



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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DOLE COMMENTS ON WATERGATE

The following are excerpts of a speech prepared for delivery by Senator Bob Dole, (R.Kans.) before the Annual Banquet of the American Butter Institute and the National Cheese Institute, Tuesday evening in Chicago, Illinois.

As most of you are aware, I was Republican National Committee Chairman from 1971 to last January. During that period, of course, the now-infamous Watergate incident occurred. I hope you will bear with me if I take a brief moment or two to discuss it from my perspective.

During the ten months since last June when five men were apprehended breaking into the Watergate, believe me, I have had literally hundreds of occasions to speak and to respond to questions about the affair. Each time -- both when I was Chairman, and since -- my position personally and as spokesman for the Republican party has been consistent. I said it last summer. I said it in August. I said it in October. "The act itself was both illegal and inexcusable; those responsible should have to answer to the law for what they have done." I have deplored it and condemned it -- all I think, in no uncertain terms.

There has been equal consistency on another point -- that the Republican Party was not involved and ought not to be implicated in the Watergate incident. As Chairman, I knew nothing about it and am fully satisfied that no one under my control at the National Committee was involved.

Forgive me for what may sound a partisan comment -- I think this goes actually far beyond partisan considerations and to the heart of trust and confidence in our political system -- but the Republican Party has nothing to hide, and so, nothing to fear, from the current controversy.

It is true, there is a new story every day it seems, adding to the confusion about the case. So it is an easy time for criticism, for second guessing, for assigning blame, for hand-wringing, and for finger pointing -- even at the President.

I have not been and am not now privy to all the facts of the situation. Neither, then, am I in a position to judge, much less to pre-judge, the guilt or innocence of those under suspicion. I do however know the President to be a decent man and a great President. I know too, that it is entirely conceivable that such a nefarious plot as Watergate could have been worked out, planned and implemented without his

knowledge. It is, I repeat, entirely conceivable -- you need only know the players involved.

There is, in addition, one final observation to be made -- and this is all-important. The President is now, personally directing the effort to determine the truth about the Watergate break-in. He has himself taken control of the investigation. He is determined to get at the final truth of the matter.

I have faith in his commitment to that end. I have faith in the processes of government -- in the fact-finding capability of the Congress if that is needed, and in the capacity of our judicial system to determine the facts, identify the guilty, and to mete out justice.

I am sure you share that faith. I ask you and all Americans not to let it be shaken by this affair. The President has been let down -- or so it would appear -- by certain of those he trusted. More importantly, from his perspective I am sure, the presidency has been let down. And this would be the most crushing blow to a man like Richard Nixon who has worked long and hard to attain the Presidency, and having done so, did so much to restore its dignity.

Richard Nixon is a man of ability. He has proven himself to be one of the ablest, certainly one of the most intelligent men ever to occupy the oval office. And he is a man who has always risen to meet the challenges of adversity which would crush lesser men.

He is now in Key Biscayne, alone with his thoughts. Knowing as we do that this is a man of wholly independent mind who arrives at his every major decision only after long and careful, thoughtful, personal consideration, I am confident that he will soon inform us of his decisions.

He will not rest until all of the facts are known to him. And when they are -- and I expect it soon, perhaps before the week is out -- he will share them, perhaps painfully, but openly and candidly, with the American people.