

The original documents are located in Box D23, folder “Republican Dinner, San Jose, CA, December 5, 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. TUESDAY--
December 5, 1967

Excerpts from a Speech by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., at a Republican Dinner Tuesday evening, Dec. 5, 1967, in San Jose, California

The American people are living in a crisis atmosphere--crisis at home and crisis abroad.

They are confused and bewildered. The times cry out for strong national leadership, a way out of the sea of troubles in which this country now is floundering.

And this is the greatest tragedy--that a crisis of confidence compounds all of the Nation's difficulties. There is no leader charting a clear course for the country, no strong voice to which America's millions can respond, for the people have lost confidence in Lyndon B. Johnson and his administration.

The latest nationwide poll by Lou Harris indicates that 57 per cent of the American people disapprove of the way Mr. Johnson is doing his job as President. At the same time, only 34 per cent approve Mr. Johnson's handling of the Vietnam War.

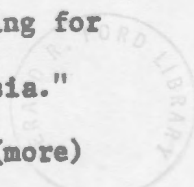
I submit that this lack of confidence in the Johnson-Humphrey Administration stems from one major cause--that the Administration's record of performance falls far short of its promises. Newsmen call it a "credibility gap." In fact, CBS commentator Walter Cronkite and others have bluntly accused the Administration of lying. I prefer to believe that this Administration has made a series of major mistakes in judgment--so many as to cause a massive deterioration of the public trust.

Why have the American people lost faith in their government?

We all remember that in late 1963 Secretary of Defense McNamara said that "the major part" of America's military task in South Vietnam could be "completed by the end of 1965." Then there were 14,000 Americans serving in Vietnam--as advisers to Southvietnamese military commanders. Now there are some 480,000 American military personnel in Vietnam, and the President has said he will increase this commitment to 525,000.

We all recall the statement made by Lyndon Johnson during the 1964 presidential campaign--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."

(more)



Reminded of this statement at a White House press conference last Nov. 1, Mr. Johnson said, "There has not been a change of policy." And he added, "That did not imply then and does not imply now that we would not do what we needed to do to deter aggression."

For my part, I believe every American interpreted Mr. Johnson's 1964 campaign statements to mean that he would not send hundreds of thousands of Americans to fight a land war in Southeast Asia. And I believe Ho Chi Minh may also have been misled into thinking America's role in Vietnam would continue to be advisory.

In fact, there may be a Credibility Gap between Hanoi and Washington as long as Lyndon Johnson occupies the White House.

But the Credibility Gap extends beyond the Vietnam War and into many facets of our domestic affairs.

② In December, 1965, President Johnson said he was going to reduce federal payrolls by 25,000. Instead, the Johnson-Humphrey Administration added 187,506 employes to the payroll over the next seven months. Currently civilian employment by the federal government stands at nearly 3 million. That reflects a jump of 243,400 between June 1966 and June 1967.

In his State of the Union Message on Jan. 27, 1966, President Johnson said: "I intend to ask the Congress to consider measures that, without improperly invading State and local authority, will enable us to deal effectively with strikes that may cause irreparable damage to the national interest."

③ That was the promise--a pledge to send recommendations to Congress aimed at improving our handling of national emergency strikes. That was in January, 1966. Has the President fulfilled that promise? Most emphatically not. Instead he has so mismanaged the economy that 1967 will be a banner year for strikes and 1968 promises to set an even more damaging record.

The Congress simply has been unable to believe this Administration in fiscal matters. Small wonder the economy is being buffeted by the winds of uncertainty. As for the wage-earner, his paycheck is slimmer than two years ago in terms of what it will buy.

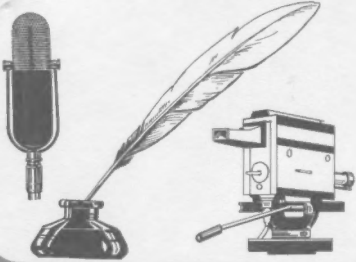
④ 2.P.S. A look at the record shows that the President forecast a \$1.8 billion deficit for fiscal 1967 but closed the books 12 months later with a \$9.7 billion deficit. Last January he predicted an \$8.1 billion deficit for fiscal 1968, but now he talks of a deficit of \$30 to \$35 billion.

As a good friend of Lyndon Johnson's, Walter Reuther, is fond of saying... America is in deep trouble.

(more)

I suggest the reason we are in trouble is lack of leadership and lack of honesty in our national government. No government which lacks strong direction at the top can long retain the trust of the American people. And without the trust of the people, no government can succeed.

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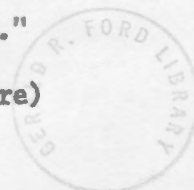
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