

News from Senator

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DOLE REMEMBERS "MAN FROM ABILENE" ON 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF EISENHOWER'S BIRTH

THIS IS A VERY SPECIAL DAY FOR ME, AS FOR EVERYONE ELSE WHO STILL LIKES IKE. WE ARE A DIVERSE GROUP ASSEMBLED HERE ON THE GROUNDS OF THE EISENHOWER CENTER. WE HAVE COME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

SHARING THIS PLATFORM ARE TWO DISTINGUISHED MILITARY MEN, WHOSE PRESENCE RECALLS OUR CENTURY'S GREATEST SOLDIER OF DEMOCRACY; TWO ELOQUENT MEN OF THE CLOTH, WHO EMBODY DWIGHT EISENHOWER'S ABIDING FAITH IN GOD; AND LAWMAKERS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC WHO REMIND US THAT THE MAN FROM ABILENE LED NATIONS IN PEACE AS EFFECTIVELY AS HE COMMANDED THEIR WARTIME ARMIES.

A SOLDIER'S SOLDIER AND POLITICAL HERO

MOST OF ALL, HOWEVER, THIS AFTERNOON BELONGS TO THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO FOUGHT IN THOSE ARMIES. MANY WILL FOREVER BEAR THE MARK OF THOSE YEARS, WHETHER IN MIND, BODY OR SPIRIT. WE TAKE PRIDE IN WHAT WE DID, AND INSPIRATION FROM HOW WE DID IT.

PERHAPS NO GENERAL IN HISTORY SO IDENTIFIED WITH HIS SOLDIERS OR SO PERSONIFIED THE CAUSE FOR WHICH THEY FOUGHT. DWIGHT EISENHOWER NEVER NEEDED FIVE STARS ON HIS SHOULDER TO WIN OUR LOYALTY. HE HAD ONLY TO BE HIMSELF, AN UNCOMMON MAN, FULL OF COMMON SENSE. KANSAS COMMON SENSE.

WHEREVER HE WENT, IKE NEVER FORGOT WHERE HE CAME FROM. SO IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT WHEN HE LAUNCHED HIS CAMPAIGN FOR THE WHITE HOUSE IN THE SPRING OF 1952, HE DID SO HERE, IN THE HEART OF AMERICA. LOST IN THE HUGE CROWD THAT TURNED OUT FOR HIS HOMECOMING WAS A YOUNG SECOND LIEUTENANT, SCARRED BY WAR AND STRUGGLING TO FIND HIS PLACE IN POSTWAR AMERICA. WHAT I HEARD THAT DAY CONFIRMED WHAT I ALREADY SUSPECTED -- THAT MY COMMANDING GENERAL WAS ALSO MY POLITICAL HERO.

FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER THOSE DAYS, DWIGHT EISENHOWER STANDS TODAY AS A POPULAR SYMBOL OF THE 1950'S. BUT IT WOULD BE A GROSS UNDERESTIMATION OF HIS PRESIDENCY TO THINK OF IT IN NOSTALGIC TERMS ALONE, OR TO MISTAKE THE FAMOUS GRIN FOR EASYGOING ACCEPTANCE OF BUSINESS AS USUAL.

IKE'S PROPHETIC WARNINGS

IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT IKE MADE US FEEL GOOD. AND HE DID. BUT HE ALSO CHALLENGED US TO DISCARD CONVENTIONAL THINKING AND GOVERN WITH MORE THAN THE NEXT ELECTION IN MIND. IN HIS 1961 FAREWELL ADDRESS, PRESIDENT EISENHOWER ISSUED TWO WARNINGS: ONE ALERTING US TO THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, AND ANOTHER, JUST AS PROPHETIC AND EVEN MORE TIMELY:

"AS WE PEER INTO SOCIETY'S FUTURE," HE SAID, "WE MUST AVOID THE IMPULSE TO LIVE ONLY FOR TODAY, PLUNDERING FOR OUR OWN EASE AND CONVENIENCE THE PRECIOUS RESOURCES OF TOMORROW. WE CANNOT MORTGAGE THE MATERIAL ASSETS OF OUR GRANDCHILDREN WITHOUT RISKING THE LOSS ALSO OF THEIR POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL HERITAGE. WE WANT DEMOCRACY TO SURVIVE FOR ALL GENERATIONS TO COME, NOT TO BECOME THE INSOLVENT PHANTOM OF TOMORROW."

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, NEARLY THREE DECADES AFTER HE SOUNDED THAT FIREBELL IN THE NIGHT, DWIGHT EISENHOWER SHOULD BE RECALLED -- NOT JUST AS A SOLDIER IN UNIFORM, NOR EVEN AS THE LEADER OF A GREAT CRUSADE FOR FREEDOM, BUT AS A PATRIOT WHOSE LOVE OF COUNTRY OUTWEIGHED ANY DESIRE FOR PERSONAL POPULARITY.

IKE'S ENDURING VISION OF LEADERSHIP

IT IS EASY TO BE POPULAR -- FOR A WHILE. WHAT IS DIFFICULT IS TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP THAT STANDS THE TEST OF TIME. IT IS EASY TO VOTE FOR MORE PROGRAMS AND BENEFITS. WHAT IS DIFFICULT IS TO RESTRAIN OUR APPETITES, AND TO DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN REAL ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. ALL LAST NIGHT, IKE'S BOYS STOOD VIGIL OVER THEIR OLD COMMANDER'S RESTING PLACE IN THE PLACE OF MEDITATION. LIKE GENERAL EISENHOWER HIMSELF, THEY KNOW HOW IT FEELS TO MAKE SHORT-TERM SACRIFICES FOR LONG-TERM GOALS. THEY KNOW THAT HISTORY WILL JUDGE HARSHLY THOSE WHO WRITE OFF TOMORROW FOR A FEW VOTES TODAY.

IN LIFE DWIGHT EISENHOWER GAVE US LEADERSHIP; IN MEMORY HE INSPIRES US TO LEAD. IF WE REALLY WISH TO HONOR THE MAN FROM ABILENE ON THIS, THE CENTENNIAL OF HIS BIRTH, WE WON'T JUST QUOTE HIS WORDS. WE WILL FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE. WE WILL MAKE THE HARD CHOICES; WE WILL ACCEPT THE OBLIGATIONS OF LEADERSHIP. AND THEN IKE'S GREATEST MEMORIAL WILL BE AN AMERICA AS STRONG ECONOMICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY AS SHE IS MILITARILY.

THIS IS WHAT HE MEANT WHEN HE SPOKE OF "THE CHANCE FOR PEACE." THIS IS WHAT WE OWE TO OUR CHILDREN, TO HIS MEMORY AND TO THE COUNTRY HE LOVED.