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NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

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PRESIDENT CLINTON & NATIONAL SECURITY

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S CLAIMS OF POLICY SUCCESS FAR REMOVED FROM REALITY; ADMINISTRATION HAS NO MISSILE DEFENSE PLAN TO DEFEND AMERICA

President Clinton claimed great success for his foreign and defense policy in a commencement address at the United States Coast Guard Academy earlier today. His claims, however, are far removed from reality and demonstrate that his greatest strength is rhetorical excess, not policy success. Each of his claims demonstrates more about his determination to mask his real national security record, rather than to display global leadership to protect American interests and promote American values.

President Clinton claims he has ensured the most able military in the world. America does have the best armed forces the world has ever known thanks to the military rebuilding begun under Ronald Reagan. The American military is second to none today in spite of President Clinton's efforts -- not because of them. Under President Clinton, the U.S. Armed Forces have endured the assault of defense spending cuts. President Clinton has opposed Republican efforts to increase the readiness of U.S. Armed Forces. Last year, President Clinton vetoed a major defense bill because it had too much money, because it placed restrictions on his ability to place American forces under the command of the United Nations, and because it provided for defending America from today's dangers and tomorrow's threats.

President Clinton claimed credit for deterring Iraqi aggression in the Persian Gulf in the same week he gave Saddam Hussein his greatest victory since the invasion of Kuwait. Blessing a U.N deal to reduce Iraqi domestic discontent with Saddam Hussein will prolong his despotic regime.

President Clinton claims to support a strong defense against ballistic missiles but President Clinton vetoed legislation last year because it contained provisions to defend the American people with a national missile system. He said that the bill would require a system to, and I quote, "defend all 50 states from a long-range missile threat that our Intelligence Community does not foresee in the coming decade." Well, our Intelligence Community has been wrong time and time again on its predictions on the rate of technological advances. This time we are talking about the lives of the American people -- from Alaska to New York, from Maine to Florida -- and we cannot rely on wishful thinking.

Defending America Comes First

The American people are vulnerable to accidental missile launch at this very moment and will be increasingly vulnerable to ballistic missile attacks from rogue states as this decade progresses. That is why I introduced the Defend America Act earlier this year. The time for talk is over. The time for action is now. Today President Clinton said, this plan is "the wrong way to defend America." The fact is that President Clinton has no way to defend America from ballistic missile attack. A national missile defense system cannot be built overnight if the intelligence community's rosy picture is as inaccurate as President Clinton's former Director of Central Intelligence has testified.

President Clinton says real missile defense is too expensive. That is not the case. This is not a matter of affordability, but of priority. And, in my view, the defense of America must come first.

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Clinton Delays & Underfunds Theater Missile Defense Programs

President Clinton claims to be upgrading our missile defense systems to protect American forces deployed abroad. The reality is that in the Clinton Pentagon, theater missile defense programs have been consistently delayed and underfunded -- in defiance of the law passed by Congress. It was Republicans that provided substantial increases in theater missile defense programs to address the Clinton Administration's shrinking budget requests.

President Clinton says that Russian missiles are no longer targeted at American cities. That is a half-truth. Russian land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles are no longer targeted at our cities, but they can be retargeted in seconds. Furthermore, the Russian pledge not to target the United States did not apply to their long-range missiles deployed on Russian submarines.

President Clinton claims progress in reducing the nuclear threat in the former Soviet Union but ignores the fact that Russia is regularly and routinely violating existing arms control agreements. The Clinton Administration has not learned that getting a signature on an agreement is the beginning -- not the end -- of real arms control.

President Clinton claims to have curbed proliferation, but Chinese and Russian sales of nuclear technologies have increased during his administration. As for North Korea, President Clinton's nuclear deal only rewarded blackmail by Asia's most dangerous regime with assistance, technology and diplomatic attention.

Indicted War Criminals in Bosnia Run Free

President Clinton claims to have brought peace to Bosnia. An absence of war is not peace. Six months after Dayton, indicted war criminals run free. Indeed, they are the only ones who really have freedom of movement. Free and fair elections are in question. Two and a half million refugees cannot return to their homes. Moreover, the misguided judgment and lack of leadership of the Clinton administration ensured that Iran gained entry to the heart of Europe.

President Clinton didn't mention how his Administration facilitated the European foothold of the world's most dangerous regime -- Iran. And he ignored the effect of his deal with Tehran on derailing international efforts to isolate Iran.

President Clinton claims credit for restoring democracy in Haiti, but overlooks political killings by the government installed with American power, neglects the lack of economic reforms, and ignores systematic flaws in the 1995 elections.

President Clinton claims peace agreements in Northern Ireland and the Middle East and ignores the very real possibility that those agreements are unraveling today.

U.S. Trade Deficit At Record Levels

President Clinton claims success for opening foreign markets to American products, and ignores the fact that the U.S. merchandise trade deficit has ballooned to record levels under his administration. Under President Clinton, paper agreements have replaced real action on access to foreign markets.

President Clinton didn't mention the disaster in Somalia where his decision to allow the United Nations to call the shots resulted in the deaths of dozens of brave Americans. And President Clinton did not mention his repeated decisions to defer to the United Nations to define and defend American interests.

Need for Decisive Leadership - Not Mere Words

For American foreign policy to be successful in defending our interests and promoting our values, it must be clear, credible and consistent -- and built upon a foundation of strong national defense. President Clinton's foreign policy has been inconsistent, incoherent and sometimes duplicitous. He has weakened America's defense. The American people look at results not just rhetoric. Some defenders of the Clinton Administration argue that its foreign policy performance has improved -- but the American Presidency is no place for "on the job training." And public relations efforts will not change the fact that President Clinton has squandered the foreign policy legacy he inherited from the Reagan and Bush Administrations -- victorious in the Cold War and in the Gulf War, respected throughout the globe. If American is to enter the 21st century as the strongest force for peace, freedom and prosperity, it will take decisive leadership - not mere words.