

BOB DOLE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PHILIPPINE BASES

AQUINO ADDRESS EXCELLENT

LIKE EVERY OTHER SENATOR I'VE SPOKEN TO OVER THE PAST 24 HOURS, I WAS DEEPLY IMPRESSED WITH PRESIDENT AQUINO'S ELOQUENT ADDRESS TO OUR JOINT MEETING. AND, HAVING HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH HER IN MY OFFICE AFTER HER SPEECH YESTERDAY, I WAS EQUALLY IMPRESSED ON A PERSONAL LEVEL WITH HER QUIET DETERMINATION, COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY AND WILLINGNESS TO MEET THE DIFFICULT RESPONSIBILITIES SHE BEARS FOR HER COUNTRY.

PRESIDENT AQUINO DESERVES U.S. SUPPORT, AND HER COUNTRY DESERVES U.S. ASSISTANCE. AND, OF COURSE, WE HAVE ALREADY PROVIDED SUBSTANTIAL SUMS FOR FY86 AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE APPROVING ADDITIONAL LARGE SUMS FOR FY87. WE ARE ALSO TAKING A LOOK AT THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME SUPPLEMENTAL AID THIS YEAR, THOUGH THAT REQUEST WILL HAVE TO BE WEIGHED AGAINST THE VERY DIFFICULT BUDGET DILEMMA WE FACE AND THE OTHER EQUALLY HIGH PRIORITY DEMANDS FOR ANY ADDITIONAL FUNDS WE CAN SCRAPE UP.

IMPORTANCE OF U.S. BASES

ONE ISSUE I DID RAISE WITH HER IN OUR MEETING YESTERDAY WAS THE U.S. BASES. I EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR HER COMMITMENT TO ABIDE BY THE BASES AGREEMENT THROUGH 1991 AND UNDERSTANDING FOR HER DESIRE NOT TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE IN DETAIL ON THIS TRIP. IT IS THE RIGHT COURSE FOR BOTH COUNTRIES TO TAKE UP THIS ISSUE IN DETAIL AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT ITSELF. IN THE MEANTIME, THOUGH, IT IS ALSO THE APPROPRIATE COURSE FOR BOTH SIDES TO KEEP THEIR POWDER DRY -- TO AVOID ANY ACTIONS WHICH SERIOUSLY COMPLICATE OR RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ISSUE. THAT WAS WHAT I UNDERSTOOD HER POSITION TO BE, AND IT IS THE POSITION I EMBRACE, AS WELL.

CONCERN ABOUT CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION ACTIONS

FOR THAT REASON, I AM CONCERNED ABOUT PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THE ACTIONS OF THE PHILIPPINE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION, WHOSE MEMBERS WERE IN FACT APPOINTED BY PRESIDENT AQUINO. YESTERDAY, THE COMMISSION APPROVED A PROVISION FOR THE NEW CONSTITUTION WHICH WILL REQUIRE ANY EXTENSION OF THE BASES AGREEMENT TO BE DONE BY TREATY RATHER THAN EXECUTIVE AGREEMENT. UNDER THAT PROVISION, IT COULD EVEN WELL BE THAT THE BASES ISSUE WILL END UP BEING SUBMITTED TO THE PHILIPPINE PEOPLE IN A REFERENDUM. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THIS WHOLE PROCEDURE PRACTICALLY GUARANTEES THAT THE BASES ISSUE WILL TURN OUT TO BE AN EXPLOSIVE DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUE IN THE PHILIPPINES AND SUBJECT TO BEING MADE A HOSTAGE TO THE BROADER POLITICAL STRUGGLE IN THE COUNTRY.

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I SHOULD ALSO ADD THAT IT IS ALMOST AS DISTURBING THAT THE COMMISSION, BY A RELATIVELY NARROW MARGIN, TURNED BACK AN ATTEMPT TO INCLUDE IN THE CONSTITUTION RIGHT NOW A BAN ON THE BASES AFTER 1991.

ANOTHER OMINOUS NOTE

NEW PRESS REPORTS THIS MORNING ADD ANOTHER OMINOUS NOTE. THESE REPORTS SAY THAT THE COMMISSION IS POISED TO ADOPT FOR THE CONSTITUTION YET ANOTHER PROVISION DECLARING THE PHILIPPINES A "NUCLEAR FREE COUNTRY," IN WHICH NUCLEAR WEAPONS COULD NOT BE STOCKPILED OR STORED. HOW THIS WOULD IMPACT ON THE BASES, WHERE WE HAVE MANY SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT THAT ARE CAPABLE OF CARRYING NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND ARE AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF OUR NUCLEAR DETERRENT IN THE PACIFIC, REMAINS UNCLEAR. BUT THIS WHOLE ISSUE RAISES A NEW, HUGE QUESTION MARK OVER THE FUTURE OF CLARK AND SUBIC.

NOW LET ME MAKE CLEAR THAT I FULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THESE ARE ISSUES WITHIN THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT OF THE PHILIPPINES TO DECIDE. IT IS UP TO THE FILIPINO PEOPLE TO DECIDE WHETHER AND HOW THEY WANT TO DEAL WITH THESE ISSUES IN THEIR OWN CONSTITUTION.

BUT IT IS HARD TO SQUARE PRESIDENT AQUINO'S DESIRE -- WHICH, AGAIN, I UNDERSTAND -- NOT TO ADDRESS THE BASES ISSUE WITH US NOW WITH THE FACT THAT, AT THE VERY SAME TIME, THE COMMISSION WHICH SHE HERSELF APPOINTED SEEMS TO BE TAKING MAJOR STEPS TO SHAPE -- AND SHAPE MAY BE MUCH TOO WEAK A WORD -- THE OPTIONS WE HAVE FOR DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE DOWN THE ROAD. IF THE PHILIPPINE SIDE WANTS TO TAKE FUNDAMENTAL DECISIONS ON THE BASES ISSUE NOW -- AND I DON'T THINK WE HAVE TO, BUT IF THEY DO -- THEN THE PHILIPPINE SIDE OUGHT TO BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE DIRECTLY AND IN DETAIL WITH US NOW, TOO.

MR. PRESIDENT, I STRONGLY URGE THE ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PRESIDENT AQUINO'S PRESENCE HERE TO RAISE THESE CONCERNS WITH HER AND TO OBTAIN FROM HER ASSURANCES THAT -- IF WE WANT TO PUT OFF DECISIONS ON THIS ISSUE FOR NOW, AS WE SHOULD -- THEN HER SIDE IS NOT GOING TO TAKE ANY IRREVOCABLE, UNILATERAL DECISIONS, EITHER.

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