

Kerry Gets Serious: Evokes FDR vs. Hoover

In a speech on Social Security in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania on Oct. 19, Democratic Presidential candidate John Kerry constantly referred to the differences between Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover, in laying out the choice between himself and George Bush.

Referring to the visit of FDR to Pennsylvania 72 years ago, Kerry said that Roosevelt had come to discuss how we could restore America's prosperity and America's future. At that time, Kerry said, "America was in the depths of the Great Depression." Hoover, like Bush, Kerry said, had lost jobs on his watch. "He failed to restore our economic prosperity—and so has George W. Bush."

Quoting from Roosevelt's attack on Hoover's policies as jeopardizing "the welfare of our people and the credit of our country," Kerry charged, "and so has George W. Bush."

Kerry Scores Bush's Assault on Social Security

Kerry then scored Bush as the first President to launch an all-out assault on Social Security since Franklin Roosevelt first signed the program into law. He referred several times to Social Security as a sacred compact between generations, while repeating his pledges to protect it.

Taking a swipe at sacred cow Alan Greenspan, Kerry said: "The chairman of the Federal Reserve says that the only way to pay for George Bush's reckless tax cuts is to cut Social Security. Well, let me say it loud and clear—when I am President, it is not going to happen."

At the conclusion of the Wilkes-Barre speech, Kerry again invoked FDR, observing that when FDR had come to Pennsylvania 72 years ago, the hope for a better future "seemed almost lost," but that then "the American people rose up and they forged a new future."

Kerry spoke of FDR's optimism, and quoted FDR as saying, 72 years ago, "I am as certain as mortal man can be certain . . . that from the moment that we set our hands openly and frankly and courageously to this problem, we shall have reached the end of our long, hard . . . road." Kerry concluded that, "On Nov. 2, we will reach the end of this 'long, hard' road . . . and together we will take America in a new direction."

With this speech, Kerry is finally putting this Presidential campaign into correct historical perspective: The choice today, like that between Hoover and Roosevelt, is

between fascism and the hope for a recovery. Kerry is also correct in nailing Bush for wanting to privatize Social Security.

Although the President and his campaign staff have squirmed all over the place and used semantics to deny it, there is no question but that a second Bush Administration would continue to raid the Social Security Trust Fund for budget purposes, which Bush had promised not to do, and would also move to loot the Fund, by diverting monies into the stock market and Bush's broker friends.

Excerpts From Kerry's Speech

"Seventy-two years ago today, another candidate for President by the name of Franklin Roosevelt came here to Pennsylvania to discuss how we could restore America's prosperity and America's future.

"At that time, this nation was in the depths of the Great Depression.

"The incumbent President then, Herbert Hoover, had actually lost jobs on his watch and so has George W. Bush. the first President in 11 Presidents to do so.

"He failed to restore our economic prosperity and so has George W. Bush.

"And as Roosevelt said, President Hoover's policies had jeopardized, the welfare of our people and the credit of our country, and so has George W. Bush's.

"Seventy-two years later, it's *deja vu* all over again.

"George W. Bush has become the first President since Herbert Hoover to lose jobs on his watch. He has become the first President in more than 70 years to have the incomes of American families decline in each year of his Presidency.

"He has become the first President to turn a record surplus into the largest deficit in history. And he has become the first President to launch an all-out assault on Social Security since Franklin Roosevelt first signed the program into law.

"What George Bush still doesn't understand is that his four-year spending spree on tax giveaways for millionaires has undermined the hopes of middle-class families and put Social Security on a dangerous road. Now he's asking for another four years to privatize the program, and undo the sacred compact we've made with our seniors.

"Well, I'm here to tell you that even though this is George Bush's plan, it doesn't have to be our future. And now is our moment to choose. Do we want four more years of a President who gives more to those with the most and tells a struggling middle-class that everything's just fine? Or do we want a President who will honor middle-class values and fight for middle-class opportunities?"

"I believe that we can protect Social Security for our seniors, lift up middle-class families, and keep America's promise to our children and our grandchildren. And when I'm President, that's exactly what we'll do."