



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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FOR RELEASE: Sunday A.M.'s

SCHEDULED FOR DELIVERY:
8:00 P.M. (CST), Saturday,
April 2, 1977

DOLE RAPS CARTER "ELECTORAL REFORMS", FAILURE OF OPEN DIPLOMACY WITH SOVIETS

Vincennes, Ind. -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) asserted Saturday that some features of President Carter's electoral reform program were designed to "destroy the Republican Party as a viable second party" in American politics.

The 1976 Republican Vice Presidential nominee and former Republican National Chairman made the charge in a speech to a Knox County Republican dinner.

He also said the failure of Secretary of State Vance's mission to Moscow demonstrated the futility of an inexperienced President's attempt at "open diplomacy" on such important and sensitive matters as nuclear arms limitations. Dole said Mr. Carter's explicit advance public statements about the U.S. proposals left little room for real negotiations. He said there is still time to repair any damage and review negotiations later this spring.

On electoral reform, Dole attacked the President's proposals for universal voter registration in Presidential elections; repeal of the Hatch Act prohibition against political activity by federal employees; and public financing of Congressional election campaigns.

CLOSER TO ONE-PARTY RULE

"In the name of electoral reform, the changes (proposed by Mr. Carter) would move us closer to a one-party nation," the Senator declared. "All who believe, as I do, that the competition between two strong parties has served this country well should be appalled at the grand design behind such a plan."

He said it was unfortunate that some Republican spokesmen in Washington had been "sucked into" a premature endorsement of on-the-spot voter registration.

Mr. Carter's recommendation that the necessity for prior registration be abolished would be an open invitation for fraud "on a scale that the bosses in Cook County, Illinois, never dared dream of," Dole alleged. The problems of policing such a dual federal-state system of registration would be almost insurmountable, he added.

"I want to make it as easy as possible for everyone who wants to vote to vote -- but only once in any one election," the Kansas Senator said.

VOTING OUGHT TO BE POSITIVE DECISION

But he suggested that voting ought to be a deliberate, positive decision. "We don't want political bosses dragooning real or imagined citizens to the polls -- citizens who don't have the foggiest notion who the candidates are," Dole continued. Both parties would be better advised to dwell on how they can communicate more effectively with the people and reactivate their interest in public affairs.

Turning to the Hatch Act, Dole said its repeal would make it possible to "mobilize the federal bureaucracy into a powerful political machine."

Civil servants would no longer be protected from the political pressures of their bosses, he contended. "The battle to control the growth and influence of the bureaucracy would be even more difficult if that bureaucracy were turned into a giant political organization."

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CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN SUBSIDY

Discussing another of the President's requests -- a federal subsidy for the cost of campaigning for the House or Senate -- Dole said public financing would free labor unions to contribute their vast human and financial resources in campaign activities that would be outside the legal limitations.

"All these proposals," the Senator declared, "are intended by the President to strengthen his party's hold on the political system. Partisan disadvantage is not reason enough to be against these plans, I know. To the extent that they also encourage the splintering away of third parties, they would lead to the disintegration of our strong two-party system -- at a time, I submit, when more than ever before, America needs a revival of two strong parties. Taken together, these "reforms" would, in fact, bring about a major transformation of the U.S. political system. A Democratic President and a Democratic Congress would like to preside over this readjustment, and further tip the balance of power -- all in the name of "reform".

Dole said he supported the objective behind another reform proposal, the direct popular election of the President. But he said he was seriously concerned about how this could be provided without encouraging splinter parties and making possible the election of a President with far less than a majority of the votes.
