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Oakland Rally Speech

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Final
draft

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1984

Thank you, Mayor Wilson, for that terrific introduction. Lionel Wilson has been a real friend to Fritz Mondale from the very start of this campaign. And that's because when Fritz Mondale was Vice President, he was a real friend to Oakland when Mayor Wilson was looking for federal help to get your convention center built.

Well, I can guarantee you that when Fritz and I are elected, Oakland will once again have a vice president, and a president who hears your calls. And when you put California in the Mondale-Ferraro victory column on November 6, this city will have a real friend in the White House.

Let me also recognize Oakland's two outstanding members of the House of Representatives. There is no one more committed to ending the insanity of the nuclear arms race than Ron Dellums. And Pete Stark is a principled fighter for equity in the tax code and fairness in American life.

I've really been looking forward to coming to Oakland. This city and the Mondale-Ferraro ticket have something in common. People counted us out, but we're both coming back. And when we're through, we going to show them what real winners look like.

Another reason I wanted to come here is a personal one. I'm trying to make it to every city Billy Martin's ever managed or played baseball in. I haven't done it yet, but today brings me a step closer.

This is my fifth trip to California, and I'll be back. I come back to this state so often for two reasons. First, I love it. And second, we want to win. I want to tell you honestly, we need California to win. And we're going to do it with California.

While I'm here, and while I've got this great nonpartisan crowd here, I'd like to take my own scientific, objective survey.

Are we going to win the election in November?

Are we going to send Walter Mondale to the White House and Ronald Reagan back here to the ranch?

Did Walter Mondale win that debate on Sunday?

You bet he did. You know, in that debate, President Reagan made several serious mistakes. He said there's no connection between deficits and illegal immigration -- when there is. He denied saying that submarine launched missiles could ever be recalled. When, in fact, he did say it. And he said the only alternative the Philippines have to Marcos is Communism -- when

it's not.

Ronald Reagan's statement on Philippine politics completes a circle of misunderstanding about that county. George Bush ignored decades of oppression, imprisonment and torture to toast Marcos for leading a wonderful democracy in the Philippines.

He was wrong to toast that dictator, and Ronald Reagan was wrong to ignore the strong non-communist forces working for free elections in that country. In fact, Mr. Reagan was so far off base about the Philippines that his own State Department corrected him the next day.

Now, we learn what we had all feared -- the impartial panel investigating Aquino's murder has concluded that the conspiracy to kill that great, non-communist opposition leader extended far into the ranks of the military. Now that the panel has spoken, I say it's time for our government to stop toasting dictatorship, and start working for democracy in the Philippines.

Ronald Reagan's mistakes in Sunday's debate did not stop with deficits, missiles and the Philippines. Perhaps the most astounding thing he did was propose spending hundreds of billions of dollars on a Star Wars weapons system that he wants to hand over to the Soviet Union. Now, that makes a lot of sense. We won't sell the Russians ordinary commercial computers, but this President wants to give them our most important, sensitive

military secrets.

Walter Mondale knows more about our national security after being out of office for four years, than Ronald Reagan knows after being in charge of the most impressive security establishment in the world. We need a President in command of the facts. We need a President who knows what he's doing. We need a President like Fritz Mondale who can take charge of this government.

In one day, when Fritz Mondale offered me the nomination, he did more for equal opportunity than Ronald Reagan has done in four, long years. On that day, I felt a special surge of pride as an immigrant's daughter. But it wasn't just a personal victory for me. It was a victory for every woman, every black, every hispanic and every other person ever excluded from a job because of bigotry, discrimination or hate.

Today I stand here to tell you, if we can do this we can do anything.

This election is not a contest between personalities. It's a fight over what kind of country we are, and the direction we want to go in. It's a choice that directly affects the lives of every American citizen for years to come. And it's a particularly stark choice for women, for blacks and for hispanics.

When I was growing up, black Americans were fighting for this country in Europe, but back at home they were barred from lunch counters, hotels, and voting booths.

Over the past thirty years, we changed all that. And other minority groups have joined us in the fight for full equality. During the 1950s, the Supreme Court outlawed segregated schools. During the 1960s, after marches and demonstrations, minorities won for themselves the right to vote, the right to non-discrimination in public facilities, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968 -- which, incidentally, Walter Mondale helped to write. And we made bigotry socially unacceptable at last.

I'm proud of how far we've come as a nation. We're not perfect, but each decade we're getting better.

It says something good about America when lawyers and doctors and professors are black and Hispanic and female.

It says something good about America when two of the first astronauts to fly in the Space Shuttle were a black and a woman.

And it says something good about America when one of the most exciting and influential Presidential candidates of our time is Reverend Jesse Jackson.

Every time this nation lowers another barrier, our society

is strengthened. Every time we take advantage of the talents we had excluded because of racism or sexism, our country is richer.

That's why I'm so worried today. For the first time in my life, I think we're going backwards.

Ronald Reagan's policies have been bad for the American people. But let's be plain about this: they've been a disaster for black and hispanic Americans. No one has a greater stake in this election than the locked-out, the vulnerable, the hungry, those discriminated against, and the unemployed.

There are two principal issues at stake this year for the people of Oakland. First is the issue of opportunity. In the last four years, it's become harder for average Americans to go on to college because this Administration has cut student assistance. But it's even tougher if you're an inner city youngster. This Administration cut Head Start, Title I, and bi-lingual education.

In the last four years, one out of every five families in this country has been touched by unemployment. But for minorities that ratio has been particularly appalling. For black teenagers, the unemployment rate stands at an unbelievable one out of two.

In the last four years, America's children have suffered

from deep cuts in nutrition programs. But the suffering has been greatest for minority children, one out of every two of whom lives in poverty.

In the last four years, this Administration has been anti-feminist. But it's been especially cruel to the one out of every two poor households headed by women.

In the last four years, it's been harder for the average American family to make ends meet. But it's been hardest of all for the additional six million Americans who have fallen into poverty under this Administration.

In the last four years, Medicare cuts have taken their toll on all the elderly. But no proposal was meaner than the Reagan proposal to take the minimum Social Security benefit from three million poor Americans, nearly all of whom were women.

Don't misunderstand me. Every American has a reason to vote for Walter Mondale. But the awful truth is, blacks, hispanics, women and disadvantaged Americans have only themselves to blame if they stay home and let Ronald Reagan be President again.

The second issue at stake is war and peace. War is a horrible thing for every person. But let's be clear about this: when America goes to war, minority men serve in disproportionate numbers.

Everyone here would be proud to serve this country, even die for it if that's what it takes. But like every parent here, I didn't raise my son and daughters to die in an undeclared war, against an unnamed enemy, for an uncertain cause.

Right now, the United States is militarizing a conflict in Central America which should be solved by peaceful means. And we are Americanizing a conflict which is primarily local. That's not good for Central America, it's not good for America's national interest, and it's not good for draft-age men, black, hispanic and white. I want to stop the covert war in Nicaragua.

Last week, America was stunned to learn that the CIA has written and is circulating in Nicaragua a manual that teaches assassination, terror, blackmail, kidnapping, and mob violence. It is written more in the spirit than Stalin than Jefferson. It reads like Mao, not Lincoln. It befits a dictatorship, not a democracy. It's an insult to the American people.

Moreover, anyone who believes that refining the murder techniques of Central Americans will advance our national interest is gravely mistaken. We should be building economies, not mining harbors. In our own self-interest, we should be helping people feed themselves, not kill each other.

That manual is alien to our most basic beliefs -- beliefs which across the board, this Administration has failed to

promote. I remember when John F. Kennedy launched the Peace Corps, when Hubert Humphrey started Food for Peace, and when Jimmy Carter stood up for human rights. Today we have an Administration which has befriended dictators in the Philippines, Chile, and South Africa. And as a result, our prestige and our influence among Third World nations have declined.

Listen to what this year's Nobel Prize winner, Bishop Tutu of South Africa, had to say about our government: the name of the United States in the black South African community is "mud" because of our support for a system that has brought "untold misery to so many of God's children."

Walter Mondale and I will change that. We will press for human rights, not only not only in the Soviet Union, but also in the Philippines. We will tell the South African government that their racist system of apartheid offends American values and must finally end.

There is a big difference between the candidates this year. But you wouldn't know that from listening to Ronald Reagan. In the debate last Sunday, he pretended to support human rights. He pretended to be for negotiations in Central America, and to believe in arms control. Don't let him get away with that.

There's a difference between right and wrong, truth and fiction. And there's a difference between Walter Mondale and Ronald Reagan. And I'm here today to ask the people of Oakland

to vote for what's right, for the truth, and for Walter Mondale.

He has been on your side for as long as Ronald Reagan has been against you. Walter Mondale helped write the Fair Housing Act of 1968. He helped pass the Voting Rights Act. He was a fighter for Head Start. He led the battle for an independent legal services program for the poor. He investigated the plight of migrant workers. And he's been a friend of civil rights for twenty years.

Name a decent cause, and Fritz Mondale has been there, fighting for social justice. And if you want to continue the fight for social justice, I think it's time to stand up and fight for Walter Mondale.

He believes with the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

He believes, with Martin Luther King, that we cannot stop "until justice rolls down like water, and righteousness like the mighty stream."

With Dr. King, let's declare finally that people should be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

With Dr. King, let's say we face an adversary, but we have

faced adversaries before, and this one too we shall overcome.

When Moses led his people across the Red Sea, and out of bondage, no one asked who was the first to cross, but whether the last ones were safe. America has always been the Promised Land. It's time for all of us to cross over. It's time for all of us to work for Walter Mondale.

The time to begin that work is not later -- it is now.

The time for a rebirth of equal opportunity is not later -- it is now.

The time to work for peace is not later -- it is now.

And the time to elect Walter Mondale President and Gerry Ferraro Vice President is not later -- it is now.

THANK YOU. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.