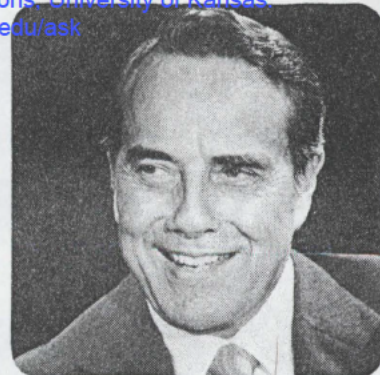


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOLE WELCOMES GERALD FORD TO ABILENE FOR EISENHOWER TRIBUTE:
38TH PRESIDENT A LEADER OF WISDOM, COURAGE AND GRACE --
AND ALWAYS "ONE OF US"

ABILENE, KANSAS - ON A WARM AUGUST NIGHT IN 1974, THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, LEARNING THAT IN A MATTER OF DAYS HE MIGHT BECOME PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, DID WHAT CAME NATURALLY. HE WENT HOME TO HIS WIFE IN ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA, WHERE HE TOOK HER HAND AND TOGETHER THEY SAID A PRAYER:

"GOD GIVE US STRENGTH," THEY PRAYED, "GIVE US WISDOM, GIVE US GUIDANCE AS THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW LIFE CONFRONTS US. WE PROMISE TO DO OUR VERY BEST, WHATEVER MAY TAKE PLACE."

AT THE END, THE VICE PRESIDENT ADDED WORDS HE HAD OFTEN USED IN TIMES OF CRISIS, WORDS FIRST LEARNED HALF A CENTURY EARLIER IN SUNDAY SCHOOL:

"TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL THINE HEART, AND LEAN NOT UNTO THINE OWN UNDERSTANDING. IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE SHALL DIRECT THY PATHS."

ONE WEEK LATER, GERALD FORD SUCCEEDED TO THE PRESIDENCY. AND HISTORY RECORDS THAT FOR THE NEXT TWO AND A HALF YEARS, HIS PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED. FOR TOGETHER WITH HIS BELOVED BETTY, AMERICA'S 38TH PRESIDENT LED US WITH WISDOM AND COURAGE AND GRACE. AT A TIME WHEN MILLIONS QUESTIONED OUR VERY INSTITUTIONS, HE EARNED OUR TRUST AS HE RESTORED OUR PRIDE. IN A WORLD WHERE NATIONS CHALLENGED OUR POSITION, HE PROVIDED GUIDANCE OF HIS OWN - ROOTED IN THE VALUES OF FREEDOM AND DECENCY AND FAITH BRED INTO EVERY MIDWESTERNER.

WHETHER YOUR PLACE OF BIRTH IS ABILENE, OR OMAHA, OR RUSSELL MAKES LITTLE DIFFERENCE. WHEREVER YOU STAND IN THE MIDDLE OF AMERICA, YOU CAN SEE A LONG WAY IN ALL DIRECTIONS. AND THAT IS AS IT SHOULD BE. HERE WE WANT NO BARRIERS TO OUR VIEW, NO OBSTACLES TO OUR ASPIRATIONS. HERE WE REJECT ARTIFICIAL DISTINCTIONS BASED ON CASTE, COLOR OR CREED.

IN TIMES OF TROUBLE WE TURN TO THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF OUR STRENGTH, JUST AS PRESIDENT FORD DID SOME SIXTEEN YEARS AGO THIS MONTH. LOVING OUR COUNTRY, WE WEAR HER UNIFORM WITH PRIDE, JUST AS PRESIDENT FORD DID IN THE NAVY OF WORLD WAR II. THEN AS NOW, WE KNOW THAT GREAT POWERS HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES TO MATCH. PRESIDENT FORD PROVED THIS IN HIS DEALINGS WITH MAO AND BREZHNEV, AND IN HIS DARING RESCUE OF THE MAYAGUEZ. TODAY PRESIDENT BUSH IS DEMONSTRATING IT IN THE PERSIAN GULF.

A PRESIDENT HAS MANY OBLIGATIONS, BUT THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT IS TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT AMERICA IS NEVER HELD HOSTAGE TO ECONOMIC OR MILITARY BLACKMAIL. BECAUSE GERALD FORD UNDERSTOOD THIS AND ACTED ACCORDINGLY, THE WORLD IS A SAFER PLACE. FOR THAT WE SHOULD ALL BE GRATEFUL.

I HAVE MY OWN REASONS FOR GRATITUDE. FOR AS LONG AS I LIVE I WILL RECALL WITH PRIDE AND EMOTION PRESIDENT FORD'S DECISION TO HAVE ME RUN WITH HIM IN 1976. WE GAVE IT OUR ALL, MR. PRESIDENT, AND ALTHOUGH WE MADE UP THIRTY POINTS IN THE POLLS, IN THE END WE JUST FELL SHORT. AT ONE POINT IN THE CAMPAIGN YOU TOOK SOME HEAT FOR DECLARING THAT THE PEOPLE OF POLAND REFUSED TO ACCEPT SOVIET DOMINATION.

THE PUNDITS SAID YOU MADE A MISTAKE. BUT IT WAS THEY WHO WERE WRONG. YOU HADN'T MADE A MISTAKE - YOU MADE A PROPHECY. AND TIME HAS BORNE YOU OUT, TO THE LASTING BETTERMENT NOT ONLY OF THE POLISH PEOPLE, BUT OF ALL EASTERN EUROPEANS AND OTHERS AT LAST FREE OF THE YOKE OF COMMUNISM.

MR. PRESIDENT, AUGUST 20 IS A VERY SPECIAL DATE ON MY CALENDAR. TODAY IS NO ORDINARY REUNION. IT WAS EXACTLY 14 YEARS AGO THIS AFTERNOON THAT YOU AND I STOOD ON THE COURTHOUSE STEPS IN RUSSELL AND I THANKED MY NEIGHBORS FOR ALL THEY HAD DONE TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE. I INTRODUCED YOU THAT DAY AS "A FRIEND OF SMALL TOWN AMERICA - ONE OF US".

FOURTEEN YEARS LATER, WE'RE ALL A LITTLE OLDER, MAYBE EVEN A LITTLE WISER. BUT I AM STILL APPRECIATIVE OF THE PEOPLE OF RUSSELL. AND I AM STILL GRATEFUL TO MY RUNNING MATE, MY FRIEND AND MY PRESIDENT: STILL "ONE OF US" - THE 38TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, GERALD R. FORD.

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