

Oct. 23 / Administration of George Bush, 1992

Korea's returned the first American remains in over 40 years.

Today, finally, I am convinced that we can begin writing the last chapter of the Vietnam war. I want to stress that it is only a beginning, but it is a significant beginning. It was a bitter conflict, but Hanoi knows today that we seek only answers without the threat of retribution for the past.

As we cooperate in bringing that painful era to a close, Vietnam and the United States can begin to look towards the future. And to begin that process, we have extended a very modest disaster assistance to flood the ravaged areas of Vietnam—to those that have been hurt the most by the flood. I've also directed my administration to work with Hanoi in developing ways to help identify Vietnam's MIA's and increase humanitarian assistance to the disabled Vietnamese veterans of the war.

Now we will begin reviewing what further steps we can take with Hanoi. We appreciate

what's been done, and now we are redetermined to go forward to see what more we can do.

Today is a day of significance for all Americans. It is so because today again we honor those who chose to serve and who gave themselves in the supreme measure of devotion to their country. We're honoring them by at long last approaching a point where we can fully keep faith with their loved ones and bring them peace. So I am proud to be standing here with four who are making a significant contribution to America's search for the full truth.

Thank you all for coming. And General Vessey, my special thanks to you, sir, for once again serving your Nation with such distinction.

General Vessey. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you all very much.

Note: The President spoke at 8 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks at a Laurel County Rally in London, Kentucky

October 23, 1992

The President. Thank you, Senator. Thank you, Mitch McConnell. And I am so proud to be introduced by your Senator, who is doing a superb job for this State in Washington. If we had more like him they wouldn't be yelling, "Clean House!" or clean out the Senate. He is a star, and you're lucky to have him up there. Mitch, thank you.

But I'll tell you what you can do: You can improve things for this State and for the Nation, getting people that think as we do on these issues, and send David Williams to the Senate, elect him. He can do it.

As far as my former chairman and great friend Hal Rogers goes, I know he's surrounded in this wonderful part of Kentucky by friends. But every once in a while you strike up a strong personal friendship built on respect and, yes, love. And we Bushes feel very strongly, Barbara and I feel very strongly about Hal Rogers. You must reelect him to the United States Congress.

I want to thank Superintendent Joe McKnight and Roger Marcum, the principal, for permitting us to have this beautiful rally on this beautiful Kentucky day. Pay my respects to Melda Barton, our national committeewoman, Melda Barton Collins; and State rep Tom Johnson; and the chairman of our campaign, Tom Handy; and our celebrity guest, the family man from "Family Feud," Ray Combs.

I still remember my great visit here 4 years ago to the town named Bush, Kentucky. And I saw the fire department and the Bush Elementary School, and I met George Bush, the postmaster. This part of Kentucky—you have a wonderful way of making somebody feel at home. Someone mentioned to me the results of the South Laurel High School student referendum, and I understand it went pretty well. And let me just say to all of those from South

Laurel High and North Laurel High, you're as smart as you look.

I also know that just 10 miles down the road is where Colonel Sanders started his first restaurant. He said something that Governor Clinton ought to learn from; he said, "The bucket stops here." [Laughter] And Governor Clinton better understand, if he wants to be President of the United States, you can't take one side of an issue one day and one another. You've got to tell the truth.

I think the Colonel would have approved of our offering for America, our own original recipe: ideas, experience, and yes, character. I don't want to ruin this beautiful rally here, but I think it is appropriate inasmuch as Governor Clinton and the rest of the liberals have been trying to misdefine my record, let me tell you about the Arkansas record. They are 50th in the quality of environmental initiatives; they are 50th in the percentage of adults with college degrees; they are 50th in per capita spending on criminal justice; 49th—they're going up, getting better—in per capita spending on police protection; 48th in percentage of adults with a high school diploma; 48th in spending on corrections; 46th on teachers' salaries; 45th in the overall well-being of children. And the other night, in a debate, Governor Clinton said, "Now I want to do for America what I've done for Arkansas." We cannot let him do that.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The people of Arkansas, and you know it, are good people, and they deserve better. And the people of the United States better not gamble on this lousy record. He's like the guy on the Little League that finished last, then wanting to go up and manage the Braves as they come back.

Governor Clinton talks about change, change, change, change; he used the word something like 53 times in a debate. But let's look at what he offers. Change—tax and spend is what he's really talking about. Arkansas for the eighties lagged the Nation in growth. And in 1991, Clinton says, "We did better; we led the Nation." Well, the only way to get Arkansas' economy moving was for Governor Clinton to get out of the State. He was out of there in '91, running

for President, the only time they did better than the national average.

And if you want to get the economy in this country moving—and I do, and we've got the ways to do it—is to send him back to Little Rock and keep him there.

I don't believe there's a person out here that works for a living thinking he's paying too little in taxes. And yet, Governor Clinton has already proposed \$150 billion in new taxes and \$220 billion in new spending. You talk about trickle down, that is trickle-down Government. Give the Government your wallet, man, and step back and let Washington solve the problem. We cannot do that to the taxpayer.

But again, my problem is this pattern of being on one side, that he has, and then on another. He says he's going to get it from the rich. There are not enough rich people around to get all that dough he's talking about. So what happens? He comes after you. If you drive a cab, work in a coal mine, whatever it is, watch out. Watch your wallet; he's coming right after you. And I'm not going to let him do that to the American people.

Yesterday, or the day before, he admitted that he may not be able to pay for his programs without taking it from the middle class. And so what does he do? Gives the programs up and says, well, I'm not going to do that. One day he's for one thing; one day for the next.

The last time we tried this kind of change, I would ask you to remember what happened. When the Democrats controlled the White House—and this same crowd controls the Senate and the House that has controlled it for 38—58 years—38 years, whatever it is—interest rates, do you remember what they were? They got to 21.5 percent, and inflation was 15 percent. And we do not need that kind of change for the United States of America.

With us, interest rates are down, and homeowners can refinance their mortgages. Inflation is down, and senior citizens are not getting wiped out by that, the cruelest tax of all. We will get it down further by controlling the growth of Federal spending and giving you a break on your taxes, particularly small business.

Change, change, change, this Clinton is bad enough, but when you throw Gore in—you heard what Senator McConnell said—you know who's going to get gored, the people that are working for a living in Kentucky, if you go for this carbon tax. I call him Mr. Ozone; he's way up there. We've got to be down where the people are, trying to solve these problems. You try their formula for change and that's all you're going to have left in your pocket, believe me.

Now, I want to get these taxes down, spending under control, and there's a good way to do that. Let me give you a little formula. Mitch believes it. Hal Rogers believes it. We fought for it. And we've got a few more good people, good men and women from Kentucky joining us there. Here's the way we'll do it. One, we will have a balanced budget amendment that makes the President and the Congress get this budget in balance in 5 years. Second, we'll get them to give us a check-off. If Congress can't handle it, let the people do it. You can check off 10 percent of your taxes to go, must go, no way around it—to reducing the Federal deficit. And I want that for the taxpayers. And the third idea is to give me what 43 Governors have, and if the Congress can't do it, give me that line-item veto. And let's cut out the pork and the waste from the Federal budget.

In this country it's small business that produces the jobs. And that's why we favored investment tax allowance or a capital gains reduction or a tax credit for the first-time homebuyer so we can stimulate jobs and investment and support small business, not do as Governor Clinton want to do, manage the economy. He calls it investing. The Government cannot invest. It is the people that invest, and he ought to understand that.

And health care, he wants a Government board again to settle everything. I want to provide insurance to the poorest of the poor. I want to pool the insurance. I want to give vouchers to the poor, tax credit to the more affluent. And then we're going to get these insurance costs down by something else; we are going to go after those crazy malpractice suits that are driving the cost of medicine right through the roof. We are suing each other too much, and

we care for each other too little. And we've got to change it. We need more people in the Congress like Hal and Mitch to get that job done.

You know, everybody in every State is concerned about crime. Arkansas' prisoners for example, spend 20 percent of their term in prison. They get off with serving one-fifth of the sentence. Under the Federal program, it is 85 percent. You see, I have a different theory. I believe we ought to have more support for these police officers out here and a little less worry about the criminals.

We had a great meeting, these police guys that are out there on the line for us. It's the same in Kentucky as other States. But the other day I had a visit from six or eight of them in the Oval Office. And that's a majestic office. You meet the world leaders, and you see all the people from all across this country. But this one was very special. Eight people, I believe it was, and they came up to say, we are for you for President. They were the Fraternal Order of Police from Little Rock, Arkansas. And I was very proud to have their support.

So we must back them up. We must win this war against crime and drugs with our "Weed and Seed" program, backing the law enforcement officers and getting tough anticrime legislation.

But I think the biggest difference as we get down to the polls, and the reason I'm convinced I will win this election, is this: I honestly believe that character counts. I believe that people look to the President of the United States not just in this country but all around the world. And I think his character has a lot to do with how they view our country.

The other night Governor Clinton said in the debate it's not the character of the President, he said, it is "the character of the Presidency." Wrong. They're interlocked. You've got to treat this office with respect and give it the dignity and the honor it deserves. And you don't get that there by saying one thing one day and changing your position. You look into the eyes of the American people and you say, this is what we're going to do. And if you make a mis-

take, a President does what you have to do. You say, hey, I was wrong about that, and I'm going to continue to do the American people's business. But you cannot be all things to all people.

Let me give you some examples. Governor Clinton says on free trade one day, "Well, I'm for it." And then he goes to the big unions up in Washington, and he says, "Well, I've got some serious reservations." On right-to-work laws, doesn't matter if you're for them or against them, but you can't be on both sides of it. He says, "Well, I'm for them," in Arkansas. He goes to the unions that are up in New Hampshire, and he says, "I'm against them."

On the Persian Gulf, a very tough decision that I had to make to commit somebody else's son, somebody else's daughter to combat. I had to make a decision and had to lead, and I couldn't equivocate. And here's what Governor Clinton said. He said, "I guess I agreed with the minority," that's those who wanted to give sanctions a chance, "I agree with the minority, but I guess I would have voted with the majority." What kind of Commander in Chief can waffle and change his position like that?

I have big differences with him, and I know some here might disagree with them. I still feel in my heart-of-hearts that when your country is in a war, you don't go to another country and lead demonstrations against your country. And when you say to the American people, "I'm going to tell you the full truth on the draft on April 17th," and then they're silent, hoping the issue goes away, I don't think that's right either. A lot of people opposed the war. Some of them said, "Well, I'm not going to even stick around." But they didn't change their story. They weren't one thing one day and then trying to preserve their political viability the next. You cannot waffle. You cannot equivocate when you're President of the United States of America.

You know, some days in the Oval Office—

it could be at night in the White House or over in the Oval Office in the day—the telephone rings, and the decisions aren't always easy ones. They're decisions where principle has to be invoked, and where you have to say what you think you really believe in your heart-of-hearts is right. And that's why I believe you cannot separate the character of the President from the character of the Presidency. They are one and the same thing. They are locked in.

I will be asking the American people to consider that important point. We've got the economic program, an agenda for America's renewal. We've got a foreign policy record that gives great credit to the United States and those who have stood strong. Isn't it a wonderful thing that the young people behind me today go to bed at night without the same fear of nuclear war that many of you had? International communism is dead. And Germany's reunited. And ancient enemies are talking to each other in the Middle East. And democracy is on the move south of our border. Now we must take that same leadership and with this new Congress—and there's going to be 100, at least 100 new ones coming up there—with that new Congress we are going to lift this country up. We are going to make life better for every single kid that is here today.

Don't you believe it when Clinton-Gore go around this country saying we are a nation in decline, everything is bad. That is not so. Yes, some people are hurting. Our program will help them. But we are the United States of America. We don't need a man whose only hope to get into office is by criticizing and tearing down. I want to build and lift up.

And I ask for your support. I ask for your vote. And may God bless the United States of America. Thank you all very much.

Note: The President spoke at 12:07 p.m. at the South Laurel High School.