

**The original documents are located in Box D23, folder “Lincoln Day Dinner, Goldsboro, NC, February 3, 1968” 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--  
February 3, 1968

Excerpts from a Lincoln Day Dinner Speech at Goldsboro, North Carolina.

"We live in the midst of alarms; anxiety beclouds the future; we expect some new disaster with each newspaper we read. Are we in a healthful political state? Are not the tendencies plain? Do not the signs of the times point plainly the way in which we are going?"

We are living today in a time when crisis follows upon crisis and solutions elude the Administration in power. The graphic lines I have just quoted might well have been uttered today or yesterday, and the speaker might have been a member of the Congress of either party.

The words are those of Abraham Lincoln, delivered at Bloomington, Indiana, on May 29, 1863.

Yet they are chillingly appropriate to the present national and international scenes.

Recently President Johnson gave the Congress and the Nation his appraisal of our national and international problems and accomplishments and outlined a course for the future.

I know of no American who felt stirred by his words. There was no note of challenge, no clear call to Americans to "rise up against a sea of troubles" and vanquish them, no demand that Americans embrace a federal regimen of financial austerity to halt the steady deterioration in the value of the dollar and the dangerously heightened outflow of our gold supply.

Yet we are living "in the midst of alarms" and nearly every day a new crisis confronts us.

North Korea, a fifth-rate power, seizes a U.S. naval vessel and leads it into the port of Wonsan by the nose. Communist terrorists fight us in the streets of Saigon and hold the U.S. Embassy for six hours,

Where are the answers? Where is the leadership that will make us proud of America again?

After a lengthy silence during which the credibility of the United States was much in doubt, the President reported to the American people concerning North Korea's seizure of the U.S. Navy ship, the Pueblo.

He spoke briefly. We were employing diplomacy by making contingency

(more)



military preparations. Air reservists were being called up. Many questions were left unanswered.

Why did we not rush jet fighters to the aid of the Pueblo? Why did the captain not immobilize his ship or scuttle her rather than to let an intelligence vessel with all manner of sophisticated electronic equipment on board fall into Communist hands? Why did the crew not resist, even though they were outgunned? Why was the Pueblo not more heavily armed? Why was it not accompanied by an armed escort?

In my view, North Korean seizure of the Pueblo should never have been allowed to happen.

There must be a full-scale investigation of the Johnson Administration's handling of our spy ship activities and the Pueblo incident itself if the American people are to have even a shred of confidence in the present Administration's conduct of our international affairs.

The United States obviously was unprepared for an incident like the seizure of the Pueblo. The American people are entitled to know why. If our fighting forces are inadequate in Korea because 500,000 American military personnel are pinned down in Vietnam, then the Administration must act to correct the situation.

We cannot permit ourselves to be humiliated in the eyes of the world by a fifth-rate power.

Congress should move quickly to review, update, and strengthen our entire policy in Southeast Asia.

Americans have always rallied behind their President in time of crisis, regardless of party. We are doing so now. But, in the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, it is "not only unpatriotic and servile but it is morally treasonable to the American public to announce that there must be no criticism of the President." He continued: "Nothing but the truth should be spoken about him or anyone else but it is even more important to tell the truth -- pleasant or unpleasant -- about him than about anyone else."

I would add: It is also critically important that the President tell the American people the truth. This he has not done -- else he could not create the illusion that success is near in Vietnam or talk of the "prosperity" of the Sixties without noting that it feeds on war and inflation. This is false optimism and phony prosperity.

Abraham Lincoln had great faith in the American people and in their ability to recognize the truth. I share that faith. It was in his last public address on April 11, 1865, that Lincoln, a great Republican president, said: "It is true that you may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time." Let the present Administration take heed.



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