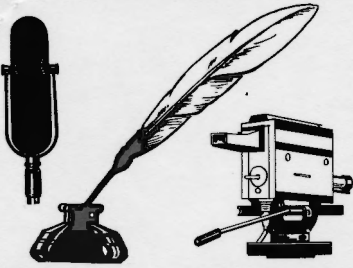


**The original documents are located in Box D34, folder “Lincoln Day Dinner, Jacksonville, FL, May 26, 1973” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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CONGRESSMAN  
**GERALD R. FORD**  
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS  
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE AT 6 P.M. SATURDAY--  
May 26, 1973

Excerpts from a Speech by Rep. Gerald R. Ford at a Lincoln Day Dinner May 26, 1973  
at Jacksonville, Fla.

Over the years one of the extraordinary aspects of American life has been our eagerness to strive for betterment of American society. This has been true from the very beginning of this nation almost steadily down to the present day.

Toward the end of the Sixties, however, this striving for betterment seemed to be lost in America. It became lost in the confusion generated by governmental permissiveness, revolutionary strife, and a foreign policy which lacked backbone and direction.

Just over four years ago a Democratic President and a Democratic Congress were running this country.

Four years ago we had over a half million men in Vietnam, with 300 dying every week. This nation and China faced each other over a gulf of hostility and ignorance while Russia and the United States continued a spiraling arms race which was headed toward nuclear disaster.

Rioting wracked our cities. The cry we heard was "burn, baby, burn." Fully one-half of the women in this country were afraid to walk in their own neighborhoods at night. Even breathing the air and drinking our water was becoming dangerous.

Today we have the leadership of a Republican President, Richard Nixon. And today, for the first time since 1945, the threat of nuclear war is diminishing, not increasing. All of our men and POW's are home from a Vietnam which is almost at peace. Crime rates have come down. Employment is at a record level of over 83 million, and unemployment is at its lowest level in 2½ years. We are creating new jobs at an unprecedented rate, and with less damaging environmental impact than ever before.

Look at the Republican record. We are virtually free from war. Racial rioting is only a bad memory. Our college students now are more interested in learning than burning. Americans are living better today than ever before.

(more)

Of course we have our troubles. Inflation has become worse in America recently. It's running at a 5 per cent rate for the latest 12 months. But the rise in the cost of living is 8 per cent in Italy and Britain, 7 per cent in France and West Germany, and 13 per cent in Israel.

Then there are the weird events that have shaken Washington to its bureaucratic and congressional foundations. But I feel that so much attention has been focused on these unfortunate and regrettable events that Americans are beginning to lose sight of what's right with their country and what this nation's relationship is to the rest of the world.

President Nixon's achievements have been tremendous. We must not let those achievements be eroded by the current clamor over the overzealous actions of a relatively small number of men. And we must remember, too, that the irrational conduct of these men is not the conduct of the Republican Party. The Party is represented by its elected officials--the President, the Vice-President, Republican members of Congress, and elected party officials. From that point of view, the strength, purposes, goals and ideals of the Republican Party are as strong as ever.

The Republican Party--the party of Abraham Lincoln--is a great party. Its goals are embraced by the vast majority of Americans.

The Republican Party--like most Americans--believes in fiscal restraint, fully aware of the horrendous impact of deficit financing on the people's pocketbook in the form of either increased taxes or increased inflation.

The Republican Party--like most Americans--believes in returning power to state and local governments through Federal revenue sharing and insistence that local communities and not faceless and arbitrary bureaucrats make local decisions.

The Republican Party--like most Americans--believes in helping those who cannot help themselves, but in otherwise preserving the liberty and freedom of individuals in this great country to work out their own destinies.

Now, how can we accomplish these great goals of the Republican Party and the American people? We can achieve these objectives by electing more people to Congress who believe in these fundamental goals and principles, by electing more Republicans in Florida and the South.

There are, of course, Democrats in the South, including Florida, who share the Republican Party's ideals. Their thinking coincides with Republican philosophy. They, like John Connally, would feel much more comfortable in the Republican Party than in the party of the New Deal, the Fair Deal, the New Frontier and the Great Society. They feel downright uncomfortable in the party which stands for centralization of all power in Washington.

We have to move in new directions. We have to move in the direction of President Nixon's New Federalism, and Floridians--Democrats and Republicans--can help. Let's bring government back to the people. We can do it, if we all try.

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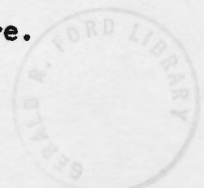
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