

Echoes of Speeches Past

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Washington

Some people listening to Richard Nixon's annual spring peace-through-escalation message had a funny feeling they had heard it all before.

As a matter of fact they had — from Lyndon Johnson in 1968.

Either Richard Nixon has been devouring Mr. Johnson's old speeches or one of LBJ's hawkish ghosts stowed away in the White House when the master left, suspecting that the need for a martial prose would arise again.

First of all, there is the emphasis on a certain kind of peace.

Lyndon Johnson in 1968: "We search every day for peace, but peace with honor."

Richard Nixon: "We have offered the most generous peace terms — peace with honor for both sides."

There is the search - for - peace - in - every - corner - of-the-world theme.

Lyndon Johnson: "In every capital where there was a prospect of peace, in every forum where there was a promise, our national leaders have sought peace."

Richard Nixon: "Earlier this year I traveled to Peking on an historic journey for peace. Next month I shall travel to Moscow on what I hope will also be a journey for peace."

There has been the treacherous response of the North Vietnamese.

Lyndon Johnson: "The answer of the enemy has been pillage. The enemy has launched a major counter-offensive against the government and the people of South Vietnam."

Richard Nixon: "We patiently continued with the Paris talks . . . finally three weeks ago, they mounted their massive invasion of South Vietnam."

In 1968 as in 1972, there was only one thing for the patriotic Americans to do: To resist insidious enemy propaganda.

Lyndon Johnson: "We ought not to let them win something in Washington that they can't win in Hue, in the First Corps, or in Khe Sanh."

Richard Nixon: "Their one remaining hope is to win the Congress of the United States and among the people of the United States the victory they cannot win among the people of South Vietnam or on the battlefield of South Vietnam."

They have a duty to support their president.

Lyndon Johnson: "I point out to you that the time has come when we ought to be united to support our leaders, our government, our men and our allies until aggression is stopped wherever it has occurred."

Richard Nixon: "My fellow Americans. Let us therefore unite as a nation in a firm and wise policy of real peace not the peace of surrender, but peace with honor . . ."

The war is a test of will in 1968 as it is still in 1972.

Lyndon Johnson: "It is an assault that is designed to crack America's will."

Richard Nixon: "The great question then is how we, the American people, will respond to this final challenge."

Could there be a bombing pause?

Lyndon Johnson in 1968. "No, until the enemy is willing to go to the peace talks and is willing to say if we stop our bombing we will promptly come and talk . . . and that he will not take advantage of our restraint to

put extra pressure on during the period. Then I think that we would be endangering the lives of our men."

Richard Nixon echoes: "I have flatly rejected the proposal that we stop the bombing of North Vietnam as a condition for returning to the negotiating table. . . I have ordered that our air and naval attacks on military installations in North Vietnam be continued until the North Vietnamese stop their offensive in South Vietnam."

Why we must continue? The same old reason — dominoes.

Lyndon Johnson said it first: "If we step aside, if we withdraw from Vietnam they will move down. . . The tide threatens to engulf that part of the world and to affect the safety of every American home. It threatens the security of every nation allied to us."

Richard Nixon still has not found a better reason. Stopping the war "would amount to a renunciation of our morality, an abdication of our leadership and an invitation for the mighty to prey upon the weak all around the world."

What will the outcome be?

Lyndon Johnson said, "Make no mistake about it, America will prevail."

Richard Nixon feels the same way: "We will not be defeated; we will never surrender our friends to Communist aggression."

Analysis
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