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Davenport Rally Speech

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DAVENPORT, IOWA

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1984

Thank you, Patsy, for that kind introduction. Like so many of the fine people of Iowa, Patsy Ramacetti was here at the beginning, eleven months ago, for Walter Mondale. And I know you'll be with us at the finish.

It's also a pleasure to see my colleague Lane Evans, who ably represents the people of Illinois in Congress, and Kevin Ready, who will join him there come election day.

Walter Mondale was in the Quad Cities last month and told me I'd like it here. Well I don't just like it, I love it. you're terrific.

In the last week, four candidates for President and Vice President have debated. And I know two things for sure: I beat George Bush . . . and George Bush beat Ronald Reagan. You know, yesterday's paper reported that Senator Laxalt said the President was (QUOTE) "brutalized by a briefing process" which "smothered" him with facts. Now I ask you -- since when is it considered cruel and unusual punishment to expect a President to learn the facts he needs to govern?

But I have to say, it was a close race for fourth place. Because while we were talking about the arms race, George Bush wanted to talk about baseball. I say to the man who tried to lecture me about the difference between Lebanon and Iran, there's a world of difference between the world series and the fate of the world. Thursday night, we were talking about the arms race because the American people want to stop it. And so does Fritz Mondale. He will call on the Soviets to negotiate an arms control agreement on his first day in office, not on the first day of his re-election campaign.

It's a long road that starts in the Iowa winter and ends on the steps of the U.S. Capitol eleven months later. You were there when Fritz needed you in the Iowa caucuses, and I know you're going to be there to help him across the finish line on November 6th.

Walter Mondale needs your help this time because we're in a fight for the things our party believes in.

We're in a fight for peace. I want a President who has the courage to stand up to the Soviets, but also the wisdom to sit down with them and negotiate an end to the arms race.

We're in a fight for the elderly of America. To protect

them, let's have Ronald Reagan collecting Social Security back in California, instead of cutting it in Washington.

And let me add: Ronald Reagan says that Fritz Mondale is trying to scare the elderly by talking about the Reagan record on Social Security. Well, the elderly aren't afraid of what Fritz Mondale says about Social Security. They know the President's record and they're afraid of what Ronald Reagan is going to do.

We're in a fight for our personal freedoms. We want Walter Mondale picking Supreme Court Justices, not Jerry Falwell.

We're in a fight to save family farms. Let's get interest rates down, boost farm exports, and help family farmers, not big corporations.

We're in a fight to preserve our environment. This Administration gave us James Watt once and Anne Burford twice. If that's Mr. Reagan's idea of doing a good job on the environment, then it's time to give someone else the job of President.

We're in a fight for equal opportunity. When I take my oath of office for my second term as Vice President, I want to swear to uphold a Constitution that includes the Equal Rights

Amendment.

Above all, the fight concerns the fate of the earth. This President opposed every modern arms control agreement ever negotiated. He is the first President since Herbert Hoover not to meet with his Soviet counterpart. He is the first President since the dawn of the nuclear age not to negotiate an arms control agreement.

Will this President never learn that an arms race leads only to an arms race, and that arms control leads to a safer world?

Two months ago, while testing his microphone before a radio broadcast President Reagan said that he had signed legislation that (quote) "outlaws Russia." He added that the bombing begins in five minutes. President Reagan said it was a joke. The American people shuddered, and our European allies were shocked.

Now the Pentagon has confirmed that in response, the Soviet Union went into a partial military alert. That was no joke. Our President's reckless comments jeopardized our safety. For the person whose job it is to defend this country, that was a very serious mistake.

The management of our strategic arsenal is the most serious

responsibility a President has. A President must understand that. Above all, we cannot afford a President who forgets that he is the President. I want a President like Walter Mondale.

In 1969, Fritz Mondale was one of a handful of Senators who opposed putting multiple warheads on our missiles because, as he said, the Soviets would soon catch up and do the same thing. If we had listened to Walter Mondale then, we would be safer today.

A leader must stand up for the things he believes in. Walter Mondale has always done that.

Fritz Mondale has fought for our children all through his career. When Walter Mondale was a Senator, he led the fight for expanded day care, child nutrition, and child development programs. And remember, children don't vote. As Vice President, he led the cause of the boat people. And as candidate for President, the first speech he gave was to lay out his program for farmers.

There are times when a leader must remind us not only that we are a great nation, but that America can be even greater. There are times when a leader must swim against the tide to be true to his beliefs. Fritz Mondale is that kind of leader.

Name the last time Ronald Reagan took the lead on an issue in advance of his time. A leader must. Name the last time President Reagan took a chance for social justice. Walter Mondale has. Time and again he has put his career on the line to secure the rights of others.

And the most recent chance he took was to ask me to be his Vice President. Everyone talks about equal opportunity. Only a few stand up for it. And when I take the oath of office as the first female Vice President in American history, we can all thank Walter Mondale.

This candidacy is not just a symbol: it's a breakthrough. It's not just a statement: it's a bond between women all over America.

In St. Paul a few weeks ago, a 91-year-old woman came up to me, hugged me, and said: "I never thought I'd live to see this day."

Eleanor Roosevelt, whose 100th birthday we celebrated this week, did not live to see this day. But I think she'd be proud.

She was 36 before she cast her first vote, because the law didn't let her. What a waste. She shouldn't have been prevented

from electing public officials; she should have been one.

You know, by most standards, I don't have much in common with Eleanor Roosevelt.

She was born to privilege; I was not. She came from a famous American family; my father was an immigrant from Italy.

You name it: religion, accent, education, and background, we are as different as night and day.

But when you come down to it, none of that really matters. Because we share beliefs, and that means far more than all the less important ways we differ. And the beliefs we share are the ones the Democratic Party has always stood for.

Civil rights; jobs and a decent life for working men and women; peace, democracy, and human rights; and justice for every American.

Those are my goals, and the goals of my running mate and my party. Eleanor Roosevelt dedicated her life to them, and today they are at stake in this election.

Make no mistake about it: we're in a fight for the heart

and soul of this country.

And as Democrats, we're going to win that fight.

This is a brand new race. It's getting hot -- and they're feeling the heat. It's getting close -- and they're getting worried.

For our country, for our future, for the principles we believe in, Walter Mondale and I have just begun to fight.

The time to wage that fight is not later -- it's now.

The time to register new voters is not later -- it's now.

The time to stop the arms race is not later -- it's now.

The time to send Tom Harkin to the U.S. Senate is not later -- it's now.

The time to elect Fritz Mondale President and Gerry Ferraro Vice President is not later -- it's now.

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