

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

RNC WINTER MEETING
REMARKS OF
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE
RAMADA RENAISSANCE HOTEL - WASHINGTON, D.C.

I've been a Republican for a long time. And like many of you, I can't recall all of the RNC meetings I've attended over the years. They seem to run together in my mind.

But the Winter Meeting of 1995 will be different. This one we'll remember. Because at this Winter Meeting we can finally say: The Republican Party is the majority party of the United States of America.

For the first time in a very long time, more Americans say that they identify with Republicans than Democrats. As the result, we...the Republicans...are the majority in the United States Senate. We...the Republicans...are the majority in the U.S. House of Representatives. And, we...the Republicans...hold the majority of governors' seats in our state capitals.

And, if we remain true to our principles, I predict that when you hold your winter meetings in January of 1997, you'll be hearing from a newly-inaugurated Republican President of the United States.

Up until last year there were many who thought a Republican majority in both houses of Congress would be nothing short of a miracle. And there might have been some divine intervention last November. But other forces were at work, too:

Years and years of hard effort by many Republicans--people like you--built the party up from the grass roots, all across the country. We had outstanding Republican candidates. And we had great party leadership--especially from people like Haley Barbour and Jeanie Austin.

More Freedom, Less Government

But the most important force was, and will continue to be, the power of our ideas.

And that's what I want to talk with you about today. Republican ideas. How they are, at root, very American ideas. That's why we won. And the most powerful of these is the idea of limited government.

Americans are demanding a nation made more free by insisting on a government that is more limited. Limited taxing, limited spending, and no more unfunded Federal mandates. Fewer Federal programs, more power to the States, more freedom for our people. It's not complicated. More freedom, less government.

If we can remember that--if we can maintain our commitment to that idea--if we can keep the promises we made to the American people--we will return America to greatness and remain the majority party for many winter meetings to come.

However, our destiny is not yet set. The future of the Republican Party and our country is being wrestled out in the Congress almost as we speak.

We're struggling now over fundamental principles such as requiring the Congress to live under the rules it imposes, ending unfunded federal mandates, and passing a balanced budget amendment.

Despite our majority, it's not easy. The media want to report the personalities, the small victories, the threatening defeats. They have made the Contract with America the issue, instead of the ideas the Contract represents. They are missing the story today, as they missed it in the months leading up to the election. But the American people understand, and they are watching.

Mandate to Rein in Government

I thank the American people for their trust and their call to action. Their wishes could not be more clear, and as a Party we
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must act on them. My mandate as Senate Majority Leader will be to rein in our government, and I hope it will be the purpose and the principal accomplishment of the 104th Congress.

To accomplish that goal, we Republicans will dust off my favorite Amendment--the 10th Amendment--the one that reads: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States, respectively, or to the people." You can find that amendment in the Bill of Rights.

Democrats, however, seem to discover a new "right" every time that stumble across something that's wrong.

The trouble is, liberal Democrats seem to think America is what's wrong, and we think America's biggest problem is having a government run by liberal Democrats.

They think "rights" are things a government gives to the people. We think our Founding Fathers discovered enough rights, that they are already enumerated in our Constitution, and they are the rights of private citizens to be free from government, not to be provided things by it.

If there is a litmus test, this is it: Are you more free if you are guaranteed certain resources that are determined and measured by a governing elite, or are you more free if you are guaranteed that government will not interfere with your ability to pursue what you choose? We think it is the latter.

That's why, in this session of the Congress, we will propose and pass legislation to protect the rights of private property owners, and to cut the tangle of red tape forced upon America's small businessmen and women.

Cutting Taxes

And that is why, in this session, we will cut taxes. There seems to be a growing bipartisan consensus to cut taxes, which we Republicans should welcome, and which makes me think we should be able to act on a tax cut fairly quickly.

But the philosophical divide between the parties is especially visible here. I, for one, strongly object to President Clinton, who I assume still speaks for his party, labelling Americans according to "class" on this issue.

We must not create factions of Americans competing against one another for the favors of government. Instead, we should lead by instilling hope and restoring freedom and opportunity for all our people.

By cutting taxes we will reduce the government's take of private wages--worthy unto itself. But if tax cuts are also to have the effect of limiting government and providing for long-term prosperity, then they also must be matched by real cuts in government spending.

Cutting Government Spending

Despite what the Democrats will tell you, deficit spending is not under control--unless something dramatic is done, deficits will begin to balloon dramatically again in 1999. Like a family examining its finances after a Christmas that was too rich, we must make hard decisions and endure sacrifices to make ends meet.

Along with prohibiting unfunded mandates, cutting taxes, and requiring a balanced budget--and no doubt about it, the best Balanced Budget Amendment if we can get it, is one that requires a three-fifths vote to raise taxes--we have another very effective means of limiting government: cutting government spending.

With the exception of Social Security, every bureaucracy and bureaucrat, every government program and Federal expense must be considered ripe for reduction or elimination.

Rolling Back Federal Programs

In this Republican Congress, we will roll back Federal programs, laws and regulations from A to Z--from Amtrack to

Zoological studies--working our way through the alphabet soup of government.

Our guide will be this question: Is this program a basic function of limited government, or is it an example of how government has lost its faith in the judgements of our people and the potential of our markets?

I believe that, more often than not, the answer to this question will justify less Federal involvement, fewer Federal rules and regulations, a reduction in Federal spending, and more freedom and opportunity for our States and our citizens.

America's Role in the World

Finally, let me touch a moment on America's place in the world. Here, too, are important differences between the parties. One of these is highlighted by the apparent willingness of this President to place the agenda of the United Nations before the interests of the United States. Haiti springs to mind. Another

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example is his willingness to subjugate American principles and beliefs to the strait-jacket of global opinion. Bosnia springs to mind.

Although the responsibilities of our national government are limited, its primary function is to protect the freedom and well being of our people.

We must never forget that America has been the greatest force for good the world has ever known.

We must never be reluctant about our greatness or ashamed of our strength.

America's success has fueled a global revolution of liberty, shining light where it was thought totalitarian darkness would always reign. Our government's responsibility to protect our freedom must be reflected in the unapologetic assertion of our interests in every agreement, every pronouncement, every action we take, anywhere in the world.

Future of Our Party - Future of Our Country

Let me end with where I began--in a discussion of the future of our party and how it is intertwined with the future of our country. And let me quote Ronald Reagan, whose words still ring clearly and true for us today:

"In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem. Government is the problem. From time to time, we've been tempted to believe that society has become too complex to be managed by self-rule, that government by an elite group is superior to government for, by, and of the people. But if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else?"

You and I are leaders of our party during a defining moment. Some in the media like to characterize the debate going on in Washington as a squabble among special interests. Instead, a great contest is being waged right now over the principles by which America will govern itself in the years ahead.

Democrats and Republicans embrace profoundly different ideas about government's proper role and size and intrusiveness in our lives. We disagree about some fundamental social values. We have a different understanding of America's place in the world, and her history and future in it.

Party of the People

It turns out that as much as our political opponents assert to the contrary, we are the party of the people--and that must be our future.

As long as our disagreements with Democrats continue to be about philosophy and not about who divvies up the spoils--as long as we remain true to our beliefs in our campaigns and in our governance--we will keep winning the debate because we will remain on the side of the American people.

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