

United States Senate

MEMORANDUM

Introductory remarks - Clarksburg

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John W. Davis
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Newton Baker

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Thank you John Ames, for that introduction.

It's good to see so many West Virginia Democrats turn out for this dinner in Clarksburg. It looks as if Chairman Ben Stout is one of those Democrats who gets things done. I want to thank you, Ben, for asking me to be here, and for being patient when my schedule made it necessary for me to delay coming.

I am proud to see my West Virginia colleagues from the Senate -- Jennings Randolph and Bob Byrd -- up here at the head table. They're doing a great job for your state in Washington -- so keep sending them back.

It's a pleasure to see the Senator from Minnesota -- Hubert Humphrey -- take time from his campaigning to be with us. I am sorry that Jack Kennedy couldn't be with us also.

I am particularly glad to see Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. again, keeping an eye on Hubert -- and maybe on some others who are here.

But I would guess that the size of this gathering and a good bit of its enthusiasm is due to the presence of my good friend, Cleveland Bailey. This is his territory and he has been serving it well in Congress for years. He's one of that bank of dedicated Americans to whom I looked up when I was serving in the House of Representatives. The working men of West Virginia -- and all the States -- have no stauncher advocate in the House.

You people out front know this, but I think those up here who are not West Virginians, might like to know that Clarksburg produced Stonewall Jackson. Now if I talk much about General Jackson, sure as shooting some one is going to accuse me of appealing to sectional prejudice, which is the last thing I want to do. Clarksburg is also the city where another prominent American was born -- Louis Johnson, former Democratic Secretary of Defense.

I'm grateful to Clarksburg for Jackson and for Louis Johnson -- but right now I'm even more grateful to Clarksburg for another native son, Cy Vance, a hard-working member of my staff.

My Friends and Fellow Democrats:

No man of sensibility could fail to be aware of a question that is uppermost in your minds tonight.

That question is: "What is this man Johnson doing here anyway?"

I believe in setting your minds at rest. I believe in answering that question directly and without evasion. I am here for votes--votes for the Democratic Party.

As far as I am concerned, this is a time for men of good will to submerge their differences--however large some of them may loom at the moment--and join the battle in which all Democrats are of one mind--the battle to restore a united government to this nation--a government which will once again exercise the vigor and inspiration to meet the needs and aspirations of all our people.

The American people are facing a great decision in November. And that decision will affect our lives, and the lives of our children, for many decades to come.

Here in West Virginia you are engaged in a political contest of nationwide interest. As a Democrat, my interest is not so much in the individuals involved as it is in the determination you have revealed to elect the Democratic ticket in November.

Hundreds of thousands of words have been written about the contest in West Virginia. It has been analyzed by every writer who can find a way to get into print. The mountains have been invaded by an army of professional and amateur poll takers, and by political scientists and commentators--all with expense accounts.

And that is true not only of your state but the rest of the country. What they are learning is that there is no conceivable Democratic candidate who would not get the backing of a majority of the voters in this country right down the line.

What we will be confronted with in November is much more than a contest between personalities. It will be, more importantly, a contest between philosophies. The name of the man in the White House is far less important than the policies which must start streaming from the White House next January.

The country has had eight years of Republican rule. We have had two terms in which to judge the Republican Party--led by a standard bearer who can fairly be described as the best that the Republican Party has to offer.

At the end of those eight years, one thought is clear: The Democratic Party at its worst is better for the country than the Republican Party at its best.

But this is not the year in which the Democratic Party is presenting itself at its worst--or anything even approaching that state. This is the year in which the Democratic Party is presenting itself at its best--regardless of which candidate we select to carry the banner.

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For the past few weeks you have had the opportunity to become acquainted with two of the men who seek the nomination. They have ranged the length and breadth of West Virginia. They have talked to the people at the factory gates; at the pitheads; in the remote fastnesses of your rugged mountains.

And no matter what you decide next Tuesday, either one of them would be far superior to anything that the Republican Party can possibly offer.

And I believe that the same thing can be said about the man from Missouri or the man from Illinois.

During the past eight years, the distinction between the two parties has become crystal clear. It is not a distinction of patriotism, of love of country, or of devotion to duty. It is instead the distinction between two philosophies of government.

One is aware of the realities of our times and seeks to meet those realities with constructive programs. The other avoids the realities of our times and seeks to meet problems with slogans coined on Madison Avenue.

The difference was illustrated by a message sent to the Democratic Congress by a Republican President just five days ago.

That message first warned Congress that it would be disastrous to cut foreign aid spending by one red cent. Then, without a pause for breath, it warned Congress that it would be disastrous not to cut spending for so-called "special" groups here at home.

It is difficult to understand the double standard which says that a dollar spent abroad promotes the security of the nation, while a dollar spent at home destroys the foundations of our freedom. I always thought that any money spent by the government--at home or abroad--should be judged solely by the standard of the nation's needs.

But the major point is the Republican insistence that we pay little or no attention to the so-called "special" groups. I think it is about time that we strip away the propaganda and decide exactly who these "special" groups are whose desires we are supposed to ignore.

Do these "special" groups include the unfortunate men and women who live in the pockets of misery and unemployment that scar our otherwise prosperous country? After all, they have a special interest in jobs.

Do these "special" groups include our elderly citizens who find a lifetime of savings wiped out by the mounting costs of medical care? After all, they have a special interest in health and in life.

Do these "special" groups include our children seeking an education in a time of inadequate facilities? After all, they have a special interest in the future.

Do these "special" groups include America's young married couples who seek housing within their means? After all, they have a special interest in happiness and security, and decent homes in which to raise their children.

If these are the "special" groups to which the administration refers, then the Democratic Party can plead guilty to concern for special interests--the unemployed, the elderly, the children, the

young couples . We will let the Republican Party decide whether it wants to plead "innocent" of any feeling for these "special" groups .

The message went a bit further . It asked that gasoline taxes be increased; that postal rates be increased; and that the interest rate ceiling be lifted . Somehow, in the topsy-turvy world of the last eight years, bankers and money lenders are no longer a "special" group .

The Republican Party claims that it is in the national interest to increase the profits of the money lenders; but it is only a "special" interest that seeks to increase the knowledge of our children .

I can't figure it out . But I have an idea that the voters can figure it out . They will know what to do about it next November .

The state motto of West Virginia --"mountaineers always free"--is something which all of us should ponder and take to our hearts . The great issue of our times is freedom--whether freedom can exist in a rapidly changing world which grows more complex every day .

Every coin has two sides and freedom is only one side of a coin. The other side is responsibility.

All history has taught us that freedom is a privilege which does not exist by itself. Men will remain free only so long as they are willing to accept their responsibilities.

The real issue in the coming election is not whether men desire freedom but whether they are willing to shoulder the responsibilities that go with freedom.

They are heavy responsibilities, and the Democratic Party is the party which is ready to shoulder them.

We must face the problems posed by the pockets of unemployment that mar the face of our otherwise prosperous land.

We must work out wise programs for the conservation of our natural resources.

We must form dynamic policies to educate our children so that life will be better for them than it has been for us.

We must find the way to make it possible for our elderly citizens to get the medical care which they require and to which they are entitled--without pauperizing themselves and their families.

We must re-examine our whole Social Security program to bring it in tune with the realities of the America of the 1960's.

We must lay down a national defense that provides security for the future as well as the present.

We must step up enormously our exploration into the realm of outer space.

We must devise a foreign policy that will meet today's needs, strengthen America's position throughout the world, and enlist support of other nations in helping the under-developed nation's help themselves.

We must re-examine our foreign trade programs, devised twenty-six years ago to meet conditions vastly different from those that exist today. Let us make them truly reciprocal, not a one-way street to joblessness for Americans.

It is a simple matter to pretend that these problems do not exist--that if we just shut our eyes they will go away. But it is not so simple a matter to convince our people that these problems do not exist. They know better.

They know that freedom and prosperity and security come only when people are willing to work for them. They will no longer follow political leaders who try to tell them that responsibilities do not have to be shouldered and problems do not have to be faced.

The American people are fully capable of solving their own problems. They do not need to be led by the hand. But they do need leadership that is as confident of the people as the people are of themselves. And for eight years, the Republican Party has failed to give them that kind of leadership.

The Republican Party has offered America the alternatives of grudging charity or complete indifference. And that is why the Democratic Party will win in November.

Here in West Virginia I don't think you people want relief or a dole or charity or gifts. I think you do need more help in research into the uses of coal. I think you do need area redevelopment. But when the Congress has acted to provide these, we have been blocked by vetoes. And I think you do need some financial help to provide for more effective conservation of your forest land and your water resources.

This kind of help would not bankrupt the Federal government. But it certainly would go a long way toward helping West Virginia to clear up its own problems itself.

And I think the same general principles apply to every state in the Union.

In the election that lies before us, the choice is clear. It lies between the party that seeks to meet problems and the party that seeks to avoid problems. It lies between the party that looks to the future and the party that looks to the past.

Those of you who are here tonight are the shock troops of the Democratic Party. You are the ones who will carry the message of democracy to every town, every cross roads and every farm.

And because of your work, a mighty army will arise in the fall to place the nation once more on the path to strength and to progress.

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