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ADDRESS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.  
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AT THE ANNUAL BANQUET OF THE  
CLINICO PATHOLOGIC SOCIETY

CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND  
6:30 P.M. FEBRUARY 15, 1972

FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 p.m. TUESDAY

It is a pleasure to be here tonight. In this atmosphere, I feel like a statesman and not a politician.

But actually a man must be a good politician if he is going to be a statesman, and that is the basic thrust of what I am going to talk about tonight.

My subject is New Directions for the Seventies--challenges facing the political parties and the Nation in the 1970's. The challenges that face the nation are indeed the challenges facing the political parties. The political party that is most successful during the Seventies will be the party that best meets the challenges of our times and sells the American people on its stewardship.

In a political sense, there is one problem that currently underlies all of the others. That problem is making Government sufficiently responsive to the people. If we don't make government responsive to the people, we don't make it believable. And we must make government believable if we are to have a functioning democracy.

We have all seen many Americans become increasingly skeptical of our political system--and I speak now not only of the young but of countless older Americans. They question whether it matters if they do not go to the polls. And this kind of questioning threatens our democratic system.

There is an answer to this questioning--and that answer is to make government work in a way that people can see and feel.

The other party may come forward with its own ideas but I personally feel the best cures for popular lethargy and voter apathy lie in returning power to the people and restructuring the Federal Government.

I am talking specifically about no-strings sharing of Federal revenue with state and local governments and about an overhaul of Federal cabinet departments.

(more)

This is not very sexy stuff, but it's what is needed to close the gap between promise and performance in the relationship between government and the people.

Federal revenue sharing is a continuing financial transfusion that can save our federal system and bring new strength to government at the grassroots level. Money is power, and the idea is to put more of the money where more of the power ought to be--at the local level. The idea is to put the money where the problems are, and in that way to solve them.

If we can solve problems instead of just talking about them, people will believe in government.

This is why we need a reorganization of the very framework of the Federal Government--to make it better able to deal with the problems of our people. Under the plan I have in mind, six of the present 11 cabinet departments would be consolidated into four new departments: Human Resources, Community Development, Natural Resources, and Economic Affairs. Hearings have been conducted in the Congress, and it is safe to predict that at least the new Community Development Department will see the light of day this year.

I said earlier that the only way to make the American people believers in their government is to lick our problems. Surely one of the biggest problems of all is the present welfare system, which is like pouring money through a sieve.

We must reform our antiquated and demeaning welfare system. The present system is a scandal. It just isn't working. Nobody is for a system that makes it more attractive to be on welfare than to work.

The answer, I think, is the Administration's new Family Assistance Plan--a plan tied to the work ethic, a plan that encourages families to stay together, a plan that would put a floor under the income of every family in America. It is the key to taking people off welfare rolls and putting them on payrolls. It is the means to a life of dignity for low-income Americans.

When we talk about moving people from welfare rolls to payrolls, it is only natural we should speak also of what I call "the new prosperity"--prosperity in peacetime.

Seldom in the history of the United States have we had peace and prosperity at the same time. Prosperity has usually come with a wartime economy, a booming defense industry. We are now trying to achieve prosperity at the same time that we end our involvement in a costly and tragic war.

(more)

What are we dealing with? We are seeking to bring under control an inflation that roared ahead almost unchecked between 1965 and 1969. We are seeking to stimulate an economy that has been throttled back as we have fought inflation, have partially shut down our defense industries and have cut our fighting forces by a million men.

The challenge that faces the two major political parties in the Seventies is whether we make inflation-fighting work while at the same time stimulating the economy to bring about peacetime prosperity.

We are making progress toward price stability and economic prosperity despite political in-fighting and the natural reluctance of some Americans to see a President of the opposite political persuasion succeed in meeting one of the biggest challenges of our times.

I think Phase 2 of our inflation fight is working. It has a lot going for it, despite obstructionism on the part of organized labor. At the same time, we have the stimulus of the tax cuts requested by President Nixon and enacted by the Congress. This should ultimately mean the creation of thousands of new jobs.

Certainly one of our key problems--and one of the challenges of both political parties--is the restoration of our environment. We have already taken giant steps toward cleaner air through passage of the Clean Air Amendments of 1970. Now we must focus on the need to clean up the nation's waterways. We must take every feasible action necessary to make our lakes and streams clean again. In sum, we must enter upon a new "get tough" era in the effort to restore clean air, clean water and open spaces--so that these elements will, as the President puts it, "once again be the birthright of every American."

There are, of course, many other urban ills--crime, poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing and transportation. These must be attacked on a regional basis, rather than in piecemeal fragmented fashion.

Local governments can work together as one in attacking crime, improving transportation and housing, finding jobs for the unemployed through metropolitan area job centers.

New attitudes are also necessary at other levels of government.

State and federal officials must come to realize that the problems of the city go far beyond specific slum areas and social ills. City metropolitan area governments must be given the resources--money and authority--to solve the larger problems of the whole community.

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Federal revenue sharing is the key to such local problem-solving. And there must be a cutting of controls from Washington and State capitols if local governments are to have the flexibility to get the job done.

There is still another key problem where initiative must be taken at the Federal level. That is the problem of health care. Progress is being made. With bipartisan support, the Congress last year enacted the most comprehensive health manpower legislation in the nation's history. This new health manpower program is designed to wipe out the estimated shortage of 50,000 doctors by 1978 and to increase the number of nurses by 400,000 by 1980.

But the health manpower shortage is only part of the challenge that faces us. The facts are that our entire health delivery system needs improving.

One of the major parties would meet the challenge by putting the Federal Government in charge of the entire health delivery system and underwriting all health care through the Federal Treasury. My party would expand the government role of financing care for the helpless and needy while improving basic health insurance coverage for all others. Employers would pay the bulk of the health insurance premiums for the working population. Catastrophic illnesses would be covered up to \$50,000 for each family member. The plan also would stress preventive medicine--keeping people healthy instead of sending them into hospitals with minor ailments and thus escalating the nation's health care bill.

My party believes the health care problem can best be met by improving the present system, not by scrapping it and erecting a Federal bureaucratic structure in its place.

We have been talking solely about challenges on the domestic scene. Let us turn now to the foreign arena.

The challenge in foreign affairs is to build a foundation for future peace while repelling efforts both on the Right and on the Left to shunt America off into a new posture of isolationism. We must maintain our position of leadership in the world if the world is to have any chance to live in peace.

A new quality of realism now dominates American foreign policy. We have agreed to accept Mainland China as a sovereign nation, adjusting our policies in Asia to meet changed economic and political conditions there. Following our military withdrawal from Vietnam, we will continue to provide support under the Nixon Doctrine for our non-Communist friends in Asia.

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In our relations with the Soviet Union, new realism on both sides has recognized a mutual interest in reducing the risk of nuclear war. There are signs that an agreement on the deployment of nuclear missiles will result from the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. Should these talks indeed prove successful, they will show that with hard bargaining and diligent negotiation we can avoid a new upward spiral of the nuclear arms race.

The foreign relations of the United States have changed drastically with President Nixon's upcoming visit to China and his planned trip to the Soviet Union in late May. The President also has consulted with our Free World partners in advance of his trips to the summit in Peking and Moscow.

In announcing his visit to Moscow, the President referred to "recent advances in bilateral and multilateral negotiations involving the two countries." It is safe to assume this included the SALT Talks.

Sources close to the Talks indicate a good prospect for limiting anti-ballistic missile systems on both sides and a fair prospect for a limit on offensive missiles.

I am convinced the bargaining from strength carried on by the Administration at SALT has earned the respect of the Russians. The prospects for agreement today are related, in my view, to our own decision to proceed with strategic weapons development--including the ABM system--during these Talks.

We are turning from an era of confrontation to an era of negotiation. But there is no question in my mind that negotiation will prove fruitful only if we negotiate from a position of strength. This is the lesson which is lost on the neo-isolationists.

We are achieving success in foreign affairs because we are continuing to show the world that we are determined to discharge America's responsibilities.

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We must lay a foundation for prosperity without war and we must build a new strategy for peace.

Our goals are clear. Our purpose is strong. With the help of the American people, we cannot fail.

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