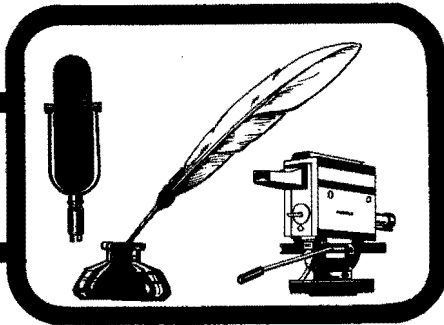


The original documents are located in Box D21, folder “GOP Dinner, Macon, GA, October 29, 1966” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE AT 7 P.M.
SATURDAY, OCT. 29, 1966

EXCERPTS FROM SPEECH BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH., AT GOP DINNER, MACON, GA.

I want peace as much as any other man in America, but I am compelled to say in all honesty that the Manila Conference produced nothing really new in the way of a peace plan.

The only new development was the time element in the pledge that all foreign forces would get out of Vietnam within six months after the Communists begin pulling out of the war.

This is not necessarily a solid basis for building peace in Vietnam. It appears to be more nearly an effort to give the Vietnam War back to the Vietnamese.

It traces to a speech made by Secretary of State Rusk last October 12 in Washington before the Association of the U.S. Army. In that speech Mr. Rusk said American forces would be withdrawn from Vietnam if North Vietnam would withdraw its regular army units from South Vietnam and would stop supplying the Viet Cong. The upshot would be that the Viet Cong and the Saigon Government then would be left to settle their differences by negotiation or continued war.

The Manila Conference called for "effective international guarantees" of an end to hostilities in South Vietnam. What would those guarantees be? Who would enforce them--a UN peacekeeping force?

For public consumption at least, the Manila Conference did not address itself to the question which is central to an end to the fighting in Vietnam: the future makeup of the Saigon Government.

The Johnson Administration has hinted that it would be willing to accept a coalition government in Saigon. Premier Ky is adamantly opposed to giving the Communists a government toehold that might later turn into a stranglehold and a Communist takeover.

We will perhaps never learn of the secret talks behind the broad-brush manifesto issued at Manila.

A half-dozen words spoken at Manila constituted perhaps the most significant statement made there because they had the ring of reality. Our commanding general in Vietnam, Gen. William C. Westmoreland, said: "The war is far from over." He spoke the bitter truth.

(MORE)



We must continue to pursue the possibility of peace most diligently but not at the cost of losing it in the long term. We must build a base for peace in Vietnam by helping to establish political stability there and to gain the support of the people for their government in Saigon.

But we must meantime expect that the Communists will try again to launch a major offensive in Vietnam. We can also expect that U.S. troop commitments will be increased substantially in the months ahead -- to 400,000 or beyond. We can only hope that the President obtained promises of increased troop commitments from our Manila Conference allies so that we will not continue to bear so disproportionate a burden.

We must never agree to a "put-up" coalition government in Saigon that would lead to a Communist takeover. Free elections under tight international supervision are the soundest basis for giving the South Vietnamese a free choice of the system under which they will live.

There is no easy road to peace in Vietnam. To think otherwise is self-deception.

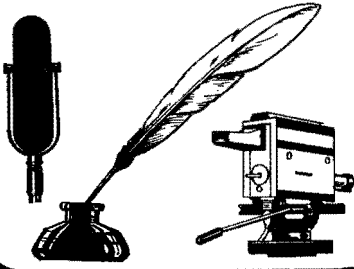
It also is deception for the Johnson Administration to pretend we can fight a war halfway around the world, spend more and more on Great Society social welfare schemes, reach the moon in time for the 1968 presidential election, and not suffer damaging inflation.

Speaking in this state with its Democrat tradition, I am prompted to quote a candid gentleman, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, George Mahon, Democrat of Texas.

When I talk about an income tax increase as a direct consequence of unnecessary Johnson-Democrat spending, some Americans dismiss my remarks as a partisan statement in an election year. Would they believe George Mahon? Well, Mr. Mahon said just this week that an income tax increase is a "probability" for 1967. And he cited not only the needs of the Vietnam War but rising government spending on the domestic front as the reason.

I have called the 89th Congress "the Inflation Congress." Again, some pass off my comments as a partisan attack. Would they believe George Mahon? Well, Mr. Mahon told the Lubbock, Tex., Chamber of Commerce on October 24 that the "seeds of large and growing spending programs were sown" in the 89th Congress which adjourned last Saturday. This was the Congress that President Johnson called "the greatest Congress in American history."

We don't need an Inflation Congress in Washington. We need a Responsible Congress. We need men and women who will spend your tax money reluctantly, not dish it out with a scoop shovel. That's why you must elect a Responsible Congress on November 8.
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