

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 3, 1988

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
DEFENSE CONFERENCE REPORT VETO

PRESIDENT REAGAN'S DECISION TO VETO THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL IS THE RIGHT DECISION; AND IT WAS MADE FOR ONLY ONE REASON -- THE RIGHT REASON: THE BILL DOES NOT SERVE THE NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE MESSAGE THE PRESIDENT SENDS WITH THIS VETO IS LOUD AND CLEAR: HE WILL NOT STAND FOR ANYONE PLAYING POLITICS WITH OUR NATIONAL SECURITY. HE WILL NOT STAND FOR ATTEMPTS TO ENACT ONE PARTY'S CONVENTION PLATFORM INTO LAW.

WE HAVEN'T HAD THE ELECTION YET; AND IT'S STILL MORE THAN FIVE MONTHS UNTIL INAUGURATION DAY. NONE OF US KNOWS WHO WILL TAKE THE OATH OF OFFICE NEXT JANUARY. BUT RIGHT NOW, RONALD REAGAN IS STILL THE PRESIDENT; RONALD REAGAN IS STILL IN CHARGE OF OUR DEFENSE, ARMS CONTROL AND FOREIGN POLICIES; AND RONALD REAGAN INTENDS TO DO HIS DUTY, AND MEET HIS RESPONSIBILITY, TO DO WHAT'S NEEDED AND WHAT'S BEST FOR AMERICA'S SECURITY.

IT IS RONALD REAGAN WHO MUST NEGOTIATE WITH THE SOVIETS; AND HE CAN'T NEGOTIATE SUCCESSFULLY IF LIBERALS IN CONGRESS TRY TO MICROMANAGE OUR ARMS CONTROL POLICIES. IT IS RONALD REAGAN WHO MUST MAKE BASIC DECISIONS ON THE DIRECTION AND PACE OF OUR DEFENSES, INCLUDING THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE; AND HE CAN'T DO THAT SUCCESSFULLY IF LIBERALS IN CONGRESS UNILATERALLY GUT S.D.I. THAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE. THAT'S WHY THIS BILL HAS BEEN VETOED.

HOWEVER, MR. PRESIDENT, I'M PLEASED TO REITERATE THE PRESIDENT'S SUPPORT FOR THE KIND OF DEFENSE BILL THAT WAS PASSED IN THE SENATE. OUR ARMED SERVICES MEMBERS -- FROM BOTH PARTIES -- SHOWED GOOD SENSE, GOOD FAITH AND COMMENDABLE RESTRAINT IN FORMULATING A BILL THAT MORE ADEQUATELY MET OUR NATIONAL SECURITY NEEDS. THE PRESIDENT INDICATED HE WOULD HAVE SIGNED THAT KIND OF BILL. HE IS RIGHT NOT TO SIGN THIS KIND.

-MORE-

WHAT'S WRONG

WHAT PROVISIONS LED TO THIS VETO? EVEN AS WE ARE DEEP INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS ON OUR STRATEGIC FORCES, THE CONFERENCE REPORT WOULD HAVE US TAKE TWO EXTREMELY POTENT STRATEGIC PLATFORMS OUT OF SERVICE EARLY -- WITH ABSOLUTELY NO QUID PRO QUO FROM THE SOVIETS. LAST YEAR IT WAS ONE MISSILE BOAT, THIS YEAR TWO, NEXT YEAR -- WHO KNOWS? WHY ARE WE GIVING AWAY THESE TWO VESSELS -- THESE BARGAINING CHIPS, IF YOU WANT TO CALL THEM THAT -- WHY ARE WE GIVING THEM AWAY?

IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

IN THIS BILL, CONGRESSIONAL LIBERALS HAVE ALSO USURPED FROM THE PRESIDENT THE AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE WHEN AND HOW TO MODERNIZE OUR STRATEGIC BALLISTIC MISSILE FORCES. THE SOVIETS MUST BE DELIGHTED THAT THE CONGRESS HAS NOW PUT THE RAIL-MOBILE MX INTO THE SAME LIMBO AS MIDGETMAN. EMASCULATING BOTH PROGRAMS IS NOT A COMPROMISE -- IT IS STUPIDITY, PURE AND SIMPLE.

IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

AND FINALLY, MR. PRESIDENT, AND PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN FIT TO FINALLY DRAW THE LINE ON CONGRESSIONAL MICROMANAGEMENT OF THE SDI PROGRAM. SDI IS PRECISELY THE INSURANCE POLICY THAT WE WILL NEED IN A POST-START WORLD. IT IS PRECISELY THE LEVERAGE WE NEED ON THE SOVIETS TO GET TO THAT WORLD WITH A GOOD START AGREEMENT.

BUT CONGRESSIONAL LIBERALS, IN THIS BILL, HAVE RIPPED \$800 MILLION OUT OF THE HEART OF S.D.I., AND HAVE LIMITED SOME OF THE MOST PROMISING TECHNOLOGIES. SOME ARE BOASTING THAT THEY'VE TAKEN THE "STARS" OUT OF "STAR WARS;" AND THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY HAVE DONE. BUT THEY'VE ALSO TAKEN AWAY THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIETS WILL NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY ON A NEW START AGREEMENT; AND THEY'VE TAKEN AWAY ANY CHANCE WE MIGHT HAVE OF STOPPING NUCLEAR WARHEADS LAUNCHED AT AMERICA FROM LANDING ON OUR SOIL, AND DESTROYING OUR PEOPLE. IS THAT SOMETHING TO BOAST ABOUT?

MR. PRESIDENT, IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

NONE OF IT MAKES ANY SENSE.

MR. PRESIDENT, WE'VE ALREADY HEARD ONE SENATOR TAKING TO THE FLOOR TO DECRY THIS AS A "POLITICAL VETO."

HOGWASH.

IT'S A NATIONAL SECURITY VETO OF A POLITICAL BILL.

NEXT WE WILL SEE THE CROCODILE TEARS OF THOSE WHO, FOR DECADES, HAVE DONE NOTHING TO SUPPORT AMERICA'S FIGHTING MEN -- BUT NOW WILL GUSH ANGUISH OVER AN ALLEGED SCRUBBING OF A PAY RAISE.

HOGWASH.

THE TRUTH IS, WE NEED THAT PAY RAISE AND CAN EASILY HAVE IT -- AS LONG AS CONGRESSIONAL LIBERALS GIVE UP THEIR ATTEMPTS TO USE IT AS BLACKMAIL, TO ACCEPT THEIR DANGEROUS AGENDA.

MR. PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT REAGAN DOES NOT SEEK CONFRONTATION WITH THE CONGRESS. HE DOES NOT INSIST ON HIS OWN WAY, NO MATTER WHAT. HE MADE ALL THAT CLEAR YESTERDAY, IN HIS DECISION ON THE PLANT CLOSING BILL.

BUT PRESIDENT REAGAN DOES INSIST ON MAKING HIS OWN DECISIONS ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES. HE IS THE PRESIDENT. HE IS THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF. IT IS HIS JOB.

HE INTENDS TO DO THAT JOB. AND I -- AND MANY OTHERS IN THIS BODY -- INTEND TO STAND BY HIM, AS HE DOES IT.