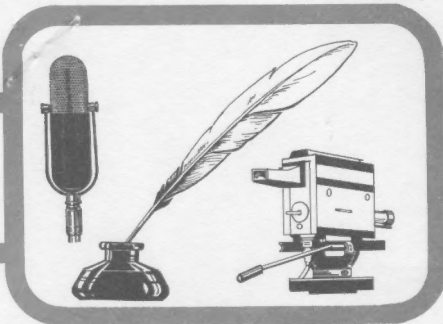


The original documents are located in Box D23, folder “Lincoln Day Dinner, Evansville, IN, February 3, 1968” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--For Release at 6:30 p.m. Saturday--
February 3, 1968

Excerpts from a Lincoln Day Dinner Speech at Evansville, Indiana.

President Johnson is asking the American people to pay for his mistakes.

That is the chief thrust of his State of the Union Message, his Budget message and his Economic Report to the Nation. That is the significance of his request for a 10 per cent income tax surcharge.

A few days ago Postmaster General Larry O'Brien remarked that President Johnson would not attack his opponent in seeking reelection. Lyndon Johnson would, O'Brien said, be continued in office on the strength of his record.

Let us take a look at that record. It is a record of mismanagement in the handling of the Vietnam War and the domestic economy.

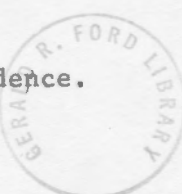
President Johnson's favorite line is: "Let us continue."

It is a meaningful phrase, for under Lyndon Johnson the Vietnam War continues, excessive federal spending continues, the threat of higher taxes continues, the problems of our cities continue, the upsurge in consumer prices continues, the squeeze on the farmer continues, the climb in the crime rate continues, the rise in interest rates continues, the dangerous outflow of our gold supply continues, deterioration of the dollar at home continues, and massive federal deficits continue.

The answer, the President says--as though he has discovered a wonderful cure for all our ills--is to add 10 per cent to the people's income tax bills. He adds that "restraint is essential to our economic health" right now--and taxing the people some more is his idea of restraint. Well, it's not mine. I say restraint should begin with the President.

The President claims he is exercising restraint in federal spending. In support of that claim he cites what he describes as "priorities" in his 1969 budget. Let me point out just two examples of the President's kind of priorities--a \$250 million increase in spending for development of a supersonic transport plane and a 25 per cent increase--from \$1.2 million to \$1.5 million--in highway beautification expenditures. These are Lyndon Johnson's priorities--at a time when we are fighting a war costing \$26 billion a year or more. I don't believe the people will be misled by this pretense at frugality and prudence.

(more)



This is a time for putting first things first, not for going off in all directions at once.

I feel sure the American people will not be deceived by President Johnson's absurd exercise in priority-setting, any more than they will swallow his attempt to blame the 90th Congress for the inflationary pressures generated by Johnson Administration policies.

Johnson inflation not only has shrunk the dollar at home, it has hurt its worth abroad. This is because Johnson inflation has so raised the price of American goods that we have increasing difficulty in exporting them.

We can make progress in this country even in time of war, but not when the federal government flirts with bankruptcy.

My good friend, House Majority Leader Carl Albert of Oklahoma, is fond of saying that if Abraham Lincoln were living today he would be a Democrat.

Carl seems to have forgotten it was Lincoln who said: "The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot so well do, for themselves, in their separate and individual capacities. In all that the people can individually do as well for themselves, government ought not to interfere."

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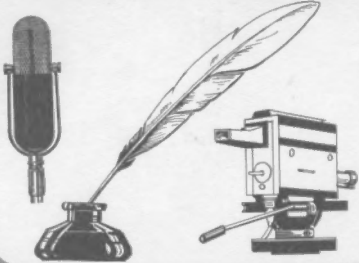
We currently are experiencing a failure in national leadership.

In this age of crisis the Nation sorely needs a new leader with a strong sense of mission--to bring the Vietnam War to a successful conclusion, to steer us clear of humiliating crises like the Pueblo incident, to curb inflation, to restore world confidence in the dollar, to raze the slums and build our cities anew, and to turn the national crime rate downward.

What is Lyndon Johnson's record of leadership? He has only succeeded in accumulating federal deficits of more than \$60 billion--half of that in fiscal years 1967 and '68, pushing the federal debt to \$370 billion and running up an annual interest bill of \$14.4 billion on that debt.

Soon the Democratic Party will be having its annual Jefferson-Jackson Dinners. I suggest as a theme the following statement made by Thomas Jefferson in 1816: "I place economy among the first and most important of republican virtues, and public debt as the greatest of dangers to be feared."

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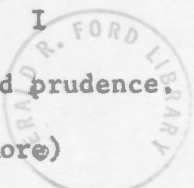
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