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BENTONVILLE, Ark., Feb. 14 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) tonight said Richard Nixon "prefers to employ the voice of reason, rather than passion" in unifying the country, as Abraham Lincoln did over a century ago.

Speaking at the Benton County Lincoln Day dinner in Bentonville, Ark., Dole said, "Just over 100 years ago, America was divided as it is today by the issues of race and war. The survival and progress of the United States as one nation was in doubt."

"Then as now," he added, "there emerged a leader who approached the Presidency in a spirit of calm, reason and with a determination to bind up a fractured country."

"In 1969," Dole added, "we are confronted with an economic, social and political crisis of such magnitude as we have rarely seen since Lincoln's time."

"And once again, the American people have chosen a leader who replaces thundering rhetoric with a voice of reason and with action based on realism so that the nation can move forward together."

"In his inaugural address," Dole said, "President Nixon did not diagram our failures, but spoke instead of our hopes and ambitions and of what a partnership of the government, private enterprise and individual citizens can do to turn those hopes and ambitions into action to bring peace in Vietnam, put our economy back on a solid footing and end urban blight, poverty and crime."

"The President needs our support in lessening the volume of strident and unconstructive dissent," Dole added. "Most of all, he needs us to help remove the causes of domestic discord that now imperil us as one nation and as a free people."

Quoting Lincoln, Dole concluded, "President Nixon believes the proper role of government is to aid and support the people in those tasks which 'they cannot do at all, or cannot so well do in their separate and individual capacities.'"