

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 1984

CONTACT: WALT RIKER,
SCOTT RICHARDSON 202/224-6521

REMARKS BY SENATOR BOB DOLE

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD DINNER MARVIN CENTER, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Washington, D.C. -- May 9, 1984

Thank you very much, President Elliott. Needless to say, I am delighted to be here this evening, and flattered by your invitation to speak to such a distinguished gathering of scientists and academics.

A century ago, another university president named Eliot -- in this case, Charles William Eliot of Harvard -- wrote to a friend about a worrisome trend. "The fact is," he told his friend, "that the enlargement of the functions of the general government is the great political sin...of our times." Well, even Eliot changed his mind to some degree by the time the 20th century ushered out its simpler, more pastoral predecessor. And few among us can question the central role assumed by modern government in guiding economic progress and promoting what we still like to call the general welfare. The debate that goes on -- indeed, that grows more heated as the Reagan Administration pursues fundamental changes in the size and scope of government, is over how best to achieve those exalted aims.

THE ECONOMIC BATTLEGROUND

The economy is the chief battleground. Consider a government that drains off tens of billions of dollars of capital. However noble its stated objectives...is that government promoting social justice, or is it actually undercutting its goal by discouraging private investment? The answer to that question, in my opinion, is painfully obvious. Yet, some tell us the only solution to government's past mistakes is -- more government. Specifically, an "industrial policy" to be hammered out by labor, business, the academic community, all gathered around the federal table by a benign Uncle Sam.

Well, better a federal table than a public feeding trough. Better -- but not good enough. I believe there is an alternative. Namely, more reliance upon individual entrepreneurs and academic experimentation. Other nations may rely on central planning for their entry ticket to global competition. I believe we should entrust the future to those most nearly caught up in it. This evening, I am looking at a room full of such pacesetters.

NEW JOBS AND NEW SCIENCE

Innovation provides the building blocks of any truly lasting prosperity. But it can hardly flourish if intellectual property rights to a new product or process are clouded. A government eager to sample the economic benefits of scientific research has an obligation to clear the crowded path that leads from a test-tube or drawing board to a patent or copyright.

(MORE)

Four years ago, with my colleague Birch Bayh, I was pleased to jump into this particular arena. In the act to which President Elliott has so generously referred, we set out to dispel at least some of Uncle Sam's reputation as a bureaucratic Indian giver. We cleared much of the tangle of bureaucratic brambles that frustrated university and small business ownership of inventions arising from federally assisted research. Since then, corporate contributions to campus research have grown to nearly half a billion dollars annually. Perhaps the greatest success story is the biotechnology industry, where this country holds a commanding lead over its foreign competitors.

A CLEAR TITLE FOR INNOVATION

I've returned to the field to propose the next logical step. The Senate bill number is S. 2171, and it would establish a clear and consistent presumption in favor of contractor ownership for all businesses, regardless of size. It would also extend the ownership provisions of the original Bayh-Dole bill to non-academic contractors who manage government-owned lab facilities. And it would repeal certain existing conditions placed on university licensing of inventions, such as the five-year cap on the grant of any exclusive license to a large business.

PUBLIC INTEREST -- PRIVATE INVESTMENT

I have not left out the public interest in addressing these several private interests. For example, I would disallow contractor ownership of an invention required by national security, or where the contractor is not located within the United States. What's more, I would permit, indeed, urge, agencies to grant licenses to competitors if no effective steps are being taken toward commercialization.

For a quarter of a century -- just about as long as I've been in this city -- efforts have been underway to develop some kind of uniform patent policy. Today, at long last, we have a viable proposal. Hearings on S. 2171 have been completed in the Senate Judiciary Committee and will begin next week in the House Committee on Science and Technology. There is a realistic chance that the bill could become law this year, and I invite you to lend your support to this legislative effort.

CONCLUSION

America's future demands the liberation of her keenest intellects and broadest imaginations. Over and over, throughout our history, the academic community has replaced what was adequate for one generation with what is superior for the next. But it cannot compete with one hand tied behind its back. I propose to untie a few knots. I am grateful for your help and support. Now...if only someone here can invent a pill that makes Congressmen want to balance the budget....