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Speech by Rep. Gerald R. Ford (R-Mich)

SIGMA DELTA CHI Columbus, Ohio April 3, 1965

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Those of you who are concerned with the more obscure political happenings in Washington may recall that I was elected Minority Leader of the House by a ~~landslide~~ landslide vote of 73 to 67.

This triumph¹---and the use of that word may be the over-statement of the year---shows that all you need is an allegation of virtue, a moderate amount of hard work, and lots of luck.

The overwhelming mandate I received in January, and the unbroken record of successes since then, encourage me to appear before you tonight as an authority-----on the problems of the oppressed minorities.

As was said two thousand years ago--- "Where the carcass is, there will the eagles gather together." I am certain none of you are eagles.

You see, football is really my first love. I am a politician only because of the job security!

But since Michigan walloped Oregon State in the Rose Bowl by 27 points, and, three days later Ford beat his opponent by only 6 points, perhaps I chose the wrong profession.

I have often wondered where I would now be if I had accepted Curly

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Lambeau's offer in 1934 to play fro ball with the Green Bay ~~Packers-----~~
~~Packers-----~~

perhaps on the Supreme Court.

Partly in help to take a look at the new direction of the Republican Party.
It's true that the new House Republican leadership hasn't won any

spectacular legislative successes. This has been appropriately noted by

some ~~Republican representatives~~. But we never campaigned on a platform that we could

double our numbers and slice the opposition in half before November 1966 by

some strange sleight of hand or magic potion.

As you may know, the numbers on each side of the aisle in the House have remained the same since November third---140 Republicans to 294 Democrats.

The odds are rough. But, to coin a phrase----with a little different twist---

"we shall overcome."

You in your profession and those of us in my profession face the same powerhouse---but in a ~~different~~ different way.

The White House and all its talented troops try to spoon-feed the news media---and they try to clobber us. The President has virtually unlimited resources working his will---- a veritable army of experts, authorities, researchers, propagandists and the like.

He is also king pin of a branch of government that employes $2\frac{1}{2}$ million civilians and controls the destiny of 2 million 600 thousand military personnel.

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These two groups have a payroll cost totalling \$28 billion....and together they will spend more than 127 billion tax dollars in fiscal 1966. I wish Republicans had this kind of a campaign fund!

This awesome power and the vast apparatus, if used improperly, could mean the withering away and eventually the death of the two-party system.

There is nothing constitutionally ordained about running our government through two great political parties.

Almost from the start our nation made such a choice, however. It was a wise decision. We avoided the chaos of a multi-party government. We avoided the loss of freedom of the single-party system. And we built into government an additional set of checks and balances.

Not only does a strong second party provide the electorate with legislative alternatives, but also with a remarkably high level of honesty and frankness.

The American news media has a noble tradition in demanding the facts, bursting the bubble of propaganda, unstuffing the shirt and exposing the corrupt.

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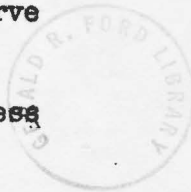
You of the journalistic profession can perform your job better if the relative strengths of our two parties are more nearly in balance and not so far out of kilter.

When both the Executive and Legislative branches are dominated by the same political party, the Committees on government operations of the House and Senate---which have broad investigating authority--- should be under the control of the minority party. It smacks of legalized collusion when we find the suspect and the District Attorney are blood relatives.

To make the Federal government function better, to help you get the facts, Republicans in Congress believe this new idea would be a step in the right direction.

By giving the minority party control of the two committees--- with their sweeping authority to investigate--- the majority party would be constantly on notice that its actions ~~and~~ or inactions were subject to effective and critical review. The American people deserve this kind of protection.....an assurance that political righteousness prevails in high places.

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By assuring in this way that the voice of the minority party is ~~heard~~ heard, there would be small chance that any cover-up or wrong-doing would escape notice.

The news media would have the responsibility to objectively report the work of the Committees on Government Operations of the House and Senate with the minority party controlling the investigating authority.

It is safe to speculate, for example, that with such a set-up there would be more public confidence that the real Bobby Baker story had been told.

The Democrats certainly have us overwhelmed numerically in Congress. We could throw up our hands and say "what's the use?" That's no answer for the American people, for you or for ourselves. Fortunately, there is a constructive ferment right now in the Republican Party.

We have already made some reorganization of our internal machinery. The Research and Planning Committee is working on long-range policy. We are creating special task forces on major substantive in such rapid succession that one observer said we are setting up an "anti-poverty program for Republican intellectuals."

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The current, day-to-day legislative problems are dealt with by a policy committee, which is on the firing line often and long these days.

On the basis of simple arithmetic, the Administration can slam-bang through just about anything it wants in this Congress, particularly by twisting a few arms as it did in the Nasser victory on an appropriation bill a few weeks ago.

Nevertheless, we will win on some issues in this Congress. More importantly, Republicans will build a record for a substantially stronger representation after November 8, 1966.

Our Republican strategy in the house will be diversified. We'll be most grateful for any Democratic support, North or South.

To compete with the administration we will offer:

1. Opposition to Administration aims and methods when we think both are wrong; but never obstructionism just for its own sake.
2. Constructive alternatives to Administration's schemes when we feel they are tackling the right problems, at home and abroad, in the wrong way.

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3. Workable programs, developed through task forces, to meet any problems the Administration is ignoring, neglecting or sidetracking. By the way, we refuse to concede that Democrats have a monopoly on ideas for the solution of domestic or foreign difficulties.
4. Wholehearted support for the President when we think he is right. Viet-Nam policy in the last few weeks is the prime example. More and more Republicans have staunchly backed the President while more and more Democrats have changed their tune to favor immediate negotiation and a tail-between-our-legs withdrawal.

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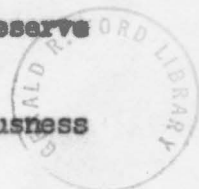
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SIGMA DELTA CHI

Columbus, Ohio

April 3, 1965

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*Sam DeVine
outside?
Jim Rhodes
Clarence Brown*

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY
AT 8 p.m. EST., April 3, 1965

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Some have described this as a triumph. Others say I have a shaky mandate. Whatever name is tagged on this political victory, it shows that all you need is an allegation of virtue, a moderate amount of hard work and lots of luck.

At this point I suspect my goodfriend Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen might caution me that the oil can is mightier than the sword.

In any event, the skyrocketing victory---or the nervous triumph---I achieved in January, and the unbroken record of successes since then, have encouraged me to appear here tonight as an authority-----on the problems of the oppressed minorities.

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As was said two thousand years ago -- "Where the carcass is, there will the eagles gather." I am certain none of you are here for such a purpose ~~today~~ *tonight*.

As you know, football is really my first love. I am only a politician because of the job security!

But since Michigan beat Oregon State in the Rose Bowl by 27 points, and, three days later Ford beat his opponent by only 6 points, perhaps I chose the wrong profession!

I have often wondered where I would now be if I had accepted Curly Lambeau's offer in 1934 to play pro ball with the Green Bay Packers -- perhaps on the Supreme Court!

It's true that the new House Republican leadership hasn't won any spectacular legislative successes. This has been appropriately noted by some. But we never campaigned on a platform that -- by some strange sleight of hand or magic potion -- we could double our numbers and slice the opposition in half before November 1966.



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Here would be a genuine vehicle to assure that the voice of the minority would be heard, that the majority would be constantly on notice that its actions or inactions were subject to effective and critical review. Here would be an assurance the public through your help would know that any cover-up or wrongdoing would be improbable, if not impossible.

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We have already made some reorganization of our internal machinery.

under Charlie Nordell
The Research and Planning Committee is working at long-range policy. We are creating special task forces on major substantive issues in such rapid succession that one observer said we were setting up "an anti-poverty program for Republican intellectuals."

John Rhodes, with a beefed-up staff, is Policy Committee chairman, and this reorganized group will deal with current, day-to-day, legislative problems.

On the basis of simple mathematics, the Administration can pass about everything it wants to in this Congress, particularly if it twists a few arms as it did in the Nasser victory on an appropriation bill a few weeks ago. Nevertheless, we will win on some issues in this Congress.

More importantly, Republicans will build a record for a substantially stronger representation after November 8, 1966.

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1. Opposition to Administration's aims and methods when we think both are wrong; but never obstructionism just for its own sake.
2. Constructive alternatives to Administration schemes when we feel they are tackling the right problems, at home or abroad, in the wrong way. House Republicans have already recommended responsible proposals this year in medicare, education, housing and Appalachia.
3. Workable programs, developed through our task forces, to meet the many problems the Administration is ignoring or neglecting. We refuse to concede that Democrats have a monopoly on ideas for the solution of domestic or foreign difficulties.



4. Wholehearted support for the President when we think he is right. Viet Nam policy in the last few weeks is the prime example. More and more Republicans have staunchly backed the President while more and more Democrats have changed their tune to favor immediate negotiation and tail-between-our-legs withdrawal.

On the domestic scene we recall that the Congress has enacted three laws on Civil Rights since 1957. Progress has been made in the South because there is a growing public conscience and sense of justice.

Yet even in 1964 far too many eligible Negroes of voting age were not registered to vote in eleven Southern States. For some part of the 2,800,000 who are unregistered, the franchise is unattainable regardless of their qualifications. In some islands of resistance, the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution is still being flouted.



The Republican leadership insists this violation of constitutional rights must end prior to the 1966 election.

The achievement of this goal requires a new and strong Federal Voting Rights Law. This legislation should:

- (1) effectively and speedily end the unconstitutional denial of the right to vote everywhere in the United States;
- (2) terminate unreasonable standards for registration and voting without interfering with the reasonable requirements established by the states;
- (3) terminate any discriminatory application of requirements for registration and voting;
- (4) should not penalize areas which are not guilty of discrimination.

The Voting Rights bill which the Administration has submitted to the Congress falls short of meeting these standards.



This bill appears to affect only the 18, possibly 20, states which have some kind of literacy test as a qualification for voting. It does not apply to four Southern states in which are found 25 per cent of the unregistered Negroes of the South -- Arkansas, Florida, Tennessee, and Texas. It does not apply to Smith County, Texas, with low voter turnout among a population of 27 per cent Negro. On the other hand, it does apply to Aroostook County, Maine, where only one per cent of the population is non-white.

This bill ignores those discriminatory practices used in the states that do not employ literacy and similar tests.

In the literacy-test states it largely ignores discrimination that touches less than 50 per cent of the population.

This bill introduces a strange kind of geographical discrimination. It nullifies the literacy test in Martin County, North Carolina, where 49.9 per cent of the voting-age population went to the polls in 1964, but it leaves the literacy test in full effect in Guilford County, North Carolina,

which registered a turnout of 52.5 per cent of its voting-age population.

This bill leaves untouched too much discrimination in too many places. If it is passed as drafted, the Congress will find itself struggling with yet another voting rights bill in 1966 or 1967.

The Administration's bill will not accomplish all that must be done. Under the leadership of Congressman William McCulloch of Ohio, I believe there will be a Republican Voting Rights bill in the House of Representatives that will be more comprehensive in its application. The Republican members of the House Judiciary Committee, the members of the House Republican Task Force on the Right to Vote, and others, have been at work on such a bill for several weeks. They are considering, among other proposals, those made by Republican members of the Congress before the President presented his bill. This more effective proposal will be ready for consideration by the House Committee on the Judiciary.



This overall blueprint for Republican legislative action is based on what we conceive to be our duty to the 43 per cent of the American electorate who put us in office, and to the people as a whole who face ever-increasing Federal domination and erosion of their liberties unless an articulate opposition functions effectively.

It is based on the hard truth that the Republican Party to win in 1966 must earn and regain the respect of many millions of voters -- and it can't do this by sitting on the sidelines and waiting for an international or domestic catastrophe to produce a call for a change of leadership.

It is based also on a profound conviction that something more than talk of unity and consensus is demanded by the challenges of our times.

We subscribe to the observation of Senator Robert A. Taft in 1951, endorsed by John F. Kennedy in 1960, that "if you permit appeals to unity to bring an end to criticism, we endanger not only the constitutional liberties of our country, but even its future existence."

We raise the question of whether it is enough in these days of danger and turmoil for our President to continue to act as a consensus politician instead of a statesman who leads.


Waiting for a consensus can and often does mean ignoring little problems until they become big ones.

It can and does mean inaction until the riots start -- whether in Saigon or in Selma.

As recently as January, the President was referring with satisfaction -- according to some well-known columnists -- to our policy in South Viet Nam as one of "creative inaction."

To me, this is a fantastic concept -- better described, perhaps, as "dynamic paralysis."

Yet this attitude was reflected in the State of the Union Message, which suggested that the international scene was so improved that we could all but forget it in favor of domestic affairs.



The disarray of NATO is all but ignored by the Administration.

Nasser and Sukarno thumb their noses with seeming impunity.

And the disruptive voices in the Democratic Party not only undercut the President in his conduct of foreign affairs at a time of national crisis -- they also raise the very grave danger of a Communist miscalculation as to our intentions in Viet Nam and Southeast Asia.

We believe in keeping the ball on the enemy's goal line -- not back-pedaling to our 20-yard line before starting the next play.

The President can always count on Republican support when his foreign policy is firm and decisive on the side of freedom and in the national interest.

But if ever there was a time for broad-gauged revival of genuine bi-partisanship in foreign policy in the spirit of the late Senator Arthur Vandenberg, that time is now.

Senator Vandenberg, who was my fellow townsman, was largely responsible for my getting into politics.



He arrived at a thoughtful concept of the nation's best interests in foreign policy matters which served the American people magnificently well -- and it is a concept which I would be honored to help to expand beyond current policy in South Viet Nam.

But foreign policy bi-partisanship in the Vandenberg pattern means genuine consultation across party lines in determining policy -- not just using the Republicans for after-thought window dressing.

It does not mean merely a summons to the White House in a moment of crisis, and then calling in the photographers and announcing Republican endorsement of an Administration policy already determined.

Nor does it mean foreclosure of Republican criticism of foreign policy when we are convinced the Administration is wrong.

Some of our problems, particularly a lack of unity, have been created by Republicans. On behalf of America's future, I suggest that the present political imbalance -- however self-inflicted -- is not a good thing.



Under our system, no Party can be doctrinaire, sectarian, narrow in its appeal, or misrepresented to have such an image, however unfair the charge might be -- and still attract the majority of the electorate.

The high ground of moderation with unselfish unity is not only common horse-sense for a political Party -- it is also representative of the people and in keeping with the underlying genius of the American political system.

The day-to-day rebuilding of Republican policy and the Party must begin in the Congress -- and because all the House must face the voters next year, the heaviest burden of the task must be carried in the House.

We aim to correct that imbalance -- to re-establish two-party government. Far from lamenting our fate, House Republicans are wide open to fresh ideas and confident that new approaches, full participation, and renewed dedication can earn new friends for the Republican Party, and make an important contribution to the future of America.

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