make good use of the considerable opportunities offered by your new position". Steve Pejovich, a fellow member of Mont Pelerin Society, commented that "I would not be surprised if before too long the Heritage Foundation becomes a real force in the nation's life". [11]

Feulner was fully aware that with a budget of a little more than one million dollars, Heritage Foundation was nothing compared with Brookings Institution and some other left-wing think tanks. But the optimist had a solid trust in the potential of the foundation and the neo-conservative movement behind, and this belief drove him to carry out a radical reform in the think tank. Firstly, Feulner introduced his colleague in Republican Study Committee Phil Truluck to be the director of study, whose task was to commit subtle and efficient studies of public policies and translate the studies to a language that would be easily taken by policymakers. Truluck kept the policy briefs like *Backgrounders* and expanded them to 15-20 pages in order to cover more policy fields. The size of the briefs should be just enough to fit in a suitcase so that they could be scanned by the congressmen wherever they were. "Get inside a person's briefcase and you have a chance to get inside his head." [9](p. 3) The innovation of Truluck was to throw a new *Issue Bulletin*, a double-sided brochure to summarize different opinions towards one issue. The publication of Heritage Foundation aimed at first-time response and presenting immediate development and analysis, which made it the first think tank to emphasize this respect of intellectual production.

Heritage Foundation's choice of researchers also went beyond traditional categories. Feulner no longer stuck to prestigious scholars and experts, but put his eyes on young men and women that attempted to join the fields of politics and academy. As he put, "we wanted people who were looking to make a mark as opposed to someone who already had made his mark." [12](pp. 84-85) "The typical Heritage analyst had recently completed a PhD, had a couple of published articles in his portfolio, and had done perhaps some work on a book." [12](pp. 84-85) The ambitious and aggressive young analysts agreed perfectly with Heritage and made it an active and optimistic institution.

The second reform was to set a senior public relations counsel, which was taken by Hugh C. Newton. The counsel was in charge of promoting Heritage's ideas to those who were able to influence public opinions. By the end of 1977, propaganda expert Herb Berkowitz joined the foundation and began to design a systematic sales strategy. Newton and Berkowitz travelled around the country and talked with editors from mainstream newspapers, offering conservative ideas and ideological contrasts as origins of media value. The result was quite immediate and clear. By 1979, Feulner's weekly comments had appeared on about 1,400 newspapers, and *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post* often quoted Heritage's research and opinions as well. [9](p. 93) By setting the public relations position, Feulner and Heritage Foundation quickly permeated into traditional media.

Since the origin of modern think tanks, the research has always been their roots and basis. Heritage Foundation was no exception, but with bigger ambition. In Feulner's view, Heritage should become a place where "conservatives could

meet for lunch, forums and roundtable discussions”; “a resource for information on the work of other conservative organizations”; and also “a comprehensive roster of conservative experts on university campuses and connect them to the Washington policy community.”[12](p. 64) Therefore, Feulner innovated the “Resource Bank” which, in the charge of his another former colleague Willa Johnson, intended to build a network among conservative intellectuals and groups across the country and make Heritage the communication center of conservative ideologies and intellectual practice. Within its first year, Resource Bank succeeded in recommending many conservatives to Congress testimony, including the well-known Thomas Sowell. It was also by Resource Bank that many less known conservatives got direct access to policymakers, and Charles Hobbs who later became a senior counsel of President Reagan was one of the beneficiaries.[9](p. 94) Resource Bank was kept refreshing by internal communication and *Annual Guide to Public Policy Experts*, and it soon included thousands of scholar and policy experts. This innovation not only smoothed the communication between idea promoters and policymakers, but also improved the efficiency of the process from intellectual production to intellectual practice.

Following think tank traditions, Heritage Foundation issued its unique journals. Feulner hired Robert L. Schuettinger to edit the quarterly-published *Policy Review*. The journal began with a controversial article written by economist Walter Williams. He discussed the damage of minimum wage to young workers and minorities. The issue that included the article was republished many times, and the journal soon entered into public view.[9](p. 96) Chris DeMuth of Harvard University appreciated *Policy Review* and predicted: “If you can sustain the high quality of the articles in the first two issues you should move very quickly into the top rank of public policy journals.”[13](p. 12) Paul Greenberg also wrote that “*Policy Review* is the conservative’s answer to the *New Republic*.”[13](p. 11) About the philosophy of intellectual practice in terms of publication, Feulner presented his opinion on a 1977 Mont Pelerin Society conference. In the paper he submitted, Feulner claimed that attention should be paid to how to transform conservative ideas to public policies. He suggested focusing on elites and making them realize where their interests were. Feulner said, “we ought not to press our ideas to the limits, but rather proceed one step at a time, always having our ultimate objectives firmly in view.” [14]

Heritage also developed a training program. Feulner kept the “Washington Semester Program”, which was open to college students and aimed to increase their understanding of Congress and legislation through one semester’s abundant courses. The participants were able to enroll in Washington colleges, take a chair in the seminar on political philosophy thrown by Schuettinger, get an internship on Capitol Hill or in Heritage Foundation. The training program was meant to cultivate future conservative leaders, and other think tanks did not hesitate to imitate. Someone used “5M Principle” to conclude Feulner’s management: Mission, Management, Members, Media, Money.[9](pp. 97-98)

The favorite words of Feulner is that “Heritage is its

people”.[9](p. 100) In a “policy entrepreneur” like him, the resource of talents was both what he sold and what he sold upon. In comparison with traditional think tanks such as Brookings, Heritage was nothing in terms of accumulation of prestige, researches and relations. Heritage thus chose a simplistic structure with less than 30 key members and a large number of temporary outsourcing groups. This structure guaranteed that it operated in an efficient, low-cost and more flexible way. The system could not live without the abundant support from conservative businessmen and entrepreneurs, and that is why it perfectly agreed with the rising neo-conservative movement. On the other hand, the social relations brought by Feulner and Truluck also guaranteed the survival of Heritage. The elitism of Heritage set a relatively high standard for its members. Apart from leading professional researches, they were also in charge of collecting feedback, socializing and communicating with congressmen and councillors.

Heritage’s stick to conservatism assures its financial supply. Fundraisers regularly reported the developments and targets to supporters and technically persuaded them to identify the tasks with their own beliefs. In April 1981, Von Kannon, former publisher and donor of *The American Spectator*, became the financial director of Heritage. He saw Heritage in a necessary market competition and asked Heritage to become an “effective spokesman” for more and more people’s views.[15] A donor who donated 10,000 dollars said: “We admire your commitment to preserving those principles and traditions that our founding fathers established more than 200 years ago.” And a member of “President’s Club” wrote: “We pray that people will be given ears to hear what you have to say, and then the courage to respond to the truth. We are grateful to be a small part of what you are doing.”[16][9](p. 105) Heritage performed well in showing their respect to the donors. For example, to a donation of \$13,9410 by Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, Feulner encouraged shareholders to write a gratitude letter and emphasize the meaning of this nice gesture.[17] The fundraising brought considerable income to Heritage Foundation. From 1974 to 1980, the income increased 13 times and reached 532,000 dollars.

Under Feulner’s leadership, Heritage Foundation set up its task and goal, formed a realistic managing system, reinforcing its connection with conservative movements and gave birth to a new type of think tanks. In a memorandum, Feulner specifically emphasized that the core target remained public policy process and congressmen.[18] In the memorandum, Feulner turned down “Professors’ Project” and located Heritage Foundation in the field of public policy institute instead of academy, with the major task to prove proper information to policymakers at proper time.[19] He required Truluck to report the daily work of all departments, which is no difference to the management of ordinary commercial business. Feulner spent most of his time on fundraising and selling the think tank. In mid 1977, Feulner was invited to the “Public Policy, Politics and Power” seminar and discussed policy concerns with representatives from AEI, Hoover Institution and other conservative think tanks, which meant Heritage had been accepted by peers. By 1979, Heritage Foundation had transformed from an obscure think tank to an important mediator and intellectual

producer of American conservatives. Libertarians, religious rights, new rights, old rights and neo-conservatives cooperated on the Heritage platform and then affected the climate of public opinion which policymakers were also in. With the coming of the presidential election, Heritage Foundation was fully prepared for making its mark.

IV. MANDATE FOR LEADERSHIP AND REAGAN'S REFORM

In the November of 1979, president candidate Ronald Reagan promised a 30-percent personal tax cut; an orderly transfer of federal programs with funding to state and local levels; a revitalized energy program based on increased production of oil, natural gas and coal; a diplomatic and military strategy to meet the challenge of the Soviet Union; and a North American economic accord among the United States, Canada and Mexico.[9](p. 126) And he put forward the principles of "self-reliance, self-discipline, morality and responsible liberty for every individual", [20] which corresponded with the advocacy of Heritage Foundation and neo-conservatives. Reagan thus became the political representative of conservatives.

The relation between presidents and think tanks tended to be subtle; the interaction usually lied under the sea level. As an advocacy tank, Heritage Foundation took it as its primary task in 1979 to realize its conservative policy goals through Reagan's campaign. A meeting of board of trustees this year was about the ways of the new government to deal with all kinds of challenges. Jack Eckerd thought that Heritage should "become more involved in some type of program which would study this problem [of government size] and propose solutions".[9](p. 127) William Simon and Eckerd agreed that the power of the government and the knowledge and information of think tanks should be combined to improve administrative efficiency. Edwin Feulner - with a more realistic mind - proposed "a project which would suggest ways to cut government size, manage it more effectively, and promote free enterprise".[21] This proposal was based on Feulner's accurate observation of government's shortage: "The new and hopefully conservative administration should have some source of information and guidance other than what you get from the incumbents whom you replace." [22] Selected information would misguide the new administration and inhibit beneficial reforms. In order to dredge the tunnels of information, Heritage Foundation decided to take a "big gamble" and provide a guidebook to the transitional government after the 1980 election. They bet on the winning of Ronald Reagan and Heritage's ability to operate such an enormous project.

On a meeting of trustees in December 1979, Feulner proposed a general plan. The plan focused on the conservative agendas of the first hundred days and pointed out that the guidebook would not offer elixir or elaborate diverse conservative ideas, but to provide specific suggestions that "would help revitalize our economy, strengthen our national security and halt the centralization of power in the federal government".[23] Based on Feulner's plan, the general director Charles Heatherly wrote a five-page outline in 1980 January and proposed setting up research groups in correspondence with governmental

departments and agencies. Each group would have 20 members with one leader and one vice-leader. The group members must include Capitol Hill staff, conservatives that had worked in Nixon or Ford administration and scholars. Group leaders were in charge of recruiting members and submitting drafts by 1980 June 1st. The only requirement of the drafts is to "have continuity and conformity" to conservative principles.[9](p. 129)

With a total budget of \$250,000 and based on the Resource Bank and Academic Bank, leaders were soon determined. The standard of choice was ability rather than prestige. The head of the regulatory agencies group was James E. Hinrichs Jr., a young policy designer of way less reputation than his ability. Hinrichs "recruited an outstanding team and did yeoman's work in coordinating the regulatory reform study".[24] Also none-known William Bennett was selected as the vice-leader of "National Endowments for the Humanities and Arts" group thanks to the Resource Bank. Meanwhile, in case that the public recognize Heritage as a political intellectual group, Heatherly sent letters to both Reagan and Carter and invited them to review the researches. Although Carter and his team never showed up, this action did avoid potential controversies. Also when researcher Jeff Gayner was appointed as Reagan's campaign advisor, Feulner seriously warned him against doing the advising job during work time. All the cautious moves were to prevent Heritage from losing the tax-free privilege.[25]

Based on Ronald Reagan's "family, work, neighborhood, peace, freedom" speeches, Heritage Foundation published *Mandate for Leadership*, a 1093-page guidebook, and it soon became an important reliance of the transitional administration. Not only did the president himself appreciate the book,[26] but the OMB director-designate David Stockman also admitted that "leaders in both the new administration and the Congress will find in this work all the tools they need to hit the ground running". Representative Trent Lott complimented the book as "unparalleled in scope".[27] Even influential names like Richard Nixon and David Abshire recognized the work to be of great significance to the conservative movement. [28] Media also tended to appreciate the *Mandate*. *Washington Post* described the book as "an action plan for turning the government toward the right as fast as possible". Gannett News Service used "unabashedly conservative" and "candor and plain" to describe the language style. *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* appreciated Heritage as "one of the nation's most respected private research organizations".[27](p. i)

Feulner and Heatherly guided *Mandate* into a guidebook for public policy rather than a monograph of theories. The advice in the book was specific and operable. For instance, the defense chapter suggested increasing the production of trident submarine as to build a three-dimensional national defensive system. The interior chapter advised giving the rights to mine, reclaim and water back to states. In the finance chapter, Norman Ture gave out step-by-step plans for tax reduction, taxation reform, tax types and economic development.[29] The contents of *Mandate* reflected how Heritage identified itself and became a reference to the decision-making of the transitional administration.

Mandate functioned not only as a guidebook, but also as a

list of conservative talents. Pendleton, the director of White House personnel, called for administrators from the writers of the book. Feulner claimed that “there were many qualified conservatives in Washington capable of heading a federal agency or department”, so “there was no need to rely on political retreads from the Nixon and Ford administration who might not understand what the Reagan Revolution was about”. [12] (p. 117) 250 scholars and policy analysts took part in the *Mandate* project, of whom 15 were appointed by the transitional administration as senior agents. Norman Ture was appointed to be the Treasury’s undersecretary for tax and economic affairs, while economist Manuel Johnson became one of the governors of the Federal Reserve. Aside from them, 14 Heritage members advised Reagan’s president’s campaign, and some of them took temporary jobs after the election. Willa Johnson worked for 6 months in personnel affairs and Charles Heatherly was once a special assistant to the secretary of education. Relying on the success of *Mandate*, in December 1980, Heritage held an unprecedented training seminar for congress staff, which engaged more than 200 job-seekers.

In face of the remarkable success, Feulner was cautious enough to point out that the election was just the first step to realize the policy ideal of conservatives. In an interview, Feulner claimed that “the honeymoon is so short; after you’ve been here for more than 60 or 90 days, people start looking on you as part of the problem rather than part of the solution”. [22] The caution of Feulner and Heritage influenced Reagan administration into realizing their promises like playing hard on diplomacy and ceasing the control on oil price. Tax reduction and national defense reinforcement were soon on the agendas as well. For this, Reagan wrote to Feulner and expressed his gratitude: “Thanks to you, we have began our historic journey toward national renewal..... I would like to continue our partnership for the American people.” [30] Thus Heritage Foundation quickly transformed itself to the advisor, critic and provider of feedback of Reagan Revolution.

During Reagan’s first term, the focus was on tax reform, of which the major result was the “Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981”. The act saved 749 billion dollars for private and entrepreneurial taxpayers in the next five years. Heritage Foundation played a key role in the legislation of the act. When Reagan submitted the draft to the Congress, the Democrats also presented a reform plan, which formed a counteraction between parties. As a response to the Democrats, Heritage Foundation published *An Analysis of the Reagan Tax Cuts and the Democratic Alternative* and used comparison to demonstrate the merits of Reagan’s plan: (1) its tax cut was bigger-25 percent to the Democrats’ 15 percent; (2) it would be enacted over three years instead of the Democrats’ two years; (3) it cut marginal tax rates across the board, while the Democrats aimed two-thirds of their cuts at low-and middle-income taxpayers. [9] (p. 142) The author Thomas M. Humbert argued that the logic of Reagan’s approach was for individuals to pursue personal interests “unhindered by government”, thus to generate enormous productive force to promote the economic development of the whole nation. [31] The book became a frequently-quoted reference for Congressmen and media.

Heritage’s support for tax cuts partly came from the ideas

of Hayek and Milton Friedman, which believed in the ability of market and people to motivate economic growth. On the other hand, Heritage counted on the reduction of government output to weaken the concentrated power of federal government. Therefore, the choice of Heritage was not fully originated in politics because it was also a reflection of conservative ideology.

Heritage did not limit its ambition to tax cuts; governmental budgets also came into its sight. In the beginning of 1981, Heritage published *Agenda for Progress: Examining Federal Spending*. The book- edited by researcher Eugene McAlliste and collected the wisdom of 20 college scholars and economists- argued that the execution of public policies should take more account of private sectors and individuals, implying the privatization of industries and commercial projects in order to achieve lower budgets. The book used many cases and data to demonstrate the benefits of privatization and provided theoretical support. David Stockman’s evaluation of Heritage’s work in this respect was “invaluable”. [15] (p. 7)

Also in 1981, Heritage published *Reforming the Military*, aiming at transforming the idea of national defense. The essential question of the book was how to improve the efficiency of military budgets, and the author put up “combat effectiveness” as the criterion of military decisions and argued that the key was to defeat the enemy rather than economic efficiency. [32] The research put strategic consideration ahead of simple increase of output when it came to the comparison between the United States and the Soviet Union. There were a number of specific proposals in the book such as replacing the “attrition/firepower” style of warfare with more maneuverable settlements, reactivating World War II battleships and using less expensive and more flexible fighters. [9] (p. 145) Beyond the book, Heritage stuck to its approach that combined national defense strategies with foreign relations and took advantage of *Backgrounder* to present latest observations of the Soviet Union, France and Latin America. The advantage of quick response was prevalent. For instance, before the president of Jamaica visited America, Heritage had worked out a report of Jamaican economy in favor of the coming negotiation. And just one day after Alexander Haig’s declaration of fight against terrorism, Heritage published *The Soviet Strategy of Terror*, which was more than a coincidence.

At a press briefing in March 1982, Feulner and General Daniel Graham presented a Heritage research on American space strategy, which made a considerable difference on American national defense and even the end of Cold War. The research put forward a concept “High Frontier” and argued that the space would decide the tendency of war and peace. The work suggested developing a multisatellite ballistic missile defense system capable of blocking enemies outside of the continent and achieving real stability and security. High Frontier strategy expected to equip the United States with bigger power beyond its conventional and unconventional weapon systems. [33] This concept made an important contribution to the construction of Strategic Defense Initiative.

A program like Strategic Defense Initiative was challenged by many interest groups. For example, Secretary of State George Shultz directly condemned the president’s

science adviser as “a lunatic”, worrying that the program would sabotage the NATO cooperation. At critical moments like this, it was Heritage Foundation and other conservative think tanks that reinforced Reagan’s determination to reform. Eventually, in a speech on March 23rd 1983, President Reagan settled the program as his “ultimate goal”.[34] The firm hand of the president could at least be partly attributed to the shaping of the climate of opinion by Heritage Foundation.

The Cold War dynamics in the 1980s drove America’s eyes on Asia. The establishment of diplomatic relations and the economic boom of East Asia forced American elites to re-evaluate the position of East Asian countries on their international outlook. In 1982, Heritage Foundation established an Asian Studies Center. Confident in the future influence of Asia, Feulner invited the recently retired national security advisor Dick Allen as the research director. The initial focus of the center was on the “Four Asian Tigers” - South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore- and their origins of economic boom. Mainland China was usually the comparative object so as to make up a “common sense” that the mainland economy relied nothing but forced labor. This output of ideological ideas was not to sabotage the re-established relations between the US and China, but to force China to accept the international rules set by Americans and integrate the potential Chinese market into the operating track of capitalism.[35][9](pp. 156-157) While advocating economic freedom and free trade, Asian Studies Center also paid attention to the interactions between the United States and Chinese Taiwan and attempted to mediate US-Chinese relations.

In a commentary article in *Washington Post*, the writer vividly wrote: “If America is weaving unsteadily back toward the right-hand side of the road, The Heritage Foundation [sic], while not at the steering wheel exactly, is filling the gas tank, turning the engine and shoving a road map under the driver’s nose.”[36] The comment pointed out Heritage’s assistant position in the neo-conservative movement. The cooperation between Feulner and Truluck guaranteed the fundraising and intellectual production of the think tank, and their innovative our sourcing had been a positive tradition since Feulner’s reform. Feulner’s charisma and the simplistic structure of Heritage are key to the tradition, which saved extra costs as well as easily achieving a clear division of labor and a joint force.

In December 1984, Ronald Reagan won the election with a sweeping point, and Heritage Foundation produced *Mandate for Leadership II*. The book concluded Reagan Revolution during the first term and advised on the next four years. In terms of internal affairs, *Mandate II* urged increasing support for education, promoting market liberalization and enterprise privatization, deepening the social security reform. The national defense and military chapter stressed the significance of “Star Wars Program” and NATO alliance. National Endowment of Democracy was suggested to propagate pluralism and raise “human rights” issues.[37] Like its former counterpart, *Mandate II* was aimed at realistic reforms and reflected the policy visions of conservatives. *USA Today* described the book as “a new battle cry for recasting the U. S. government in a conservative image”, while *Saturday Review* recognized it

as a representative of “the consequences of ideas”.[38]

With the expansion of Heritage’s influence, the Resource Bank also became so large that a book launch could draw together 400 elites including Congressmen, journalists and scholars. By 1985, Heritage Foundation had established regular communication with 1,200 scholars and 250 think tanks, public interest legal groups, education institutions and other policy studies institutes. The annual meeting of Heritage became kind of a conservative feast. In April 1988, 130 representatives from more than 90 public policy institutions participated in the 11th conference of the Resource Bank. As the “Washington Cinderella”, Heritage Foundation shared its experience with other think tanks and public policy institutes and became the model for many local organizations. In 1984, Feulner flew to Chicago and shared his experience and knowledge with the “students” from local think tanks.

Overall, Ronald Reagan, the neo-conservative movement and Heritage Foundation supported each other in the historical process. Reagan was always supportive, considerate and compassionate to Heritage, which improved the confidence of the think tank and Feulner. On the other hand, Heritage Foundation tried its best to make appeals and policy designs for Reagan Revolution, which eventually contributed to the recovery of American politics, economy and national defense in the 1980s. The neo-conservative movement constructed the context and background of the interaction between Reagan and Heritage. In fact, however, Heritage kept active even after Reagan ended his second term and played a role in Clinton’s reform as well. The long-time influence of Heritage demonstrated that its energy of motivation actually originated from the conservative dynamics rather than the power of one certain administration.

V. CONCLUSION

The historical process of Heritage Foundation reflected a “knowledge-power” interaction - an important part of western political culture - in three aspects.

Firstly, Heritage Foundation was a combination of think tank as an intellectual entity and the rise of neo-conservative ideology. As pioneers and supporters of the ideology, Joseph Coors, Paul Weyrich and Edwin Feulner established Heritage as a platform for policy elites to communicate and produce conservative ideas. The extremely realistic operation of Heritage was characterized by its concentrated management, direct-mail fundraising, out-sourcing research and “sales of ideas” concept. The innovations it contributed to think tanks and other intellectual organizations were remarkable. The phenomenal “Heritage pattern” composed the prologue of the rise of advocacy think tanks. Influential think tanks like Adam Smith Institute and American Center for Progress were partly modeled after Heritage.

Secondly, Heritage Foundation functioned as both the stand-bearer and the mediator of neo-conservative movements. Through Heritage, the ideologies of limited government, market liberalization, individual freedom and strong national defense were transformed into specific intellectual products and presented to policymakers and the public. Sometimes the intellectual products could cast an

explicit influence on policies as the contribution of *Mandate* to Reagan Revolution. Sometimes the intellectual practice implicitly shaped the climate of opinions and prepared the elites and the public for reforms and revolutions. The neo-conservative movement was a complicated political and social movement, which involved extreme rights, new rights, religious rights, medium liberals and old rights. The mix and contrast of ideas used to confuse policymakers. Towards that, Heritage Foundation collected diverse opinions, filtered them using Resource Bank and presented a proceeded collection of information to the Congress, the administration and the public. And thanks to the convenience assured by its social network, the platform function of Heritage was rather irreplaceable in the movement.

Thirdly, however, the close connection with the Congress and the government sometimes brought doubts and challenges to Heritage. The critics condemned the party inclination of the think tank and call for the cancellation of its tax-exempt privilege. Although Feulner was cautious enough to warn the members against enrolling too much into political activities, the public image remained that Heritage was an exclusive intellectual supporter to the Republicans, which inhibited Heritage from becoming the conservative equivalent of Brookings. But in an era of conservative rise, Heritage never thought about getting rid of ideological labels and did benefit from the firm stand. This, too, demonstrated the mutual influence between knowledge and power.

By exploring the historical process of Heritage Foundation, this paper illustrates the framework of modern government and policy process. From the perspective of think tanks, intellectuals form the focus in spite of the complexity of politics. Therefore, further studies should be expected to introduce the government, the public and other agencies (research committees, universities, etc.) to build a more dynamic and multi-dimensional analysis.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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