The original documents are located in Box D33, folder "Fund-raising Dinner for Senator Howard Baker, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN, September 28, 1972" of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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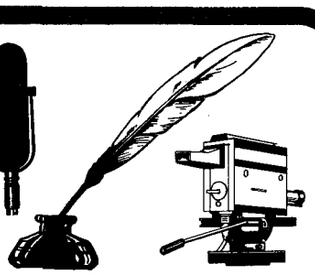

CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

NEWS RELEASE

--FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 P.M. THURSDAY--
September 28, 1972

Excerpts from a Speech by Rep. Gerald R. Ford at a fund-raising dinner for Sen. Howard Baker at the East Tennessee State University Ballroom at Johnson City, Tenn.

It is a tremendous pleasure for me to be here in the most Republican part of Tennessee. I feel right at home. And it is a great pleasure for me to appear here with your great senator, Howard Baker. I guess I don't have to tell you about Sen. Baker's leadership qualities. He is easily one of the most outstanding members of the United States Senate. He is respected by all of his colleagues for his integrity and his ability, and he is a fine spokesman not only for the state of Tennessee but for the entire Nation.

Tonight I would like to talk with you about our national security -- and national survival.

I would urge you to be on guard against those who argue that humanity has now reached the point where the possibility of armed aggression can be safely disregarded.

The man who contends the proper policy is for the United States to disarm unilaterally because the Soviet Union then would follow suit with hand outstretched in friendship is pitifully naive.

And anyone who talks of cutting defense outlays by $30 billion is either badly misinformed or incredibly irresponsible.

I am speaking, of course, of Sen. George McGovern. There is no need to mince words. When a candidate for President makes a proposal which is so shockingly dangerous, the only proper course is to meet it head on.

We all know that the financial burden military preparedness imposes on the taxpayer is great. But would the American people accept the argument that because of our unmet domestic needs we cannot afford an adequate national defense? I think not.

I think, too, that unlike the spokesman for retreat the American people do not believe war is so horrible that it is better to suffer defeat than to fight.

The American people are rejecting George McGovern because he is the apostle of retreat abroad and radicalism at home.

(more)

Cut the fat out of the defense budget? Absolutely. The House of Representatives recently trimmed $4.3 billion from the fiscal 1973 defense appropriations bill. But should we cut the muscle to get at the fat? Never.

Don't let muddle-headed characters like McGovern kid you. This Nation has no future if it allows itself to become a second-rate power militarily. And that's what would happen if we cut our defense outlays by $30 billion. This holds true whether you believe a permanent East-West detente can be negotiated or that we will some day have to fight a world war again to retain our liberties.

Let's heed the lessons of history. Weakness invites attack. Of that there can be no doubt. It takes but one aggressor to plunge the entire world into war no matter how fervently other nations yearn for peace and how willing they are to turn their swords into plowshares. An America that is militarily strong is an America that keeps the peace.

What folly it would be for us to abandon a policy of maintaining at least military equality with the Soviet Union simply because other nations have accepted a decline from first to second or third ranking!

Let no one interpret my remarks to mean I do not favor curbing the nuclear arms race.

I strongly favor the SALT agreements. I salute the President for this accomplishment and for his other initiatives in the interests of world peace.

Where I part company with some Americans is that they favor unilateral disarmament. They would steer their ship of peace into the dangerous shoals of isolationism.

I maintain that we have achieved limitations on nuclear arms because we negotiated with the Russians from a position of strength.

We have reached other agreements with the Russians and we have opened the door to China because we are strong -- and we will make further progress toward peace only if we remain strong.

Now we must move toward the second phase of SALT. We must move toward further limitations on nuclear weapons and eventually the reduction of armaments in the nuclear area.

But our opponents have proposed massive cuts in our defense budget, cuts that would have the inevitable effect of making the United States a second-rate power and of destroying our initiatives toward a <u>mutual</u> reduction of arms and military manpower.

Let us continue to seek peace and the mutual reduction of arms. But while we do this let us have a military force second to none.

Let us always be sure that our President negotiates from a position of strengt

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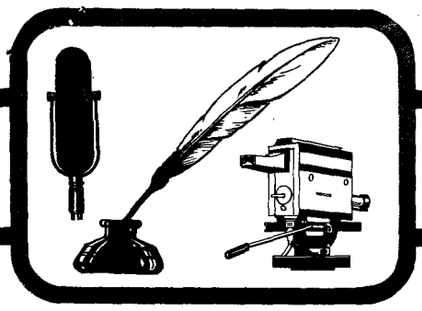

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