

The original documents are located in Box D20, folder “Big County Republican Chairmen's Meeting, Washington, DC, July 7, 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 AT 6 P.M., EDT
THURSDAY, JULY 7, 1966

SPEECH EXCERPTS--BIG COUNTY REPUBLICAN CHAIRMEN'S MEETING, WASHINGTON, D. C.

The titular leader of the Divided Democrat Party has opened his 1966 political campaign with a flying visit to appease angry farmers in Nebraska and Iowa and a televised news conference at his LBJ Ranch.

In Des Moines, he said with heavy sarcasm:

"On the inflation front, if you are distraught, if you are worried about high prices, if you have a stomach ulcer because of high wages, if you are concerned about hogs bringing too much, calves bringing too much, or wages getting too high, and you are really worked up about inflation, it may be that you ought to vote Republican....When these folks start talking to you about inflation, you tell them that is something you only have to worry about in Democratic administrations."

I say "Amen." And I'll wager President Johnson will wish he had never spoken those words. For Americans are seriously worked up about inflation. They are quite aware that the Eisenhower dollar is now only worth 89 cents in the supermarket. And they are going to vote Republican.

The cost of living has gone up about 3 per cent in the past year, and there is every indication it will continue to rise. Mr. Johnson may not get worked up about this secret sales tax his inflationary policies have imposed on everybody, but Americans trying to get along on modest and fixed incomes feel the squeeze. They won't appreciate their President joking about it.

The inequity of inflation is that its evils fall heaviest on the poor, those who spend most of their income on the necessities of life. It almost seems to be the fixed policy of the Johnson-Humphrey Administration to penalize these Americans, while soliciting new members for the President's \$10,000 Club.

To cite a particularly clear case, consider the recent Sales Participation Act, which the White House rammed through this Blank Check Democratic Congress to cover some of the gaping holes in the President's 1967 Budget. This piece of fiscal shenanigans permits the government to sell \$5,000 shares in Federally-secured loans and pay the big operators who can afford to invest in \$5,000 chunks a whopping 5 3/4 per cent interest on their money.

But when the workingman or the schoolchild lends his small savings to the government in response to patriotic bond appeals, he gets only a little better than

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SPEECH EXCERPTS

four per cent interest. Yes, it may be that Americans ought to vote Republican this November.

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Back at his Texas ranch, President Johnson surveyed the world scene and came up with this astonishing conclusion:

"We have made great progress and, generally speaking, we are optimistic about most of the continents. And if we could only solve the problem in Vietnam, and we think we're on the way to doing that, we could have a world that is rather peaceful and generally prosperous."

Now, Mr. Johnson knows better than that. Vietnam is a grave problem, but even if it miraculously disappeared, this old world would be far from "rather peaceful" or "generally prosperous." There are tensions and tragedies on every continent--including our own--which this Administration has neglected in its preoccupation with the Vietnam problem, and which this nation must face to maintain its leadership of the free world.

For months we Republicans in Congress have been pleading with the President to talk straight to the American people. Now it seems we must urge him to talk sense as well.

As for Vietnam, all of us hope that the President is right in saying it is on its way to honorable solution. We in the Republican minority have supported him on every step in the right direction, and will continue to do so even if leading figures of his own party do not.

Last December 13 the Republican Coordinating Committee, meeting here, unequivocally reaffirmed our party's policy of resistance to Communist aggression but warned of "a growing danger that the United States is becoming involved in an endless Korean-type jungle war" in Southeast Asia. We called for a Kennedy-type quarantine on North Vietnam and also recommended "maximum use of American conventional air and sea power against significant military targets" in order to minimize casualties and bring about a swift and secure peace.

Six and a half months later, after rejecting and resisting these and similar recommendations by his top professional military advisers, President Johnson last week ordered heavy strikes against North Vietnamese oil storage depots. The Administration hints these blows already are speeding the prospect of peace.

All Americans pray for peace, regardless of politics.

But Governor Scranton of Pennsylvania, in my judgment, was absolutely correct in stating in Los Angeles last Sunday that "if it had been done earlier it would have been more efficient militarily and less contentious diplomatically."

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SPEECH EXCERPTS

During the past six and one-half month interval of indecision, some 2,434 Americans have been killed and 15,062 have been wounded in Vietnam. Tragically, this toll of 17,496 represents roughly two-thirds of all U.S. casualties in the Vietnam War since January, 1961.

During the past six months of 1966, American losses have been averaging about 100 dead and 500 wounded every week of the Vietnam War.

If use of American sea and air power against significant military targets in North Vietnam succeeds in bringing peace closer in July, why would it not have done so in January?

The American people deserve and will demand a convincing answer to this proper question.

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