

The original documents are located in Box D31, folder “Lincoln Day Dinner, Albany County Republican Committee, Albany, NY, February 13, 1971” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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(Robt. Prentiss)*

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AN ADDRESS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BEFORE A LINCOLN DAY DINNER
SPONSORED BY THE ALBANY COUNTY (N.Y.) REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE
AT ALBANY, NEW YORK
6:30 P.M. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1971

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY

I am very happy to be here tonight, and I am happy to be able to tell you that better times lie just ahead.

We have lived through a mighty rough period in this country in recent years--a time of assassination and anarchy, of riots and burnings, of snipings and bombings, of campus disruptions and violent disorders.

Remember the good old days, when youthful protest was just a girl who insisted on saying "no?"

Instead we have experienced wild demonstrations and attempts to tear our country apart, violent revolution, mindless revolt.

I have just figured out why they call it the Far Left. That's because it's so far from being right.

I believe violence in this country has clearly subsided. And I feel certain this is far more than mere circumstance. This is a direct result of positions taken by our Republican Administration--refusal to compromise with the forces of violence and a determination to deal firmly with those who seek change through destructive means.

We have, in a word, a responsible administration. During the last administration, nobody wanted to be responsible for anything.

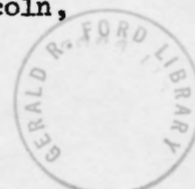
I don't intend to be particularly partisan tonight, but I'll just bet that if President Nixon ends the Vietnam War, reduces crime and brings inflation under control the Democrats will say it's a trick to make them look bad.

We do have many problems that deeply concern us, and inflation is one of them. Things are quiet in Washington right now, but inflation hasn't slowed up my wife. She just keeps charging ahead.

It is quiet along the Potomac, but a fever is burning beneath the surface of the political scene. It is the fever of change.

More than a century ago the first Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, told a nation torn in two by war:

(more)



"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise to the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think and act anew."

On Jan. 22 last, President Richard M. Nixon addressed the Congress and the American people, declaring:

"In these troubled years just past, America has been going through a long nightmare of war and division, of crime and inflation. Even more deeply, we have gone through a long, dark night of the American spirit. But now that night is ending. Now we must let our spirits soar again. The people of this nation are eager to get on with the quest for new greatness. They see challenges, and they are prepared to meet those challenges. It is for us here to open the doors that will set free again the real greatness of this nation--the genius of the American people."

Will the Democratic-controlled Congress meet that challenge? Will the Congress ride the winds of change with the Republican Party? Or will the masters of political power on Capitol Hill seek to stifle change and push it back into the bottle?

The times change, and political parties and governments must change with them.

I find that change has swept through the Republican Party, ripping away the cobwebs of reaction and the resistance to reform.

Who would have thought just a few short years ago that the Republican Party would be championing the first major overhaul of the welfare system in four decades?

Who would have thought just a few short years ago that the Republican Party would be advocating a massive sharing of Federal income tax revenue with the cities and states?

Who would have thought just a few short years ago that the Republican Party would be proposing to reshape the entire Federal Government by cutting the number of Federal cabinet departments from 11 to seven?

The Republican Party has become the party of daring and imagination--the party of boldness and reform--the party of the future--the party of hope for America.

The Republican Party is alive with new ideas and programs for meeting the needs of the people, for restoring our environment, for bringing the best possible health care to the people, for improving the quality of life in America.

(more)

The Democratic Party has become the party of the status quo, merely seeking to graft new growth onto old programs. The New Deal and the Fair Deal have become the American people's ordeal.

Despite Democratic Party roadblocks to change, the Republican Party has brought great progress to the American people in the past two years.

Despite the fact that Richard Nixon was the first President since Zachary Taylor to enter office with Congress firmly in control of the opposition party, the wheels of progress have been steadily turning and the record is there to prove it.

It was a Republican Administration that reversed the course of the war in Vietnam and wound it down.

It was a Republican Administration that developed a new strategy for peace in the world centered on the Nixon Doctrine of helping those nations which help themselves.

It was a Republican Administration that brought about ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

It was a Republican Administration that entered into serious negotiations with the Soviet Union on the limitation of strategic arms.

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improve on-the-job safety for America's working men and women.

And it was a Republican Administration that got a reluctant Democratic Congress to adopt legislation for a stepped-up fight against organized crime and the drug menace.

Let's be honest about it. A Democratic Congress is not anxious to give a Republican President anything that will make him and his party look good.

When a Republican President's proposals prevail with a Democratic Congress it is because popular support for the legislation is so apparent it cannot be ignored. The Democrats then try to steal the credit for the legislation--as they did with tax reform in 1969--and seek to amend the legislation beyond all recognition.

In spite of such tactics, Republicans can point to a formidable list of accomplishments in the last Congress--among them postal reform, draft reform, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Unemployment Compensation Amendments of 1970, the Organized Crime Control Act, and the Comprehensive Drug Control Act.

Now we look to the future. We look for more progress--progress toward peace, and progress toward prosperity in peacetime.

In his State of the Union Message of Jan. 22 last, the President laid a blueprint for progress before the Congress and the Nation.

He set forth six great goals--prosperity in peacetime, welfare reform, the restoration of our environment, the best possible health care for all Americans, putting the money where our problems are...by sharing Federal revenue with the cities and states, and complete reform of the Federal Government through an overhaul of cabinet departments.

With one stroke, the President has challenged the Nation to scrap what has failed and to turn instead toward meeting the needs of tomorrow in tomorrow's terms.

He has taken dramatic new initiatives on social legislation and on the structure of government--and the response among the people makes it clear he has captured the imagination of the nation.

What the President is asking for is a chance to prove that government can work.

He is seeking to do this by moving to replace the present scandalous welfare system, to establish work incentives and work requirements, to aid the working as well as the non-working poor with an income floor, to bolster state and local governments, to overhaul job training and job placement programs, to share Federal

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income tax revenue with states and local communities.

Republicans want to reform government itself--so that instead of sliding further into musclebound ineffectiveness it at last can deliver the services it promises and bridge the gap between promise and performance.

As the first Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, said: "The legitimate object of government is to do for people what needs to be done, but which they cannot by individual effort do at all or do so well for themselves."

Through Federal revenue sharing, by putting the money where the problems are, we will be returning government to the people. And, as Lincoln so well expressed it: "We hold to the true Republican position. In leaving the people's business in their hands, we cannot be wrong."

There will be great opposition to revenue sharing and to overhaul of the Federal departments. We all know that old Federal programs never die; they don't even fade away. Their supporters are legion, and lobbyists are a determined breed.

But the American people will be heard--and they should be heard, at all levels of government. What man has made, man can change. And we must have the courage to change what should be changed.

We must tear away the tangle of red tape. We must find our way out of the bureaucratic maze. We must return government to the people.

The problems of New York are not the same as those of Michigan. The problems of Albany are not identical with those of Grand Rapids. That is why we need Federal revenue sharing.

Money is power. Moving money back to the states and cities means a flow of power back to the people. This is where the power belongs.

If Republicans succeed in returning power to the people, the people will turn to the Republican Party.

The people will turn to Republicanism because it is the Republican Party which seeks to make the people--young, middle-aged and old--a part of participatory democracy. It is the Republican Party which seeks to involve the people in building through better government a better life for all of us on this planet.

That is why I say the party of Lincoln is on the threshold of once again becoming the majority party in this nation.

Every individual wants to count for something. Under the Republican philosophy of government, he can.

We must think in terms of people, not just programs. We must replace computers with compassion.

(more)

Lincoln said: "This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it."

Let's make this country belong to the people again. Let's give the individual the feeling of determining his own destiny, of being able to make things happen.

This is the image of the new Republicanism. This is the shape of things to come. This is how the new Republican Party will build a new America.

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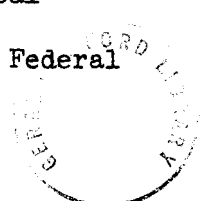
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