

God bless the United States of America.

Note: The President spoke at 5:02 p.m. in the Goldwyn Ballroom at the Reno Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Cleveland Jordan, national commander, DAV; Jo-

seph C. Zengerle, national senior vice commander, DAV; and Maj. Robin Higgins, whose husband, Col. William R. Higgins, was killed while held hostage in Beirut, Lebanon.

Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council in Colorado Springs, Colorado

August 6, 1992

Thank you for that wonderfully warm ALEC welcome. And Fred Noye, thank you for that generous introduction. I want to thank the official host, the Mayor, Mayor Isaac, for his hospitality; recognize Sam Brunelli, of course, an old friend with us here who feels very comfortable here; Holly Coors, so well-known to all in ALEC; my dear friend and respected leader of faith, Jim Dobson here. Let me just say, Fred, you have done a wonderful job as chairman. I'm not pronouncing you dead yet; you have a few more months. But you've done a great chairman job. And I know that your shoes will be ably filled by Bill Raggio, over here, from the State of Nevada.

Bill flew in with us last night from Reno on Air Force One. And all the White House stationery and matchboxes from the plane are missing. But he swears there's no correlation whatsoever. *[Laughter]* But I was so honored that he came all the way up from the convention, took the puddle-jumpers all the way, to just represent ALEC on the ride down, fill me in on what a fantastic convention is underway right here in Colorado Springs.

Twenty years ago, when ALEC started, I see it that you were a lone voice in the conservative wilderness. Now you gather in these marvelous Colorado mountains at a time when the endangered species list is topped by that creature rarely spotted outside of the 202 area code; I'm talking, of course, about the unabashed, unreconstructed liberal. *[Laughter]*

But your energy and your ideas and your enthusiasm helped lead the ideological transformation of America. So it's an honor

to be standing here as your guest, invited to speak to you today. I understand that, I think the figure is no fewer than six members of my Cabinet will speak here. I'm especially delighted that you've chosen to give the Thomas Jefferson Freedom Award, that coveted award, to the idea man of the conservative movement, Jack Kemp.

As you know, so far this election has been a little one-sided. For 9 months—and I'm not complaining; my day is coming—for 9 months, five other candidates, maybe it was six way back then, various sundry surrogates have aimed a firehose of criticism at me. I have been blamed for everything except that crazy scoring system that was used in the Olympic boxing competition. I shouldn't really go out on a limb like that because I haven't checked the AP wire and see how it went. *[Laughter]*

But I admit I've been a little slow to fight back. My opponent has mentioned my name about once every 5 seconds, not always in the most flattering light. I still haven't even said his name in full. I've referred occasionally to "my opponent," "the other guy," and even "the Governor of a certain State with a profitable chicken industry on the Mississippi River, located somewhere between Texas and Oklahoma." *[Laughter]*

Let me tell you why I have waited. As I listen to the American people, I get a sense of something you might pick up from your own constituents. People are sick of politics. I think they think this election year has gone on a little too long. You used to start on Labor Day. Labor Day isn't even at hand yet. They're tired of the charges and

the countercharges. They want ideas, and they want action. They want to trust their leaders to turn the first into the second.

That's what I want to talk about this morning: ideas, action, and trust. Well, I don't want to get too partisan. I'm going to draw a few comparisons. Grant me a favor, though, and I'll save the "C" word for my convention in Houston. And then I'll just stick with the all-purpose title for today of "my opponent." But let me guarantee you one thing: When our convention is over—I am tired of being slugged by these people, and I will fight back. I am going to win this election. I will fight tough, but I will fight fair.

Which reminds me, remember the old story of the fierce gladiator? He'd killed every lion that they could throw up against him, every lion he'd faced. So one day the centurions went out, went to Carthage and found the meanest lion in the world. They'd buried the gladiator in the arena there in Rome, right up so just his head was sticking out, fill him with sand. The lion was released, charged him, making a deadly pass at the gladiator's head. And as he did, the gladiator reached up and took a very ferocious bite in a very sensitive place in the lion's anatomy. [*Laughter*] The lion howled in pain and ran for the exit, fled from the arena. And the lead centurion ran out, attacked the gladiator screaming, "Fight fair, damn it! Fight fair!" [*Laughter*]

Now, every time I tiptoe into the water with this guy, they start yelling, "Negative campaigning." I am going to fight back. And I will define his record as he's ill-defined mine. I will fight on the only battleground that really counts, and that is the battleground of ideas. And ideas matter.

If ever there was an organization that understood it, ideas matter, and ALEC knows. They know that. When Americans choose their leadership, they're choosing a direction. They're choosing a set of beliefs.

For the past quarter century, the tide has flowed our way for a very simple reason: The American people agree with our philosophy and with our ideas. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the whole world is wearing those red ALEC blankets that I saw last night. For years your members, working in both political parties, have been

holding the line on Government spending. You've been resisting the Pavlovian impulse to raise taxes at every turn. And you're fighting to give parents the chance to choose their kids' schools and choose their day care. I am for this, and I hope you'll all support it.

This is the wave of the future. It will make the public schools better, the private schools better, and the religious schools better. When I got out of the service nobody said to me, "Here's the GI bill; you can only go to School A." They said, "Go to the school of your choice." That enhanced the great State universities and the private universities and those based on religious faith.

On many of the major issues of this campaign, my opponent and I have entirely different ideas. On education, on health care, on life, on defense, on prayer in school, for example, we are separated by a gulf as wide as the Grand Canyon. But on some issues, especially economic issues, I'm afraid we don't yet sound all that different.

Of course, unlike my great predecessor, I will have to confess I am not known for threatening Daniel Webster's place in oratorical history. I will confess, there have been other greater speakers. But to me, real eloquence, real eloquence, lies in action. So when it comes to ideas for fixing our economy, I say, look not just at what we say; look at what we are trying to do and have done.

Let me give you some examples. I firmly believe we must get a handle on this budget deficit before it strangles our future. My opponent supposedly agrees with me. He says in his speeches that Government takes too much of your money and gives you too little in return. And what do we do about it?

Well, I have fought for a freeze on domestic discretionary spending. I have fought for a cap, and this is the only way we're going to get the deficit down, a cap on mandatory Federal spending, with specific proposals for savings, and a responsible, I emphasize that word, a responsible reduction in defense spending consistent with our mission as the leader of the world and consistent with my oath to be responsi-

ble for the national security. I am not going to cut into the muscle of our defense and go back to a hollow army. So let's be clear on that.

I know everybody at ALEC likes light reading. Now here is a mid-session review, and in it, it tells exactly and specifically how to get this budget deficit down. It's been sitting up and languishing in the Congress, who do not want to make the tough decisions that I have recommended year after year. I urge you all to go out to your nearest bookstore, hopefully getting it at a discount, and read this program. You'll be impressed because it is ALEC philosophy.

Now, my opponent has taken a very different approach. He has proposed over \$200 billion of new spending and at least \$150 billion in new taxes. And when it comes to any concern about the Federal budget deficit, his action sounds like John McLaughlin's sign-off every week, "Bye-bye." [Laughter]

Look, ultimately—you know this; the men and women of ALEC know this—I believe the only way to get the budget deficit under control, the major disciplinary tool, is a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. You at ALEC have done for the amendment what Rush Limbaugh has done for the art of passionate communication.

Let me just single out one person, probably embarrass the daylights out of him, but I know of what David Halbrook, a former ALEC chairman, had done. A most respected Democrat, he has taken the lead on the balanced budget amendment. He has taken your message and mine all across this country, and we owe him a vote of gratitude: Thank you very, very much. I knew he'd be embarrassed. There he is. Don't give him equal time or he'll tell you how his town in Mississippi is the center of the universe. I don't have time for that. [Laughter]

No, but again, on this question of the balanced budget agreement, look at the rhetoric out there. My opponent agrees with me in principle. But at the moment of truth, when we finally got that amendment to the floor of the House this summer, he came out against it. The amendment fell short by 9 votes, after that liberal congressional leadership convinced 12 cospon-

sors, 12 people that had cosponsored the amendment, to change their position at the last minute and to vote no.

Okay. We're going to keep fighting. But if we can't get a balanced budget amendment right now, at least give me a line-item veto like virtually every Governor in the United States has. But again, he says he favors the idea, this opponent, nameless opponent. But look at our actual proposals. In my budget this year—and again, I don't want to lift that heavy book up—I identified 246 Government programs—will you mind holding it up at the appropriate time? [Laughter] This is an all-purpose book, I'll tell you—246 that I would end and another 4,000 wasteful projects that I will also get rid of altogether. They're in there. They are defined.

Now, this list includes some big-ticket items as well as some smaller things like a vitally important Federal research program into the mating habits of the mink. Again on this issue, my opponent is singing the same tune, but the dance steps are different. When he released his economic plan—look at it, don't take my word for it—he searched and searched through thousands of Government programs and found only one that he would eliminate, Federal subsidies for honeybee farmers.

Now, I have gone head-to-head in this job day in and day out, regardless of the polls. And I'm going to continue to do what I think is right with some very powerful special interests: the NEA, the powerful teachers union; the labor bosses; the ACLU; the Ralph Naders of beltway fame. But I doubt anyone will get stung by taking on the honeybee industry. They're just not that tough. [Laughter]

What about mandatory spending? It's devouring more and more of our budget every year. About two-thirds of the budget the President doesn't get a shot at, I think we all know that. I propose it's time to roll up our sleeves and go after it. No matter what the political price, we owe it to the young people here today. My opponent nods his head in agreement saying, and here's a quote, "We need a Government that offers more empowerment and less entitlement." And all, again, I'm asking, and I'll be asking this all fall, is do the words

match the action?

In my past three budgets, I have proposed the caps on mandatory spending, and I have submitted specific ideas for savings. The amounts aren't paltry: \$72 billion in this year's budget, \$47 billion last year, \$119 billion in 1990. And what does the opposition offer? You can search the entire economic program and find one very tiny idea: reducing Medicare subsidies for the wealthy. That isn't a bad idea. In fact, I put it in my own budget. But keep in mind, it would reduce mandatory spending by one-tenth of one percent next year. This hardly qualifies as a profile in budget-cutting courage.

Do you see a pattern? Do you see a pattern here? Look at our most pressing economic challenge: how to create more jobs now. I have proposed a package that includes incentives for investment to create jobs, many incentives that ALEC has been so forcefully advocating; that help, that credit, for the first-time homebuyer so that that homebuyer can participate in the American dream; tax savings through juggling around the IRA's for families that are trying in these tough times to save.

My opponent copies you and me when he says that an expanding economy's the best policy of all. But first, he proposes the largest tax increase in American history, larger than what Mike Dukakis and Walter Mondale proposed together. Then he proposes at least a 7-percent payroll tax to finance a new Government-run health care scheme. Then his friends in the congressional leadership took my growth package and added a tax increase to it, and I took care of that with the veto pen. And as your able chairman said, that's the first time a President has done that.

So you have every right to say, "What's going on here? What's happening? What's really happening?"

As I peel through the details of our economic plans, I can't help but think of the words of another George—I'm not used to quoting him—George McGovern. George McGovern has never been what I would call a big friend or fan of mine. But you may recall during the New York convention, he called the other ticket, and I quote here, "a Trojan horse." He said, here's the quote,

exact quote, "They are really much more liberal than they appear. And they'll show it after they are elected." Well, I don't know if I ever have told you this before, but George McGovern is a very smart man. He is very intelligent. [Laughter]

But this is what worries me. As I compare the details of what we have to offer, the details, and I begin to wonder. Is all this talk of what they call a new covenant simply a coverup for some very old and tired ideas? The other side talks about changing the economy with new spending and taxes. But when they talk about change, that's all you're going to have left in your pockets when these guys get through with you. [Laughter] So please get the ALEC message around this country.

There's one other thing—and I say this with respect for the conservatives on both parties that are here—my opponent talks about change, but he refuses to even mention the one thing that hasn't changed in 36 years. I'm talking about the liberal leadership in the United States Congress. It's about time we changed that if we want to move this leadership forward.

So if you really want to clean out the deadlock in Washington, why not clean out that same liberal deadwood on that leadership that has fought me every inch of the way, scared to death that the American economy might just get a little bit better if they pass those incentives that I know would have helped this economy grow.

Now I'm hoping, and I really do, this may be George McGovern's Trojan horse will be a tiger when it comes to holding the line on taxes and spending. But I doubt it. I believe the voters need more proof than mere words. So today I have an idea to propose to the American people, a way to move away even in this fiercely partisan election year, a way to move away from partisanship, a way to get some of the ideas you fought for off the drawing board and into action, a way to get our economy moving today and keep it growing tomorrow, and most important, a way to do what is right for our country.

Today I issue a challenge to my opponent and to his close allies there in the congressional leadership: If you really agree with us

that these ideas are important, why hold them hostage to a political campaign? If you really believe that tax cuts can create jobs, pass my growth package now. If you want to get a handle on Government spending, put a line-item veto on my desk right now and give me a chance to get this deficit under control. I'll start cutting right away. If you want to control mandatory spending, convince the Congress to adopt this proposed savings plan just next week. They don't have to wait. If you really want to reform health care, bring it up. Our plan is up there. It's a good one. Bring it up, and vote on it. If you really believe in a balanced budget amendment, let's call it up and vote for it again. And leave the pressure off of these Members, and let them vote their consciences, and let them do what's right for the American people. Send it to your States right now for ratification.

Now, the plan I've outlined today, a plan based on so many ideas that you've fit into the system, ALEC ideas, ALEC initiatives, is the strong, compelling action that our economy desperately needs. Quite frankly, I don't expect the other side to come forward and back their ideas, these pronouncements, back them with action. I think there's a Trojan horse lurking in the weeds,

ready to pull a fast one on the American people, and I simply am not going to let that happen.

In the next 4 months and for the next 4 years, I will accelerate our fight for these tax incentives and lowering the taxes, for budgetary discipline, for making the tough calls on runaway spending. I will put my case in words, but I will back my words with action. I will show the American people we must not return to a failed philosophy for America, no matter how neatly packaged it is today. It is time to continue moving forward, forward on a positive, conservative vision for our great Nation.

May I thank each and every member of ALEC. And may God bless the greatest, freest, fairest country on the face of the Earth, the United States of America. Thank you all very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 9:12 a.m. at the Broadmoor Hotel International Center. In his remarks, he referred to ALEC officers Fred C. Noye, national chairman, Sam Brunelli, executive director, and William Raggio, incoming national chairman; Bob Isaac, Mayor of Colorado Springs; Holland H. Coors, who gave opening remarks at the meeting; and James Dobson, president, Focus on the Family.

Remarks on the Situation in Bosnia and an Exchange With Reporters in Colorado Springs

August 6, 1992

Bosnia

The President. A few remarks on the situation in Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia and what the United States, working with the international community, is doing to contain and defuse this escalating crisis.

Like all Americans, I am outraged and horrified at the terrible violence shattering the lives of innocent men, women, and children in Bosnia. The aggressors and extremists pursue a policy, a vile policy, of ethnic cleansing, deliberately murdering innocent civilians, driving others from their homes.

Already the war has created over 2.2 million refugees, roughly the population of greater Pittsburgh and Baltimore. This is, without a doubt, a true humanitarian nightmare.

Now, the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia is a complex, convoluted conflict that grows out of age-old animosities. The blood of innocents is being spilled over century-old feuds. The lines between enemies and even friends are jumbled and fragmented. Let no one think there is an easy or a simple solution to this tragedy. The violence will not end overnight, whatever pressure and means the international com-