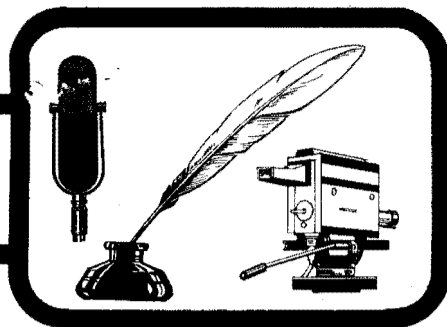


The original documents are located in Box D22, folder “Morris County Republican Dinner, Morristown, NJ, May 12, 1967” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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

**NEWS
RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE AT
6:30 p.m., Friday, May 12, 1967

EXCERPTS FROM A SPEECH BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH., HOUSE MINORITY LEADER,
AT MORRIS COUNTY REPUBLICAN DINNER, MORRISTOWN, N.J., FRIDAY, MAY 12, 1967.

National opinion polls in America reveal a seeming contradiction regarding Vietnam.

A majority of the people approve of our basic policy in Vietnam--they want to thwart Communist aggression in Southeast Asia--but they disapprove of President Johnson's handling of the Vietnam War.

I think the explanation is that events have proved Mr. Johnson's policy of gradual response in Vietnam to be a tragically mistaken course. His mistake has been in substituting political judgment for military judgment on questions of military strategy.

The indecisiveness and the gradualism in the United States effort that resulted from Administration policy gave the Communists time to build their strength and to anticipate and offset nearly every allied move.

There is no question in my mind that Mr. Johnson's policy of the gradual response has made it infinitely more costly--in lives and weapons--for us to assist the South Vietnamese in turning back the Communist threat.

The Johnson Administration is admitting the failure of its policy of gradualism by doing now what it refused to do a year ago.

The Administration had a ready explanation whenever it was asked why a certain military action was not taken in months past. Now the Administration is undertaking these very actions, but the job is far more difficult. The delay also has reduced the effectiveness of these actions.

When the North Vietnamese surface-to-air missile sites were being built, President Johnson declared them off-limits to our flyers. When the Russian-built MIGs first appeared in Vietnam, we allowed them sanctuary on the ground. Now our pilots are being ordered to hit previously forbidden targets in North Vietnam--at terrible cost in lives and planes.

I submit--with all due respect to higher authority--that we should have been doing 12 months ago what we are doing now. If we had, we would be 12 months closer to the bargaining table. The Administration has stretched out the war.

(more)

Some may ask, what of the risk that the Soviet Union or Red China might have become involved? My answer is that we are taking just such a calculated risk right now.

I believe the kind of pressure the Administration finally is applying in Vietnam will help produce negotiations. But if the war is still going on in 1968, the American people may well decide that only a new administration can break the deadlock and bring the war to an honorable conclusion.

* * *

The state of the economy will be a key issue in the 1968 election.

There is no question that the massive tax cuts of 1964 and 1965 touched off a boom. That was a good action, supported by both parties. But the Johnson Administration doomed the boom by failing to slow down the economy when it became overheated in late 1965 and early 1966.

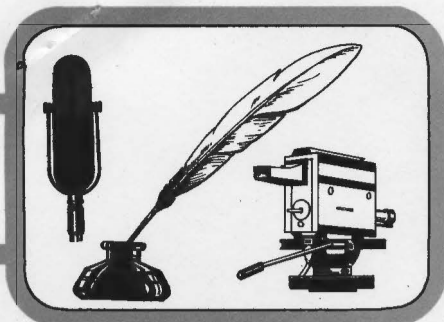
The situation called for deep cuts in domestic spending, possibly coupled with a tax increase. Certainly the circumstances called for one or the other. The Administration refused to initiate either course and, in fact, continued to overstimulate the economy. Meantime the Federal Reserve Board launched its own fight against inflation and succeeded in pushing up interest rates to the highest level in 40 years.

The cost of living rose sharply, hurting all Americans but especially the aged and others on fixed incomes. We saw the greatest price advance for any 12-month period in recent years except at the outset of the Korean War.

Why go over this ground? The dust from the inflationary spiral of 1966 has settled only temporarily. More trouble lies ahead--trouble that has its roots in the Johnson Administration's failure to halt inflation last year. The Johnson Administration must assume major responsibility for the steep climb in living costs which has laid the foundation for big wage increases in 1967. Workers in all industries are striving to catch up. This in turn threatens a new inflationary spiral. Productivity is expected to increase only slightly while wages take a big jump. This increase in production costs will swing new pressure behind existing price levels.

This Administration mismanaged the American economy in 1966. Now it would add to the damage wrought by inflation by loading an income tax increase on the worker and on an economy thrown into imbalance by its unwise policies and bad timing. The economy needs a pep pill, not a sleeping potion. In my view, the proposed tax increase doesn't make any more sense now than it did in January when the President advanced it.

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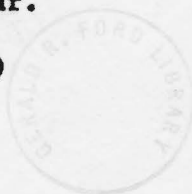
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