



[► Back to RenewAmerica](#)

SPEECH

Southland Chamber of Commerce

Alan Keyes
September 13, 2004



MP3 audio

MODERATOR: Without further ado, I'd like you to give a warm Southland reception to Ambassador Alan Keyes.

(applause)

DR. KEYES: Good afternoon. I want to first say that it's a special pleasure for me to be able to share some thoughts today about the area that, as y'all know, in a certain sense I live in these days, and which I've learned a great deal from in the course of my time here in Illinois. I've learned a great deal about some of the real conditions of life that folks are facing, and I've also learned a great deal about what some of the probable obstacles and solutions are--obstacles to the solutions of problems and what some of the solutions are--and that's what I want to talk to you about today.

Folks often have observed--and it's actually my intention to make sure that they see clearly--that I am what you might call a candidate of the moral priorities. I spend a good deal of time talking about the moral crisis this country faces, and why it is imperative that we deal with that crisis.

What they don't often understand, because the media refuses to report it, is that I have over the course of time, both over the years and in the course of this campaign, quite comprehensively discussed and shown that that moral crisis is also related to, and at the root of, many of the economic challenges that we face here in the state of Illinois.

Now, it is pretty commonplace--especially when you're dealing with Republicans and Democrats--for us to understand that there is a contrast, under ordinary circumstances, between the approaches that are taken by the two parties, one party placing an emphasis on government solutions, and the other party placing an emphasis on solutions that can be attained through the initiative and private enterprise of our people. What I think it's a little less focused on is that those two approaches to our economic life actually represent two very stark and different understandings of who human beings are, and what they are capable of.

The approach that I take is based upon the notion that God made us to be free, and that government exists in order to support what we do in and with our freedom. My opponent, Barack Obama--because he, among other things, takes that mentality that is often present in the Democrat elite and takes it to an extreme--he's not just a liberal, he is a socialist. He's a thoroughgoing academic socialist--somebody who believes that, at the end of the day, government is the prime instrument for solving the problems of the people. And, of course, that means that government doesn't just support and facilitate. It dominates, and it controls. And that is the contrast.

Now I think that we're all of us, still in America, dedicated to being a free people. And that makes me wonder why it is that so many people can be seduced by approaches to our

problem that, at the end of the day, mean the end of our liberty. And I think we actually have, right here in Chicago, a very good example of that. We have the city of Chicago, which at the end of the day, is a city that, when you walk through it, the streets are clean, it seems reasonably well-run--we were just talking about that before we sat down to lunch today.

But there is one problem that I perceive everywhere I go--with all the folks I talk to, whether they are for or against the machine politics that has produced that result--and that is that the city of Chicago is run in such a way that it is the politicians and the bureaucrats who are the gatekeepers of everyone's economic prospects, of everyone's educational prospects, of everyone's social prospects. The people of Chicago are, as it were, subject to a benevolent despotism, presided over by bureaucrats and politicians who claim that what they do is for the benefit of the people.

But I also encounter a whole lot of people in the Chicago area who are trying hard to see those benefits, but haven't come up with them yet--people who are being subject, right now, to removal from their neighborhoods in order to see high-rise condominiums go up in place of the areas where they used to live, and help is not "on the way," to help them rediscover a place to live in the neighborhoods that they have grown up in. No. Folks in my own area, in Calumet City, are still waiting on the hope that somebody will address the unequal distribution of economic opportunity in the Chicagoland region, that is the direct result of the fact that a certain group of machine politicians now sit athwart the interests, not just of people in Chicago itself, but of people in this whole region, and, indeed, across the entire state.

Now, I think it's really important that we try to be fair to everyone in our political system. It's very important that we be fair to the prospects of the people who live in Chicago. But I think it's also important--and it would be one of my responsibilities as a United States Senator--to assure that the interests of the whole people of Illinois is served, that the interests of the whole state of Illinois is served. And in order to achieve that, we must make sure that no one governmental entity--however important it may be in population terms and in other terms--no one governmental entity should dominate the economic prospects of this state.

(applause)

Sadly, that's exactly what takes place. I have been looking, for instance, as one has to do, if you are going to speak with any knowledge of the challenges facing us all. I've been looking at the challenges of Illinois' transportation future. Now, some people--and this is actually a symptom of our problem--and the news media, naturally, are folks who give evidence of this symptom every time they speak, because they're always approaching me and asking me where I stand on the O'Hare expansion.

Will somebody explain to me--and I've asked some of them this question--why they define the problem in those terms? The challenge is for the whole region and the whole state, and yet, the question is defined as if only one element of that challenge needs to be addressed. How can this be? Why do we think in these terms? Because we have accepted an understanding of the problem that takes for granted that only one of Illinois' components should be determining how we understand the challenge of the future for the entire state.

I don't think that this is fair, and I also don't think it's wise. Why isn't it wise? Well, in the case of our transportation challenge, it's not wise because not all the resources that we have or could have in potential to address the challenge of our transportation future are concentrated under the control of the city of Chicago. We have resources in Rockford. We have the possibility of developing resources in the region around Peotone. These are ideas that have been broached. They have been looked at thoroughly. People have come forward and even offered the possibility that we could get private financing to jumpstart the process of offering an alternative that would help to decongest the airways that lead into and out of our state.

And yet, despite the fact that, when I first got here, I asked, "Well, who's for, and who's against" this and that--it turns out that, at least in lip service, almost every politician in this state has acknowledged at some point, in some way, that there needs to be an alternative. There needs to be an accretion. There needs to be a supplement to what we have existing, in

the way of airports in the northern region.

And yet, nothing happens. And you know the reason nothing happens? The reason nothing happens is because the political machine sits like a troll under the bridge, saying, "Me eat first. Nobody gets to eat 'til we do." See?

And I am not denying that we must be fair to Chicago, and fair to the people of Chicago. But it seems to me that we need to stop treating our political life as if we are the prisoners, and Mayor Daley is the overseer.

(applause)

It is time to liberate this state from the control of what amounts to an authoritarian political machine. And I think that that's one of the goals that we have to set if we are to solve these questions.

We have even seen the concept of regional approaches to our problems distorted in such a way that it amounts to, again, control by one element of our state. When you look at the problem of our transportation future, for instance, it's quite clear that, given the resources available in Rockford, given the need to provide an engine of economic opportunity for people in the southern areas of Chicagoland, we need to be looking at these matters in a way that is truly regional, that respects the interests and the contributions to be made by all the elements of our state that are going to be affected by, and make a contribution to, meeting the transportation challenge of our future. But at the moment, it seems as if we can't even define the regional approach without giving the preponderant weight of control to one element of our political system.

I go through all of this in order to illustrate that we only have in part a material or economic challenge, in dealing with a lot of the problems we face. What we have are, in another part, is we have a deeply political challenge, a challenge that involves the question of fair representation for all the people of our state, in the decision-making processes that affect our economic future.

I would suggest to you that that fair representation is not being achieved right now, and it's not being achieved because the political system of our state is skewed in the direction of domination by a narrow handful of self-serving politicians, who have long since forgotten that politics exists to serve the people, not the other way around.

(applause)

Now I intend, within the next week, week and a half, to go out and take a detailed proposal with respect to--or ideas, anyway--with respect to the challenge of our transportation future, and I'm gonna address this question of the political obstacle that I think is really the primary cause of existing paralysis, not only in this area, but in a lot of areas. But today, I want to share with you some thoughts about how we deal with that problem overall, because I think that that's the real challenge of our election season right now.

It's a challenge that can be defined in several ways, and folks have approached me over time, with different ideas and formulations, all of which, I think, tend, or are intended, to try to get at the same point.

I think a lot of people in Illinois are feeling as if they are imprisoned in their own homes. It reminds me a little bit of the way people feel when their neighborhoods have been taken over by gangs, and there is violence on the street and bullets whizzing by, and they basically have to put bars up to the windows and lock all the doors and sit inside, because when they go out, they're afraid they're gonna be shot down or trampled over by somebody or other.

I think that's the way a lot of people in Illinois feel about politics in this state, and it's why a lot of decent people with integrity have been choosing to sit on the sidelines, have been choosing to retire into their homes and put the bars on the windows, in the hope that they will be left alone by a system that has, in fact, stood representation on its head, and that no longer

respects the requirements of true representative government in our society.

I would have to tell you--and maybe, it's because I can speak with the liberty of one who has just arrived and has no interest at heart except the interest of the whole people and the whole state--but I have reached a definite conclusion about this one. I think it's time to free the political prisoners in Illinois.

(applause)

I think it's time to break down this prison house of political paralysis, and I think that the way we can go about it--the way we can go about it is by not playing the game of the existing politicians. And you notice, by the way, that though I have named a name, and so forth, and I do believe--to be honest about it--that the culture of this machine political system was birthed, and is perpetuated by, the Democrats, I don't think, however, that it's any longer confined to them, sadly. And that means that we, all of us, together, face a challenge. We face the challenge of how we get away from a politics of manipulation, a politics that seeks to approach all the different groups in our society with one thing in mind--"What can I promise you, that will get your vote?" See? "What lies can I tell you, that will procure your support, so that I'll be the gatekeeper who decides what comes through?" And then, "Just how little or how much do I have to give you, to keep suckering you along in your role in my little political machine?"

And I'll be frank with you. I see some people who seem to have psyched the game out pretty well, because they know that the only way to win in a game like that it making people uncertain how you will vote. And then, there are other groups in this area who haven't been that smart, to be quite frank about it, and they've allowed themselves to be suckered into a position where they're taken for granted, where they give a continuing loyalty, no matter what. And at the voting booth, they can be so relied on that they get nothing out of the process, except continued neglect. I don't think that's very wise, and I have been counseling folks against this approach, but some people still insist on taking it.

And the challenge, therefore, is how you can motivate people to finally break the chains of this political bondage. And that's where we come to the moral side of the equation. 'Cause what it generally takes to break the chains of one's bondage is courage. It takes spirit. It takes courage. It takes a willingness to stand forward and take the risk. For the sake of what? Well, you might lose something, and therefore, you have to, kind of feel that that loss would be worth it.

And what is going to produce that outcome? Well, I think what's going to produce that outcome, at the end of the day, is this truth about a lot of people, that even though politicians want to treat us as if the only thing we care about is our selfish, material interests, most of us live our lives, every single day, in such a way as to prove that we know that there's something more to life than that. We know as parents, that very often we will put aside our material, selfish interests. We'll put aside the thing that might give us a little pleasure today, that might give us a new dress, a new car, a little entertainment, and we'll put it aside because our children need their clothes, and they need their books, and they need to get ahead.

I was talking with a fellow in a restaurant near Cal City the other day. He works for the Ford Motor Company, was talking about the education system, how it had failed him, and how he had finally decided he had to put his daughter into a private school, a faith-based school. And he had paid for this, over the course of time, twenty thousand and more dollars, and he had to work two jobs, and so forth. He had made great sacrifices. He really resented the fact, by the way, that he had to pay for it twice. See?

That's one of the reasons I'm in favor of school choice, which, just, by-the-by, my opponent opposes. I don't think that hard-working people who want to see the best for their children should be made to pay twice for their children's education.

(applause)

He has already made the sacrifice. See? And, later in the conversation, just by the way, it

turned out that, not only had he made that sacrifice to get his daughter through school, but just in passing, he got really quiet at one point, and it turned out that he was thinking of his son, who, nineteen years old, as I recall, had been killed in a drive-by shooting two years before. Somebody who they got into a run-in with, and his son got a gun shot. And that broke my heart, of course. And you know, it also illustrated the truth, didn't it, that from somewhere inside this man, filled with grief, had been found the courage, *the courage*, to go on, in spite of the worst pain a father can feel, in order to work hard--twice as hard as he should have--in order to make sure his daughter was taken care of.

See, I have to tell you, I think that kind of strength isn't about money, and it's not about material things. That kind of strength is about faith. That kind of strength is about moral courage. And that is the kind of strength our politicians think we don't have any more. They treat us like a whole assemblage of "gimme" groups. And all they've got to do to win our allegiance is hang another phony ornament on the Christmas tree of government spending, and we'll sniff along like pigs, waiting for our next handout. I am sick and tired of seeing people treated as if they were snuffling animals, waiting to get to the trough. We are a free people, and we need politicians who will respect our dignity.

(applause)

And they only way we're gonna get it, the only way we're gonna get that respect is when we start insisting that the principles of that dignity be respected--the principles that state, for instance, that even though we, at the end of the day, are supposed to be the ones who, at the voting booth, decide who the ministers and legislators and government and others, judges, will be, we're also supposed to be subject to a certain understanding of where our rights came from, that they came not from our own power but from the power of Almighty God, and that they must be exercised not just with our own selfish interests in mind, but with respect for the authority from which they come.

And that respect would deny us the right to reach into the womb to kill our innocent babies there. Respect for that authority would deny us the right to abandon traditional marriage, and act as if we define what marriage is, and can do so in a way that respects only our own pleasures and our own selfishness, and has no respect at all for the fundamental purpose of marriage, which is childbearing, childrearing, procreation, and the establishment of a strong and true foundation for the future of our society.

People wonder, I put an emphasis on these issues--well, I'll tell you why. A people without moral character cannot sustain its freedom. But in addition to everything else, that we sometimes forget, is a people without moral character, can't sustain its economy, neither. The Greeks, who invented the word "economy," actually had a good understanding of this. The word "economy" comes from the Greek. It's two words, actually. *Oikos*, *nomos*. The word *nomos* meant the rules, or conventions, or structure, for managing something, and *oikos* meant household, or the family. And so, economics was, in its beginnings, an understanding --this was how you managed your household.

I think that's brilliant, and we ought to remember it. We ought to remember it because, in our economy, too, the household is still the bedrock unit on which our economic strength relies. Where do you get your workers from? From households. Those households, are they falling apart? Are they incapable of sustaining educational motivation? Are they households in which people learn no discipline, no self-respect, no ability to understand the relationship between a quality person and their quality work? You get those kind of workers out of your household, and you will only get that kind of worker in your business. And that is a business that will fail.

We understand this. We know this, because when we talk about, "Oh, let's meet the challenge of education," everybody knows, every study I've ever seen, that the bedrock of education is a firm cooperation between the school and the home. I have watched this in the life even of my very own brother, [who] teaches special education in California, and so many times, over his long career, he has put years of work into his students, watched them come along and develop, only to find that that crisis that develops at home, as things fall apart, every bit of his work is lost, as another student drops out of school and does something to

destroy their lives. And lots of teachers know this sad and tragic reality.

These things must work in tandem. And yet, we always talk, "If we only pour more money into the schools." We're lying to ourselves, and we know it. It does no good to pour more money into the schools when the moral basis of character, and self-discipline, and self-respect is not being established at home.

(applause)

And that means that those folks who come out and talk about these issues like money is the only thing that matters--"How much are we spending on education?" Why is it that we have schools in our private sector of education, not funded by the government, that can get better results on the standardized tests and every other performance measure, than our government-run schools, on a third to half the money? And that, by the way, has now been shown to be true, even when you take kids from the most difficult backgrounds, so long as you put them in an environment where they are going to have the kind of moral challenging and moral discipline that is usually grounded, by the way, in faith, and that leads to the development of their strongest inner resources.

So even here, we look at our economic life--think about what is required for somebody to start a business. I remember years ago, when I was Assistant Secretary of State for international organizations, I had a meeting with a businessman from Kenya. He was an American participant--or a Kenyan participant, in an American program where folks came and they traveled around the country, visiting different cities and talking to our business people, and so forth and so on, dealing with all kinds of people, corporate people and small business people, et cetera, and he was having an exit interview with me. Folks would come through, they'd meet an assistant secretary or various ones in the department. Since I was in international organizations, I got to see everyone. The nice thing about being there is you talk to people, it's not just one part of the world but from the whole world, so you get to talk to everyone.

And I was talking with him, and I asked him what it was that he had found most surprising about America, in terms of the greatest difference between what he found here, and what he found in Kenya. You know what his answer was? He said he had found it really amazing, how hard Americans work. And especially, how hard people who are trying to start their own business, how hard they would work. And what also surprised him was that they worked so hard, and yet, from what he had learned, most of the startup businesses failed. And he wondered why people kept trying. See? And he wasn't at all sure that that would happen in his country--that people would be willing to work eighteen and twenty hour days, to try and make a business work when they had no certainty, no guarantee whatsoever that there would be a return. He saw what we take for granted: that it's not just the [unintelligible: manner/matter?]. You don't get up all that time, knowing that you don't have any sure guarantee of anything, just for money that ain't coming in. You get up because you are motivated by something in yourself, motivated by a faith, motivated by a courage, motivated by a willingness to dedicate yourself to a dream for your family and for your community that you just won't give up. The foundation of that dream isn't money and it's not greed. The foundation of that dream is faith and the ability to sustain it, even when the going gets tough.

Why do we forget this? Because it means that our entrepreneurship, our risk-takers, the folks who, at the end of the day, have been the seed from which have sprung almost every one of our huge and gigantic successes in economic life, they've been people like that. We see them, sometimes, in terms of the aftermath, when they have made their millions or hundreds of millions, and we forget that there was a time when they were just struggling folks with no guarantee of a return, plugging themselves along because they had the courage to believe in something that wasn't just themselves.

And I think that's grounded, at the end of the day, in the fact that we have been a faithful people, that we started with a sense that God exists, and that He watches us, and that we have gone on, through every trial and every crisis, with that same sense as a people, not just as individuals. Enshrined in our great documents, as a people, the sense that our rights come from God, that He is part of the life of our nation.

I talk a lot about this, and I'm not ashamed of it. Some people think I ought to be, but then I point out to them that every single major statesman in American life and history has never been ashamed to speak of God. I talk to this, especially to these reporters these days coming at me, and do you know who else, by the way, used to remind people with reasonable frequency that our rights come from Almighty God? John F. Kennedy. He was a Democrat. I really wish I understood why Democrats don't talk that way any more, why they talk and act and vote as if they are ashamed of America's moral heritage, ashamed of America's religious heritage, ashamed of the faith of her people.

And this is the final point I'm going to make in this little talk. We talked about the paralysis that has created, in a way, a political prison house for all the people of Illinois, where we are subject to the veto of one little clique of politicians. I think that needs to end. But do you know how we'll end it? We'll end it by having some sympathy with those who are the prisoners of conscience within that same machine, people who have loyalty year after year, decade after decade, giving their votes to support machine politicians, and yet, who have also, year after year and decade after decade, seen the moral principles of their faith and conscience betrayed by the stands that are taken by those same politicians.

That's happening today. That's happening today in the black community, where people of faith and conscience know that this whole hunger after gay marriage is going to destroy the family and they are against it, but they are prisoners, betrayed in conscience by their own party and their own leaders, and yet asked to continue to serve mammon with their vote. I think they are tired of this contradiction.

I see the same among Roman Catholics, people of all different ethnic backgrounds, whose faith tells them it's wrong to take innocent life, it's wrong to abandon the understanding of marriage that Christ set down--"the two become one flesh"--yet, they are prisoners still, within that same machinery that has taken their vote and betrayed their faith and their conscience.

(applause)

And I think, as a people in Illinois, if we want to free ourselves from the prison of political paralysis, then we must help to free the prisoners of conscience from the political machine that has farmed their votes, and betrayed their true beliefs.

And that is, in a nutshell, what the Keyes campaign is about. Contrary to what people say, I don't neglect any issues. We address them all, and I have, in the course of my varied career, dealt with issues to a great extent, and my campaign folks will attest that, though I take briefings and listen hard to local dimensions and Illinois dimensions of all these issues, they don't prepare long briefing papers for me on these subjects, because I have been briefed by life and experience, already.

And that means that it doesn't take too much time for me to decide what I'm going to say to a group like this, but--at the same time, at the same time--it means I make conscious choices about what the priorities shall be in my campaign. And I'll be frank with you. I don't care what the polls and the media and the pundits say. At the end of the day, the priority of my campaign is to free the people of this state from the domination of a morally and politically corrupt understanding of politics.

(applause)

I think that if we're able to achieve that, then we're going to find solutions that will be fair to all, solutions to the challenge of our transportation future, solutions to the challenge of quality education for all our people, that will empower parents once again to be the major power in determining the educational future of their children, solutions to the problem of how we attract businesses to this state, by getting rid of the corruption tax and the litigation tax, bringing down the skyrocketing cost of malpractice insurance, keeping doctors in this state, so we can have access to quality medical care, that will attract and keep new businesses, and an environment friendly to their existence.

All these things must be done, but they won't be done until we have rejected the coalition

politics of selfishness, and adopted the community politics of principle. When we have come together, standing on that common ground of our faith and belief, then we shall know how to work together--not in the interest of a few, not in the interest of a little clique of political masters, but in the interests of all, for the sake not just of somebody's power, but of everybody's good. Thank you.

(applause)

Question and answer session

ALAN KEYES: I would like to take some questions.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Since the business of the Congress is generally conducted in committees, if or when you're elected, what committees would you like to serve on?

DR. KEYES: Hmm. Well, I think that, given the nature of Illinois, there are some priorities that have to be pretty practical, and I would think that Agriculture and Transportation would be good ones to look at. I also think that, from a point of view of some of my own key interests, the Judiciary and Foreign Relations would be good to look at, and I also think that those that have to do with Trade and Commerce would be good to look at. You also have to have a range, because you're not going to get everything you want, so you have to put down a range of choices, but I think, from the point of view of the people I represent, those would be the kinds of committees that I would want to be involved with.

I also think that it's especially true that the Agriculture and Trade, we need to have a look at right now, because I think that our trade policies have had a deeply adverse effect on Illinois especially. We have seen the manufacturing jobs go overseas. We have seen the ill effects from the fact that our farmers are not getting truly fair access to markets overseas, and the export--the continuing export--of jobs out of this state is, I think, greatly facilitated by a trade approach that has just been wrong-headed.

We've talked about free trade. First, it's not free trade. It's managed trade, and the question is, is it going to be managed for or against our interests? Because we're negotiating these bad deals in multilateral fora, I would argue, it is right now against the interests of the people of our state.

It may favor a few particular interests on the American economic scene, and I understand that. People are putting big bucks into the pockets of these politicians to vote so that they can export our jobs overseas, and then have them send back the cheap goods that are made by foreign labor, so we can buy them on our consumer market, and fill everybody's pockets with money. But I think that, at the expense of the American worker and the American farmer and the American people, it is wrong to serve the interests of a narrow group of American interests that now seem more loyal to their own international profits than they are to America.

And so, I would want to be heavily involved in that area in particular, because I think it's time we had a different approach that looked at results, not theories, and if we're not getting the right results for our workers and for the strengths of our economic base, in manufacturing and otherwise, then we need to change our approach, put a greater emphasis on bilateral arrangements where we have more clout and can get the kind of things we need for our people.

Question? Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Mr. Ambassador, you've come out in favor of abolishing the income tax. And I'm wondering why that is, and how would you replace that revenue?

DR. KEYES: Well, I join with an ever-growing number of Americans, I'm glad to say, who have realized that the income tax is a bad system. It was, by the way--and, I don't know, this is a short question with a very long answer, if I answer it in full (and everybody cautions me against long answers). But, the truth is that the income tax is bad in just about every possible

way, for a free people.

First of all, it is bad in principle, because it turns control of our resources over to the government. We don't even realize that half the time, but that's what we've done. If I make a deal with somebody that says that I will cede to them the right to take out of my pocket a percentage of my income to be determined by them--in principle, how much of my income do they control? All of it! They specify the percentage, so if they want one hundred percent, that's what they can take. We have given this power to our government, and then we're surprised when they talk about our money as if it all belongs to them, and they are gracious enough to let us keep some of it.

Under the income tax system, that is, in principle, the situation. It all does belong to them--and they are gracious enough, every now and again, to pass a tax bill that lets us keep some. See?

Step number one: a free people should never cede control of its supply lines to the government, because otherwise, if that's the case, how does it maintain its independence of the government it's supposed to control? "A power over a man's resources is a power over his will."--Blackstone. The Founders used to quote that all the time, as a caution against letting the government get this kind of control.

Second, of course, it takes away the first use of a certain percentage of our dollars from our people. And that's very bad, because that means that most of the surplus that is generated by their labor is being expropriated by the government for first use by political machinery. People don't get to decide how their dollars will be saved and invested, and so forth--and as a result, we have low savings rate. We have low rates of capital formation, and so forth and so on. Why should we be surprised, when we are allowing the government to lap up most of the surplus that's being produced by our earners?

I think that people should have the right to first use of every dollar they earn, and the government should not be taking its share until after they decide what to do with it.

Third, this has a bad moral effect. I bet you didn't realize that. This whole system of 501-C3, and so forth, is chilling and paralyzing to the voices of conscience in our society. It is giving government an indirect and lying control over the participation of the citizens of conscience and faith in the political process. This is killing the moral fabric of our country, and the income tax is directly related to it, and directly responsible for it. And so, it has bad effects on a whole range of fronts.

What replaces it? Well, one I think I favor is the Fair Tax system--it's the National Sales Tax. And we shouldn't be afraid of this, by the way, because they come back with the boogeyman, "Well, we would have to have a tax that was fifteen or twenty percent on goods," and so forth and so on, and they scare people with the rate of taxation, forgetting that, in a properly structured system where you'd have a certain market basket of goods and services free of the tax, so people could get the basics--food, clothing, shelter, and transportation--in a non-taxed economy of exchange, well, that could put us in a position where, whatever the rate of taxation, we control the incidence of taxation. We're the ones who decide whether, at this stage of our life, we need to be saving money more, or less. We could give ourselves a tax cut. How? By changing our patterns of consumption. That would put behind us a powerful incentive to save, to invest; a powerful incentive to provide the kind of capital that's needed, particularly for the cutting-edge businesses, the smaller entrepreneurs and so forth, who are the cutting edge of job creation. It would be an explosion of economic productivity in this country, because we would have given people control over their own resources.

It would also mean, of course, that a lot of the stuff that is now done by the government in a bad way--in the welfare, and all that--could be taken over by churches, and the communities of faith, because the people would be able to decide to devote their resources to the approaches they believe will be most effective in helping people to turn their lives around. They wouldn't need government faith-based initiatives, because people would sponsor faith-based initiatives of their own, with their own resources, decided on their own initiative.

So I think that we ought to get rid of the income tax, replace it with a sales tax system that gives our people control over the first use of one hundred percent of their money, with the government taxing only in the open marketplace, the end transactions of goods and services-- because, of course, the government has to be funded. Nobody denies this. But it doesn't have to be funded at the expense of our liberty.

Last question?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: As I drive to Michigan to visit relatives up there, I always see a sign along the road that says, "Get Us Out of the United Nations." And I know that you were a United Nations representative. I also know that, right now, there's a big hullabaloo about the oil for, that was supposed to go to Iraq has gone to the United Nations. How do you feel about the money that we as a country spend in the United Nations, diverting that to our people at home?

DR. KEYES: Well, I have gotten this question a whole lot over the years, both when I was serving at the U.N., and in the aftermath. My service at the U.N. did not leave me a fan of the United Nations overall. I think that it's one of those cases where, you know how they say "travel broadens"? Well, in this particular case, the more you know about it, the less you like it.

(laughter)

But I think we have to avoid, though, oversimplifying our situation. We avoid it, first, by remembering who put the U.N. together in the first place. Who put the U.N. together in the first place? No; we did. Now, why? Because, at the end of World War II, after the world had imploded for the second time, at the cost of great life and treasure to the United States, we kind of thought something needed to be done, to see whether we could avoid having it happen a third time, particularly since we had now stumbled upon these weapons that could blow the whole world up, several times over.

I have to say that I don't fault the intention. I think it was carried out with the best of intentions, in rather a bad way, because, though we did articulate some nice ideals that correspond to the true understanding we have of human rights and human dignity, we didn't require that all the states that join the U.N. respect those ideals, and as a result it became a battleground, for decades, between forces of socialist totalitarianism, and forces of liberty. That's what it was like when I was there, and on any given day of the week, liberty didn't do so well at the United Nations. I understand it still doesn't. And that means that it's a very iffy forum, in terms of our values, our ideals, and our interests.

The one thing I would say, though, is--I think if, tomorrow, America pulled out of the United Nations, just in some precipitous way, it would cause us more damage than any good we would get out of the pullout, because we would pay a price for that in every relationship we have, with every country in the world. They would beat us about the head and neck in every war that occurred, every problem that existed on the face of the earth, they'd stand up immediately and say, "Well, this wouldn't be happening if America hadn't pulled out of the U.N. You got to pay us now, for it." And I know how we are. We talk a good game, until somebody tugs at our heartstrings. We're really tough, until somebody comes along with a position where people are really suffering, and we need to do something. We're basically a decent people. We don't want to leave the world to suffer and die. We can't do it. We can't leave it alone. And that's right. That's a matter of conscience for us.

And that being the case, I don't think we should fool ourselves into thinking that that browbeating wouldn't have an effect, that it wouldn't cost us a lot more than the money we are presently paying the U.N. as we dole out, in our bilateral and regional relationships, money after money after money, in response to this notion that we have disrupted everything in the world by pulling out of the U.N.

Now, I cite that not, however, to say that we should go to the other extreme. And the other extreme is this notion, now being promoted in this idea of the judicial power of the world

court, being brought to bear against our troops, as they are in combat in different parts of the world. Some elements of the World Trade Organization, where we surrendered our sovereignty to multilateral bodies that could actually substitute for decisions made by our duly-elected legislatures, thereby subverting or substituting for our Constitution, and so forth. This is a huge mistake.

So, while we must look for those moments when the U.N. can be of some service to our interests, to our values and ideals--rare as those moments might be, they do happen--we must also operate in such a way that we never surrender any element of our sovereignty to the U.N.

And that, I believe, is one of the reasons why the Left is set on beating up on G. W. Bush. Although it was a little hit-or-miss there for a while, what the administration has clearly represented is the assertion that America is a sovereign power, that we will defend our rights, our interests, and the lives of our people, even if it requires sovereign, independent decisions to do so.

That's the real meaning of this issue that has come up, which I think is hurting John Kerry badly, that he gives the impression that, in order to defend America, you got to get a permission slip from the United Nations. No, we don't. The U.N. charter was written in such a way that, when you're attacked, you get to defend yourself, and you don't have to ask anybody's permission. And we shouldn't. We don't want to establish a system where a body that contains a bunch of tyrannical governments, that is not based on a principle of representation, that does not respect the idea that government must be based on consent and periodic elections--no such international government should ever supercede the constitutional government of the United States.

(applause)

And I think that it's dangerous [unintelligible]. I want to thank you all for your patience. I really enjoyed being with you, and I hope that you'll be looking seriously at the choice you have in November. God bless you.

