

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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CLINTON BUDGET: WHERE IS IT?

DOLE SLAMS WHITE HOUSE & MEDIA HYPOCRISY: REPUBLICANS DESERVE SPECIFICS OF OVERDUE CLINTON BUDGET BEFORE OFFERING OWN "SPECIFICS"

WASHINGTON -- The following is the text of remarks delivered today on the Senate floor by Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole regarding the Clinton budget proposal, and White House and media demands that Republicans produce "specific" alternatives before they have seen overdue details of the Clinton Administration's own proposal. (The text has been revised to correct syntax and some figures):

Mr. President, I do not want to hold up consideration of the funding resolution. But I do want to take a minute or two to talk about the President's economic package and to point out a few facts that I think would be important for those who are following the budget package.

Clinton Misses Budget Deadline

First of all, Section 300 of the Congressional Budget Act requires that the President submit his budget to Congress on the first Monday in February. This new deadline was set in the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990, and President Bush made the deadline in 1991 and 1992. So far the Clinton Administration has sent us a blueprint. We are still awaiting specifics.

I would just indicate that in that vein, as was pointed out by our friend, the distinguished Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Bentsen, yesterday before the Senate Finance Committee, he said this: "Let me say what we are doing this morning. We are coming to you with not a completed detailed package. We are coming to you before we send you the budget to talk to you about some things where we want your input; where we want you to fill in and help us with the further details. If you have some more cuts that you want, let's all put our fingerprints on them."

The point I would make is we have a blueprint, but we do not know what the details are. For all of this we have been talking about for the past several weeks, we have been guessing. We do not know what the defense cuts are. Nobody knows. That is \$112 billion in additional spending cuts.

Where Are the President's Details?

Now the Washington Post has been, sort of acting as an intermediary for the Clinton Administration, faxing up inquiries to those on the Republican side, saying: Well where is your alternative? Do you have any specific budget cuts? Send them to the Post and we will pass them on to the White House. I guess that is what they have in mind since they are the number one cheerleader in this town for the Administration.

We just suggest to the Post that they ought to be asking: Where is the budget? Where are details of this package? How can Republicans respond to a package in one week when the Clinton administration has been out there ever since the campaign ended in November -- I guess some do not think the campaign has ended -- but, since the election, working on this detailed bold plan for America.

GOP Has Made the Tough Votes

So I just suggest on behalf of the Republicans that we will be responsible as we have been in the past. And going back to 1985 again, and years after that when we were up here willing to do the tough things, make the tough choices. And in that year, only one Democrat voted with us, the late Ed Zorinsky from the state of Nebraska. And the vote was 50 to 49. We passed the toughest budget resolution that his place has seen before and since that time.

So I would just suggest that we are prepared to be players. I have always been a player. But I want to play after I see all the people on the field, all of the specifics on the field, not half of

(more)

the team, or nobody knows what \$12 billion streamlining government is. What is it? An \$11 billion in administrative savings? What is it?

I just suggest that there are a lot of things we can do before we can comply with the Post deadline of today so they can run a big story tomorrow morning point out, what are the differences?

Cut Back New Spending, Taxes & Tax Breaks

But I would just say for starters, there is \$178 billion in new spending. We can certainly cut that back by \$100 billion or so. There are a lot of new taxes, \$360 billion in new taxes. We could certainly cut that back.

And there are some tax breaks of some \$60 billion, \$70 billion, and we can certainly cut those back. That would be a good start. But right now we have a package that is about \$3 in new taxes for every dollar in new spending. I wanted to indicate to the Washington Post, the intermediaries for the Clinton Administration, that we are working and we will be there with a plan.

See Budget First, Then Vote

First, we want to see the budget. Now we are being told we may pass a budget resolution before we get the budget. Maybe that has been done. Maybe there is precedent for it, but we would like to see the budget before we pass the budget resolution. We would like to see the specifics, the cuts, the new taxes, what the impact is on defense, and the energy impact. We think, in fairness, we have a right to see that before the press demands of us that we come up with some whole new package, so we can start debating the Republican package.

Advice to White House: Campaign is Over

Finally, a word of advice to the communications department at the White House. They ought to calm down, go out for a weekend, have a diet Coke, enjoy yourself. The campaign is over. You won. Now comes the hard part: leading America. It is a lot easier and a lot more fun to play the campaign game where every Administration policy becomes a victim of some 30-second negative TV ad. This is not Super Tuesday. We are dealing with a major deficit reduction plan.

This is not the New Hampshire primary or the Iowa caucus. This is day 37 of the Clinton presidency. If the White House continues to treat every day like another day on the campaign trail, the American people -- and I think President Clinton himself -- will be ill served. It certainly does not make Republicans want to jump up and support the President, if we have somebody in the communications department saying we are doing nothing but whining or carping. That may have been good campaign talk, but we are going to be around here 3 years and 11 months, and we want to cooperate with the President. We do not want to get in a contest with his communications director.

The Political Stimulus

I suggest that, as in the past, we are going to be responsible, and we are going to have real cuts, not just in defense, not 112 billion more out of defense. We are going to try to scale back a lot of the new spending. I note that today in the Washington Post, even they are saying now the stimulus package does not do much, but it is "psychological." They had the right letter first -- P -- but it is P for political, not psychological.

The Bush Recovery

The Bush recovery is well under way. We are making progress. We will have to revise the economic growth estimates for the last quarter of 1992. It seems that we ought to let the Bush recovery continue without adding \$18 billion to the deficit. In the spirit of cooperation, I say to the President of the United States, President Clinton, that he will find Republicans being responsible. We have had 7 days. He has had about 100-some days to get ready. We still do not have his budget. I say that, in fairness, give us a little time. We are going to have some options. We agree with Secretary Bentsen and others that this has to be a total effort. We hope that when that time comes, we will have more support for our ideas than we had in 1985, when one Democrat voted for the Republican package.

Patriotism Redefined

So we hope we can do better than that. We think the people want more jobs, and they want the deficit reduced. They want us to speak out. They want bipartisanship. They are tired of gridlock, and we want to be helpful where we can. But, that does not mean you are not patriotic if you do not sign onto \$360 billion in new taxes. If that is patriotism, it is a brand new definition. We may not meet the Washington Post's deadline, but we will try to be responsible on this side of the aisle.