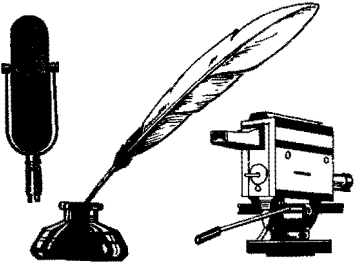


The original documents are located in Box D20, folder “Dinner for Representative Henry P. Smith III, Tonawanda, NY, April 18, 1966” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY OF SPEECH
MONDAY EVENING, APRIL 18, 1966

SPEECH EXCERPTS--DINNER FOR REP. HENRY P. SMITH III AT TONAWANDA, N. Y.

It's time somebody blew the whistle on the Johnson-Humphrey Administration for its blunders in handling our foreign affairs.

Despite attempts by Administration officials to put the best possible face on things, it's clear that tragic mistakes are being made by this Administration--not only in Vietnam but in Europe.

Here is the record:

1. The Johnson-Humphrey Administration is primarily to blame for the recent political unrest in Vietnam because the extraordinary attention showered on Premier Ky last February at Honolulu triggered action by his rivals.
2. The recent civil disorders in Vietnam hurt the war effort by disrupting bomb supply lines and causing a cutback in bombing activity and by diverting some South Vietnamese troops from war duties.
3. The recent political turmoil in Saigon made it easier for Communist guerrillas to mount their devastating mortar attack April 13 against Tansonnhut Air Base, which killed seven U. S. servicemen and wounded 155 American and South Vietnamese servicemen. A high-ranking South Vietnamese security officer stated that "security around the air base was relaxed because of the political situation." He explained that some of the troops that normally would have patrolled the outside perimeter of the base were confined to quarters or sent to help keep down civil disorder.
4. France's impending pullout from NATO has seriously weakened the NATO alliance, and the Johnson-Humphrey Administration must bear some of the blame for this development.
5. The combat readiness of U. S. forces in Europe is at a lower level than at any time since before the Berlin crisis of 1961, both in quantity and quality, because of drawdowns of men and material for Vietnam.
6. The timing of the Defense Department withdrawal of 15,000 Army specialists from West Germany to train recruits for Vietnam duty was unbelievably stupid, coming as it did when NATO was shaken to the core by France's upcoming withdrawal.

TONAWANDA, N. Y. SPEECH EXCERPTS - APRIL 18, 1966

Last Thursday (April 14) I charged the Johnson-Humphrey Administration with mismanagement in connection with bomb shortages, pileup of ships at Vietnam, and diminishing of our overall combat readiness. The Pentagon promptly denied the charges.

On the same day, a U. S. military spokesman in Saigon said that U. S. air action against the Viet Cong in South Vietnam was reduced on Wednesday (April 13) because of a shortage of bombs at some airfields.

Last weekend the Pentagon revealed it is buying back for \$21 apiece 5,570 750-pound bombs sold to a West German fertilizer firm two years ago for ~~\$1.20~~ ^{\$1.70} apiece. Is there a bomb shortage? Figure it out for yourself.

* * *

Let no one misinterpret Republican policy on Vietnam. Republicans are dedicated to thwarting Communist aggression there. We have therefore supported Democratic Administrations in the carrying out of this basic objective since 1961. We will continue to do so. But the Loyal Opposition does not have to be a silent opposition. When the Johnson-Humphrey Administration makes mistakes in Vietnam, we must point them out or we will be shirking our responsibility to the people.

* * *

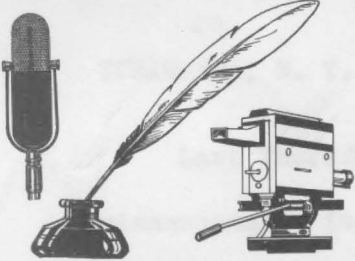
The Pentagon has sought to refute reports of bomb shortages in Vietnam by stating that our planes are dropping bombs at $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the rate of the Korean War. I should hope we have far greater air war capability in 1966 than in 1951. That statement did not prove we have enough bombs of all sizes. It was an attempt to bury bomb shortage charges through sheer weight of statistics. It was intended to overwhelm while not really refuting the charges. As a matter of fact, the statement issued April 14 contained several admissions of weapon shortages and of extraordinary action taken to solve them.

* * *

President Johnson is acting like a very confused man. First he talks about an income tax increase to halt inflation, and then he talks about cutting spending. He is confusing the American people by thinking out loud. But Republicans aren't confused. They know the way to stop inflation is to cut federal spending.

House Republicans are building an economy record, We're voting to cut non-military spending 5 per cent across the board. Most Democrats are voting against these economy moves. They're for spending more on Great Society programs while we fight a billion-dollar-a-month war and prices keep going up.

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