



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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Following are two statements made by Senator Bob Dole during today's Senate session.

Gerald Ford -- A Great President, A Good Man

The date was June 28, 1787, and our national leaders were gathered in Philadelphia in an atmosphere of rancor, dispute and doubt. The Constitutional Convention had been underway for some time and events had come to such a pass that the very future of our young experiment in democracy was in doubt.

On that day, Benjamin Franklin -- then a very old man -- rose and offered a motion that henceforth their deliberations begin with prayer. In introducing that motion, he made this statement. He said, "I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the Affairs of Men."

On the eve of our celebration of 200 years of success with our experiment in democracy, this nation again found itself in an atmosphere of rancor, dispute and doubt. Our country was not in danger from without, but from within. Our confidence in ourselves as a people, and in our basic institutions of government was gravely affected. In that hour of national necessity, America saw again proof that God governs in the affairs of men.

The Constitution created back in 1787 proved equal to our need, and for that we were grateful and perhaps even a little astonished. The world at large was even envious.

Those same events gave us a man whose inherent human gifts captured and reflected back upon us our own historical vision of the goodness of America and reminded us of what we had always believed ourselves -- and in adversity, proved ourselves -- to be.

As prayer created the proper environment for the birth of our constitution, so prayer supported the first President created not by popular franchise but by constitutional mandate.

He didn't ask for a hundred days, or a thousand days. He promised no great crusades and announced no new national purpose. His own request, majestic in its simplicity, was as old as our Republic and as sincere as the heart of America.

"You have not elected me President with your ballots," he told our people, "so I ask rather that you confirm me as President with your prayers." And the American people did so.

If it is true that the Almighty rules in the affairs of men, and I believe it is, then we cannot say that Gerald Ford was an accidental President. Rather he was a providential President.

A Force for National Unity

Jerry Ford did not awaken strong emotions in the American people. Some saw that as a weakness in him. Many more now understand what a monumental strength it was and is. For strong emotions do not unite a nation. They divide it. And we needed to be united. Jerry Ford never played on our fears and weaknesses. He appealed not to faction, but to faith. He asked not for partisanship, but for patriotism. He called upon our courage and our strength.

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While some would dig about in the fires of our recent past for the ashes of disgrace and despair, Jerry Ford lifted out the flame of national redemption. He came to office on the heels of fifteen years of war, waste, and Watergate and put an end to the hemorrhaging of our national self-respect. He rekindled the spirit of America in our national life and in our hearts.

If he had done that and nothing more, history would count him as one of our great Presidents. But he did do more.

Today we are at peace not only in our hearts; we are at peace in the world and likely to remain so for the work of this strong man. Our economy has been stabilized and the groundwork laid for a new prosperity as a result of his prudence. We are able to embark on new and uncertain paths with assurance, as a result of his wisdom.

The Ford Legacy

On a personal note, let me say that I shall always be grateful for the honor of having been Jerry Ford's running mate in the election of 1976. While the Republican ticket did not prevail, it would greatly stretch the meanings of words to say that Jerry Ford lost. He cannot be said to have lost when we look to the fact that he has created a legacy of stability, integrity and dignity of which his successor must now strive to be worthy.

In two short days, he will leave the high office which he restored and ennobled just as he came to it -- with our prayers. For the President, for a First Lady whose strength and courage and warmth both he and our nation relied upon, and for their wonderful family, our prayer is that they may have long years of good health, of prosperity and of happiness.

President Ford has promised us that he will continue to be active in our national life, and for that we are profoundly grateful. He was there when America needed him, and he will continue to be there. And America will continue to need him.

So to our 38th President, we say God bless you, God speed you, and thank you.

Tribute to Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller

Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to one of the most extraordinary public servants of the century. Since the 1940's, Nelson Rockefeller has served his state, his nation, Presidents of both political parties, and a score of domestic and international philanthropic organizations with dedication and enthusiasm. His public achievements have been well chronicled, and I have not the time to recite them all.

While I, too, praise his public record and look forward to further contributions to the betterment of our nation, it is his friendship that I value most. Whenever I have asked for his help -- in political campaigns and on matters of public policy -- Nelson Rockefeller has been there. In 1974, when I was engaged in an uphill campaign for re-election to the Senate, Vice President Rockefeller generously offered to come to Kansas to work on my behalf.

Again last fall, when I was seeking to succeed him in the office of Vice President, he generously gave his time, his advice, and his counsel to my campaign. His willingness to give up this second highest office in the land in order to unify his party is a mark of his generosity and his longstanding dedication to the two-party system in America.

Too often in the past, Nelson Rockefeller has been castigated, criticized, and misunderstood by the Republican party. Yet he has been one of the most tireless workers on behalf of Republican candidates, by they liberal, moderate, or conservative. Because Nelson Rockefeller is, has been, and will continue to be interested in good government and the national stability which only a strong two-party system offers.

Nelson Rockefeller is a great national asset. Knowing him as I do, I am confident that his lifelong dedication to improving the lot of peoples throughout the world will continue unabated in the years ahead.

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