

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Ambassador Nikki Haley.

John Heubusch ([00:37](#)):

Good evening everyone. My name is John Heubusch and I have the honor of being the executive director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute. Welcome to all of you this evening. Thank you so much for coming. In honor of our men and women in uniform who protect and defend our freedoms around the world, if you please stand and join me for the pledge of allegiance.

John Highbush ([01:06](#)):

I pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

John Highbush ([01:21](#)):

Please be seated. Before we get started I'd like to recognize a few special guests we have in the audience with us this evening. Former Congressman and his terrific wife Janice, Elton Gallegly. Elton.

John Highbush ([01:50](#)):

Our second special guest with us tonight is a member of our board of trustees. For those of you who have had the chance to work with him, you know he is no stranger to civic duty. Gerry Parsky has been called into public service by five United States presidents. He has served as the assistant secretary under President Nixon and Ford at Treasury, a member of President Reagan's council on productivity, a member of President George H W Bush's export council. And as a member of President George W Bush's commission to strengthen Social Security.

John Highbush ([02:33](#)):

Closer to home, he served on the Reagan Foundation's board of trustees for 26 years, and is personally responsible for some remarkable achievements during that time. As the chairman of our investment committee, he's overseeing our endowment fund, one that's nearly quadrupled in size in the last 10 years. When he is not busy securing the Reagan Foundation's future, Jerry's other day job involves serving as the chairman of Aurora Capital Partners, an investment firm based here in Los Angeles. Gerry's kindly agreed to act as our host this evening and has the honor of introducing our featured speaker. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Gerry Parsky.

Gerry Parsky ([03:31](#)):

Thank you very much. Good evening. I want to thank John for those kind words and on behalf of my fellow trustees, thank all of you for being here. It's an honor to welcome you to the latest installment of the Reagan Foundation's speaker series, A Time for Choosing. As most of us Reaganites know it's a phrase made famous by President Reagan's pivotal 1964 speech. As has been said at the start of each of these events, that speech, referred to often as "the speech", set in motion a chain of events that would launch a political career, define a conservative movement and reshape a party. Today, the party once led by Ronald Reagan is facing its own time for choosing. What are its core philosophies, if any? What should the party stand for? What domestic policy and foreign policy positions are absolutely essential?

Gerry Parsky ([04:45](#)):

In May, June, July, and September guests here at the Reagan Library heard from Speaker Paul Ryan, Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary Mike Pompeo, and Governor Chris Christie. They offered their own views and their own perspectives in to these questions critically important to the Republican party's future. Tonight's speaker will provide her vision.

Gerry Parsky ([05:16](#)):

Nikki Haley is no stranger to facing her own times for choosing. Whether to challenge an incumbent in her own party to launch a political career, how to lead through tragedy and bring down a flag in order to lift up a state, how to confront enemies of freedom on the world stage with trademark grit and grace, and when to step down from a diplomatic post where the ambassador led so capably, and when to take issue, as a matter of principle, with anyone. With that experience, it's only natural so many Republicans are looking to Ambassador Nikki Haley for direction. After all, it's a rare political figure who can win widespread praise for experience in both domestic policy and foreign relations. So we're honored to have her here with us. I dare say this speaker series would be incomplete without her.

Gerry Parsky ([06:30](#)):

Of course, while we all hope tonight's speech may give us some insight into the ambassador's next steps, it's really all about the direction of the party. As has been said before, this is not a forum for slogans or personal attacks. It's a place for serious and thoughtful discussion. It's also not a time or place to try to remake the past. President Reagan believed in the future and upholding his legacy means always looking to tomorrow, not longing for yesterday. As he said it in the speech quote, "you and I are told increasingly we have to choose between left or right. Well, I would suggest," he said, "there's no such thing as left or right. There's only an up or a down." So what will the Republican party look like tomorrow, next year or next decade, in order to go up?

Gerry Parsky ([07:51](#)):

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Ambassador Nikki Haley.

Nikki Haley ([08:12](#)):

Thank you. Thank you, Gerry, for your very, very kind words and thank you all for being here. It is a great privilege to be back at the Reagan Library. This is truly an incredible place and a most fitting tribute for our 40th president. Ronald Reagan's life and leadership provides so many important lessons for our country. I wish every American could visit this library and learn from it, especially right now in this extremely challenging time. It has become fashionable in some circles, even in some conservative ones, to dismiss the relevance of Ronald Reagan. They say we must move beyond Reaganism. The times have changed, they said, and it's only right to change with them. Well, of course, it's true that every era has its unique challenges. No period in history provides an exact map for today, but dismissing the lessons of Reagan makes no more sense than dismissing the lessons of Lincoln or Washington. We must not reject the profound wisdom of our past because it would be sure way to destroy our future.

Nikki Haley ([09:33](#)):

And it turns out there's a great deal of similar between Reagan's time and ours. History isn't exactly repeating, but it is rhyming. Think about it, growing inflation, runaway federal spending and debt, rampant crime in our cities, radical leftists running our universities, radical Islamists holding Americans hostage, an evil communist empire aggressively spreading its influence in the world. Am I talking about 1980 or am I talking about today? The answer is both. Many of the biggest challenges of our time look

an awful lot like the ones Reagan faced. Our 40th president saw things clearly. He saw that America faced an existential threat. He knew that victory in the Cold War and success at home depended on rebuilding our national strength and restoring confidence in the American cause. He did just that and we know what happened.

Nikki Haley ([10:49](#)):

He rallied the American people to beat communism and preserve freedom. He brought America to new heights of prosperity and opportunity. More than anything, Ronald Reagan renewed our will to compete and win and that made all the difference. America is once again in a life or death struggle. In 1981, we were up against the Soviet Union. In 2021 we face a series of enemies who want to destroy us. Islamic terrorists, Iran, Russia, communist China, they all want to harm America. They all want to drive freedom from the earth and they all increasingly have the capacity and the will to attempt to do it.

Nikki Haley ([11:43](#)):

I saw this threat plainly at the United Nations. No, the UN is a place where diplomats from all over the world gather and exchange pleasantries. Socializing is encouraged and confrontation is discouraged. On the surface everyone plays nice, but just underneath the surface, it's a very different story. A very ugly story. At the United Nations and in the world at large, the unfree countries outnumber the free countries. They do truly evil things and get away with it. When it's time to vote and condemn them, a majority of the world usually takes their side. It sickens me to think about what those countries do and how many times the United Nations refused to hold them accountable.

Nikki Haley ([12:46](#)):

In Syria, a brutal murderer uses chemical weapons against women and children. In North Korea, a tyrant expands his nuclear arsenal while starving his very own people. In Iran, theocratic lunatics are building their own nuclear arsenal and bankrolling terrorists. In Venezuela, a socialist dictator crushes freedom and tortures protestors. And in China, the communist party is guilty of genocide. A genocide that is happening right now at this very hour. Yet, as we saw when he spoke to the United Nations, Joe Biden can't even call out China by name.

Nikki Haley ([13:37](#)):

Make no mistake, our enemies are not just people with a different view about how best to govern, they're barbaric. They want to roll back history to a very dark time. They've spent many years building their strength and now they're done waiting. The fall of Afghanistan has every one of them thinking America's era has ended and theirs has arrived. The Taliban victory in Afghanistan is a total disgrace. It leaves America weaker in the world and less safe at home. It's the fall of Saigon and the Iran hostage crisis rolled into one. Our country hasn't been embarrassed in my lifetime. The American people have every right to be angry because it didn't have to be this way. It shouldn't have been this way.

Nikki Haley ([14:36](#)):

We went to Afghanistan to stop the terrorists who killed nearly 3000 Americans on 9/11. My husband deployed to Afghanistan to fulfill that mission. President Biden has thrown away what Michael and his military brothers and sisters fought for. He's thrown away what more than 2300 Americans died for. Let's look at America's overseas force structure. We have around 200,000 American troops deployed around the world today, less than 2% were in Afghanistan at the beginning of the year. We had fewer troops than we have in a dozen other countries. Was it enough to make Afghanistan a flourishing

Western style country? Of course not. No number of troops could have done that and nation building should never have been our mission. But we did have enough troops to stop the Taliban from taking over and renewing a safe haven for terrorists and that was vital for American security.

Nikki Haley ([15:43](#)):

Then Joe Biden pulled everything out with no conditions. Our worst fears were realized within days. Everyone saw it coming except the president who promised it would never happen. Where I come from, that's a fireable offense. Now the Taliban is back in power. Their flag is flying over our embassy. Last time they gave Al-Qaeda free reign to plot attacks on America. This time will be no different. Al-Qaeda is still in Afghanistan with the Taliban's blessing. You can bet they're hatching plans to attack us. That's who they are, that's what they do. Thinking otherwise is naive and dangerous. America is in greater danger today than we were just three months ago.

Nikki Haley ([16:40](#)):

Joe Biden thinks retreat is a sign of strength. He doesn't even realize that his actions have told the world that America is too weak to stand up for itself. The consequences of this failure are echoing across the world. Now are not one, but two radical Islamic regimes in the world, Afghanistan and Iran. They are different in some ways, but they are united in their hatred for America. And because of this administration's policies, they are both gaining strength and determination. You can bet they will push their advantages because Joe Biden has proven he will fold.

Nikki Haley ([17:27](#)):

Russia is happy too. Vladimir Putin is thinking about how he can swallow more of Ukraine and perhaps southern neighbors. And he's pocketing the president's foolish concession on Nord Stream 2. The media relentlessly and falsely called Donald Trump a Russian stooge. In eight months in office, Joe Biden has done more to improve Russia's economic and strategic standing than Trump ever did. It's disgraceful.

Nikki Haley ([17:57](#)):

And then there's the worst threat of all, communist China. Beijing now sees the biggest opening it's ever had. Taiwan is directly in its crosshairs, but it's not just Taiwan. Japan, South Korea, India, Australia, they're all starting to wonder if they stand alone. They too are wondering if the American era is over. It matters if our enemies think America won't protect our friends and our allies. It matters even more if they think we won't protect ourselves and our way of life. That's exactly what China, Russia and the Islamic terrorists believe right now.

Nikki Haley ([18:44](#)):

We're in a clash of civilizations and the bad guys think the good guys lack the will to win. That perception is very dangerous for America and for the free world. Our enemies have always hoped this day would come. They know from history that when America retreats, freedom falters, but I also saw at the United Nations that when America steps up, our enemies step back. The barbarians of the world fear nothing more than a confident and strong United States with the courage of our convictions. The most important mission of our time is to stop our national self-loathing and to regain our courage and renew our convictions.

Nikki Haley ([19:46](#)):

Protecting our freedom starts at home. In particular, it starts with an uncomfortable reality. I recently came upon an observation by the eminent historian, Bernard Lewis. He said, quote, "The Roman empire and the medieval Islamic empire were not conquered by more civilized peoples. They were conquered by less civilized, but more vigorous peoples. In both cases, what made the conquest possible was that things were going badly wrong within the society, so that it was no longer able to offer effective resistance." Is he talking about Rome or America? Have things gotten so badly wrong in our society that we are unable to resist the forces of evil? For many Americans the answer would be yes.

Nikki Haley ([20:43](#)):

A large portion of our people are plagued by self-doubt or even by hatred of America. It's a pandemic much more damaging than any virus. Every day more people think living in the land of the free is a curse, not a blessing. You hear it on the news, you read it on social media and in school curricula, you see it in rage and riots on our streets. Nowadays we're told our founding principles are tools of oppression. We're told the world's freest and most prosperous country is no better than any other. In fact, we're told it's worse. Well, if that's the case, why did so many Haitians gather under the bridge in Texas last month? They didn't come here because America is evil, they came here because America is free. My parents always reminded me, my sister and two brothers, that even on our worst day, we are blessed to live in America.

Nikki Haley ([22:05](#)):

This plague of self-doubt is not new. It existed in Reagan's time. Jimmy Carter spoke of a national malaise, but it's much worse now. The America doubters are even more powerful than ever. They've captured the school classroom, the corporate boardroom, the media green room and the backrooms of government. They own the commanding heights of culture and politics and they're using their position to turn Americans against each other and against our own country. This problem runs deeper than being woke. It's bigger than critical race theory. Those things are dangerous, but the greater danger is that anger toward America is now the bedrock belief of the American left.

Nikki Haley ([22:54](#)):

As my great predecessor, UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick famously said in Reagan's time, "The left was happy to quote blame America first." Today's Democrats don't even believe in America. We've reached a place where the president and the vice president of the United States routinely accuse America of systemic racism. Virtually every elected Democratic politician agrees with them. This is an astonishing turn of events.

Nikki Haley ([23:29](#)):

Just 17 years ago, Barack Obama gave the speech that launched him on his way to the White House. It was at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. This is one of the most noted passages from his speech. Then Senator Obama said, quote, "We are one American family. There's not a black America and a white America, a Latino America and an Asian America. There's the United States of America. We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes." Can you imagine any prominent Democrat making that statement today? I can't. Democrats have given up on America as a colorblind society. They see America's flaws as more profound than its strengths. They deny the massive progress we've made and they punish anyone who disagrees. They are quick to praise those who attack America and eager to attack those who praise America.

Nikki Haley ([24:37](#)):

Democrats have abandoned Barack Obama's unifying message on race and national identity. Republicans cannot make the same mistake. That message was our message first. We must once again, take it to the American people. We're fighting for a society where people are judged by actions, not color, where discrimination is ended, not embraced, where censorship is rejected and free speech is protected. We want a country that cherishes its principles and takes pride in its progress. And we know the only way to bring out the best in America is to believe in America.

Nikki Haley ([25:21](#)):

We must not be ashamed of the American story. We should tell it everywhere we go. We know that some of it's hard to hear, the founders weren't saints. They lived in a time in which slavery was legal and women's rights were an afterthought. We don't need to make excuses for those obvious injustices, but we can't act like that's all the country is. The left is so focused on what was wrong they missed the things America got right.

Nikki Haley ([25:53](#)):

The American founding remains history's biggest leap forward for human freedom. For the first time, a nation proclaimed that all people are created equal, that we have unalienable rights, and that government is legitimate only when it derives from the consent of the governed. What happened in 1776 turned history on its head and billions of people are better for it. So no, America isn't perfect, but the principles at the heart of America are perfect.

Nikki Haley ([26:28](#)):

And the story doesn't stop there. The founders set a standard for America to meet, and they summoned the American people to meet it. If you're reading a woke history book, you'd never know it, but if you're reading a real history book, you will meet the heroes who pursued the promise of freedom, equality, and justice for all. That promise sparked a fire in the hearts of Frederick Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, and the abolitionists who brought slavery to an end. It moved the minds of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B Anthony, the suffragettes, and all who've made women's rights a reality. That promise filled the air when Martin Luther King Jr told us of his dream, it was made more real with the end of segregation and the victory of civil rights.

Nikki Haley ([27:19](#)):

That promise of America has been a constant in my life. I'm the proud daughter of Indian immigrants. We were the only Indian family in a small rural southern town, population 2,500. My dad wore a turban. He still does to this day. My mom wore a sari. Nobody knew who we were, what we were or why we were there. I was a brown girl in a black and white world. Every day my family faced stares, whispers, suspicion, and exclusion, but then something very American happened. The community looked beyond skin color. They got to know my family as hardworking people who shared their values. Slowly, those stares turned into smiles, those whispers turned into words of friendship. We went from being left out to being welcomed in. Not every day was great, but nearly every day was better than the one before it.

Nikki Haley ([28:36](#)):

I haven't just seen the American story, I've lived the American story. And take it from me, the first female and first minority governor of South Carolina, America is not a racist country. This is a story

Republicans should tell and it's a story Republicans should finish. The moral mandate to make America freer, fairer and better falls to us. Lord knows there's a lot of wrongs to right. There's an education system that fails too many students, a welfare system that traps too many in poverty, a healthcare system that's too costly and bureaucratic. There's a crime wave that claims too many lives, disproportionately black and brown lives. There's a crisis at the border that undermines our safety and our national identity. There's too much trust in central planners and the fantasy of socialism and too little trust in the genius of the people and capitalism. More than anything else, we must restore America's moral courage.

Nikki Haley ([30:02](#)):

We need the confidence that our cause is just and our principles are true. If we lose that, we lose everything. We won't have the will to win the fight between freedom and tyranny. America will destroy itself from the inside and our enemies won't even have to lift a finger. Now is the time to remind our fellow citizens that America deserves our hard work and our love. Students need to hear that message, businesses need to hear it. And we should take that message to communities where Republicans don't go nearly enough. We cannot ignore minorities and women. The left is feeding them a false narrative about our country and more often than not, it's all they hear. It's up to us to provide the truth about America.

Nikki Haley ([31:01](#)):

The sooner we lead a new awakening of patriotism, the quicker we'll stop the decaying belief that our country is systemically racist. The sooner we rekindle faith in our first principles, the faster we'll make even more progress towards justice for all. Most of all, by restoring belief in the goodness of our nation and our national cause will prepare the country to beat the challenges of the 21st century. Only a confident and a proud America can win the clash of civilizations. I have faith we'll come through this crisis. After all, it was only 16 years from the fall of Saigon to the fall of the Soviet Union. When President Reagan predicted the Soviet collapse, it appeared unimaginable. Nine years later, it happened. I firmly believe that freedom and democracy will also leave Chinese communism and the criminal regime in Iran, on the ash heap of history.

Nikki Haley ([32:17](#)):

And when I look to the American future, I see what others don't see, and I marvel at it. I see a country proud of its principles and its place in the world, a free people at peace with each other and protecting our values, a culture shining as a beacon for all to see. Today, that vision seems impossible, but it's not just my vision. It's what Abraham Lincoln meant when he called for a new birth of freedom during another terrible time in our nation. It's what Ronald Reagan had in mind when he called us the last best hope of earth, the last best hope of man on earth, at an another time of great division in our country. Like them, we are called to bring out the best of our country and summon the best of our people. And like them, I know we'll succeed no matter how hard it may seem right now.

Nikki Haley ([33:14](#)):

There are those who see America's glory days as behind us, but I don't believe that. How could I, after all I've seen? As a brown girl growing up in a small southern town, I saw the promise of America unfold before me. As governor of South Carolina, I saw our state move beyond hate and violence and unite to take down a flag that did not belong at our state capital. As ambassador, I saw that America is still the

standard. When we lead, the world follows. When we speak, the world listens. What we are, the world wants. I was reminded of America's special role every day at the United Nations.

Nikki Haley ([34:09](#)):

But one day stands out among the rest. It was the day I stood on the Simón Bolívar Bridge between Columbia and Venezuela, watching thousands of Venezuelans pour by, by the thousands fleeing from socialist tyranny. I can still see their faces, they were hard and sad. Most had walked many miles in the blazing sun to get the only meal they might eat that day. They were coming from a place where they killed zoo animals for food. Entire families passed carrying what few possessions they had. For some, it was a stuffed animal, for others, a plastic bag with a couple of pieces of clothing inside. When I left the bridge, I went to a nearby shelter run by the Catholic church where the Venezuelans were all gathering. I met a few of them and I hugged them. After a few minutes, more and more families started to gather around. I didn't understand why they flocked to someone they had never met. And then it hit me. They didn't care who I was, they cared where I was from. In me, they saw America and in America they saw hope.

Nikki Haley ([35:34](#)):

The time has come to revive that hope. We must keep it alive for ourselves and our children, our grandchildren, and yes, our world. Ronald Reagan said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction." America is now putting that to the test. I have faith we can pass that test like we always have. Our challenges are steep, but they are not too steep to overcome, so long as we believe in America and fight for America. We have no higher calling as a people. Together with you, I pledge to answer that call and inspire our country once again. Thank you. God bless you. And may God bless America. Thank you.