



RONALD REAGAN
Presidential Library & Museum

Remarks at a Republican Party Rally in Costa Mesa, California

November 3, 1986

The President. Thank you all. And thank you, Governor Deukmejian, for that very kind and generous introduction. Senator-to-be Ed Zschau, Senator Pete Wilson, the members of your State team '86 that were just announced to you by the Governor, your Congressman, Bob Badham, others here on the platform -- Bob Dornan, Congressmen Moorhead, Dreier, Dannemeyer, and Clair Burgener; our State chairman, Congressman Lungren, and you ladies and gentlemen: It's great to be home in California. And isn't it a great time to be an American?

Well, you know -- [applause] -- please, please -- you know, having been a drum major of the YMCA Boys Band in Dixon, Illinois, I can't stand here without thanking the Estancia High School Band and the Costa Mesa High School Band. They have played such fine music in this great and wonderful amphitheater. But -- now, shhh -- I'm going to talk about you. [Laughter] I can't help but see all of you young people here in the audience, and I have a special message for you from my roommate. My roommate said to tell you that when it comes to drugs, please, please -- for your families, for your future, and your country -- just say no. And now I have another message, and this one's from me. When it comes to George Deukmejian and Ed Zschau -- for yourselves, your families, for your future and your country -- just say yes.

Audience. Just say yes!

The President. You know, as I often say when we're taking off in Air Force One, it's great to get out of Washington and back to where the real people are. And the message I've been taking to the American people everywhere is plain and simple. I've reminded them that we turned the economy around: Inflation is down, interest rates are down, jobs and growth are up. And today we're enjoying one of the longest economic expansions in our history. Now, I have pledged that we will not be satisfied until this expansion reaches every sector of our economy and every home in America and until every American who wants a job has a job. But on this campaign trip I have also alerted the American people that there is a threat to all we've accomplished. A threat that comes from the Democratic leadership in Congress that would rather fatten the Federal budget than protect the family budget. Will they ever learn?

Audience. No!

The President. No. We don't have a deficit because we're taxed too little; we have a deficit because they're spending too much. And how they like to raise taxes. Those folks never met a tax they didn't like. And when it comes to spending your hard-earned money, they act like they have your credit card in their pocket. And believe me, they never leave home without it. You know, in illustrating the differences between the approach of the Democratic leadership and our approach, I've been fond of telling a little story almost everywhere we've gone. So, today I have a special message from my friends in the press who've traveled with us in the past few days and weeks. I've seen the umbrella they've opened at times, along the way, with the message: "No more puppy jokes." [Laughter] So, I promise no more puppy jokes.

Audience. We want the joke!

**RONALD REAGAN**
Presidential Library & Museum

The President. But did you hear the story about the kid who was outside the Democratic fundraiser selling kittens? When the people came out from the fundraiser, he was holding up the kittens, and he was saying, "Buy a Democrat kitten." Well, a couple of weeks later the Republicans held a fundraiser in the same place. And when they came out, there was the same kid with the kittens. And he said, "Buy a Republican kitten." And one of the members of the press who'd seen him there 2 weeks before said, "Wait a minute, kid. You were selling these kittens the last time as Democrat kittens. How come they're Republican kittens now?" Kid says, "Because now they've got their eyes open." [Laughter]

You know, in illustrating the differences between the approach of the Democratic leadership and our approach - well, that, I figure, fits. Now, everywhere I've gone I've also spoken of my most solemn duty as President: the safety of the American people and the security of these United States. And I've also talked about how proud I am of the 2 million young men and women who are in the uniforms of the United States military today. Thanks to them every nickel-and-dime dictator around the world knows that if he tangles with the United States of America, he will have to pay a price.

Audience. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Now, most important, I've talked about our Strategic Defense Initiative against ballistic missiles, SDI, and our goal to keep America strong, to save the world from mutual nuclear terror, and to eliminate nuclear ballistic missiles from the face of the Earth and ultimately all nuclear weapons, of every kind.

Now, everywhere I've gone I've tried to have a special word for Democrats and Independents. I wanted them to know that during these past 6 years as President, I've relied again and again upon their support and told them I'm grateful. With their huge majority in the House of Representatives, had there not been many of them willing to cross over and support us, we couldn't have done any of the things that we've done. You know, I used to be a Democrat myself.

Audience. No-o-o!

The President. Yes, wait a minute! And that's why I hope and believe there must be many here, as I've seen them across the country, patriotic Democrats who realize they could no longer follow the policies of the liberal leadership of their party; that it had become completely out of step with the hard-working and patriotic men and women who make up the mainstream of the Democratic Party. Now, I know how tough it can be to break with tradition, but remember what Winston Churchill said as a Member of the British Parliament. He changed parties, and he was harshly criticized for doing so. And then with one sentence he answered it all. He said, "Some men change principle for party, and others change party for principle." That was the message I took around the country, and it's the message I bring to you today. And come to think of it, when I consider the importance of sending George Deukmejian back to Sacramento and sending Ed Zschau to help us in Washington, I think of another great statement by Winston Churchill. "Give us the tools and we will finish the job."

So, ladies and gentlemen, this, then, has been our message: a strong economy, lower taxes, a strong America. But I hope you will forgive me if, toward the end of a long campaign, I take some quiet moments now to add some final thoughts about the meaning of what we saw and did. Of course, I welcomed the chance to talk about the issues, but I think you can see I've always thought there was only one real issue in this campaign: the future. That future that all of us want: a future of prosperity, of freedom for the individual, and above all, a future

**RONALD REAGAN**
Presidential Library & Museum

where America is safe and secure and advancing the cause of world freedom while helping humanity escape from the prison of nuclear terror.

I've seen that future during this campaign. I've seen it in those faces and faces along the highway our motorcade traveled from the airports. So many Americans interrupt their day to walk out and wave a hello. Children waving flags in front of their schools, office workers standing outside in their shirt sleeves, and laborers and mechanics in their work clothes as we pass their garages and warehouses. Housewives with little ones waving flags from the front yard. And that's why, wherever we've gone -- as we flew away from Washington over the towns and neighborhoods and the baseball diamonds and football fields, shopping centers and school yards -- I always told my countrymen how grateful I was for the gift of the real America, the gift of coming home again. And now that I'm back here in California, where my career in public office started, I want to say thanks to all of you, too, for that gift of coming home. Flying back from Iceland recently, I think you can imagine how grateful I was for that gift, the gift of returning to a land like this. But I must tell you I also thought about other faces I've seen, the faces of the people of Iceland and so many other nations -- faces filled with hope, hope that the leaders of the world might someday work together and bring to every people and every land the blessings of peace and freedom.

And I just think it's our job as Americans to work for that. You know, the other night on Air Force One we were flying from one stop to another after a long day, and I went back where a lot of our people and the staff were in the plane, and they got to reminiscing and telling stories. They know my weakness. You get along toward this time in life and you do have a lot of stories you delight in telling if there's half a chance. But there was one out of all of this that I'd like to share with you, and it isn't a joke.

Back shortly after World War II, I went to England to make a picture there called "The Hasty Heart." And it was on a weekend shortly before the Christmas of 1948 -- my first time ever in England. I hired a driver and a car to take me out to see some of the English countryside -- a couple of our people were with me. And along toward the end of the afternoon, he pulled up at a little pub. And he told us it was 400 years old, and we went in. And here, we'd call it a mom-and-pop store because there was an elderly couple, and they were not only the owners, they were the entire staff of this. And pretty soon, as we sat there talking a little bit, this matronly woman came over to us, one of the two owners. She said, "You're Americans, aren't you?" And we said, yes, we were. And she started to reminisce. She said, "Oh, during the war," she said, "there were a great many of your chaps just down the road here at the base." And she said, "They used to come in here of a night, and they'd hold songfests." And she said, "They began calling me mom, and they called the old man pop." And she said, "And now . . ." By now she's not looking at us. She's kind of looking off into the memory, and she said, "It was Christmas Eve." And she said, "The old man and me were here alone, and suddenly the door burst open." And she said, "In they came." By this time there's a tear on her cheek. And she said, "They had Christmas presents for the old man and me." She said, "They called us mom and pop, as I said." And then she said, "Big strappin' lads they was from a place called Ioway."

Well, you know, I think from a place called Ioway or it could have been from California or Connecticut or Vermont or Texas. Or maybe, as the song says, "from the lakes of Minnesota to the hills of Tennessee." But how wonderful it has been to see it all again. We were just down south -- North Carolina, Georgia, the modern boomtown of Tampa in Florida, and in Alabama, with Jerry Denton. He's a Senator now, but it was back in 1973 when, after nearly 8 years in a Vietnamese prison camp, he stepped off that homebound plane and all of us were watching on television wondering what we were going to

**RONALD REAGAN**
Presidential Library & Museum

see of these men who had endured so many years of torture and imprisonment. And there he stood. He saluted the flag, and then he just said it all: "God bless America." We made it to Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Missouri, too. I got hugged there by a bear with a big tummy. The Secret Service wasn't even a little bit nervous. He was the school mascot for the Southwest Missouri State University.

Now, most recently, I've been in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Air Force One took a few passes by Mount Rushmore, and we did the same thing in Colorado over the Air Force Academy. And we could see the cadet corps down below, they had all come out to salute us as we went over. We went to Indiana, Spokane, Washington, then a big western welcome in Idaho, and on to Nevada. I was just there this morning. And now, at last, home to California.

You know, if you won't tell anyone I told you this, I told Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister of England, one time when I saw her that if her people had only come across this other ocean instead of the one they did, the capital of the country would be in California. But everywhere we've been, we've seen the red, white, and blue. It was good to see so many flags, and as Lee Greenwood says in his song about new patriotism: "If tomorrow all the things were gone I'd worked for all my life and I had to start again with just my children and my wife, I'd thank my lucky stars to be living here today, cause the flag still stands for freedom and they can't take that away."

You know, maybe I could finish this campaign today by telling you something about the Iceland summit that wasn't too widely known. Mr. Gorbachev told me that when I talk about how we Americans look forward to a day when all the world would know the blessings of liberty, he said the Soviet Union takes this as a kind of threat. And, of course, there's really only one answer to that: It's no threat, Mr. Gorbachev, it's just a dream; we call it the American dream. But the truth is it's the oldest dream of humanity: the dream of peace and freedom, a dream that someday must belong to every man, woman, and child on Earth. And we find it is terrifying to the head of state of the Soviet Union, that picture of freedom for all people.

So, before leaving, I'd like to say to all of you young people today how delighted I am to see you. Wherever I've gone in the last few weeks, you've been there, and I'm grateful. Wait a minute, I've got a message for you. You see, people my age do deeply believe that it is our duty to turn over to you the same opportunity and freedom that our parents and grandparents handed on to us. And when we look at you -- when we see your openness, your enthusiasm for America and for life itself -- it gives us heart, the heart 7E 7E7Eit 7E7E 7Etook 7E 7E7Eto 7E7E 7Efight 7E 7E7Eand 7E7E 7Eto 7E 7E7Ewin 7E7E 7Ethis campaign. And who knows, perhaps many years from now, when you have children or grandchildren of your own, one of them will ask you about a November day a long time ago when a former sports announcer named Dutch Reagan came to town for the last campaign. And should that happen -- and since I won't be able to myself -- I hope you'll tell them for me that I said it wasn't true, that there are really no last, no final campaigns; that each generation must renew and win again for itself the precious gift of liberty, the sacred heritage of freedom.

Please tell them for me that I always thought being an American meant never being mean or small or giving in to prejudice or bigotry; that it did mean trying to help the other fella and working for a world where every person knows freedom is both a blessing and a birthright; that being an American also means that on certain special days, for a few precious moments, all of us -- black or white, Jew or gentile, rich or poor -- we are all equal, with an equal chance to decide our destiny, to determine our future, to cast our ballot. Tell them, too, of my fondest hope, my greatest dream for them: that they would always find here in America a land of hope, a

**RONALD REAGAN**
Presidential Library & Museum

light unto the nations, a shining city upon a hill. So that they would be able to say in their time as we've said in ours: I'm proud to be an American, where at last I know I'm free. And I won't forget the men who died, who gave that right to me. And I'll gladly stand up next to you and defend her still today. Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land; God bless the U.S.A.!

Audience. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. God bless Governor George Deukmejian, Ed Zschau, and all this team up here that you're going to send back to office; and God bless you. Thank you.

Note: The President spoke at 2:16 p.m. at the Pacific Amphitheater. He was introduced by Gov. George Deukmejian. Following his remarks, the President returned to the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles, where he remained overnight. The following day, the President returned to Washington, DC.

11/03/1986

Date