

FOR RELEASE UPON DELIVERY  
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REMARKS BY MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON  
FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS

Friends:

It is a great honor to be introduced by Jim Trimble. All of you who have sent him to Congress over and over again know as well as I do what an outstanding Congressman he is.

Judge, without meaning to turn you into an historical character, I want to say that this part of Arkansas ought to have your statue at every other crossroads to remind folks of all you've done to provide parks, colleges and water projects during your long legislative career.

As a Texan, the highest compliment I can pay you -- and I do want to pay you a high compliment -- is to say you are a man of the Sam Rayburn school. This part of the world is a better place because Jim Trimble is here.

I'm very happy to be here today on the Fort Smith National Historic site -- another of Jim Trimble's projects -- surrounded by my good friends, your Senators John McClellan and Bill Fulbright and their wives, Norma and Betty. We share memories of many happy occasions in Washington -- both social and political. Over the years these courageous men of Arkansas and the other Democrats of the Arkansas delegation have been among my husband's respected and trusted advisors.

Three years ago this month our great President Kennedy accepted from the city of Fort Smith the deed to this historic ground. I feel certain that he would have considered it a privilege, as I do today, to dedicate this site to the memory of those pioneers who explored and tamed this frontier and made it possible for this bustling friendly city to exist.

Here at the junction of the Arkansas and Poteau rivers, is a crossroads of history and a meeting or stopping place for many famous personalities of frontier days. Jefferson Davis, who was to become President of the Confederacy, met his future wife, General Zachary Taylor's daughter here; Vinnie Ream, who created the Lincoln statue in Statuary Hall, lived here as did Mary Breckinridge of the Frontier Nursing Service. Stephen Austin and Sam Houston passed this way and, of course, Judge Isaac Parker made frontier justice both famous and picturesque here.

But while we are recalling the colorful past, I believe we should also be applying its lessons to the future. Thomas Jefferson said, "I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past." And right now, in this election we are at a crossroads where the signs point clearly to two different philosophies -- the philosophies of "yes, certainly" and the philosophy of "no, never."

As we stand here, we have to ask ourselves some searching questions. Are we to go back to the time when the Federal Government accepted no responsibility for the hungry and the dispossessed? To the time when there was no social security, no unemployment insurance, when bank deposits were uninsured and labor had no right to bargain collectively for better wages and working conditions?

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Are we to go back to the jungle when the strong were free to prey on the weak? Are we to have Government for all the people or Government for the fortunate? Are we to have the Great Society or the great surrender?

Your Senator Fulbright made our choice very clear when he said recently: "The domestic issue has to do with the kind of future America will have; the foreign issue has to do with whether we shall have any future at all."

The President has said: "The true courage in this nuclear age lies in the quest for peace." And, he has summed up his philosophy saying: "We will be firm, but we will be fair." And, he added: "Our guard is up, but our hand is out."

Eleven months ago on a most awful day, my husband became your President. Behind him lay the experience of 12 years in the House of Representatives, 12 years in the Senate, and three years in the Vice Presidency. Into these last eleven months he has poured all the energy, intellect and heart he has to try to keep our country prosperous, to preserve peace and to plan for a greater America.

My husband has had some wonderful help during these difficult months from what he likes to call a "can-do" Congress and he's also had immeasurable assistance from his loyal and hard-working Cabinet officers. I am very happy to have with me today the wives of three members of the Cabinet. They are outstanding women who go far beyond their official duties to give service in the community where they live and I want you to meet them.

First, a woman who somehow finds the time to teach remedial reading to boys and girls whose reading handicap cuts them off from educational opportunity and could easily cause them to drop out of school and blight their entire lives -- the wife of our Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara -- Margie McNamara.

Second, a woman whose diverse interests keep her busy supervising a Cabinet wives project making needlepoint covers for the dining room chairs in Blair House and seeking out summer-time and part-time jobs for teenagers -- the wife of our Secretary of Labor, W. Willard Wirtz -- Jane Wirtz.

Next, a woman who takes a warm, friendly interest in the newly arrived diplomatic families in Washington and in all kinds of foreign visitors. She introduces them to such American institutions as supermarkets and laundromats and informal buffet suppers at home -- the wife of our Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman -- Jane Freeman.

I'm proud to call these ladies my friends and the President is proud of them and the way they see fit to tackle the everyday problems of our nation.

In his acceptance speech, the President said, "This is a dangerous and difficult world in which we live. I promise no easy answers. But I do promise this: I pledge the firmness to defend freedom, the strength to support that firmness and a constant patient effort to move the world toward peace instead of war."

At that same convention, the President asked for and was granted a fine, experienced man, a long time friend -- Senator Hubert Humphrey -- as his running mate. The President and Senator

Humphrey stand together as men of the future, as men pledged to solve problems not just deplore them.

In America, it is our privilege to choose our leaders. In so doing, we make a conscious choice in shaping our personal destiny. Thomas Jefferson said: "Let the people know the facts and they will decide wisely." History has proved him right.

I believe in our President, and I believe in your right to choose, and in your wisdom to do so wisely.

Thank you.

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