

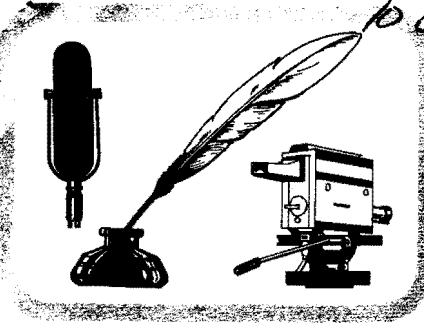
The original documents are located in Box D30, folder “Kent County Republican Picnic, Johnson Park, Grand Rapids, MI, August 1, 1970” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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



--FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY--
Saturday, August 1, 1970

Excerpts from a speech by Rep. Gerald R. Ford at the Kent County Republican Picnic, 1 to 6 p.m. Saturday, August 1, 1970, at Johnson Park, Interstate 196 at Wilson Ave.

This is an election year, and we have got to get the facts across to the American people. We have got to get the facts across on three basic issues -- inflation, the Vietnam War, and misplaced priorities.

The facts on these three issues favor the Republican Party. The facts favor the Republican Party because these three issues are the products of the mess the Democrats made in national office during the Sixties. The facts favor the Republican Party because the Democrats are obstructing the efforts of the GOP to deal with these problems. The facts favor the Republican Party because we are making progress in spite of political mischief-making by the Democrats.

Let's take a look at inflation. It was the Democrats who brought it on -- brought it on by expanding the economy at the same time that they led us into a massive land war in Asia -- brought it on by telling the Nation we could have both guns and butter.

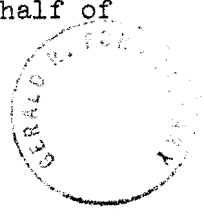
Now we are fighting this Democrat inflation and unwinding the war. The economic side-effects are painful -- an increase in unemployment and a period of tight money. But the fact remains that we are succeeding in slowing inflation without the kind of recession that usually follows the sort of wild spending spree our Nation engaged in under the Democrats in the Sixties.

And although unemployment has been up, it is considerably less nationwide than the 6.7 per cent unemployment under the Democts in 1961, and the 5.1 per cent average under the Democrats from 1961 through 1968.

It is a fact, too, that total employment hit an all-time high this year. More than 79 million Americans are employed. Total employment is now nearly 1.5 million higher than it was one year ago.

It is also a fact that real per capita disposable income -- what individuals have available to spend after allowing for taxes and inflation -- real per capita disposable income was at the highest rate in our history during the first half of 1970.

(more)



We are now passing through the first phase of a successful campaign against inflation in which the rate of inflation has ceased to rise. This is no thanks to the Democrats, who have been working against us in Washington. As part of this campaign, the Administration has slowed the expansion rate of Federal spending drastically -- from an average increase of 15 per cent a year from 1966 to 1969 to 7.5 per cent in 1970 and a projected 4 per cent in 1971. This has enabled us to keep the Federal budget close to balance while recognizing important national priorities in the fields of environment, welfare and transportation. We have exercised firm control over defense spending. We have cut back less urgent non-defense programs. And we have employed greater efficiency throughout the Federal government.

The Democratic Party is still running against Herbert Hoover -- a great American, according to Harry Truman and other Democrats. The facts are that they did not bring about prosperity after the Great Depression. It was the boom conditions of World War II that erased depression era unemployment. And the facts are that the Democrats did not produce prosperity in the Sixties. They generated a false prosperity, an inflationary boom, by taking us into the Vietnam War.

Now some Democrats are talking about the Vietnam War as though it is President Nixon's and not Lyndon Johnson's war. That is ridiculous, and a completely phony issue.

When President Nixon took office he inherited a full-scale war in Southeast Asia to which Lyndon Johnson had committed nearly 550,000 U.S. military personnel. Whether this was a moral or illegal war was irrelevant. President Nixon had to deal with it. And he has dealt with it most intelligently and sensibly. He has completely changed the direction of the war. He has reduced by 125,000 the number of Americans committed in Southeast Asia, and he will be bringing 150,000 more of our men home by next spring. This means that half of the men committed to the Vietnam War during the eight years of the two previous Democratic administrations will have been brought home in the first two years of the present Administration.

By next July 1 our troops in Vietnam will no longer have a combat role. Our forces still there will be primarily supply and logistics units. That means we will have disengaged from the fighting in Vietnam and will have turned the combat over to a well-trained million-man South Vietnamese Army.

What do the President's critics want? To turn South Vietnam over to the Communists? I say we're on the right course -- a course that will keep South Vietnam

(more)

in the hands of the South Vietnamese and will help keep all of Southeast Asia from falling into the Communist camp. We're on the course that will prevent future Vietnams -- helping our Asian friends to help themselves.

You hear a lot of talk today about misplaced priorities. You would think it was the Democrats' issue. Not at all. This is a Republican issue. It is because the two previous Democratic administrations got us so deeply involved in Vietnam that we have been unable to concentrate our energies on solving domestic problems. It is because the two previous Democratic administrations got us so deeply involved in Vietnam that we are in the inflationary mess we are in.

Yet, despite the mess we are turning our national priorities around. And it is a Republican administration that is doing it -- turning our national priorities around without destroying our national defense, as my opponent would have us do.

The Nixon Administration has trimmed defense spending by \$12 billion and another \$7 billion cutback is planned. That's something for the priority propagandists to talk about. But they won't.

President Nixon's 1971 budget calls for spending 41 per cent of our Federal dollars on human resource programs and 37 per cent on national defense. This is the first time in 20 years that an Administration has programmed defense spending at a lower figure than human resource spending.

In 1961 we spent 48 per cent of our Federal budget for defense and only 30 per cent for human resources. By 1969 we were still spending 44 per cent for defense and only 34 per cent for human resources.

What do the priority propagandists want? To dismantle our defenses, as we did after World War II?

The Nixon Administration has cut our active military forces by 16 per cent since 1969 and has cut direct civilian employment by the Defense Department by 10 per cent.

In the first six months of 1970, the Defense Department announced 422 actions to reduce, alter or close military installations and activities -- actions which will result in a saving of nearly \$1 billion. You didn't see this happen under either of the two previous Democratic administrations.

Turn our national priorities around? You bet. That is exactly what we are doing. And it isn't necessary to completely distort our Federal spending to do it, as some in the opposition would have us do.

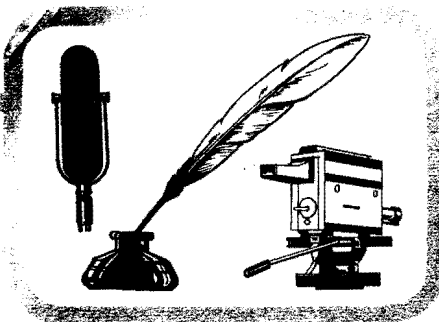
Are we starving social welfare programs to take care of the military?

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Since the Korean War, defense spending has risen 49 per cent, an amount roughly equal to the increase in prices over that period. In real dollars, the U.S. is spending about the same amount for defense now as in 1953.

At the same time, spending for health, education, welfare and labor increased 944 per cent and for all other functions by 182 per cent. More than half of the \$129 billion increase in Federal expenditures between 1953 and fiscal year 1971 was applied to social purposes and less than one-fifth to defense. Like I said, the facts are on our side. Let's get the facts across. We've got a story to tell.

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