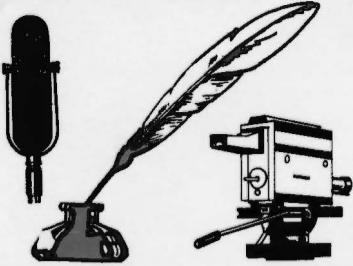


The original documents are located in Box D34, folder “GOP Dinner, Brookville, PA, February 17, 1973” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY--
Saturday, February 17, 1973

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We have, in effect, suffered through a civil war in America in the years just past.

This country was torn asunder, its national fabric rent by dissent and divisions and its character buffeted by winds of horrendous change.

A Republican President has seen us through this time of national crisis, just as in another time the first Republican President used his great moral strength to keep our country from permanently splitting apart and gave it the God-loving leadership it so desperately needed.

Why do we love and revere Abraham Lincoln? We cherish him for his insight and wisdom, his great courage and his tenderness, and most of all his devotion to what he thought was right.

President Nixon is much like Lincoln. He has insight. He is sensitive. He is determined to uphold that which he believes to be right.

I think it is because of this that Richard Nixon was able to lead us out of the darkness of civil strife, out of the toils of a government so bogged down with welfare state bureaucracy as to be almost immobile, and out of the nightmare of a horrible little war halfway around the world in which there could be no hope of victory.

Think how far we have come in the last four years--as a people and as a Nation.

Four years ago serious thinkers, as well as millions of ordinary citizens, were doubtful of America's ability to cope with the future.

Years of rioting had wracked our cities. Years of senseless war had robbed our youth of respect for their own national birthright. An agonizing economic dilemma existed, a dilemma that told us we would only have prosperity if the war

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continued to escalate. Guns and butter threatened to become a permanent part of the American scene. Polls showed that more than half of the women in this country were afraid to walk in their own neighborhoods at night. And it appeared that breathing the air or drinking the water would soon become just as hazardous.

Above all, the cosmic cataclysm of nuclear war seemed all too possible.

Look around you now. Let's take stock of what America is like today.

For the first time since 1945, the threat of nuclear war is diminishing rather than growing. Problems of air and water pollution are being dealt with. Crime rates are coming down. All of our men are coming home from Vietnam. We have achieved an honorable peace there. The synthetic wartime prosperity of the 1960s is being converted to the solid economic stability of the 1970s.

All this in four years. The Richard Nixon Years.

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If the President could help bring us that far, that fast, is it not sensible to surmise that his leadership will be even more effective in the next four years?

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Built on Lincoln's leadership, the last third of the 19th century was a time of peace--our last full generation of peace--in which America's energies turned away from war and were devoted to nation building and the expansion of freedom.

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A pragmatic man, Richard Nixon is quick to reject that which will not work and to make use of that which will. He exercises the powers of the White House in line with these words of Abraham Lincoln: "I do not mean to say we are bound implicitly to follow in whatever our fathers did. To do so would be to discard all the lights of current experience--to reject all progress, all improvement."

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As it was with Lincoln, so it has been with Richard Nixon. The opposition party, in control of the Congress, has sought either to block major Administration measures or to take credit for them.

Yet we have made great progress, both at home and abroad. Besides advancing the prospects for world peace, we have revitalized our economy while controlling inflation.

Real growth in our economy exceeded the Administration's goal of 6 per cent

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At this point I would like to appeal to my Democratic friends in the Congress to put country ahead of party and to support the President's major initiatives in this time of challenge.

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Let's help him to win the peace in Vietnam now that he has achieved an honorable settlement there.

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The American people, I am thoroughly convinced, reject all extremism--of the right and the left.

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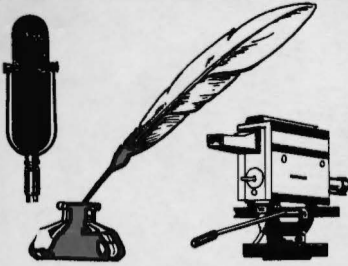
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