

CONGRESSMAN LYNDON JOHNSON SPEECH
8:00 P.M. May 22, 1948
WOOLDRIDGE PARK, AUSTIN, TEXAS
KICK-OFF RALLY

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THE CHALLENGE OF A NEW DAY

A New Day

Friends ... fellow citizens ... Texans ... Tonight I stand before you, humble but confident. We are launching a new day in Texas politics. My humbleness grows out of knowledge. Into the hands of the man you make your Senator, you give your fate and mine. In that high-domed Senate Chamber sit the men who will decide the destiny of all mankind.

Eleven years have passed since first I stood, in this same park, and asked your vote for Congress. Tonight, the park's the same ... many of the faces are those of faithful friends. Some faces ... I miss. I miss their faces ... yet I speak to them as well as you. Because I speak for peace ... the peace they died for.

A Time for Sober Words

Ten days ago, I had a choice ... between the easy way of asking you for reelection ... or a hard, sixty day campaign in which the power of corporate interests will be pitted against me. I chose the hard way. Too long the power of these absentee corporate groups has had its way in Austin.

Tonight I want to look you in the eye and say what can be done to save our way of life.

We Have a Job

When men are big enough to meet it, every challenge brings a finer world. We stand, you and I, face to face tonight with the supreme challenge. America must lead the World. We have a job to do.

Shall We Surrender?

We know the alternatives. Either we work together, and build together, to make all the World a home for freedom. Or we surrender to the Godless men in Eurasia. I shall surrender nothing. I intend to live as I was born: FREE.

The road we shall travel toward a better tomorrow is marked by three bold signposts. The first is preparedness. The next is peace. And the greatest is PROGRESS. Without preparedness, there may be no peace; without peace, there can be no progress.

Five Preparedness Points

Let us follow those signposts. The first is preparedness.

America's greatest strength lies in her free competitive system - the genius which mass-produced the weapons of War. It produced the greatest industrial know-how in the World today; it nourished the World's most productive and the highest paid working men. That competitive system is the backbone of preparedness.

In past years, our industries have been sheltered by the oceans; in past years, when war threatened, other nations held the enemy at bay while America converted to war.

The Luxury of Time

That luxury of time has disappeared, forever. Today, miles are measured by seconds.

We must keep that industrial machine ... that backbone of our strength ... free and strong; and we must be prepared to defend it.

Surplus Plants

To keep our industrial might strong, I fought the President and the War Assets Administration to stop the wasteful sale at junk-yard prices

of our surplus war plants. Yes, it was a one-man fight. Just two weeks ago that fight was won; the Government recalled 11 1/4 plants, saving the taxpayers one billion 258 million dollars.

We must have a strong and modern Air Force. To have jet fighters in the air in 1941, we must start building them now. That's why Lyndon Johnson led the fight for the 70-group Air Force; that's why I, Lyndon Johnson, bucked the land-locked minds of military bureaucrats to do it.

We Must Plan Ahead

Preparedness demands an Army strong enough to support our Air Force, defend our homeland, and secure and defend Air Bases. Today our Army is pitifully small - eight divisions. Soviet Russia and her satellites have 260 divisions in arms. Our Navy must be kept strong enough to return the attack of any invader. Great carriers can't be built overnight.

Finally, as great as any other factor for preparedness is the power of science - the power that created the atomic bomb. Keeping our secrets is important; it is more important that we have secrets to keep.

Those are the elements of Preparedness as Lyndon Johnson sees them.

The Second Signpost

With preparedness, we can reach the second signpost on the road which Lyndon Johnson believes we should travel: Peace. What have we done, and what can we do, for Peace?

One. We can strengthen the United Nations.

Two. We can keep open the free channels of trade.

Three. We can turn atomic knowledge to the peace.

Four. We can stand up to the war-makers and say, This far and no farther, as we did in Greece and Turkey.

Five. We can help those free men who are willing to help themselves with the Marshall Plan.

Six. We can tell the World about America.

War thrives on poverty and hunger. The nations of the World can overcome those war-breeding conditions only by restoring their internal prosperity. That demands a free flow of goods in the channels of international trade. The Texas cotton farmer must sell his product on the World market; if there is no market, his cotton will rot on the loading platform. Lyndon Johnson proposes to use your vote to extend the reciprocal trade agreements.

The greatest power in war also can be greatest in peace. For the past year I have served as a member of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. If I were to tell you what I know of atomic energy, I would be guilty of treason. But out of those laboratories where the lights flicker tonight at Oak Ridge and Los Alamos will come miracles for the peace.

They Shall Not Cross This Line

Firmness with international bullies is essential. That is another lesson we learned too late to prevent two wars. To prevent a third war we drew a line across Turkey and Greece; we subdued the Soviet arrogance in Berlin; we won the Italian elections. We must quarantine aggressor nations who would gobble up free countries. We must stand up to war-makers and say, This far and no farther.

The search for a lasting peace is the one tie which binds all people together. Only this week came word from a lonely Pacific island, Eniwetok, of the test of a more powerful atomic weapon. While these great matters were discussed, you could read in another news column the statement

by another man who seeks to be United States Senator. Here's what that man said: "The average citizen is more interested in making a living for himself and his family and in conditions that personally affect him than foreign policies, although the latter, too are important." God forgive those who know not what they say.

The Third Signpost

With preparedness, and Peace, will come progress, the third signpost on the road to a new tomorrow. Progress is made by men who look forward instead of backward; men who are doers instead of sitters; men who are constructive instead of just calculating.

Here are immediate goals for progress:

✓ One. For the farmer, support prices; blacktop roads; electrified homes; soil and water conservation.

Two. For the teacher, a salary as big as her job.

Three. Laws protecting the public from both selfish labor and selfish capital.

Four. & Cost-of-living adjustments in old age assistance.

Five. For public health, more hospitals, doctors and nurses.

Six. A federal policy leaving to the states those matters which are state functions, such as civil rights.

I have heard it said that the county courthouse should not be moved to Washington.

Shall we look to the county courthouse to support farm prices and finance soil conservation? Who is there in the courthouse who can give us loans for ~~minix~~ electrifying homes; who in the courthouse will combat inflation?

Texas warehouses are bulging today with mohair because there is no market ~~price~~ nor price offered for it. Shall our ranchers take their plight to the county courthouse?

No, you don't take those problems to a man who can see no farther than the county courthouse. You go to the central government, as the mohair growers have done; and you fight to get support prices, as we're fighting for the mohair growers.

Square Deal for Farmers

It's high time the farmer got a square deal. The farmer must not be left to the mercy of commodity speculators who reap fortunes without ~~gait-~~ ~~ting~~ setting a hand to a plow. The farmer must have fair minimum prices guaranteed for his crops. He should have a blacktop road past his door. He should have cheap electricity on the pattern we've set in Central Texas where 20,000 rural homes are connected to the two co-ops in the Congressional District I represent.

Two great soil conservation programs have been launched in Central Texas ~~x~~ by the Colorado and Guadalupe-Blanco River Authorities. A community is no richer than the soil which supports it. Soil conservation and flood control must be expanded to embrace all of Texas.

The school teacher is our most over-worked and under-paid citizen. I know because I began my career as a teacher. The Government must help the States increase teacher pay - and increase it now.

In this campaign Lyndon Johnson wants the vote of working men, and every Texan's vote, on the basis that he believes Lyndon Johnson will play fair and square with him.

I voted FOR the Taft-Hartley law, and to override the President's veto. Those votes were cast because I believe John L. Lewis is the most dangerous man in America today. When John L. Lewis, or James ~~Reese~~ Petrillo, or any other man thinks he is bigger than all the people ... it's high time for the long arm of government to reach out for that man.

That's a part of my record on labor. I also voted FOR reasonable working hours, FOR minimum pay bills; and FOR improvements to the ~~Rick~~ Railroad Retirement law.

Whenever, as a Senator, Lyndon Johnson must choose between SELFISH labor and fair business, I will vote for business. Whenever I must choose between SELFISH business and fair labor, Lyndon Johnson's vote will be for labor. THAT'S HOW THE PEOPLE WANT IT. They want no more sweat shops, and a fair division of the fruits of toil; they also want an end to bloody, costly strikes. With the job we have to do for Preparedness, Peace and Progress, it's vital that our industrial machine keeps running. Both the John L. Lewises and the reactionary labor-baiters must be subject to the law. NEITHER SIDE MUST BE ALLOWED TO RUIN OUR COUNTRY.

That's Lyndon Johnson's position. Now, demand to know how OTHERS would have voted on those same vital measures. You laboring men: Like you, I distrust any man who makes a secret agreement. ~~For~~ Trust only public statements.

The elder citizen cannot live on bread-money alone. Under the courthouse regime, aided by the special pleaders, the state administration in 1945 placed a ceiling on pensions. I have always advocated a Federal program substantial enough to take pensions out of politics.

Wants no Part of Socialized Medicine

I want no part of socialized medicine. I fought the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill. The Democratic answer to this form of socialism is more hospitals, more doctors, more nurses; and the county courthouse can't build hospitals. Providing assistance is a job for state and Federal governments.

The cost of living is making poor men of citizens who deserve more. I want to see a dollar buy a dollar's worth of goods once more. This nation must put a curb on the dizzy spiral of inflation which a Republican-dominated Congress gave us.

Government must be a strong ally and not a foe of free enterprise. Free enterprise must be unhampered by red tape, and protected from absentee Wall Streeters who give the small businessmen the pennies while they take the dollar bills. Our monopoly laws must be enforced.

Civil Rights Program is a Sham

The Civil Rights Program is a ~~farce~~ farce and a sham - an effort to set up a police state in the guise of liberty. I am opposed to that program. I have voted AGAINST the so-called poll tax repeal bill; the poll tax should be repealed by those states which enacted them. I have voted AGAINST the so-called anti-lynching bill; the state can, and DOES, enforce the law against murder. I have voted AGAINST the FEPC; if a man can tell you whom you must hire, he can tell you whom you can't hire. Let's have a statement from the other candidates.

That is the road Lyndon Johnson proposes to travel as your Senator: A road for preparedness, peace and progress. I pledge myself to follow it with courage and action.

Two Senators of Whom Texas is Proud

Years ago, a young man from Northeast Texas, Morris Sheppard, went to the National House of Representatives at the age of 28. He served there 11 years. Texans rewarded his faithful service, and he became one of our greatest Senators.

Another spirited young man served 12 years in the House and was promoted to the Senate. His name is Tom Connally. Today he is a distinguished spokesman on foreign affairs.

When I was 28, you sent me to Congress. I have worked hard and I'm proud to submit my record of 11 years as qualifications for advancement.

The Battle is On

Tonight, in every congressional district, volunteer committees are working. People like us who believe in Preparedness, Peace and Progress are getting that job done.

There is work for all of us to do. Contact your local committee and say, "I believe in Lyndon Johnson's program; I am ready to help." Each of you can write your friends and kinsmen a few postcards. Tell them of our achievements together. Tell them we can do the same job for Texas - a job for our kind of people.

We're the kind of people who started life in a rural home or a little town. You'll find those people in the filling stations and hardware stores. Teaching the country schools. Riding a tractor across the blacklands - or following a plow furrow as I did in my boyhood. You'll find them gathering together on Sunday, to worship and sing the old songs. These are my people; the finest people on earth; the people from whom I want a letter of recommendation.

And I want those of you listening in tonight who have the faith and courage to join us in this fight to write Lyndon Johnson at Austin. Tell me you're with me. I need your active help ... and most of all, I need to know you are behind me.

This new era in Texas politics is begin tonight. We are going to talk in this campaign; we are going to act, and we are going to work as a United States Senator from Texas should talk and act and work. At its end, my family ~~me~~ will be waiting: My wife, two baby daughters, and my mother; more precious to me than life itself. And when the race is run, I promise them here and now, they will be proud of my conduct as ~~a~~ a man who fights for his beliefs and fights as a gentleman.

A Final View

To you who have heard me through, this final solemn vow, before God and these people: I will serve you as a Senator with honor and honesty. I will vote my independent convictions. With my brains and my energy and my heart, I will strive to do credit to you who elect me ... to our state ... and to our nation.

Good night ... and God bless you.