



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY ON THE SENATE FLOOR TODAY BY SENATOR BOB DOLE (R-Kans.)

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Mr. President, for the past several weeks, and increasingly over the last few days, the Watergate case has been the almost sole preoccupation of this city and perhaps to a lesser degree it has been on the minds of citizens all over this country.

In part, this was due to the very nature of the case. In part, too, it was due to the fact that the President had not spoken out definitively on the matter and it was felt, understandably, that until he did, the constant speculation and certainly the public preoccupation with the case could not be expected to diminish.

BACK TO BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT

I rise now to express the fervent hope that after the events of yesterday which culminated in the President's address of last night, we can get back to the business of government. I am hopeful that now we can get away from the temptations to assign blame and for each to throw his bricks at those who have been involved or implicated, temptations to which many on both sides have yielded.

Mr. President, President Nixon quite properly accepted the responsibility for the over-zealous actions of those under him. His was an act of high principle and courage, in my view. He has acknowledged that the actions of certain of his own White House aides and some of those at the Committee to Re-elect the President reflected poor judgment, whatever the motivation.

G.O.P. ABSOLVED

I feel constrained to point out that while the illegal activities that occurred during the 1972 campaign may have been--in some degree--the responsibility of a certain few administration aides and CRP staff, no one has implicated the Republican Party as such, or the Republican National Committee in any wrongdoing. And I believe the President supported that distinction last night.

I say this for no other reason but that I feel it is important that this distinction be made. The Republican Party has been unfairly associated with the events of Watergate and with the illegal activities of a few who worked outside of the Party's structure and who often ignored its counsel and eschewed its professional support.

The Republican Party's record in this entire matter is clear and unsullied. It cannot fairly be associated with any of the misdeeds represented by Watergate. The President himself has clearly laid the blame elsewhere.

MUST TRUST IN SYSTEM OF JUSTICE

Mr. President, the announcements of yesterday that key Presidential aides were resigning was, in my view, quite a necessary action, and I would be less than totally candid if I did not add that I welcomed the announcement. I had in fact, publicly stated my views in favor of such action earlier. But, as President Nixon said last night -- and as I have been saying for months -- it is crucially important that we now entrust the judicial system with our faith that the facts of the case -- and an accurate assignment of guilt and innocence -- can and will be determined through the workings of the governmental process.

"There will be no whitewash at the White House." With that assurance from the President, personally and forcefully and somewhat painfully asserted, there is little cause for any concern on the part of my colleagues that time and the processes of our system will not uncover the full story.

AVOID EXCESS

It is indeed essential, "as the President himself said," that in reacting to the excesses of others, we not fall into excesses ourselves." When all is said and done, when the illegality of the Watergate affair has been fully explored and when guilt and innocence have been determined and justice has been done, no matter who is found responsible we must remember that there has been great personal tragedy involved.

HASTY DECISION AVOIDED

One other thing must be said in reference to the widespread expressions of dismay from many that the President did not speak out sooner on the Watergate case and that he did not take the actions much earlier than yesterday.

I cannot fault him for this. To have demanded the resignation of top White House aides, last summer, or last fall, or earlier this year before there was sufficient evidence would have been to risk a disservice to men whose counsel he valued. He has not prejudged their guilt or innocence. He has acted only in the interest of maintaining White House integrity. He quite properly waited until he could be sure of the facts before acting.

It is characteristic of this man to avoid hasty decisions. He was not panicked through the long and difficult course of his efforts to end our involvement in Vietnam. He was not panicked by the difficulties he faced in advance of the summit meetings of last year. And he was not forced -- even by the most tragic and personally disturbing circumstances of Watergate -- into precipitate action.

He waited for the facts to emerge -- and only when the whole picture, insofar as it is now clear did emerge -- did he take action.

Mr. President, it is always easy to condemn and to second guess from the perspective of hindsight. I would urge that such temptation be avoided.

President Nixon has spoken now. Much of the air has been cleared and what remains to be learned and decided about the whole affair can be done through the workings of the judicial system in concert with the full cooperation of the Executive Branch and the activities of the Senate Select Committee.

ONLY INTEREST NOW IS JUSTICE

Our interest now as lawmakers and as people committed to our political system, is and ought to be, justice -- no more, no less. I have complete faith that justice -- full and fair and undiluted -- will be done in this matter. That is my sole demand and my confident expectation.

I don't say -- nor do I mean to imply by any of this -- that now that the President has spoken the matter ought to be considered closed and that all discussion of it should cease. But I do perceive that the President's announcement has changed the context of the situation.

He has spoken on the subject.

He has taken steps to remove from the White House those whose continued presence there would -- fairly or not -- have threatened the integrity and the credibility of the administration.

He has properly accepted the responsibility for the actions of those under him.

No one who is not himself uncontrollably overzealous could ask for any more -- save that full justice be done -- and only time is needed for that, I am sure.