

News from Senator

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REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
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DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

INTRODUCTION

IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE HERE TODAY AT THIS GREAT UNIVERSITY, PARTICIPATING IN THIS MILESTONE EVENT IN YOUR LIVES. I KNOW, LIKE MOST OF US IN WASHINGTON, YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING THE IRAN-CONTRA CONTROVERSY. SO I THOUGHT I'D START TODAY BY TOUCHING BRIEFLY ON THAT STILL-UNFOLDING DRAMA.

GET ALL THE FACTS ON THE TABLE

FIRST OF ALL, LET ME SAY THAT THE SOONER WE GET ALL THE FACTS OF THIS SAD EPISODE OUT ON TABLE, THE BETTER. THE PRESIDENT'S CREDIBILITY IS BEING CHALLENGED; HIS ABILITY TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP QUESTIONED. WE CAN'T STAND BY AND LET THIS AFFAIR, BIT BY BIT, SAP THE PRESIDENT'S AUTHORITY.

THE PRESIDENT IS DOING HIS PART TO GET THE FACTS OUT. I THINK HE DEMONSTRATED THAT AGAIN LAST WEEKEND, IN HIS RADIO ADDRESS. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT MISTAKES WERE MADE, HE HAS TAKEN A SERIES OF ACTIONS TO KEEP HIM OUT FRONT ON THIS ISSUE -- CALLING FOR AN INDEPENDENT COUNSEL, APPOINTING THE TOWER COMMISSION AND SELECTING A NEW NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER.

BUT, IF WE ARE TO GET THIS AFFAIR RESOLVED AND BEHIND US, OTHERS NOW HAVE TO FOLLOW THE PRESIDENT'S LEAD.

THOSE WHO WERE INVOLVED IN QUESTIONABLE ACTIVITIES IN THE FIRST PLACE BEAR A PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP THE COUNTRY OUT OF ITS PRESENT PREDICAMENT. NONE OF US HAS THE RIGHT TO DEMAND THAT THEY GIVE UP THE LEGAL PROTECTIONS THEY ENJOY AS AMERICANS. BUT WE DO HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS THE VIEW THAT THE COUNTRY MUST COME FIRST -- THAT IT IS VITAL TO HELP THE PRESIDENT RESTORE THE CREDIBILITY OF HIS ADMINISTRATION.

THE CONGRESS HAS AN OBLIGATION, TOO, TO ACT AS SWIFTLY AND RESPONSIBLY AS THE PRESIDENT. THREE WEEKS AGO, I SUGGESTED WE CREATE A SPECIAL CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE, TO AVOID A PROLIFERATION OF ILL-ORGANIZED, PARTISAN WITCH HUNTS. AFTER SOME FALSE STARTS, I THINK WE'RE ALMOST THERE. WHEN THE CONGRESS CONVENES JANUARY 6, IT IS MY HOPE THAT A SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE WILL HIT THE GROUND RUNNING, WITH ALL THE POWERS AND TOOLS IT NEEDS TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS AFFAIR.

POLICY MISTAKES

WE NEEDN'T WAIT UNTIL JANUARY, THOUGH, TO PONDER SOME ASPECTS OF THIS MATTER. SOME FACTS ARE ALREADY ON THE TABLE, FAIR GAME FOR COMMENT AND CRITICISM. THAT'S ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THE POLICY AREA. AND IN THAT AREA, MISTAKES WERE MADE, AS THE PRESIDENT SAID. AND SOME OF THEM WERE DILLIES.

THE GOAL OF THE IRAN INITIATIVE MADE SENSE. THE EXECUTION OF THAT INITIATIVE DIDN'T. YOU CAN DEFEND AN EFFORT TO BUILD BRIDGES TO MODERATES IN IRAN. BUT YOU HAVE TO BE MIGHTY SURE THAT THOSE BRIDGES DON'T BECOME ONE-WAY STREETS, PAVED WITH UNILATERAL CONCESSIONS. AND YOU HAVE TO BE EQUALLY SURE THAT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS NOT MISPERCEIVED FOR WHAT YOU CLEARLY SHOULDN'T BE DOING: TRADING ARMS FOR HOSTAGES.

HELPING THE CONTRAS, IN MY VIEW, ALSO MAKES GREAT SENSE -- BOTH IN DEFENSE OF OUR OWN NATIONAL SECURITY AND IN PURSUIT OF THE GOAL OF DEMOCRACY FOR ALL IN THE HEMISPHERE. IF WE'RE SERIOUS ABOUT DEMOCRACY, WE HAVE TO TAKE SERIOUSLY THE THREAT POSED BY A SECOND TOTALITARIAN MARXIST STATE IN THE REGION.

CERTAINLY THE LEADERS IN MOSCOW AND HAVANA UNDERSTAND THE HIGH STAKES INVOLVED IN NICARAGUA. THAT'S WHY SOVIET AND CUBAN ADVISERS ARE CRAWLING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. THAT'S WHY THE SOVIETS HAVE SHIPPED HUNDREDS OF TONS OF THEIR MOST MODERN MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO THE SANDINISTAS, INCLUDING -- IN RECENT MONTHS -- A BRAND NEW SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SYSTEM.

THE UNITED STATES HAS A LEGITIMATE RIGHT TO RESPOND TO THIS THREAT. AND THE 99TH CONGRESS DID VOTE, TWICE, TO APPROVE AN ENTIRELY LEGITIMATE, ABOVE-BOARD PROGRAM OF AID TO THE CONTRAS, AS PART OF THE AMERICAN RESPONSE.

SO THERE IS NOTHING WRONG -- IN FACT, THERE'S EVERYTHING RIGHT -- ABOUT SUPPORTING THE CONTRAS. IT IS ESTABLISHED, OPEN U.S. POLICY.

BUT BREAKING THE LAW OR DEFYING THE WILL OF CONGRESS, EVEN TO HELP THE CONTRAS, WAS JUST PLAIN STUPID. AND MOST REGRETTABLE OF ALL, THE SIDESHOW THAT HAS BEEN CREATED IS BLURRING OUR FOCUS ON THE BRUTAL REALITY OF NICARAGUA -- THE REALITY OF A HEAVILY ARMED, AGGRESSIVE, TOTALITARIAN REGIME, WHOSE GOALS ARE UNDERMINING REGIONAL DEMOCRACY AND SUPPRESSING THEIR OWN PEOPLE.

THE TASKS AHEAD

AS WE PONDER THE MISTAKES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE, THOUGH, AND CONDUCT A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF THE WHOLE IRAN-CONTRA AFFAIR, LET'S KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE.

"THE BUCK STOPS HERE" IS A SLOGAN TO US, BUT IT'S A HARD FACT OF LIFE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. HE, ALONE, MAKES THE HARD CALLS -- DAY IN, AND DAY OUT. IN REACTING TO THE ERRORS OF IRAN, LET'S NOT FORGET THE LONG STRING OF RIGHT DECISIONS THIS PRESIDENT HAS MADE -- THE REBUILDING OF AMERICA'S DEFENSES; THE

GIANT STEPS FORWARD TOWARD REAL REDUCTIONS IN NUCLEAR ARMS; THE RESCUE OF GRENADA; AND ALL THE REST. THOSE ACTIONS WILL SURVIVE AS THE REAL LEGACY OF THIS ADMINISTRATION.

AND, ABOVE ALL, LET'S NOT GET BOGGED DOWN IN A PARALYZING ORGY OF SELF-RECRIMINATION. THOSE OF US WITH REAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONDUCTING THE NATION'S BUSINESS HAVE TO LOOK AHEAD. THE TASKS THERE ARE FORMIDABLE.

RESTORE NATIONAL CREDIBILITY

FIRST, WE'VE GOT TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE TO OUR NATIONAL CREDIBILITY. THE FIRST STEP IS REAFFIRMING THAT AMERICAN POLICY REMAINS, CLEARLY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY: NO NEGOTIATIONS WITH, NO CONCESSIONS TO TERRORISTS. PERIOD.

SECRETARY SHULTZ CARRIED THAT MESSAGE TO OUR NATO ALLIES THIS WEEK, AND HE GOT AN ENCOURAGING RESPONSE. OUR ALLIES, GENERALLY SPEAKING, APPEAR ANXIOUS TO PUT THIS MATTER BEHIND US. THEY KNOW, AS WE DO, THAT THE ALLIANCE FACES AN ENORMOUS THREAT FROM GROWING SOVIET MILITARY MIGHT. AND THEY KNOW, TOO, THAT -- AS A RESULT OF THE DEFENSE AND ARMS CONTROL INITIATIVES WE HAVE ALREADY UNDERTAKEN -- WE MAY HAVE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY DURING THE NEXT TWO YEARS FOR A REAL BREAKTHROUGH IN NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTIONS.

BUT THE ALLIANCE HAS TO BE UNIFIED IN DEALING WITH THESE MATTERS, WITH NO LINGERING DOUBTS AMONG US ABOUT OUR BASIC POLICIES AND RESOLVE. AND, FROM OUR STANDPOINT, IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT THAT WE PAY SPECIAL HEED TO THE SITUATION OF THOSE EUROPEAN LEADERS WHO HAVE STAKED A GREAT DEAL POLITICALLY ON THEIR PAST, STRONG SUPPORT FOR AMERICAN POLICIES. THEY NEED A VISIBLE SIGN THAT WE ARE SENSITIVE TO THEIR POSITION AND TO THE VULNERABILITIES THAT THE IRAN INITIATIVE MAY HAVE GENERATED FOR THEM. WE NEED TO SHOW, CLEARLY, THAT WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH THEM, JUST AS IN THE PAST THEY'VE WORKED CLOSELY WITH AND SUPPORTED US.

SO I WOULD URGE THAT THE PRESIDENT, PERSONALLY, ASK THE LEADERS OF OUR MAJOR ALLIES TO COME TO WASHINGTON FOR A SPECIAL SUMMIT, WHERE WE CAN LAY ALL THE CARDS ON THE TABLE ON THE IRAN INITIATIVE. TELL THEM WHAT WE'VE DONE, AND WHY. ADMIT WHERE MISTAKES WERE MADE. AND GIVE THEM MEANINGFUL ASSURANCES THAT THERE WILL BE NO MORE ARMS TO IRAN; NO MORE SECRET MISSIONS TO TEHERAN.

AND, WITH THAT MATTER LAID TO REST, WE CAN ALSO MAKE A FRESH START ON THE BROADER CHALLENGE: HOW WE CAN COORDINATE EFFECTIVELY, AND WORK TOGETHER, TO STAMP OUT TERRORISM AND DEAL WITH THE REAL SECURITY THREATS TO THE WESTERN ALLIANCE.

GETTING OUR NATIONAL SECURITY APPARATUS IN ORDER

AND WE HAVE A SECOND LARGE AND PRESSING TASK: GETTING OUR NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY APPARATUS IN ORDER. THE TOWER COMMISSION WILL BE LOOKING INTO THIS AND MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS. BUT, SIMULTANEOUSLY, WE HAVE TO STEP BACK FROM THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION AND ASSESS THE BIGGER PICTURE -- THE WHOLE RANGE OF PRESIDENTIAL-CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS IN FORMULATING AND IMPLEMENTING NATIONAL SECURITY POLICIES.

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ONE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM WE HAVE -- AND I THINK IT UNDERLIES THIS WHOLE MESS -- IS THE GROWING GAP BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE AUTHORITY THAT CONGRESS IS WILLING TO CEDE HIM TO DO THE JOB.

THE CONSTITUTION SAYS WE HAVE ONE PRESIDENT, WHO CONDUCTS OUR NATIONAL SECURITY POLICIES. BUT CONGRESS SOMETIMES ACTS LIKE THERE OUGHT TO BE 535 PEOPLE SITTING IN THE OVAL OFFICE, CALLING THE SHOTS ON EVERYTHING FROM HOW MANY MX MISSILES WE NEED TO WHO COOKS THE MEALS AT OUR EMBASSIES OVERSEAS.

CONGRESS HAS A LEGITIMATE ROLE TO PLAY IN FORMULATING AND OVERSEEING OUR NATIONAL SECURITY POLICIES. BUT IT IS NOT THE ROLE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE. WE HAVE TO LET THE PRESIDENT BE THE PRESIDENT.

TIME FOR A FRESH START

MUCH OF THAT IS A MATTER OF ATTITUDE AND TRUST. AND MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT -- TRUST HAS GOT TO BE A TWO-WAY STREET. IF THE PRESIDENT WANTS OUR TRUST -- AND HIS RECORD INDICATES HE SHOULD HAVE IT -- HE HAS TO TRUST US, TOO. THAT MEANS A GENUINE, SINCERE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT THE CONGRESS HAS A KEY ROLE TO PLAY. IT MEANS MORE CONSULTATIONS; MORE TIMELY CONSULTATIONS; NO MORE CURVE BALLS IN POLICY AND PROCEDURES. IF CONGRESS IS GOING TO BE IN ON THE CRASH LANDINGS, WE HAVE TO BE IN ON THE TAKEOFFS.

BUT CONGRESS, TOO, HAS TO CLEAN UP ITS ACT. WE MUST -- MUST -- DO SOMETHING ABOUT LEAKS OF NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION. WE'RE WAY PAST THE NUISANCE STAGE; LEAKS ARE NOW A REAL AND PRESENT DANGER TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES. WE HAVE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF HEARINGS -- ESPECIALLY THE "FISHING EXPEDITION" TYPES OR THOSE ORCHESTRATED PRIMARILY TO EMBARRASS THE ADMINISTRATION.

THE BOTTOM LINE ON BOTH SIDES IS: LESS CONFRONTATION; MORE COOPERATION.

THE PRESIDENT HAS INDICATED HE WANTS TO COOPERATE WITH CONGRESS. HE HAS A NEW NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. AND WE ON CAPITOL HILL ARE ABOUT TO LAUNCH A NEW CONGRESS.

THE TIME MAY BE RIPE FOR BOTH SIDES -- THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP -- TO SIT DOWN PRIVATELY AND TRY TO FORGE A FRESH START. AS REPUBLICAN LEADER OF THE SENATE, I AM READY TO LEND MY GOOD OFFICES TO A QUIET DIALOGUE BETWEEN THIS REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT AND THE LEADERS OF THIS DEMOCRATICALLY-CONTROLLED CONGRESS -- TO SEE IF WE CAN'T GET BACK ON A COMMON TRACK AIMED AT THE NATIONAL INTEREST.

UPDATING NATIONAL SECURITY LAWS

FINALLY, I THINK WE NEED TO RE-EXAMINE AND UPDATE SOME OF THE LAWS WHICH GOVERN EXECUTIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL ROLES IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE CONGRESS IN 1973 PASSED THE WAR POWERS RESOLUTION, SETTING LIMITS ON THE PRESIDENT'S AUTHORITY TO USE MILITARY FORCE WITHOUT SPECIFIC CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION. BUT BACK IN 1973, WHEN THE RESOLUTION WAS CRAFTED AND PASSED BY THE CONGRESS, TERRORISM WAS SIMPLY NOT SEEN AS A MAJOR THREAT TO AMERICA AND AMERICANS. IT WAS JUST NOT CONSIDERED, OR DEBATED, AS WE PRODUCED THAT LEGISLATION.

AS A RESULT, THE PROCEDURES OF THE RESOLUTION ARE TOO CUMBERSOME TO GUARANTEE THE PRESIDENT WILL BE ABLE TO ORDER SWIFT, SECURE AMERICAN COUNTER-STRIKES AGAINST TERRORISTS. AS I DID LAST YEAR, I INTEND TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION IN THE 100TH CONGRESS TO CORRECT THIS PROBLEM -- TO GIVE THE PRESIDENT LIMITED BUT SPECIFIC AUTHORITY TO DEAL WITH THE TERRORIST THREAT.

WE ALSO NEED TO LOOK AT THE CURRENT PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS OF ACTIONS TAKEN UNDER THE WAR POWERS RESOLUTION, THE INTELLIGENCE OVERSIGHT ACT AND OTHER NATIONAL SECURITY-RELATED LAWS. CONGRESS DOES HAVE A NEED FOR INFORMATION ON THESE ACTIVITIES. BUT, IN MEETING THIS LEGITIMATE NEED, I AM DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT WE ARE PROVIDING TOO MANY PEOPLE TOO MUCH INFORMATION ABOUT ACTIVITIES THAT TRULY MAY REQUIRE STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY. TO UNDERSCORE THE POINT, THE COMBINED MEMBERSHIP AND STAFF OF THE TWO INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEES IS OVER 100 PEOPLE.

ONE IDEA WOULD BE TO GIVE THE PRESIDENT SPECIFIC AUTHORITY, IN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE CIRCUMSTANCES, TO BYPASS FULL COMMITTEE NOTIFICATION AND INSTEAD INFORM ONLY THE FOUR LEADERS OF THE CONGRESS -- THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY LEADERS OF THE SENATE; THE SPEAKER AND MINORITY LEADER OF THE HOUSE. AS A SAFEGUARD, WE COULD EVEN PERMIT THOSE FOUR BY MAJORITY VOTE TO OVERTURN THE PRESIDENT'S JUDGMENT AND REQUIRE WIDER NOTIFICATION, IF THEY CONCLUDED THE PRESIDENT WAS ACTING UNWISELY OR FOR THE WRONG MOTIVES.

AND LET ME STRESS THIS: THE GOAL OF THESE REFORMS IS NOT TO STRENGTHEN THE PRESIDENT, NOR TO WEAKEN THE CONGRESS. THE GOAL, INSTEAD, IS THAT WE ACT IN ACCORD WITH THIS SIMPLE TRUTH: AMERICA WILL BE STRONG ONLY IF WE HAVE A STRONG PRESIDENT, WORKING WITH A RESPONSIBLE CONGRESS, IN PURSUIT OF THE NATIONAL INTEREST.

THE PART YOU CAN PLAY

SO THESE ARE SOME OF THE DIFFICULT CHALLENGES THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS FACE. BUT MEETING THESE CHALLENGES IS NOT JUST THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A FEW OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON.

IF OUR COUNTRY IS TO ACCOMPLISH THE AMBITIOUS GOALS WE HAVE SET, ALL OF US MUST DO OUR PART. AND THOSE, LIKE YOU, WHO HAVE ENJOYED THE PRIVILEGE OF AN EXCELLENT EDUCATION AND WHO CAN TRULY ASPIRE TO GREAT THINGS -- YOU HAVE THE BIGGEST RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL.

IT IS EASY TODAY -- IN THE MIDST OF ANOTHER GOVERNMENTAL CRISIS -- TO BECOME CYNICAL; TO DECIDE THAT NOTHING HAS CHANGED, AND NOTHING EVER WILL.

AND IF THAT'S THE CONCLUSION THAT PEOPLE LIKE YOU -- THINKING PEOPLE, EDUCATED PEOPLE -- IF THAT'S THE CONCLUSION YOU COME TO, YOU'RE GOING TO BE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT. NOTHING WILL CHANGE.

BUT IF, INSTEAD, YOU LOOK AT THINGS -- IN WASHINGTON OR WHEREVER YOU ARE -- AND SAY: YES, THERE ARE PROBLEMS, BUT I'M GOING TO TRY TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT -- THEN THINGS WILL GET BETTER.

THERE IS A PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNMENT BASED ON THAT KIND OF INDIVIDUAL EFFORT AND DETERMINATION. IT'S CALLED DEMOCRACY. IT HAS SERVED US WELL FOR TWO CENTURIES. AND, IF WE LET IT, IT CAN SERVE US EVEN BETTER IN THE DAYS AND YEARS AHEAD.