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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BELL NOMINATION TO BE ATTORNEY GENERAL COULD BE IN TROUBLE, DOLE SAYS

Washington, D. C. -- Senator Bob Dole said today that "the nomination of Griffin Bell to be Attorney General could be in trouble on three fronts -- his announced intention to dismiss FBI Director Clarence Kelly, his close political association with President Carter, and his past civil rights record."

In a statement issued from his Washington office, Dole said, "Bell's plan to dismiss Clarence Kelly 'before too long' flies in the face of many campaign statements by President Carter on the need to de-politicize the FBI. Clarence Kelly has done an outstanding job in directing the FBI in a dignified, fair, and non-partisan manner. He should be permitted to continue in office."

"It is not entirely clear that the new Administration has the power to force Director Kelly's resignation, anyway. Just last year, we passed the 1976 Crime Control Act which established a fixed ten-year term for the FBI Director. The purpose of this new law was to shield the FBI from political pressure and bring some semblance of continuity to our nation's top law enforcement agency. Any attempt to oust Director Kelly without cause would be viewed by many in the Senate as contravening the spirit of that new law and a step backward in establishing a truly independent Federal Bureau of Investigation," Dole said.

Dole also said he was distressed by Judge Bell's "close political connections" with the President. Dole said, "Bell contributed a substantial amount of money to the Carter campaign, raised funds from other sources, wrote campaign speeches, and was involved in the Vice Presidential selection process. No doubt, the President should be able to select an individual in whom he has absolute trust and confidence. But the Bell nomination smacks of political cronyism, the very kind of appointment which President Carter himself criticized during the campaign."

Dole also reiterated his previously expressed concern about Judge Bell's civil rights record and is studying the Judiciary Committee hearing record prior to voting on the nomination next week.

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