

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
PENNSYLVANIA GOP LINCOLN DAY DINNER
FEBRUARY 26, 1987
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INTRODUCTION

IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE HERE TODAY. THIS MAY
TURN OUT TO BE A RATHER PIVOTAL DAY FOR OUR
COUNTRY'S FUTURE OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS.

RELEASE OF TOWER COMMISSION REPORT

THE TOWER COMMISSION -- APPOINTED BY THE
PRESIDENT IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE IRAN-CONTRA
AFFAIR -- WAS RELEASED THIS MORNING. I'M SURE

- 2 -

THAT ALL OF US HERE IN WASHINGTON AND AROUND THE COUNTRY ARE GOING TO BE LOOKING AT IT, AND REACTING TO IT, OVER THE NEXT DAYS AND WEEKS. AND THE WAY WE REACT IS GOING TO BE TERRIBLY IMPORTANT TO OUR COUNTRY.

I JOINED THE PRESIDENT IN WELCOMING THE RELEASE OF THE REPORT. IT CAN BE A MAJOR STEP IN HELPING US TAKE THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS NECESSARY AND GETTING THE ISSUE BEHIND US.

UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S ALREADY OBVIOUS THAT COLOSSAL BLUNDERS WERE MADE. SOME ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONNEL CHANGES MAY BE NEEDED. BUT THAT'S ULTIMATELY THE PRESIDENT'S CALL.

- 3 -

ONE IMMEDIATE AND NECESSARY STEP IS FOR THE PRESIDENT TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO EVERYONE THAT HIS HAND IS FIRMLY ON THE RUDDER -- THAT HE'S IN CHARGE, THAT HE'S MAKING THE DECISIONS, AND THAT THERE IS VIGOROUS FOLLOW-UP TO INSURE THOSE DECISIONS ARE BEING FAITHFULLY IMPLEMENTED. I'M CONFIDENT THE PRESIDENT WILL BE TAKING THOSE STEPS. I HAVEN'T HAD THE CHANCE TO READ THE ENTIRE REPORT YET. BUT AS WE DIGEST AND ACT ON THE REPORT, LET'S KEEP SEVERAL IMPORTANT THINGS IN MIND.

PRESIDENT TOOK INITIATIVE TO GET TRUTH OUT
FIRST, IT WAS THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES WHO CREATED THE TOWER COMMISSION. HE DIDN'T HAVE TO. BUT HE DID. BECAUSE HE WANTED

- 4 -

THE TRUTH TO BE TOLD. NOT BECAUSE THE REVELATIONS WE SEE IN THIS REPORT, AND ELSEWHERE, ARE NECESSARILY THE BEST THING IN THE WORLD FOR RONALD REAGAN. BUT BECAUSE GETTING THE TRUTH OUT IS BEST FOR THE COUNTRY.

IT WAS THE PRESIDENT, TOO, WHO ORDERED THE APPOINTMENT OF A SO-CALLED INDEPENDENT COUNSEL -- A SPECIAL PROSECUTOR. HE DIDN'T HAVE TO. BUT HE DID. BECAUSE HE WANTED THE TRUTH TO BE TOLD.

AND IT WAS THE PRESIDENT -- PRESIDENT REAGAN -- WHO HAS PLEDGED HIS COOPERATION TO THE VARIOUS CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS. AND WHO HAS DELIVERED ON THAT PLEDGE. IN FACT, DELIVERED TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT SOME HAVE

- 5 -

QUESTIONED WHETHER HE HAS TURNED OVER TO CONGRESS SOME MATERIAL HE SHOULDN'T HAVE. BUT THE PRESIDENT HAS GONE AHEAD AND GIVEN CONGRESS EVERYTHING IT HAS ASKED FOR. AND, AS WE HAVE SEEN IN OUR HISTORY, THE PRESIDENT DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THIS. BUT THIS PRESIDENT HAS. BECAUSE HE WANTS THE TRUTH TO BE TOLD.

THERE HAS BEEN NO COVER-UP; NO STONEWALLING; NO DUCKING RESPONSIBILITY. AT LEAST NOT BY THE PRESIDENT. THE COMMISSION ITSELF CONCLUDED, AND THIS IS A QUOTE FROM THE REPORT: "THE BOARD IS CONVINCED THAT THE PRESIDENT DOES INDEED WANT THE FULL STORY OUT."

- 6 -

AND IT SEEMS TO ME THAT, ALONE, IS ONE MARK OF THE KIND OF LEADERSHIP WE HAVE HAD FROM THIS PRESIDENT, AND ARE GOING TO CONTINUE TO HAVE THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

SO AS WE HEAR ABOUT, AND THINK ABOUT, THE TOWER COMMISSION REPORT, AND MAKE OUR OWN JUDGMENTS ABOUT "WHO SHOT JOHN" -- LET'S KEEP THIS VERY MUCH IN MIND: THE PRESIDENT SHOT NO ONE. AND HE HAS LED -- LED -- THE FIGHT TO FIND OUT WHO DID.

AND THAT BRINGS ME TO THE SECOND POINT THAT WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND. AND IN MANY WAYS, THIS IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT.

- 7 -

MUCH REMAINS THE SAME, DESPITE REPORT
AFTER TONIGHT'S NEWS SHOWS, TOMORROW'S
HEADLINES, AND ALL THE COMMENTARY AND DEBATE WE
ARE GOING TO HAVE OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS
-- SOME THINGS ARE NOT GOING TO BE ANY
DIFFERENT AT ALL.

RONALD REAGAN IS STILL GOING TO BE THE
PRESIDENT. AND HE'S GOING TO REMAIN THE
PRESIDENT UNTIL JANUARY 20, 1989 -- AND THAT'S
TWO YEARS AWAY.

AND THE ENORMOUS PROBLEMS THIS COUNTRY
FACES -- THOSE PROBLEMS ARE NOT GOING TO CHANGE
BECAUSE THE TOWER COMMISSION HAS FINISHED ITS
WORK. THEY WILL STILL BE THERE, AS DAUNTING AS
EVER.

- 8 -

AND NEITHER WILL WE LOSE THE OPPORTUNITIES WE HAVE AS A COUNTRY AND AS AMERICANS. THOSE OPPORTUNITIES -- TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINED PROSPERITY AT HOME; TO ASSERT OUR LEADERSHIP IN THE FREE WORLD; TO EXPAND THE FRONTIERS OF FREEDOM AROUND THE GLOBE -- THEY WILL STILL BE THERE, BEFORE AMERICA, BEFORE US.

AND THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS WILL REMAIN: CAN WE OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS? CAN WE SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES, AND DO THE NATION'S WORK?

TWO CHOICES

WE BASICALLY HAVE TWO CHOICES, NO MATTER WHAT TURNS OUT TO BE IN THE TOWER COMMISSION REPORT.

- 9 -

WE CAN REMAIN PREOCCUPIED WITH CRITICISM;
WITH FINDING OUT WHO TO BLAME AND FIRE; WITH
EXPRESSING DOOM AND GLOOM FOR THE COUNTRY AND
THE PRESIDENT.

OR WE CAN ACCEPT THE FACTS IN THE REPORT;
DEAL WITH THEM; AND, THEN, GET BACK TO THE
OTHER WORK OF THE COUNTRY. TOGETHER. WITH THE
PRESIDENT. WITH HIS LEADERSHIP. AND UNITED.
CERTAINLY NOT ON EVERYTHING. BUT AT LEAST ON
THIS: THAT WE ARE ALL AMERICANS. THAT WE ALL
WANT A STRONG AMERICA. AND THAT WE'RE NOT
GOING TO HAVE IT, UNLESS WE HAVE A STRONG
PRESIDENT.

- 10 -

IF WE FALTER, OUR ADVERSARIES WILL PROSPER

BECAUSE, MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, IF WE
DON'T JOIN TOGETHER, THERE ARE PLENTY OF
PROBLEMS IN THIS COUNTRY THAT ARE GOING TO GET
OUT OF HAND. AND PLENTY OF PEOPLE AROUND THE
GLOBE -- FROM MOSCOW TO MANAGUA, FROM TRIPOLI
TO TEHERAN -- WHO ARE MORE THAN READY TO TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF OUR DISUNITY OR DISCORD.

YOU CAN SAY MANY THINGS ABOUT MR. GORBACHEV
-- AND ON ANOTHER OCCASION, I'D BE HAPPY TO SAY
A FEW OF THOSE THINGS -- BUT ONE THING YOU
CAN'T DENY. HE IS PRESENTING US WITH A VERY
FORMIDABLE POLITICAL CHALLENGE.

- 12 -

ADROIT, MODERN-LOOKING DIPLOMACY, THAT SEEKS TO BLUR THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMUNISM AND FREEDOM. WELL, WE DON'T HAVE TO WONDER ANY MORE.

BUT NEITHER DO WE HAVE TO DESPAIR. NOT IF WE ARE UNITED.

GORBACHEV MAY BE -- LET'S FACE IT, IS -- GREAT AT P.R. BUT HE'S GOT A LOUSY PRODUCT. AND WE CAN SHOW HOW LOUSY IT IS BY OUR OWN PERFORMANCE, AS A NATION AND A PEOPLE.

BUT ONLY IF WE WORK TOGETHER.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE: AT HOME...

WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO? WE HAVE TO PUT OUR OWN ECONOMIC HOUSE IN ORDER, AND MAKE SURE IT STAYS THAT WAY. THE FIRST PRIORITIES THERE ARE

- 13 -

TO DO SOMETHING DRASTIC AND PERMANENT ABOUT REDUCING FEDERAL BUDGET DEFICITS; AND TO MAKE SURE THAT WE DON'T RETREAT ON THE PRINCIPLES OF TAX REFORM, WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL TO OUR LONG-TERM ECONOMIC VITALITY.

WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING QUICKLY AND VIGOROUSLY ABOUT TRADE DEFICITS. I KNOW THAT IS A VERY HIGH PRIORITY TO THIS INDUSTRY. BUT IF WE ARE TO DO SOMETHING THAT WORKS, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO AVOID THE TRAP OF TURNING THIS INTO AN IRRATIONAL, PARTISAN, BIDDING CONTEST FOR POPULARITY AMONG COMPETING INTEREST GROUPS.

WE NEED A SOUND, COMPREHENSIVE, BIPARTISAN APPROACH THAT WILL SHOW THOSE WHO DON'T TRADE FAIRLY THAT WE MEAN BUSINESS; PROVE TO THOSE

- 14 -

WHO DO THAT WE DO NOT SEEK TO PENALIZE THEM;
AND WHICH GETS AT BOTH THE SHORT-RUN PROBLEMS,
AND THE LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS, TO THIS TERRIBLE
NATIONAL PROBLEM.

...AND AROUND THE WORLD

AND WE MUST MOVE, MOST URGENTLY OF ALL, TO
INSURE THAT AMERICA REMAINS THE STRONGEST
NATION ON EARTH, BOTH MILITARILY AND
POLITICALLY.

WE START BY FACING THIS TRUTH: A STRONG
DEFENSE COSTS MONEY -- BIG MONEY. THAT DOESN'T
MEAN WE HAVE TO TOLERATE WASTE IN THE
PENTAGON. THERE IS NO GROUP THAT KNOWS ANY
BETTER THAN THIS ONE THAT TOILET SEATS AND
SCREWS DON'T COST THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS.

- 15 -

BUT WE HAVE TO BE SECOND TO NONE IN OUR MILITARY TECHNOLOGY. WE HAVE TO BE SECOND TO NONE IN THE QUALITY OF OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL. AND WE HAVE TO BE SECOND TO NONE IN OUR WILLINGNESS TO BEAR THE COST OF FREEDOM.

AND, TOO, WE HAVE TO MATCH OUR MILITARY STRENGTH WITH A STRONG, ACTIVE FOREIGN POLICY. ARMS CONTROL REMAINS AT THE TOP OF OUR AGENDA. REYKJAVIK REPRESENTED A WATERSHED. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT AND A SOVIET LEADER TALKED SERIOUSLY ABOUT LARGE REDUCTIONS -- NOT LIMITS, BUT ACTUAL REDUCTIONS -- OF NUCLEAR STOCKPILES. AND IT RESULTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEGOTIATING OUTLINES WHICH CAN

- 16 -

PROVIDE THE FRAMEWORK FOR ACTUAL AGREEMENTS.

IF THE SOVIETS WILL JUST NEGOTIATE IN GOOD FAITH.

AND WE HAVE OTHER IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL TASKS. WE HAVE ONLY BEGUN TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO DEAL WITH THE SCOURGE OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN DRUGS. WE HAVE NOT EVEN GOTTEN THAT FAR IN COMING UP WITH A STRATEGY TO STOP INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. AND WE HAVE STILL TO PROVE THAT WE WILL MEET OUR RESPONSIBILITY, AND MATCH OUR RINGING RHETORIC, BY PROVIDING REAL, SUSTAINED SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE FIGHTING FOR THEIR FREEDOM AROUND THE GLOBE.

WE CAN DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

THESE CHALLENGES ARE ENORMOUS. BUT SO ARE AMERICAN RESOURCES AND INGENUITY.

- 17 -

WE HAVE SPENT AND SPENT, UNTIL OUR FEDERAL DEFICITS HAVE GOTTEN OUT OF HAND. WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO MUSTER THE WILL AND THE WAYS TO GET THEM BACK UNDER CONTROL.

WE USED TO BE WAY AHEAD OF THE PACK IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND WORLD TRADE. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND OUR WAY BACK INTO THE LEAD.

WE CREATED THE FIRST NUCLEAR WEAPONS. AND NOW WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAD THE SEARCH FOR WAYS TO RENDER THEM OBSOLETE.

AMERICA HAS PROBLEMS. BUT WE HAVE ONE THING IN MUCH GREATER MEASURE: PROMISE. OUR PROMISE AS A NATION AND AS A PEOPLE.

SO, LET US PICK UP THE TOWER REPORT, READ IT CAREFULLY AND TAKE WHATEVER LESSONS IT HAS TO OFFER.

AND THEN LET'S PUT IT DOWN, AND GET BACK TO THE NATION'S BUSINESS.