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SPEECH

Minuteman Border Fence Project Groundbreaking Ceremony

Alan Keyes
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[applause]

Thank you very much. God bless you. God bless you all. We always say that. But there are times, I think, when we ought to stand back and realize that the truth of the matter is that sometimes when we say, "God bless you," what we're really saying is *you are a blessing from God.*

And right now as America faces what I think is the greatest crisis of our institution in its history, across the board, one of the most important examples of that crisis is right here. When a country loses the will to defend its borders, when a country loses the will to assert its identity, when a country loses the will to stand in defense of its way of life, that country is doomed. And I think all of us have to be fearful, if you listen to what's coming out of Washington and coming from our president, and so forth, that we are hearing the confirming echoes of that doom coming down the corridors of our present and the future that we should be leaving our children and our grandchildren.

Now, I'm here to tell you right now that however we may sometimes feel discouraged, that however we may sometimes think that there is no hope, you need to remember that when we pray to God for a blessing, you have come forward to be the answer. You have come forward to be the defenders.

[cheer, applause]

You have come forward to be the examples of the American spirit that built this country and will defend its future.

And we also have to be clear about something else, because part of me feels like, as you very well know, *we shouldn't be here at all*, the truth of the matter. After all, we go through the motions every few years, we send folks off to Washington, D.C., we elect them to the House, we elect the Senate. What is their first duty? To listen to them these days, you'd think that their first duty would be to serve the money bags who put money into their political coffers -- but that is not their first duty. To listen to them these days, you would think that their first duty is to kowtow to foreign potentates and presidents, like Vicente Fox, instead of the people of the United States. But that is not their first duty.

[applause]

To listen to them talk today, you would think their first duty was to respond to the needs and wishes of all those folks throughout the world who wish that they were in America. But that's

not their first duty.

The oath that they swear, every single one of them, is to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States.

[applause]

And that Constitution is not the work of foreign governments, it is not the work of foreign people, it is the work of the people of the United States. It is to *us* that they owe their allegiance.

[applause]

We are left to our obvious conclusion, if, as the president himself said -- and I don't care, did any folks in this country realize how breathtaking it was for the President of the United States, well into the sixth year of his terms of office, to look the American people in the eye, and as if it were a really fantastic and wonderful revelation that he had just discovered -- to tell us that we do not have control of our borders?

[laughter]

Now, this is very good, don't you think? This is like the fellow who is hired to guard your property telling you that you don't have any security!

I'm thinking to myself, "Well, Mr. President, you've been at work for six years now. I'd like to know what *you've* been doing with all that time!"

He tells us now that he's going to get to work, that he's going to do the job that he should have been doing all along. And what's even more appalling is that after September 11th, you would have thought it would have been fairly clear -- they tell us we've got to secure our ports of entry, they tell us we've got to secure the airports, they tell us we've got to seriously examine everybody who's coming through into the country -- and meanwhile they have left the southern border of the United States wide open to every individual who is willing under the cover of darkness and deceit to come into this country.

[applause]

And they acknowledge hundreds of folks coming across every day, and we're supposed to believe that in the midst of all those people, they are just wonderfully innocent, hopeful immigrants coming across to seek a better life.

I think that in the midst of a lot of those people, there would have to be a few of those folks who are coming across to *take* our lives, not to seek a better life for themselves!

So, what do we do? Well, what we are told we ought to do, given the Senate's bill, is we ought to deal with the problem of all of the illegal folks who have come -- and the things that they need in order to regularize their lives -- and then maybe somewhere down the road, a little piecemeal here and there, they'll deal with the security of our border. And that shows you where their allegiance lies -- and it doesn't lie with the people of this country. Because, if they took that allegiance seriously, there would only be one priority for the President, for the Senate, for the House -- as they have, thankfully, shown us -- and that priority is clear: security *first*, security *now*, security *before anything else will be considered*.

[cheer, applause]

And everything else they offer us, as [Rep.] Steve King was just telling us -- here we are, sort of like the young lady who is taking care of the first child by her boyfriend, who then tells her, "Don't worry about birth control. *Trust me.*"

[laughter]

Well, we're taking care of having to deal with the problem of millions of people who have come into this country as a result of the dereliction of duty of these political elites. And they wish us to accept what they told us in '86 and '94 and every time they turned around: "Trust us! Trust us! Trust us!" I think we need to send them a good, clear, strong message: "We don't trust you anymore!"

[applause]

And I want to say it outright. I'm a Republican, . . . but it's about time that we look G.W. Bush in the eye and tell him, "We don't trust you, either!"

[applause]

Not on this issue! Not now!

What we need, in order to restore our trust is not your promises, not your talk, not your 614 pages of legislation you don't intend to enforce. What we need now, as the *only* thing that we will accept, is results that finally get this border back under control of the American people, where it belongs!

[applause]

Here's why you give me particular hope. You give me particular hope, because I look back at the history of the country, and though they tend to forget it, America wasn't built by the government. The government was built by the people.

We do remember that, don't we?

Before it extended its reach, people had to reach out. They had to explore, they had to clear, they had to build, sometimes they had to fight and struggle and give their lives. We stand on ground that was not first claimed by the American government, it was first claimed by the courage, the ingenuity, the perseverance of the American people.

[applause]

And as it was claimed in the first place, so it must be defended now -- and that's why you're here.

You're here to remind folks who think that every time an American steps forward to take the initiative now, they should be told to wait for the government to act, wait for the government handout, wait for the government research, wait for the government to do it -- we have never waited on the government before, and we're not going to start now.

[applause]

And though we all may have very good reason, given the record over the last several decades, to not trust the political elites, somebody explain to me why it is that any of them would look at the American people, and when we step forward and say we want to help in our own defense -- we want to do what's necessary to defend our own property, our own families, our own homes, our own lives in the way that has been our great tradition -- can you tell me on what grounds they dare to tell us that they don't trust *us*?

I think it's about time that they acted like the people who built this country in the first place, people who aren't willing to trust the government first, not when we can trust to our own courage, to our own work, to our own discipline, to our own character.

[applause]

I want to tell you, Chris [Simcox], given the things that I've seen you've been doing for Americans everywhere -- because you've been reasserting the truth of the sovereignty of our people, you have been reasserting truth that, yes, it is, as Lincoln said, "government of the

people, by the people, for the people," and we will still step up to the plate to get the job done.

[applause]

[unintelligible] that's what these [unintelligible] of defense symbolize. They try to pretend that it's some kind of barrier, that it's *against* somebody who is in Mexico or anywhere else in the world. That's not true. We are acting *for* our people, we are acting *for* our country, we are acting *for* our children, we are acting *for* our posterity.

We are doing what Americans have always done, and in doing so, I don't think we deserve the distrust and fear of our leaders. We deserve not only their understanding and their support, we deserve that they will fall in line, as they have had to do before, and accept the leadership of the American people.

[applause]

I just want to tell you that I have been both moved and proud to be able to work in any capacity at all to help the folks who are organizing this great effort, to take the lead and to reassert the spirit of our country.

They are doing so, I think, with an admirable sense that what they're doing is not only on behalf of just themselves or their region or their states or their own ambition. It's on behalf of all of us. This is why I am reminded of what it means to be a people who not only share a common identity, but who will serve our common good and work to a common purpose.

I sometimes have to fear, when I look at what our politicians do, that some of them have entirely forgotten that at the end of the day, that's what citizenship is about. That's what their job is about. It's not everybody for themselves, grabbing what little piece of the pie we can. It's everybody showing a willingness, yes, to take care of ourselves, while we take care of the business of our communities, and our families, and our country. And that's what you exemplify. The true spirit of American self-government.

So, what we're doing here is not just building a fence. We are rebuilding a character. We are redefining a people. We are reminding ourselves and the people of our country and people all over the world that the American people have made a difference. Because, though we come from every voice and color and creed and kind, we stand together now on a common creed of self-government and liberty that has allowed us to make the difference.

[applause]

And the good spirit and the good example -- I think you're going to move people all over this country. You have already started a debate and discussion that is redefining the terms of this issue and will continue to do so. But even more than that, you are going to become the focal point of what will begin to revitalize American politics. That will uphold people of [strength] and faith and of courageous folks who are standing with them.

[applause]

But we know that everyday, in politics today, that they may think it's all right to serve their special interest and their ethnic masters, and all of this, we are going to insist once again on a politics that serves our nation, that serves our people, that serves our principles, that serves our future. We will take nothing less.

[applause]

It's a great beginning. . . . I am reminded that it's only a beginning. But Aristotle said, with some wisdom, I think, that "The beginning is more than half the whole." What he meant by that, I think, is quite clearly demonstrated. To finish the job, you must have the whole commitment, heart, and faith that will get the job done. With your courage over the last several years, you have shown that whole -- that *holy* commitment.

And I believe that it is one of those sacred moments that God will bless. So, I say it again: God bless you. But I say, as well, may God continue to bless all of us in this country for the work that you have done, for the things that you will achieve. I don't know what you're getting at the moment, but I'm sure of this: in the fullness of time there will come those Americans who will know what liberty means, because you have fought the good fight -- who will stand within a country still secure in its boundaries, because you have stood for their defense, and who will breathe to you and to God Almighty a word of thanks that will come from *their* hearts -- hearts you may never know, but who will remember *you* as the generation that began the recovery of American greatness.

God bless you.

[applause]

