

The original documents are located in Box D23, folder “Republican Fund-Raising Dinner in Honor of 18th District Representative Bob Price of Texas, November 17, 1967” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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*Distribution: Full, + 20 Mr. Ford
12:30 p.m. 11/17/67*

CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 P.M. FRIDAY--
November 17, 1967

Excerpts from a Speech by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., at a Republican Fund-Raising Dinner Friday evening, Nov. 17, 1967, at the Holiday Inn, Amarillo, Texas, in honor of Rep. Bob Price, R-Tex., representing the Texas 18th District.

The Credibility Canyon at The White House is growing ever wider and deeper despite studied attempts by the President to wipe it out in recent months.

Lyndon Johnson's Nov. 1 press conference--a quickie like so many of his other meetings with the news media--provides a couple of prime examples of the President's inability to be honest with the American people.

Asked about the likelihood of winning congressional approval for his 10 per cent income tax surcharge, Mr. Johnson said: "We will just continue to do the best we can here to persuade the Congress to take this action that we think is very essential to avoid inflation."

He didn't talk about slowing down inflation or keeping it from getting any worse. He talked as though a \$7 billion-or-less increase in taxes would be the means of avoiding inflation.

The President was pretending that right now inflation is non-existent when the truth is that the cost-of-living currently is rising at an annual rate of 4.4 per cent. Not only that, but the President was ignoring the fact that the cost of living has jumped 12.6 per cent since the Democrats took office in January, 1961.

The President was saying we could avoid inflation in 1968 if we had a \$21 billion deficit instead of a \$28 billion deficit. That is indeed strange logic. Not only that, it is pure fiction and so is Mr. Johnson's entire statement about "avoiding" inflation.

Mr. Johnson made these statements about inflation and taxes on Nov. 1. Less than a week later Mr. Johnson's leading expert on consumer prices--Labor Statistics Commissioner Arthur M. Ross--said in a copyrighted interview with U.S. News & World Report that the country would see highly inflationary price increases in 1968 regardless of what happens to the President's proposed income tax increase.

The Johnson press conference of Nov. 1 was even more interesting on another point.

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One newsman had the temerity to ask about the statement Lyndon Johnson made during the 1964 campaign, the Vietnam War comment that "we don't want our American boys to do the fighting for Asian boys" and that we don't want to "get tied down in a land war in Asia."

Mr. Johnson had the gall to say, flatly: "There has not been a change of policy." Then he sought to explain away his fraudulent campaign oratory by adding, "We are asking them all to do all they can. But that did not imply then and does not imply now that we would not do what we needed to do to deter aggression."

This is like saying black is white. I know of no American who did not take Lyndon Johnson's 1964 campaign statement to mean that he would not send American boys to fight South Vietnam's War. For Mr. Johnson to say there was no such implication in his campaign statement is sheer hypocrisy. No wonder the American people don't believe him or believe in him.

At this point I refer Mr. Johnson to a recent magazine article by former Assistant Defense Secretary Arthur Sylvester, famous for openly asserting that the Government has a right to lie when the nation's security is at stake.

Mr. Sylvester blamed the Johnson-Humphrey Administration's credibility gap on "the failure of newsmen to do their job." Then he added:

"Government officials do not have the right to lie politically or to protect themselves, but they do always have the duty to protect their countrymen."

At this point, I refer Mr. Sylvester to Mr. Johnson's Nov. 1 press conference statement on inflation and his 1964 campaign comments on Vietnam.

Mr. Johnson recently appealed for unity on Vietnam. A President cannot have unity simply by asking for it. He has to earn it by winning the people to his side. Mr. Johnson has failed to do that because he simply has not been honest with the American people about the Vietnam War. He eased this Nation into a huge land force commitment in Vietnam without really letting the people know what was happening. You can't treat the American people that way and keep their trust. There is a great crisis of confidence in America today--a confidence gap bred of a leadership gap--and its consequences could be tragic for every man, woman and child in this country.

President Johnson has made a wide variety of statements about why we are in Vietnam. The latest--he finally got around to admitting it--is that we are in Vietnam because of our own national interest, the stake we have in trying to keep South Vietnam from being drawn into the Communist world. Up until now the

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President has given the American people so many other reasons that they are thoroughly confused.

Republican leaders urged on Dec. 13, 1965, that we achieve success against the enemy by making full and effective use of our conventional air and sea power and by shutting off the flow of war supplies through the North Vietnamese port of Haiphong.

Instead the President placed hundreds of North Vietnamese targets on an off-limits list and only gradually stepped up the pressure. In fact, it was not until after I disclosed last August 8 just how we were pulling our air punch in Vietnam that the President finally approved air strikes against many of the forbidden targets.

I say that if we had hit those targets nearly two years ago when the Republican National Coordinating Committee urged it we would now be two years closer to peace in Vietnam. It may be that a settlement would already have been reached.

I have always felt we had to fight communism in Vietnam. I supported President Truman's firm decision to prevent a communist take-over in Korea. But the Johnson-Humphrey Administration's conduct of the war--on both the military and pacification fronts--has left much to be desired. The American people--and the South Vietnamese--have suffered as a result.

While mismanaging the Vietnam War, the Johnson-Humphrey Administration also has mismanaged the economy.

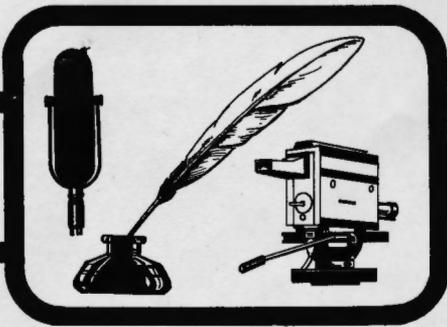
They deliberately kept the Congress in the dark on the full costs of the Vietnam War so they could go ahead with extravagant experiments in social welfare. To all Republican pleas for a setting of priorities on non-defense spending, their answers were that we could afford both guns and butter and that Republicans wanted to pay for the Vietnam War at the expense of the poor.

I say the Vietnam War has been fought wrong from the beginning to the present, and all of the American people have been the victims of this colossal Johnson-Humphrey Administration blunder. Our policy of gradualism in Vietnam has been a policy of stupidity. Worse still, it amounted to playing politics with the war.

The same holds true for the economy. President Johnson has spent us into a \$30 billion deficit and into mounting inflation and now he has the gall to ask the American people for an income tax increase. To add insult to injury, he is seeking to switch the blame for inflation to the 90th Congress. This man is just too great a burden for the American people to bear.

What is the meaning of the fantastically low approval rating given Mr. Johnson by the American people? It means they are crying out for a new leader, a man they can believe in.

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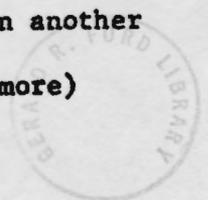
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