

AMERICA'S NEW FREEDOMS
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AFTER REAGAN

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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Note by Robert Porter Lynch: The transcript below is abridged, leaving out the references to the Dukakis/Democratic opposition, which is not as relevant today as is the clarity of mission and purpose of the Republican Party. It also leaves out a few references to specific governors who are no longer on the political stage. The readers will note that *nowhere* in the speech does Kean use the word "Conservative" but instead emphasizes "Republican." The shift to "conservative" is a new redefinition of a now-polarized party.

Tonight I would like to take you on a journey into America's future.

We begin, oddly enough, centuries ago, when a ship on a monumental voyage found itself beset by debate and argument, some wanted the ship to reverse course. They cried, "Turn back, turn back." But the Santa Maria stayed its course, and mankind gained a new world with unlimited hopes and horizons.

The President we elect this year will preside over the 500th anniversary of Columbus' journey -- the first voyage in pursuit of the American dream.

Historians today agree that Columbus was right to ignore his doubters. But what about our voyage? I would not presume to predict the judgment historians will make of Ronald Reagan, but I do know they must report the facts.

They will report that today 17 million more Americans have jobs than just eight years ago.

They will report a "Second American Emancipation" working men and women freed from the oppression of Jimmy Carter's inflation.

They will report the incredible fact that the leader of the Soviet Union went on television and admitted that communism has failed.

They will report that for the very first time in the Nuclear Age, instead of designing new weapons of destruction, we are destroying old ones.

But my friends this election is not about the past, but the future.

Very simply, it is about which party is willing to tell the truth to the American people.

You see this flag of red, white and blue? It symbolizes the "Land of the Free" and "Home of the Brave." Well, their media consultants [for the Democratic Convention] said they didn't think the colors looked good on television. So they changed red to pink, blue to azure, and the white to eggshell. Well, I don't know about you, but I believe Americans, Democrat and Republican alike, have no use for pastel patriotism.

Now I ask you should this country tolerate cynicism?
Should this country tolerate a campaign of deliberate deception?
Should this country tolerate a campaign that pits one American against another?

Our Party will not divide people -- we will bring America together.

We are not afraid to show our true Republican colors. Our purpose was spoken more than 100 years ago by a man who said America means a government whose "leading object is to elevate the condition of men -- to lift artificial weights from all shoulders -- to afford every person an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life."

Those words were Abraham Lincoln's and my fellow Republicans, his creed is our creed. When we have followed it, we have succeeded. When we have deviated from it, we have failed.

The very first act Lincoln signed as President was the Homestead Act. It offered land in the west to every American. It didn't matter if you were a man or woman, if you were black or white, if you were young or old -- as long as you worked the land. No new bureaucracy. No spending required. This Republican program limited government while offering to all unlimited dreams.

Today Americans have the same dreams, but the answer to those dreams will not come through bigger government in Washington. You see, that's what the Democrats offer. It's no wonder the most popular movie in Atlanta during their Convention was "Big" -- they thought it was a documentary on their philosophy of government.

Liberal Democrats believe Washington should manage dreams for all Americans.

Republicans believe Americans should have the freedom to achieve our dreams ourselves.

Republicans believe that if liberty is threatened anywhere, it is threatened everywhere.

We will never turn our backs on the Refusenik in the Soviet Union, the black student in South Africa, or the brave freedom fighter in Nicaragua.

Jeanne Kirkpatrick is right when she says that when comes to defending America, George Bush knows best.

We live in a dangerous and uncertain world. We need the ship of state in seasoned, strong and steady hands.

I am a student of history. I want to tell you something Americans need to understand. In 200 years, there has never been a candidate for President whose experience in world affairs and knowledge of foreign nations exceeds that of George Bush.

If the Reagan-Bush years have proved anything it is that the heroes of the American economy are not paper pushers along the Potomac, but dream makers in Dayton, Denver, and Dallas.

At a time when costs are rising, when we are paying more for insurance, housing, medical care and college tuitions, the liberal Democrats want to take money out of the pockets of working men and women because they think Washington can spend it better. But the average people I know don't want to pay higher taxes.

Low taxes create more jobs than any government program.

In New Jersey, the Reagan-Bush tax cuts have created almost three quarter of a million new jobs -- jobs with bright futures. And here's one governor from a Northeastern state who is not afraid to give credit for our economic miracle to George Bush and Ronald Reagan.

But the Reagan-Bush recipe of low taxes and economic freedom is not just working in New Jersey, in Florida or California.

The recipe is working far beyond our borders.

Around the world, people are voting with their feet for capitalism over communism

Just think for a moment. How many West Germans climb the Berlin Wall to East Germany? Not one. How many Malaysians pack up and plan to move north to Vietnam? Not one. And I ask you, how many Costa Ricans tomorrow morning will stand in line for visas to Nicaragua? Not one. They would have to be out of their minds.

And even communist nations are finally realizing that Karl Marx knew about as much about economics as Groucho Marx. The People's Republic of China is experimenting with free enterprise. Even the Soviet Union is changing.

The year I graduated college, Nikita Khrushchev declared that our children would live under communism. Today, history is on our side. We dare hope that Khrushchev's grandchildren will live under freedom.

Look at the free world. Britain. France. Japan. Italy. All cutting taxes; all expanding opportunity.

At a time when almost every nation in the World is beginning to turn our way -- let us not make the mistake in this election of turning their way.

But let us also understand that the ship of state is venturing into uncharted and turbulent waters. The watch bell has rung. We need all hands on deck.

Eight years ago, we gained power because Americans yearned for freedom.

Freedom from the shackle of high taxes;

Freedom from the tyranny of inflation;

Freedom from the burdens of big government.

And we want freedom from the embarrassment of an America that wore a "kick me" sign on its back.

Well, we Republicans delivered.

After eight years of Ronald Reagan and George Bush, our country is stronger, safer and better today -- and Americans are proud to admit it.

But new challenges lie ahead. And we won't win by simply punching the VCR and replaying the last election. And you know what -- America won't win either.

The Democratic Party failed because they kept offering the "New Deal" long after it became the "Old Deal." We should learn from their mistakes.

We want to take the Reagan-Bush principles into new areas where liberal policies have failed.

Today America demands a new vision we want new freedoms.

Freedom from fascism.

Freedom from poor schools.

Freedom from polluted oceans.

Freedom from crack dealers.

And most of all, we want freedom to know that our future will be made right here: in the United States of America.

Many of us have been blessed with good jobs, good homes and good families, but we also care about those who are not so fortunate.

We have to care. Because their future is now our future. Their tomorrow is our tomorrow.

The simple truth is: There are no spare Americans.

To those who are ill-schooled, ill-trained, or ill-housed, we must reach out and lift the artificial weights as Lincoln promised.

As Republicans, we will do it not only because economically it is the only thing to do; but because morally it is the right thing to do.

One hundred years ago this summer, an ex-slave and proud Republican stood before another convention of our party. Frederick Douglass said, "A government that can give liberty in its constitution ought to have the power to protect liberty in its administration."

One hundred years later, bigotry and intolerance still threaten. We have seen it in Howard Beach, New York, Forsythe County, Georgia, and too many other places.

Republicans will make it clear -- **we will search out bigotry and racism and we will drag it into the sunshine of understanding and make it wither and die.**

We Republicans offer liberty not just from prejudice, but from poverty.

The Democrats gave us the war on poverty and poverty won. Hosea Williams said it best: "The war: on poverty failed, because by the time it trickled down to the poor, all we got was scraps from the table."

We offer poor Americans not the junk food of government make-work programs, but the full meal of good private sector jobs.

Our idea is simple. Cut taxes in inner cities and new businesses and new jobs will flock to places like Oakland, California and Gary, Indiana.

In my state, these tax cuts -- called urban enterprise zones -- have created over 20,000 jobs, in neighborhoods that were torn by riots 20 years ago.

We would create thousands of good inner city jobs tomorrow, if the Democratic Congress would stop blocking Jack Kemp's enterprise zones program.

We discovered something in New Jersey -- every time we take an unemployed person and give him a job, we take a Democrat and turn him into a Republican.

But good jobs will not matter if our children do not have the skills to fill them.

It starts with education.

As a child, I had a terrible stutter. I had dyslexia. School overcame those problems, but I couldn't have done it alone. I went to a good school, with good teachers. Today, a lot of children across America struggle with problems. With a little help from a good school or a great teacher, today's stuttering child could be tomorrow's Keynote Speaker -- today's potential dropout could become tomorrow's Thomas Edison.

That's why Republican governors are leading a revolution in American education. The Democrats' response is always the same -- spend more money. But Republican governors understand that money won't make a difference unless we change other things as well.

No more automatic passing of students of grade to grade. If you can't write or read or count, you don't deserve a high school diploma.

Mediocrity can never be tolerated in teaching. From now on, hard work and creativity must be rewarded every single day.

When schools fail year after year, let's admit it is the fault of adults, not children. Stop blaming the children. Fix the schools.

And children cannot be educated if their minds are clouded by drugs. Kingpins who make millions by dealing drugs are merchants of death. I agree with George Bush. Those who dispense illegal drugs should be prepared to have death dispensed to them.

My father told me about roots and wings -- roots so that a child knows where he's coming from and wings so that he can soar on his own. The roots are our values.

Bill Bennett is right -- our families and our schools should teach children the difference between right and wrong:

- that honesty is the best policy
- and, at the risk of offending some people, there is nothing wrong with young Americans reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Bush Administration will offer the wings of great schools and good jobs. The head of that administration will also reaffirm our roots. George Bush is a decent man -- and he shouldn't have to defend his being one. If defending values such as loyalty, family or belief in God is no longer fashionable, than I fear for our country.

There is another value, and it comes from the Bible.

"One generation passeth away and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever." So wrote Solomon. Never has the need for environmental protection been written more beautifully.

Today our air is plagued by acid rain -- our oceans and beaches are sullied by sewage and syringes -- our very future threatened by sunburn from above and poisoned water from below.

The party of Teddy Roosevelt must regain our environmental heritage.

In the 1990's, we are going to clean America from one coast to the other. You know what -- we are going to start way up North -- in Boston Harbor.

Can jobs and trees go hand in hand? Yes they can, and President Bush is going to prove it.

What do Americans want? Not litmus tests. Not special interest politics.

They want something very simple -- good jobs with high wages; clean water and air; safe streets free from drugs; great schools; an America strong abroad so our Children will live at peace -- these desires, like a parent's love know no color or culture or creed.

With these issues, and with George Bush at the helm, we will go to the farms and the cities; to the barrios and the union halls; to the suburban developments as well as the country roads.

Let the Democrats offer the politics of delusion and exclusion.

We Republicans will practice the "Politics of Inclusion."

When I was young, I often listened to a song about America called, "The House I Live In." The song asks the question: "What is America to me?" It speaks of "Old Abe Lincoln, of Jefferson and Payne -- of Washington and Douglas and the task that still remains.

It says, "America is the right to speak my mind out" and "The air of feeling free."

The song concludes very simply: "The town I live in, the street, the house, the room, the pavement of the city of a garden all in bloom: the church, the school, the clubhouse, the million lights I see, but especially the people, that's America to me."

America is this and so much more.

But America has to be this and so much more for everyone.

You see, we are pilgrims on this ship called *Liberty*. We carry with us the dreams of our forefathers -- whether they came on the *Mayflower*, or the slave ship, or whether their ship docked at Ellis, Island or the Port of San Francisco.

If the free nations of the world represent the fleet of democracy, we are the flagship.

If we founder, the future of the free way of life will sing with us, but if we succeed, other nations will follow in our wake.

We have a historic mission.

We must prove to the world that in this voyage of America no one for reasons of race or background is ever left behind -- but that everyone is on board.

For all of us are crew on this ship of freedom -- all of us serve -- publicly or privately -- at our own stations.

It is our generation's watch on deck.

Each of us as a parent can make our house a home -- each of us as a worker can make our job a vocation, each of us as a citizen can make our community a neighborhood.

So with God's help, we will reclaim the faith of our fathers -- we will practice the politics of inclusion. With George Bush as our leader, we will redeem our American dream.

Thank you very much. Thomas Kean