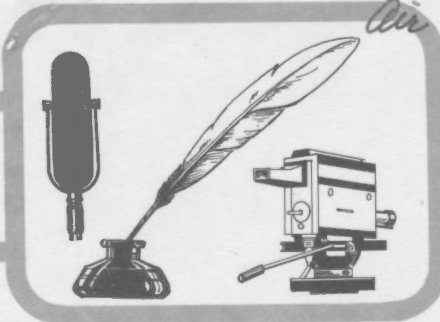


The original documents are located in Box D28, folder “Republican Dinner, Nashville, TN, November 21, 1969” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 P.M. FRIDAY--
November 21, 1969

Excerpts from a speech at a Republican dinner in Nashville, Tenn.

I am by nature an optimist, but it is not for that reason that I feel inspired as I stand before you tonight.

I feel inspired because each passing day strengthens my conviction that President Nixon has set a proper course, the right course, both in Vietnam and in our domestic affairs.

On Nov. 3 President Nixon addressed the Nation on the subject of Vietnam. That evening he made one of the greatest speeches ever delivered by an American President. The impact of that speech is now shown by polls indicating that eight out of 10 Americans are supporting the President's policies on Vietnam.

The reason the President is being supported by an overwhelming majority of the American people is that he made our two remaining choices in Vietnam abundantly clear. Those choices are capitulation or, in the absence of a negotiated political settlement, Vietnamization of the war. Once the President had explained the consequences of capitulation -- otherwise known as immediate withdrawal -- it was inevitable that the American people would give him their support.

There are those who claim the President campaigned on a promise to end the war but has no plan to do so. This is a blatant falsehood.

The President has a carefully worked out program to end the Vietnam War. That program is known as Vietnamization. It means that American ground combat forces will be out of Vietnam hopefully by the end of 1970. They will be phased out of Vietnam at the fastest practicable rate, while South Vietnamese forces are phased in.

The President is carrying out what he promised during his election campaign-- a plan to end American military involvement in Vietnam.

The President's plan to end the American ground combat role in the war is sound, and it is working.

That is why he has the overwhelming support of the American people.

At the same time, we have made substantial progress in Vietnam. The political and military aspects of the struggle there have shifted in favor of the United States and its allies. The pendulum has swung in our direction.

The military situation is under control. The Saigon Government's presence is moving ahead. The South Vietnamese armed forces are bigger and better. There

(more)



has been encouraging political progress in Saigon through a broadening of support, and some drastically needed economic reforms are finally under way.

As for North Vietnam and the Viet Cong, they have made it plain that they expect the protest movement in the United States to speed the end of the Vietnam War on their terms. I say they are making a bad mistake, because the vast majority of the American people know that the real name for immediate withdrawal is capitulation -- and they reject it.

Whether 250,000 or even a half million people join in a massive peace march, government policies cannot be made in the streets. Chants of "peace, now" are no substitute for careful decision-making in the councils of government.

The truth is that President Nixon has reversed the Vietnam policies of his predecessor. He is doing his best to extricate the United States from Vietnam, and he deserves the support of the demonstrators as well as the silent majority.

Continued protest on Vietnam can only be destructive. It can only delay the process of disengagement which President Nixon has started.

There is at least one hopeful note in the aftermath of the November Moratorium, however. It seems to me that the Students for a Democratic Society has become so splintered and the Weatherman faction has so discredited itself that SDS may well be on its way to oblivion.

I said at the outset that President Nixon's course seemed right to me both in Vietnam and at home.

In the area of domestic policy, the President has sent the Congress some 40 proposals which are deeply rooted in the need for reforms in America.

There has been a noticeable reluctance among the Democratic majority in the Congress to move those proposals forward. Yet those proposals must be implemented if the country is to move ahead.

I now find some hope in the sudden approval of draft reform by the Senate. This may be a loosening of the log that breaks the jam. But I certainly believe a watch-and-wait attitude is indicated.

In the case of draft reform, Congress's approval of the President's request for a lottery or random selection system is the occasion for a loud hurrah. I am sure that is the feeling of a vast majority of the American people. Like the President, I want this country to go to an all-volunteer Army as soon as possible, but meantime we must try to make the draft as fair as we can.

The watchword of the Nixon Administration is reform. I fervently hope that the Congress will not deny the American people the reforms they so greatly desire.



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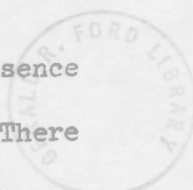
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