

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM ASSOCIATION
MAYFLOWER HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C.
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1985

THANKS VERY MUCH, DAN, FOR THAT GENEROUS INTRODUCTION.

LET ME BEGIN BY EXPRESSING MY GRATITUDE FOR THIS AWARD. BEFORE I CAME OVER HERE, I DID A LITTLE RESEARCH INTO THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S CAREER, ESPECIALLY AS A PLATFORM ORATOR. FOR INSTANCE, WHEN HE WAS SHOT IN THE CHEST DURING THE 1912 BULL MOOSE CAMPAIGN, HE INSISTED ON DELIVERING A TWO-HOUR SPEECH BEFORE GOING TO THE HOSPITAL. AFTERWARDS, THE DOCTORS FOUND THAT IT WAS THE FOLDED UP MANUSCRIPT -- ABOUT 80 PAGES LONG -- WHICH SLOWED THE BULLET BEFORE IT COULD DO MORTAL DAMAGE.

SO THERE YOU HAVE AT LEAST ONE EXAMPLE OF WHERE LONGWINDEDNESS SAVED SOMEONE'S LIFE. FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE, IT'S MORE LIKELY TO SHORTEN LIFE.

WHY DO WE REMEMBER ROOSEVELT WITH SO MUCH AFFECTION? CERTAINLY, FEW MEN IN THE HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC EVER ENJOYED THEIR TIME IN POWER MORE. FEW GAVE OFF A MORE EFFORTLESS IMPRESSION OF COMMAND. FEW CONVEYED WITH SUCH ELOQUENCE THE COMBINATION OF PERSONAL VALUES AND A NATIONAL VISION. IT WAS, AFTER ALL, THEODORE ROOSEVELT WHO INSISTED ON THE PRESIDENCY AS THE GREAT "BULLY PULPIT" OF POPULAR DEMOCRACY. AND FEW MEN, BEFORE OR SINCE, HAVE OCCUPIED THAT PULPIT WITH SUCH GUSTO.

AS A REPUBLICAN, I ALSO THINK OF ROOSEVELT AS, IN MANY WAYS, THE FATHER OF MY PARTY IN THE 20TH CENTURY. FOR IT'S EASY TO FORGET NOW, BUT IT WAS UNDER A REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT AT THE TURN OF THIS CENTURY THAT AMERICAN GOVERNMENT FIRST INVOLVED ITSELF IN

REGULATING THE PRODUCTION OF MEAT, FOOD AND DRUGS, SETTING RAILROAD RATES, CONSERVING VAST UNSPOILED AREAS OF THE WEST, PUTTING THE REST OF THE WORLD ON NOTICE THAT AMERICA HAD COME OF AGE AND WAS EAGER TO CLAIM HER PLACE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE.

"HE SERVES HIS PARTY BEST," SAID ROOSEVELT, "WHO MOST HELPS TO MAKE IT INSTANTLY RESPONSIVE TO EVERY NEED OF THE PEOPLE."

IT WOULD BE HARD TO COME UP WITH A BETTER DEFINITION OF POLITICS AS IT SHOULD BE. NOT THAT A POLITICAL PARTY SHOULD CONTENT ITSELF WITH BEING A SHOCK ABSORBER OF CHANGE. IT MUST BE ABLE TO PERCEIVE THE NEED FOR CHANGE, TO ANTICIPATE AND THEN TO GENERATE IT, ALL WITHIN THE BROAD OUTLINES OF PRINCIPLE.

THAT'S WHERE I SEE THE REPUBLICAN PARTY HEADING IN THIS DECADE OF THE 80'S. PERSONALLY, I THINK WE HAVE A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE THE MAJORITY STATUS WHICH HAS SO LONG ELUDED US. NOT SIMPLY BY OFFERING UP ATTRACTIVE CANDIDATES, BUT BY AFFORDING A VISION TO MATCH. A VISION WHICH EXTENDS BEYOND WASHINGTON.

IT WAS SUCH A LONG VIEW THAT I FIRST SAMPLED AS A YOUNG MAN GROWING UP AMIDST THE WHEAT FIELDS OF KANSAS, WHERE WE ALL SHARED A COMMON BELIEF IN THE UNCOMMON POSSIBILITIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL. THE KANSAS STATE MOTTO PROCLAIMS "TO THE STARS THROUGH DIFFICULTIES." AND WE'VE ALL EXPERIENCED OUR SHARE OF DIFFICULTIES IN LIFE. EVEN SO, WE BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY IN THE MOST SEEMINGLY ORDINARY MEN AND WOMEN. WE HELD TO THE DEMOCRATIC VIEW - DEMOCRATIC WITH A SMALL "D" - THAT EACH OF US HAD THE POWER AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE OUR LIVES USEFUL. WHERE YOU WOUND UP ON THE LADDER OF SUCCESS COUNTED FAR LESS THAN THE EFFORT YOU EXPENDED IN MAKING THE CLIMB.

LIFE ON THE LADDER

WE HELD TO ANOTHER VALUE AS WELL. IN PRAIRIE VILLAGES AND IN URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS ALIKE, WE TOLD OURSELVES THAT ONCE YOU REACHED UP TO THE FIRST RUNG ON THE LADDER, YOU REACHED DOWN TO THE NEIGHBOR BELOW. WHATEVER ELSE YOU DID, YOU DIDN'T PULL UP THE LADDER AFTER YOU. WE BELIEVED THAT YOU COULD BE CONSERVATIVE AND COMPASSIONATE AT THE SAME TIME - THAT YOU COULD FEEL WITH YOUR HEART WHAT YOU KNEW IN YOUR HEAD - AND THAT BUDGETS MUST BE BALANCED SO THAT OPPORTUNITIES MIGHT BE CREATED.

COME TO THINK OF IT, I THINK THEODORE ROOSEVELT WAS ABOUT THE LAST PRESIDENT OF EITHER PARTY TO SUBMIT A BUDGET WITH A SURPLUS. A SURPLUS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF ANY DEMOCRATS OR REPUBLICANS PRESENT, IS AN EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENDITURES.

NOW ALL THIS WAS THE TRADITION IN WHICH I GREW TO MATURITY. I LEARNED AT AN EARLY AGE THAT REPUBLICANS STOOD FOR BUDGETS THAT WERE LEAN AND TAXES THAT WERE LOW. THAT THEY ALWAYS RALLIED ROUND A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE - NOT JUST AS MEASURED BY OUR

WEAPONS OF WAR, BUT ALSO IN BUSTLING FACTORIES AND HEALTHY FARMS, AND ALL ACROSS THE ECONOMIC FRONTLINES ON WHICH A NATION'S ULTIMATE SECURITY MUST DEPEND. TODAY, WE STAND CLOSER THAN EVER TO BEING AMERICA'S MAJORITY PARTY - NOT JUST BECAUSE AN IMMENSELY POPULAR PRESIDENT PERSONIFIES THE STRENGTHS WE LIKE TO THINK OF AS UNIQUELY OUR OWN - BUT ALSO BECAUSE MOST AMERICANS HAVE COME TO IDENTIFY WITH THESE POSITIONS AS WE HAVE ARTICULATED THEM AND WRITTEN THEM INTO LAW.

OVER THESE PAST FOUR AND HALF YEARS, WE'VE TAMED INFLATION WHILE UNLEASHING ECONOMIC GROWTH. THE WORLD IS A LESS DANGEROUS PLACE TODAY THAN IN 1980, THE DESPERATE TACTICS OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISTS NOTWITHSTANDING. WHY? BECAUSE THE BALANCE OF POWER HAS TILTED BACK TOWARD AN EQUILIBRIUM. AFTER A WORRISOME TIME OF DRIFT AND DISARRAY, THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT ONLY REBUILT HER DEFENSES - SHE HAS REGAINED HER SENSE OF CONFIDENCE. SHE HAS STOPPED APOLOGIZING, AND STARTED ASSERTING HER VITAL INTERESTS. SHE HAS RAISED HER GLOBAL PROFILE - AND SHE WILL NEVER AGAIN LOWER HER FLAGS IN THE FACE OF STREET MOBS OR TINHORN TYRANTS.

THE REAGAN LEGACY

HERE IS THE LEGACY OF RONALD REAGAN'S PRESIDENCY: ABOVE ALL, A REPUBLICAN PARTY ABLE TO COMMUNICATE THE VALUES AND IDEALS IT SHARES WITH WORKING MEN AND WOMEN. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO TELL PEOPLE YOU'RE ON THEIR SIDE. YOU HAVE TO SHOW THEM. YOU HAVE TO SEARCH OUT THE THREADS THAT BIND YOU TOGETHER, AND SET ASIDE THE DIFFERENCES THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE INSPIRE A COLLECTION OF WARRING FACTIONS, AS DIVIDED AS THE DEMOCRATS AND AS UNABLE TO SEND A COHERENT MESSAGE TO INSPIRE HOPE OR KINDLE ACTION. AND THAT'S NOT ALL. WHILE STANDING UP FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN, YOU HAVE TO REACH OUT TO THOSE WHO MAY NOT ENTIRELY AGREE.

SHOW THE POOR AND THE WEAK HOW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL INCENTIVE CAN DO FOR THEM WHAT THEY HAVE DONE FOR GENERATIONS BEFORE. SHOW AMERICAN MOTHERS AND FATHERS THAT PRESERVING OUR MILITARY STRENGTH NOW IS THE BEST GUARANTEE THAT THEIR CHILDREN NEED NEVER GO TO WAR LATER. SHOW THE YOUNG THAT THEIR IDEALS ARE RESPECTED, AND THEIR VIGOR AND IMAGINATION CHERISHED AS THE SEED CAPITAL OF FUTURE GREATNESS. AND SHOW THE ELDERLY THAT WE LOOK TO THEM FOR WISDOM AND COUNSEL, PROMISING IN RETURN NEVER TO BREAK OUR COMMITMENTS OR OUR COVENANT WITH THOSE WHO RAISED AN EARLIER CROP.

OUT OF POWER, IT'S ALL TOO EASY TO FORGET THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT'S RIGHT AND WHAT'S SELF-RIGHTEOUS. IN THE PROCESS, YOU CAN INADVERTENTLY TURN OFF MORE PEOPLE THAN YOU ATTRACT INTO YOUR RANKS. IN POWER, WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PERFORM, NOT POSTURE - TO PUT OUR PRINCIPLES TO WORK, AND MILLIONS OF CITIZENS TOO.

HARD CHOICES -- BUDGET PROSPECTS

UP UNTIL NOW, WE'VE MADE HARD CHOICES SO THAT OUR FELLOW CITIZENS COULD ENJOY SOME LASTING PROSPERITY. PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS COME FORWARD WITH A TAX REFORM PLAN BOTH COURAGEOUS AND HISTORIC. A PLAN THAT BUILDS ON OUR EARLIER EFFORTS TO LOWER INDIVIDUAL RATES AND OVERHAUL DEPRECIATION. NOW THE PRESIDENT WOULD TAKE THE LOGICAL NEXT STEP, BY ESTABLISHING A "LEVEL PLAYING FIELD" FOR ALL KINDS OF BUSINESSES, AND ELIMINATING TAX CONSIDERATIONS AS A PRIME FACTOR IN MAKING DECISIONS AS TO SAVINGS AND INVESTMENT.

IT'S A GOOD PLAN - AND I'M CONVINCED WE CAN MAKE IT EVEN BETTER. BUT ALONG WITH THE BRIGHT PROMISE OF TAX REFORM, WE CONFRONT AN IMMEDIATE PROBLEM IN A BLOATED FEDERAL DEFICIT, A TICKING TIME BOMB WHICH, IF NOT SOON DEFUSED, THREATENS TO EXPLODE THE STRONGEST ECONOMIC RECOVERY SINCE WORLD WAR II. A BUDGET IS A CURIOUS DOCUMENT, A COMBINATION OF GRAY PROSE AND RED INK. THE PROCESS BY WHICH IT IS FORGED, AND I USE THE WORD DELIBERATELY, MAY SEEM ANYTHING BUT DYNAMIC.

SOME PEOPLE INDICATE WE SHOULD BALANCE THE BUDGET ON THE BACKS OF THE POOR. OTHERS CLAIM IT SHOULD BE BALANCED ON THE TURRET OF THE M-1 TANK. BOTH ARE WRONG. AND BOTH UNDERESTIMATE, CYNICALLY I THINK, THE WILLINGNESS OF MOST AMERICANS TO ACCEPT COMMON SENSE AND A SHARED BURDEN OF TEMPORARY SACRIFICE. THAT'S WHY I THINK WE WOULD DO WELL TO TELL THEM THE TRUTH, AND RELY ON THEIR INSTINCTIVE GRASP OF WHAT IS FAIR AND NECESSARY.

LONG-RANGE SOLUTIONS

IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, THE TIDE HAS TURNED OUR WAY, BOTH HERE AT HOME AND IN A WORLD WHERE TYRANNY IS ON THE RUN AND FREEDOM IS SHOULDERING DICTATORSHIP TO ONE SIDE. LIMITS HAVE BEEN IMPOSED ON WHAT GOVERNMENT CAN DO - SO THAT NO LIMITS CAN EXIST ON WHAT THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES CAN ACCOMPLISH.

IT'S THIS MESSAGE OF SURGING HOPE AND BOUNDLESS OPPORTUNITY THAT CAN SOLIDIFY OUR HOLD ON THE AMERICAN ELECTORATE. BUT ONLY IF WE ATTEND TO UNFINISHED BUSINESS: BY TACKLING THE DEFICIT, SLICING INTEREST RATES, EASING THE DOLLAR, REFORMING THE TAX CODE, AND RESTORING OUR COMPETITIVE POSITION IN THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE. HISTORY WILL NOT LOOK KINDLY ON THOSE WHO SACRIFICE TOMORROW FOR TODAY. IN THE WORDS OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT, "I THINK THERE IS ONLY ONE QUALITY WORSE THAN HARDNESS OF HEART AND THAT IS SOFTNESS OF HEAD." I WOULD SUGGEST TO SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES THAT EVEN VOTERS CAN BE PRETTY HARDHEADED ABOUT WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO MAKE THIS RECOVERY OF OURS PERMANENT. COME TO THINK OF IT, MAYBE WE SHOULD CLIMB DOWN OFF OUR PLATFORMS LONG ENOUGH TO LISTEN TO WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY: LISTEN AND THEN LEAD.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, WE'VE GOT A FEW MINUTES. YOU ALL KNOW WHAT'S ON MY MIND; NOW MAYBE YOU COULD LET ME KNOW WHAT'S ON YOURS...

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