

# Excerpts from Presidential Debates

1992

Q. I'd like to direct my question to Mr. Perot. What will you do as president to open foreign markets to fair competition from American business, and to stop unfair competition here at home from foreign countries so that we can bring jobs back to the United States?

PEROT That's right at the top of my agenda. We've shipped millions of jobs overseas and we have a strange situation because we have a process in Washington where after you've become a foreign lobbyist, make \$30,000 a month; then take a leave, work on presidential campaigns, make sure you got good contacts, and then go back out. Now if you just want to get down to brass tacks, the first thing you ought to do is get all these folks who've got these one-way trade agreements that we've negotiated over the years and say, "Fellows, we'll take the same deal we gave you." And they'll gridlock right at that point because we've got international competitors who simply could not unload their cars off the ships if they had to comply.... We have got to stop sending jobs overseas.

To those of you in the audience who are business people, pretty simple: If you're paying \$12, \$13, \$14 an hour for factory workers and you can move your factory south of the border, pay a dollar an hour labor, hire young -- let's assume you've been in business for a long time and you've got a mature work force -- pay a dollar an hour for your labor, have no health care, have no environmental controls, no pollution controls and no retirement, and you don't care about anything but making money, there will be a giant sucking sound going south....

Q. Thank you Mr. Perot. I see that the president has stood up so he must have something to say about this.

BUSH Well, Carole, the thing that saved us in this global economic slowdown is our exports. And what I'm trying to do is increase our exports. And if, indeed, all the jobs were going to move south because of lower wages, there are lower wages now and they haven't done that. And so I have just negotiated with the President of Mexico the North American Free Trade Agreement, and [with] the Prime Minister of Canada.... I want to have more of these free trade agreements. Because export jobs are increasing far faster than any jobs that may have moved overseas; that's a scare tactic because it's not that many. But anyone that's here, we want to have more jobs here and the way to do that is to increase our exports.

Some believe in protection. I don't. I believe in free fair trade and that's the thing that saved us, and so I will keep on as president trying to get a successful conclusion to the GATT round, the big Uruguay round of trade which will really open up markets for our agriculture particularly. I want to continue work after we get this NAFTA agreement ratified this coming year; I want to get one with Eastern Europe. I want to get one with Chile and free and fair trade is the answer, not protection. And, as I say, we've had tough economic times and it's exports that have saved us.

Q. Governor Clinton.

CLINTON I'd like to answer the question because I've actually been a governor for 12 years, so I've known a lot of people who've lost their jobs moving overseas and I know a lot of people whose plants have been strengthened by increasing exports. The trick is to expand our export base and to expand trade on terms that are fair to us. It is true that our exports to Mexico, for example, have gone up and our trade deficit's gone down. It's also true that just today a record high trade deficit was announced with Japan. So what is the answer?

Let me just mention three things very quickly.

Number 1, make sure that other countries are as open to our markets as our markets are to them. And if they're not, have measures on the books that don't take forever and a day to implement.

Number 2, change the tax code. There are more deductions in the tax code for shutting plants down and moving overseas than there are for modernizing plants and equipment here. Our competitors don't do that. Emphasize and subsidize modernizing plant equipment here, not moving plants overseas.

Number 3, stop the federal government's program that now gives low-interest loans and job training funds to companies that will actually shut down and move to other countries but we won't do the same thing for plants that stay here. So more trade, but on fairer terms and favor investments in America.

Q. This is for Governor Clinton. In the real world -- that is, outside of Washington, D.C. -- compensation and achievement are based on goals defined and achieved. Would you define in specific dollar goals how much you would reduce the deficit in each of the four years of a Clinton administration, and then enter into a legally binding contract with the American people that if you did not achieve those goals, that you would not seek a second term? Answer yes or no, and then comment on your answer please.

CLINTON No, and here's why. And I'll tell you exactly why. Because the deficit now has been building up for 12 years. I'll tell you exactly what I think can be done. I think we can bring it down by 50 percent in four years and grow the economy. Now, I could get rid of it in four years in theory on the books now, but to do it, you'd have to raise taxes too much and cut benefits too much to people who need them. And it would even make the economy worse.

Mr. Perot will tell you, for example, that the expert he hired to analyze his plan said that it will bring the deficit down in five years, but it will make unemployment bad for four more years. So my view is, sir, you have to increase investment, grow the economy and reduce the deficit by controlling health care costs, prudent reductions in defense, cuts in domestic programs and asking the wealthiest Americans and foreign corporations to pay their fair share of taxes and investing in growing this economy....

Q. Mr. President.

BUSH I'm a little confused here because I don't see how you can grow the deficit down by raising people's taxes. You, see, I don't think the American people are taxed too little. I think they're taxed too much. I went for one tax increase. And when I make a mistake I admit it. Say that wasn't the right thing to do.

Governor Clinton's program wants to tax more and spend more. \$150 billion in new taxes. Spend another 220. I don't believe that's the way to do it.

Here's some things that'll help. Give us a balanced budget amendment. He always talks about Arkansas having a balanced budget and they do. But he has a balanced budget amendment -- [they] have to do it. I'd like the government to have that. And I think it would discipline not only the Congress, which needs it, but also the executive branch. I'd like to have what 43 governors have -- the line item veto, so if the Congress can't cut, [if] we've got a reckless, spending Congress -- let the president have a shot at it by wiping out things that are pork barrel or something of that nature....

Q. How about you, Mr. Perot?

PEROT Well we're \$4 trillion in debt. We're going into debt an additional \$1 billion -- a little more than a billion dollars every working day of the year.

Now the things I love about it -- I'm just a businessman. I was down in Texas taking care of business, tending to my family. This situation got so bad that I decided I'd better get into it. The American people asked me to get into it.

But I just find it fascinating that while we sit here tonight, we will go into debt an additional \$50 million dollars in an hour and a half.

Now, it's not the Republicans' fault, of course. And it's not the Democrats' fault. And what I'm looking for is, who did it? Now, they're the two folks involved, so maybe if you put them together, they did it.

Now, the facts are we have to fix it. I'm here tonight for these young people up there in the balcony from this college. When I was a young man, when I got out of the Navy, I had multiple job offers. Young people [today] with high grades can't get a job. Now, whose fault is that? Not the Democrats, not the Republicans. Somewhere out there there's an extraterrestrial that's doing this to us, I guess. And everybody says they take responsibility. Somebody, somewhere has to take responsibility for this. [I'll] put it to you bluntly, American people. If you want me to be your president, we're going to face some problems, we'll deal with the problems, we'll solve our problems. We'll pay down our debt. We'll pass on the American dream to our children, and I will not leave our children a situation that they have today.

When I was a boy it took two generations to double the standard of living. Today, it will take 12 generations. Our children will not see the American dream because of this debt that somebody, somewhere dropped on us.

Q. Forgive the notes here, but I'm shy on camera. The focus of my work as a domestic mediator is meeting the needs of the children that I work with by way of their parents, and not the wants of their parents. And I ask the three of you, how can we, as symbolically the children of the future president, expect the two of you, the three of you, to meet our needs: the needs in housing and in crime and, you name it, as opposed to the wants of your political spin doctorism, and your political parties? PEROT I agree with him.

Q. President Bush?

BUSH Let's do it. Let's talk about programs for children, [but] let's talk about these issues; let's talk about the programs, but in the presidency a lot goes into it. Caring goes into it; that's not particularly specific. Strength goes into it; that's not specific. Standing up against aggression; that's not specific in terms of a program. This is what a president has to do. So I, in principle, I'll take your point and think we ought to discuss child care, or whatever else it is.

Q. And you two?

PEROT No hedges, no ifs, ands and buts. I'll take the pledge. Because I know the American people want to talk about issues and not tabloid journalism. So I'll take the pledge and we'll stay on the issues.

Now, just for the record, I don't have any spin doctors. I don't have any speech writers. Probably shows. I make those charts you see on television.

But you don't have to wonder if it's me talking. What you see is what you get. And if you don't like it you got two other choices, right?

CLINTON Now wait a minute. I want to say just one thing now, Ross, in fairness. The ideas I express are mine. I've worked on these things for 12 years and I'm the only person up here who hasn't been part of Washington in any way for the last 20 years. So I don't want any implication to be that somehow everything we say is just cooked up and put in our heads by somebody else. I worked 12 years very hard as a governor on the real problems of real people. I'm just as sick as you are of having to wake up and figure out how to defend myself every day.

Q. Yes, I would like to get a response from all three gentlemen, and the question is: What are your plans to improve the physical infrastructure of our nation, which includes the water system, the sewer system, our transportation systems, etc? Thank you. BUSH I'm not sure that -- and I can understand if you haven't

seen this because there's been a lot of hue and cry -- we passed, this year, the most far-reaching transportation bill in the history of this country, since Eisenhower started the interstate highways, \$150 billion for improving the infrastructure. That happened when I was president and so I'm very proud of the way that came about and I think it's a very, very good beginning. Like Mr. Perot, I'm concerned about the money but it's awful hard to say we're going to spend more money when we're trying to get the deficit down. But I would cite that as a major accomplishment.

We hear all the negatives. When you're president you expect this, everybody's running against the incumbent, they can do better, everyone knows that. But here's something that we can take great pride in because it really does get to what you're talking about. Our home initiative -- hope it'll pass the Congress -- is a good start for having people own their homes instead of living in these deadly tenements. Our enterprise zones that we hear a lot of lip service about in Congress would bring jobs into the inner city. There's a good program and I need the help of everybody across this country to get it passed in a substantial way by the Congress....

Q. Mr. President, aren't you threatening to veto the bill, the Urban Aid bill that included enterprise zones?

BUSH Sure, but the problem is you get so many things included in a great big bill that you have to look at the overall good. That's the problem with our system; if you had a line-item veto you could knock out the tax increases, and you could do what the people want and that is create enterprise zones.

Q. Governor Clinton, you're champing at the bit.

CLINTON That bill pays for these urban enterprise zones by asking the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more, and that's why you want to veto it. Just like you vetoed an earlier bill this year; this is not mudslinging, this is fact-slinging. A bill early this year would have given investment tax credits and other incentives to reinvest in our cities, our country, but it asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more.

Let me tell you specifically what my plan does. My plan would dedicate \$20 billion a year in each of the next four years for investment and new transportation, communications, environmental clean-up, and new technologies for the 21st century, and we would target it especially in areas that have been either depressed or which have lost a lot of defense-related jobs. There are 200,000 people in California, for example, who have lost their defense-related jobs. They ought to be engaged in making high-speed rail; they ought to be engaged in breaking ground in other technologies, doing waste recycling, clean water technology, and things of that kind.

We can create millions of jobs in these new technologies -- more than we're going to lose in defense if we target it -- but we're investing a much smaller percentage of our income in the things you just asked about than all of our major competitors, and our wealth growth is going down as a result of this, making the country poorer. We have to both bring down the deficit and get our economy going through these kinds of investments in order to get the kind of wealth and jobs and incomes we need in America. Q. Mr. Perot, what about your plans for the cities?

PEROT First, you've got to have money to pay for these things. So, you've got to create jobs. There are all kinds of ways to create jobs in the inner city.

Now, I'm not a politician, but I think I could go to Washington in a week and get everybody holding hands and get this bill signed. Because I talked to the Democratic leaders and they want it; I talked to Republican leaders and they want it. But since they are bred from childhood to fight with one another rather than get results -- you know, I would be glad to drop out and spend a little time and see if we couldn't build some bridges. Now, results is what count. The president can't order Congress around. Congress can't order the president around. That's not bad for a guy that's never been there, right? But you have to work together....

The facts are, the American people are hurting. These people are hurting in the inner cities. We're shipping the low-paying jobs -- quote "low-paying jobs" -- overseas. What are low-paying jobs? Textiles, shoes, things like that that we say are just yesterday's industries. They're tomorrow's industries in the inner cities.

Let me say in my case, if I'm out of work, I'll cut grass tomorrow to take care of my family. I'll be happy to make shoes, I'll be happy to make clothing, I'll make sausage. You just give me a job. Put those jobs in the inner cities instead of doing diplomatic deals and shipping them to China where prison labor does the work.

Q. Mr. Perot, everybody thought you won the first debate, because you were plain-speaking and you made it sound so simple: We'll just do it. What makes you think that you're going to be able to get the Democrats and Republicans together any better than these guys?

PEROT Well, I've listened to both sides and if they would talk to one another instead of throwing rocks, I think we could get a lot done. And among other things, I would say, O.K., over here in this Senate committee, to the chairman who is anxious -- I'd say, rather than just yelling at one another, why don't we find out where we're apart, try to get together, get the bill passed and give the people the benefits and not play party politics right now?

And I would think the press would follow that so closely that probably they would get it done. That's the way I would do it. I doubt if they'll give me the chance but I will drop everything and go work on it.

Q. My question was originally for Governor Clinton but I think I would welcome a response from all three candidates. As you are aware, crime is rampant in our cities. And in the Richmond area, and I'm sure it's happening elsewhere, 12-year-olds are carrying guns to school. And I'm sure when our Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution they did not mean for the right to bear arms to apply to 12-year-olds. So I'm asking: Where do you stand on gun control and what do you plan to do about it?

CLINTON I support the right to keep and bear arms. I live in a state where over half the adults have hunting or fishing licenses or both. But I believe we have to have some way of checking handguns before they are sold -- to check the criminal history, the mental health history and the age of people who are buying them. Therefore I support the Brady bill, which would impose a national waiting period unless and until a state did what only Virginia has done now, which is to automate its records. Once you automate your records then you don't have to have a waiting period. But at least you can check. I also think we should have, frankly, restrictions on assault weapons, whose only purpose is to kill. We need to give the police a fighting chance in our urban areas, where the gangs are building up.

The third thing I would say doesn't bear directly on gun control but it's very important. We need more police on the street. There is a crime bill which would put more police on the street which was killed for this session by a filibuster in the Senate, mostly by Republican Senators. And I think it's a shame it didn't pass. I think it should be made the law, but it had the Brady bill in it -- the waiting period.

Q. Thank you. President Bush.

BUSH I think you put your finger on a major problem. I talked about strengthening the American family and it's very hard to strengthen the family and it's very hard to walk down to the corner store and you know send their kid down to get a loaf of bread, it's very hard. I have been fighting for very strong anti-crime legislation. Habeas corpus reform so you don't have these endless appeals, so when somebody gets sentenced, hey, this is for real. I've been fighting for changes in the exclusionary rule so if an honest cop stops somebody and makes a technical mistake, the criminal doesn't go away. I'll probably get into a fight in this room with some, but I happen to think that we need stronger death penalties for those that kill police officers. Virginia's on the lead in this, as Governor Clinton properly said on this identification system for firearms. I am not for national registration of firearms.

Some of the states that have the toughest anti-gun laws have the highest level of crime. I am for the right, as the Governor says, I'm a sportsman and I don't think you ought to eliminate all kinds of weapons. I was not for the bill that he was talking about because it was not tough enough on the criminal. I've very pleased that the fraternal order of police in Little Rock, Arkansas, endorsed me because I think they see I'm trying to strengthen the anti-crime legislation. We've got more money going out for local police than any previous administration. So we've got to get it under control and there is one last point I'd make. Drugs. We have got to win our national strategy against drugs, the fight against drugs. And we're making some progress. Doing a little better on interdiction. We're not doing as well amongst the people that get to be habitual users. PEROT On any program, and this includes crime, you'll find we have all kinds of great plans lying around that never get enacted into law and implemented. The Brady Bill -- I agree that it's a tentative step in the right direction but it won't fix it. So why pass a law that won't fix it? Now, what it really boils down to is can you live -- we have become so preoccupied with the rights of the criminal that we've forgotten the rights of the innocent. And in our country we have evolved to a point where we've put millions of innocent people in jail because you go to the poor neighborhoods and they put bars on their windows and bars on their doors and put themselves in jail to protect the things that they're acquired legitimately. That's where we are. We have got to become more concerned about people who play by the rules and get the balance we require. This is going to take first building consensus in grass-roots America; right from the bottom up the American people have got to say they want it. And at that point, we can pick from a variety of plans and develop new plans, and the way you get things done is bury yourselves in a room with one another, put together the best program, take it to the American people, use the electronic town hall -- the kind of thing you're doing here tonight -- build a consensus and then do it and then go on to the next one. But don't just sit here slow-dancing for four years doing nothing.

Q. Governor Clinton: Do you attribute the rising cost of health care to the medical profession itself? Or do you think the problem lies elsewhere, and what specific proposals do you have to tackle this problem?

CLINTON I've had more people talk to me about health care problems, I guess, than anything else. So let me try to answer you in this way. Let's start with a premise.

We spend 30 percent more of our income than any nation on earth on health care. And yet we insure fewer people. We have 35 million people without any insurance at all. I see them all the time. A hundred thousand Americans a month have lost their health insurance just in the last four years. So if you analyze where we're out of line with other countries, you come up with the following conclusions:

No. 1, we spend at least \$60 billion a year on insurance, administrative costs, bureaucracy and government regulation that wouldn't be spent in any other nation. So we have to have, in my judgment, a drastic simplification of the basic health insurance policies of this country. Be very comprehensive for everybody. Employers would cover their employees. Government would cover the unemployed.

No. 2, I think you have to take on specifically the insurance companies and require them to make some significant change in the way they rate people into big community pools. I think you have to tell the pharmaceutical companies they can't keep raising drug prices at three times the rate of inflation. I think you have to take on medical fraud. I think you have to help doctors stop practicing defensive medicine. I've recommended that our doctors be given a set of national practice guidelines and that if they follow those guidelines, that raises the presumption that they didn't do anything wrong. I think you have to have a system of primary and preventive clinics in our inner cities and our rural areas so people can have access to health care.

The key is to control the cost and maintain the quality. To do that you need a system of managed competition where all of us are covered in big groups and we can choose our doctors and our hospitals across a wide range, but there is an incentive to control costs. I think there has to be a national commission of health care providers and health care consumers that set ceilings to keep health costs in line with inflation plus population growth.

Now let me say, some people say we can't do this but Hawaii does it. They cover 98 percent of their people and their insurance premiums are much cheaper than the rest of America. And so does Rochester, New York. They now have a plan to cover everybody and their premiums are two-thirds of the rest of the country. This is very important. It's a big human problem for America. And I'm going to send a plan to do this within the first hundred days of my presidency.

BUSH She asked the question, I think, if whether the health care profession was to blame.

No. One thing is to blame is these malpractice lawsuits. They are breaking the system. It costs 20 to 25 billion dollars a year and I want to see those outrageous claims capped. Doctors don't dare to deliver babies sometimes because they're afraid that somebody's going to sue them. Medical practitioners don't dare to help somebody along the highway that is hurt, because they're afraid that some lawyer's going to come along and get a big lawsuit. So you can't blame the practitioners for the health problem.

And my program is this. Keep the government as far out of it as possible. Make insurance available to the poorest of the poor through vouchers, in the next range in the income bracket through tax credits. And get on about the business of pooling insurance. A great big company can buy insurance cheaper than the mom and pop store on the corner. But if those mom and pop stores all get together and pool, they too can bring the cost of insurance down. So, I want to keep the quality of health care, [and] that means keep government out of it. I don't like this idea of these boards. It all sounds to me like you're going to have some government settling price. I want competition and I want to pool the insurance and take care of it that way.

And here's another point. I think medical care should go with the person. If you leave a business, I think your insurance should go with you to some other business. If you're working for the Jones company, you go to the Smith company, your insurance goes with you. And I think it's a good program. I'm really excited about getting it done, too.

PEROT We have the most expensive health-care system in the world; 12 percent of our gross national product goes to health care. Our industrial competitors who are beating us in competition spend less and have better health care. Japan spends a little over 6 percent of its gross national product. Germany spends 8 percent. It's fascinating. You bought a front row box seat and you're not happy with your health care, and you're saying we've got bad health care, but very expensive health care. Folks, here's why. Go home and look in the mirror. You own this country but you have no voice in it the way it's organized now. And if you want to have a high-risk experience comparable to bungee jumping, go into Congress some time when they're working on this kind of legislation, when the lobbyists are running up and down the halls. Wear your safety-toe shoes when you go. And as a private citizen, believe me, you are looked on as a major nuisance. The facts are, you now have a government that comes at you and you're supposed to have a government that comes from you. Now there are all kinds of good ideas, brilliant ideas, terrific ideas on health care. None of them ever get implemented because -- let me give you an example. A senator runs every six years; he's got to raise 20,000 bucks a week to have enough money to run. Who's he going to listen to, us? Or the folks running up and down the aisles with money -- the lobbyists, the PAC money. He listens to them. Who do they represent? The health-care industry. Not us.

Now you've got to have a government that comes from you again; you've got to reassert your ownership in this country and you've got to completely reform our government. And at that point they'll just be like apples falling out of a tree -- the programs will be good because the elected officials will be listening.

CLINTON One brief point. We have elections so people can make decisions about this. The point I want to make to you is that a bipartisan commission reviewed my plan and the Bush plan and concluded -- there were as many Republicans as Democratic health-care experts on it -- they concluded that my plan would cover everybody and his would leave 27 million behind by the year 2000.

And that my plan in the next 12 years would save \$2.2 trillion in public and private money to reinvest in this economy. And the average family would save \$1,200 a year under the plan that I offered without any

erosion in the quality of health care. So I ask you to look at that. And you have to vote for somebody with a plan. That's what you have elections for.

Q. How has the national debt personally affected each of your lives? And if it hasn't, how can you honestly find a cure for the economic problems of the common people if you have no experience in what's ailing them?

PEROT It caused me to disrupt my private life and my business to get involved in this activity. That's how much I care about it. And believe me, if you knew my family and if you knew the private life I have you would agree in a minute that that's a whole lot more fun than getting involved in politics.

But I have lived the American dream. I came from a very modest background; nobody's been luckier than I've been, all the way across the spectrum. And the greatest riches of all are my wife and children. Just as it's true of any family.

But, I want all the children -- I want these young people up here to be able to start with nothing but an idea like I did and build a business. But they've got to have a strong basic economy. And if you're in debt, it's like having a ball and chain around you. I just figure as lucky as I've been, I owe it to them. And I owe it to the future generations. And on a very personal basis, I owe it to my children and grandchildren.

Q. Thank you Mr. Perot. Mr. President.

BUSH Well I think the national debt affects everybody. Obviously it has a lot to do with interest rates. It has -- Q. She's saying you personally. On a personal basis, has it affected you personally?

BUSH Well, I'm sure it has. I love my grandchildren and I want to think that --

Q. How?

BUSH I want to think that they're going to be able to afford an education. I think that that's an important part of being a parent. Maybe I get it wrong. Are you suggesting that if somebody has means that the national debt doesn't affect them? I'm not sure I get it. Help me with the question and I'll try and answer it.

Q. Well, I've had friends that have been laid off from jobs. I know people who cannot afford to pay the mortgage on their homes or their car payment. I have personal problems with the national debt. But how has it affected you? And if you have no experience in it, how can you help us if you don't know what we're feeling?

BUSH Well, you ought to be in the White House for a day and hear what I hear and see what I see and read the mail I read and touch the people that I touch from time to time. I was in the Lomax A.M.E. Church. It's a black church just outside of Washington, D.C. And I read in the bulletin about teenage pregnancies, about the difficulty that families are having to make ends meet. I talk to parents. I mean, you've got to care. Everybody cares if people aren't doing well. But I don't think it's fair to say, "You haven't had cancer, therefore you don't know what it's like." I don't think it's fair to say, you know whatever it is, that if you haven't been hit by it personally -- but everybody's affected by the debt because of the tremendous interest that goes into paying on that debt, everything's more expensive. Everything comes out of your pocket and my pocket.

So it's sad, but I think in terms of the recession, of course you feel it when you're president of the United States. And that's why I'm trying to do something about it by stimulating the exports, investing more, better education system. Thank you, I'm glad to clarify it.

Q. Governor Clinton.

CLINTON Tell me how it's affected you again. You know people who've lost their jobs and lost their homes.

Q. Well, yeah, uh-huh.

CLINTON Well, I've been governor of a small state for 12 years. I'll tell you how it's affected me. Every year, Congress and the president sign laws that make us do more things and give us less money to do it with. I see people in my state, middle class people, their taxes have gone up in Washington and their services have gone down while the wealthy have gotten tax cuts. I have seen what's happened in this last four years. In my state, when people lose their jobs, there's a good chance I'll know them by their names. When a factory closes I know the people who ran it. When businesses go bankrupt, I know them. And I've been out here for 13 months meeting in meetings just like this ever since October with people like you all over America, people that have lost their jobs, lost their livelihood, lost their health insurance.

What I want you to understand is the national debt is not the only cause of that. It is because America has not invested in its people. It is because we've had 12 years of trickle-down economics. We've gone from first to 12th in the world in wages. We've had four years where we've produced no private-sector jobs. Most people are working harder for less money than they were making 10 years ago. It is because we are in the grip of a failed economic theory. And this decision you're about to make better be about what kind of economic theory you want. Not just people saying I want to go fix it, but what are we going to do. What I think we have to do is invest in American jobs, American education, control American health care costs and bring the American people together again.

Q. We've come to a position where we're in the new world order. And I'd like to know what the candidates feel our position is in this new world order and what our responsibilities are as a superpower.

BUSH Well, we have come to that position since I became president -- 43, 44 countries have gone democratic. No longer totalitarian, no longer living under dictatorship or Communist rule. This is exciting. This new world order to me means freedom and democracy. I think we will have a continuing responsibility as the only remaining superpower to stay involved. If we pull back into some isolation and say we don't have to do our share or more than our share anymore, I believe you can just ask for conflagration that we'll get involved in the future. NATO for example, has kept the peace for many, many years and I want to see us keep fully staffed in NATO so we'll continue to guarantee the peace in Europe.

But the exciting thing is the fear of nuclear war is down and -- you hear all the bad stuff that's happened on my watch -- I hope people will recognize that this is something pretty good for mankind. I hope they'll think it's good that democracy and freedom are on the move. And we're going to stay engaged, as long as I'm president, working to improve things. You know, it's so easy now to say, "Hey, cut out foreign aid, we got a problem at home." I think the United States has to still be having the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of caring for others. We're sending supplies in to help these little starving kids in Somalia. It's the United States that's taken the lead in, in humanitarian aid into Bosnia. We're doing this all around the world. Yes, we got problems at home and I think I got a good plan to help fix those problems at home. But because of our leadership, we didn't listen to the nuclear freeze group back in the late '70s. Freeze, they said. Don't touch it. We're going to lock it now or else we'll have war.

President Reagan said, "No, peace through strength." It worked. The Soviet Union is no more and now we're working to help them become totally democratic through the Freedom Support Act that I led on. A great democratic ambassador, Bob Strauss, is over there, and Jim Baker. All of us got this thing passed through cooperation, helping Russia become democratic. So the new world order, to me, means freedom and democracy, keep engaged. Do not pull back into isolation and we are the United States and we have a responsibility to lead and to guarantee the security. If it hadn't been for us, Saddam Hussein would be sitting on top of three-fifths of the oil supply of the world and he'd have nuclear weapons. And only the United States could do that.

PEROT Well, it's cost effective to help Russia succeed in its revolution. Pennies on the dollar compared to going back to the Cold War. Russia's still very unstable; they could go back to square one and worse. Still, all the nuclear weapons are not dismantled. I'm particularly concerned about the intercontinental weapons, the ones that can hit us. We've got agreements but they're still there. With all this instability and

breaking in the republics, and all the Middle Eastern countries going over there shopping for weapons, we've got our work cut out for us, so we need to stay right on top of that and constructively help them move toward democracy and capitalism. We have to have money to do that. We have to have our people at work.

See, for 45 years we were preoccupied with the Red Army. I suggest now that our number 1 preoccupation is red ink in our country, and we've got to put our people back to work, so that we can afford to do these things we want to do in Russia. We cannot be the policeman for the world any longer. We spend \$300 billion a year defending the world. Germany and Japan spend around \$30 billion apiece. It's neat. If I can get you to defend me and I can spend all my money building industry, that's a homerun for me. Coming out of World War II it made sense. Now, the other superpowers need to do their part. I close on this point. You can't be a superpower unless you're an economic superpower [like] we used to be, then we will no longer be a force for good throughout the world. And if nothing else gets you excited about rebuilding our industrial base, maybe that will, because it's job one to put our people back to work.

Q. Governor Clinton, the president mentioned Saddam Hussein. Your vice president and you have had some words about the president and Saddam Hussein. Would you care to comment?

CLINTON I'd rather answer a question first, then I'll be glad to, 'cause the question you ask is important. The end of the Cold War brings an incredible opportunity for change. Winds of freedom blowing around the world. Russia demilitarizing. And it also requires us to maintain some continuity, some bipartisan American commitment to certain principles. And I would just say, there are three things that I would like to say.

Number 1, we do have to maintain the world's strongest defense. We may differ about what the elements of that are. I think the defense needs to be with fewer people and permanent armed services, but with greater mobility on the land, in the air, and on the sea. With a real dedication to continuing the development of high technology weaponry and well-trained people. I think we're going to have to work to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Got to keep going until all the nuclear weapons in Russia are gone, and the other republics.

Number 2, if you don't rebuild the economic strength of this country at home we won't be a superpower. We can't have any more instances like what happened when Mr. Bush went to Japan and the Japanese prime minister said he felt sympathy for our country. We have to be the strongest economic power in the world. That's what got me into this race. So we could rebuild the American economy.

And number 3, we need to be a force for freedom and democracy and we need to use our unique position to support freedom, whether it's in Haiti or in China or in any other place; wherever the seeds of freedom are sprouting. We can't impose it but we need to nourish it. And that's the kind of thing that I would do as president. Follow those three commitments into the future.

Q. What I'd like to know -- and this is to any of the three of you -- is, aside from the recent accomplishments of your party, aside from those accomplishments in racial representation, and without citing any of your current appointments or successful elections, when do you estimate your party will both nominate and elect an Afro-American and female ticket to the presidency of the United States?

CLINTON Well I don't have any idea, but I hope it will happen in my lifetime.

BUSH I do, too.

CLINTON I believe that this country is electing more and more African Americans who are representing districts that are themselves not necessarily of a majority of their race. The American people are beginning to bolt across racial lines and I hope it will happen more and more.

More and more women are being elected. Look at all these women Senate candidates we have here. And, you know, according to my mother and my wife and my daughter this world would be a lot better place if women were running it most of the time. I do think there are special experiences and judgments and backgrounds and understandings that women bring to this process, by the way. This lady said here, how have you been affected by the economy. I mean, women know what it is like to be paid an unequal amount for equal work. They know what it's like not to have flexible working hours. They know what it's like not to have family leave or child care. So I think it would be a good thing for America if it happened, and I think it will happen in my lifetime.

BUSH If Barbara Bush were running this year, she'd be elected. But it's too late. You don't want us to mention appointees, but see the quality of people in our administration, see how Colin Powell performed....

PEROT I have a fearless forecast. Unless he just won't do it, Colin Powell will be on somebody's ticket in four years from now, right? Right?

Q. Thank you. I want to apologize to our audience, because there were 209 people here and there were 209 questions. We only got a fraction of them, and I'm sorry to those of you that didn't get to ask your questions, but we must move to the conclusion of the program. It's time now for the two closing statements and, by our prior agreement, President Bush will go first.

BUSH Let me just say to the American people, in two and a half weeks we're going to choose who should sit in this Oval Office to lead the economic recovery, to be the leader of the free world, to get the deficit down.

Three ways to do that: One is to raise taxes; one is to reduce spending, controlling that mandatory spending; another one is to invest and save and to stimulate growth.

I don't want to raise taxes. I differ with the two here on that. I'm just not going to do that. I do believe that we need to control mandatory spending. I think we need to educate better and retrain better. I believe that we need to export more so I'll keep working for export agreements where we can sell more abroad. And I believe that we must strengthen the family. Now let me pose this question to America: If in the next five minutes, a television announcer came on and said there is a major international crisis -- there is a major threat to the world or in this country -- a major threat. My question is: Who, if you were appointed to name one of the three of us, who would you choose? Who has the perseverance, the character, the integrity, the maturity to get the job done? I hope I'm that person. Thank you very, very much.

Q. Thank you Mr. President. And now a closing statement from Mr. Perot.

PEROT If the American people . . . just want to keep slow-dancing and talk about it, and not do it, I'm not your man. I am results-oriented, I am action-oriented. I've built my businesses. Getting done in 3 months what my competitors took 18 months to do. Everybody says you can't do that in Congress; sure you can do that with Congress. Congress is -- they're all good people. They're all patriots. But you've got to link arms and work with them. Sure, you'll have arguments; sure you'll have fights. We have them all day, every day. But we get the job done.

I have to come back in my close to one thing because I am passionate about education. I was talking about early childhood education for disadvantaged low-income children. And let me tell you one specific pilot program, where children who don't have a chance go to this program when they're three, and now we're going back to when the mother's pregnant. They'll start right after they're born. But going -- starting when they're three and going to this school until they're nine, and then going into public schools, in the fourth grade? Ninety percent are on the honor roll. Now, that will change America. Those children will all go to college. They will live the American dream.

And I beg the American people any time they think about reforming education, to take this piece of society that doesn't have a chance and take these little pieces of clay that can be shaped and molded and give them the same love and nurture and affection and support you give your children, and teach them that they are unique and that they're precious and there's only one person in the world like them and you will see this nation bloom. And we will have so many people who are qualified for the top job that it will be terrific.

Finally, if you can't pay the bill you're dead in the water. And we have got to put our nation back to work. If you don't want to really do that, I'm not your man. I'd go crazy sitting up there slow-dancing that one; in other words, unless we're going to do it, then pick somebody who likes to talk about it. Now just remember, when you think about me, I didn't create this mess, I've been paying my share. Over a billion dollars in taxes. Q. And finally, last but not least, Governor Clinton.

CLINTON Thank you, Carole. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Since I suggested this forum (and I hope it's been good for all of you). I've really tried to be faithful to your request that we answer the questions specifically and pointedly. I thought I owed that to you and I respect you for being here and for the impact you've had on making this a more positive experience. These problems are not easy and not going to be solved overnight. But I want you to think about just two or three things. First of all, the people of my state have let me be the governor for 12 years because I made commitments to two things: more jobs and better schools. Our schools are now better; our children get off to a better start from pre-school programs and smaller classes in the early grades, and we have one of the most aggressive adult education programs in the country. We talked about that. This year my state ranks first in the country in job growth, fourth in manufacturing job growth, fourth in income growth, fourth in the decline of poverty. I'm proud of that. It happened because I could work with people, Republicans and Democrats. That's why we've had 24 retired generals and admirals, hundreds of business people, many of them Republican, support this campaign.

You have to decide whether you want to change or not. We do not need four more years of an economic theory that doesn't work. We've had 12 years of trickle-down economics. It's time to put the American people first, to invest and grow this economy. I'm the only person here who's ever balanced a government budget and I've presented 12 of them and cut spending repeatedly, but you cannot just get there by balancing the budget. We've got to grow the economy by putting people first. Real people like you. I got into this race because I did not want my child to grow up to be part of the first generation of Americans doing worse than their parents. We're better than that. We can do better than that. I want to make America as great as it can be and I ask for your help in doing it. Thank you very much.