

"THE SPEECH": WALTER F. MONDALE

We're going to win this election. They say I'm behind in the polls. But they don't understand: polls don't vote; people vote.

I remember coming through Texas a couple of weeks before the 1982 election, and all the people I met were wearing long faces because Mark White was losing in the race for governor. And I remember, the day before the election, Mark White told me he was eight points behind in the polls. But he won that race. And we're going to win this one.

We will win because we're all together. Over the years, we have lost when we've been divided. But this time, Mondale people, Hart people, Jackson people, Cranston people, Glenn people -- we're all together here.

Second, we will win because we're right. The issues are with us. The need for a change in leadership is obvious to the American people.

Third, we will win because we're mad. We're mad about what this crowd has been doing to us these past four years. We know the stakes are high. We know we can't afford to lose. And we don't intend to.

The other week, Mr. Reagan went to Waterbury, Connecticut, and he reminded the people there of John F. Kennedy's final campaign speech when he was running for President in 1960. Thousands of people waited until well past midnight to hear him. They braved a driving rain. And within twenty-four hours of that last speech, he had been elected President of the United States.

Both Mr. Reagan and I remember that wonderful night, but for different reasons. That night, I was the Minnesota Chairman of JFK's campaign. And Mr. Reagan was heading up an organization called Democrats for Nixon.

Now Mr. Reagan is singing a different tune. He's praising John Kennedy. And at his Party's Convention in Dallas, they quoted FDR, Truman, and even my friend, Hubert Humphrey.

What a cynical rewrite of history that is. Can you imagine Roosevelt giving tax breaks to millionaires and socking it to working people -- as this crowd did?

Can you imagine Truman letting nearly 300 Marines and American personnel die in Lebanon -- and then passing the buck?

Can you imagine Jack Kennedy trying to gut Social Security?

Can you imagine Johnson trashing the Civil Rights Laws and denying the existence of hunger?

Today, Mr. Reagan and his Party are asking Democrats to cross the line and join the Republicans -- as if it didn't matter. But take a second look at the Republican home you're being sold, and the platform it's built on.

Do you really want to join a Party that intends to put government between you and the most private choices of your life?

Do you really want women to be paid less than men for the same work?

Do you really want politicians to choose prayers for your children?

Do you really want to get us deeper into war in Central America?

Do you really want to join a Party that believes we can "prevail" in a nuclear war?

Now some people have declared this election over. They've announced a Republican landslide. In other words, they're telling you, your vote won't count. They're saying your voice doesn't matter.

The truth is, this crowd doesn't want you to think about the stakes in this election. They want to trivialize it.

That is arrogance. We are in a Presidential election. This is a season for passion and principle.

This election is not about jelly beans and pen pals. It is about toxic dumps that give cancer to our children.

This election is not about banners and balloons. It is about old people who can't pay for medicine.

This election is not about who is proud of our Olympic athletes -- we all are. It is about the civil rights laws that opened athletics to the women and minorities who helped win those gold medals.

This election is not about sending a teacher into space. It is about improving teaching and learning here on earth.

This election is not about the size of my opponent's crowds. It is about the size of his deficits.

This election is not about Republicans sending hecklers to my rallies. It is about Jerry Falwell picking Justices for the Supreme Court.

This election is not about my standing in the polls. It is about my stand against the illegal war in Nicaragua.

This election is not about slogans, like "standing tall." It is about specifics, like the nuclear freeze -- because if those weapons go off, no one will be left standing at all.

This election is about values. I refuse to cut loose from my history and desert the beliefs I have always fought for. I would rather lose a race about decency than win one about self-interest. I would rather fight for the heart and soul of America -- than fight for the bonuses of the Fortune 500.

In this campaign, I will do everything I can to focus our nation on the real issues -- whatever the political consequences. It must never be said that in 1984, we did not know what we were doing.

I won't permit this crowd to steal the future from our children without a fight. I won't let them put ice in our soul without a struggle. They have a right to ask for your vote. But I'll be damned if I'll let them take away our conscience.

In the last few days, we've heard a soothing new tone from Mr. Reagan, and we welcome it. For four years, he sounded like Ronald Reagan. Now he's trying to sound like Walter Mondale.

The new Reagan meets with Gromyko. The old Reagan was the first President since Herbert Hoover not to meet with his Soviet counterpart.

The new Reagan praises arms control. The old Reagan opposed every arms control agreement reached by every President of both political parties since the bomb went off.

The new Reagan condemns nuclear war. The old Reagan crowd talked about winning nuclear war and firing nuclear warning shots.

The new Reagan praises peace groups. The old Reagan insulted supporters of a mutual, verifiable freeze.

This Presidential sea-change raises a crucial question: which Reagan would be President if he's re-elected?

Well, there's a clear choice. If you pick Walter Mondale as President, you'll get a President who works for peace from the first day he's in office, not from the first day of his campaign for re-election.

A President must know what he wants. But he must also be in touch and in charge. There is no reason to doubt Mr. Reagan's desire for peace. He dreams the same dreams that we do. But a President must also master, command, learn, and lead.

You can dream all you want. But if you believe that nuclear missiles can be recalled after they're launched -- as Mr. Reagan did -- you won't lead us toward a safer world.

You can dream to your heart's content. But if you believe that submarines and bombers don't have nuclear warheads on them -- as Mr. Reagan thought -- you won't move us back away from the brink.

You can dream of the lion lying down with the lamb. But if you don't bother to learn that most Soviet missiles are land-based -- as Mr. Reagan didn't bother to learn -- then your efforts at arms control are doomed.

When the fate of the earth is at stake, good intentions are not enough. And good intentions are all that we have today.

I don't doubt that the President is for peace. But he has not mastered what he must know to command his own government, and to lead. When a President doesn't know what he must, he can't command. It guarantees deadlock among his advisors. The forces of inertia inevitably prevail. Those who oppose progress almost always win. When a President is not vigorously involved, things just don't happen -- and they're not.

In Central America, there are no talks.

In the Middle East, there is no policy.

In Lebanon, there was no protection.

And on earth, there is no arms control.

Finally, a President must be responsible for his presidency. He must be accountable. If he won't, no one else in the government will.

We don't have that today. Three times in 17 months, brave American personnel have been attacked and killed in Lebanon. The first time, it could have happened to anyone. The second time, when over 200 Marines lost their lives, it could have been prevented. The Joint Chiefs of Staff warned the President not to put our troops in that unprotected position.

But this time, it is inexcusable. These terrorists' threats were publicly known. The Long Commission, the State Department, and the Defense Intelligence Agency all warned that the East Beirut embassy was in danger, and recommended security measures. But they weren't implemented.

Instead, Mr. Reagan's response has been a parade of alibis. First, he said everything that could have been done was done, and we all know differently.

Second, he compared the tragedy to remodelling a kitchen. But we all know, when you're dealing with bloody terrorists, you need a tough President who does what needs to be done to protect our people.

Third, he tried to blame the previous administration for weakening our intelligence capabilities. But even his own Vice President and

CIA Director ran away from that one.

And fourth, he blamed the press. After that, even Gerald Ford told him to own up and take responsibility.

A President must be accountable for his own government. Harry Truman had that sign on his desk that said, "The Buck Stops Here." Mr. Reagan should put a sign on his desk that says, "The Buck Stops Everywhere But Here."

This election is about leadership for our future. When John Kennedy spoke at Waterbury in 1960, he said this: "ours is a great country, but it must be greater." This year, the debate is between those who say America is back, and those who want America to go forward. I say it is time to raise our sights -- toward excellence, and toward the future. It is time to remind ourselves what America is all about.

The other week, Mr. Reagan and I both spoke at the Italian-American Foundation dinner in Washington, D.C.

He told a moving story about an Italian immigrant who came to America, penniless; lived on a meager income; and worked hard to raise his family. In the third generation, they had a bright young son, and when he decided he wanted to become a surgeon, they sacrificed everything to send him to college and medical school. One day, that surgeon saved the life of a President. And Mr. Reagan said, I know, because I was the patient.

A few days later, the surgeon -- Dr. Joseph Giordano -- wrote an article you may have seen. In it, he said, Mr. President, you only told us part of the story.

Yes, my parents sacrificed for me. But I was also helped through college by low-interest federal student loans.

Yes, I saved your life, and I was proud to do it. But the medical technology I used probably wouldn't have existed without years of federally-funded research.

And yes, my parents worked hard all their lives. But now they rely on Social Security, and more than once my father has benefited from Medicare.

Mr. President, there are millions of wonderful Americans making it on their own. But there are millions of others who need a little help once in a while -- just as you needed a little help the day Dr. Giordano saved your life.

That's what kind of people we are. And that's the difference between Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale.

Now, we've got a few days to go before we make a crucial choice about building our nation's future. I need your help, not for myself,

but for our future.

By the end of this decade I want to walk into any classroom in America, and hear some of the brightest students say, "I want to be a teacher."

By the end of this decade, I want to walk into any public health clinic in America and hear the doctor say, "We haven't seen a single hungry child this year."

By the end of this decade, I want to walk into any store in America; pick up the best product, of the best quality, at the best price; turn it over; and read, "Made in the U.S.A."

By the end of this decade, I want to point to the Supreme Court and say, "Justice is in good hands."

By the end of this decade, I want to go to my second inaugural, raise my right hand, and swear to "preserve, protect, and defend" a Constitution that includes the Equal Rights Amendment.

And by the end of this decade, I want to ask our children about their dreams, and hear not one word about nuclear nightmares.

Give me your help, and we can build that future together.

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