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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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DOLE PRAISES FORD'S "FIRST 100 DAYS AS PRIVATE CITIZEN"

Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan) said today that former President Gerald R. Ford stands in even higher esteem among his countrymen after his "first 100 days as a private citizen."

Mr. Ford's 1976 Vice Presidential running mate delivered this statement to the Senate:

Mr. President, besides being the anniversary of the first 100 days of the new Administration, this day marks the end of Gerald R. Ford's first 100 days as a private citizen. Most of the attention understandably focuses on President Carter. But in these 100 days, the 38th President of the United States has earned the ever growing affection and gratitude of his countrymen. Gerald Ford is held in high esteem by the American people for his statesmanlike conduct conforming to the highest standards of responsibility both in and out of public office.

He has kept busy lecturing on university campuses and participating in civic areas. The former President traveled 20,000 miles around the country in these first 100 days and expects to log another 20,000 miles in the month of May alone. Mr. Ford found time to play in several benefit golf tournaments and to relax with his wife Betty at their new home in Palm Springs, California. His public statements have been honest and forthright, befitting his informed interest in public affairs. But they have been moderate and restrained in tone, befitting a former Chief Executive. Gerald Ford still speaks with a strong voice in the national interest.

The Presidential transition was a model of effectiveness. All the members of the Ford Administration cooperated to the utmost as the reins of power changed hands. The legacy of the Ford Presidency made it possible for the new President to begin his term in a period of relative tranquility. Public confidence in government had been restored. President Ford was a bridge between the troubled past and an era of hope for the future.

We are in a period of economic expansion, due in large part to the groundwork of the past administration. When President Ford left office, preparations had been virtually completed for the negotiations of a new strategic arms limitation agreement with the Soviet Union. The policies of the Ford Administration opened the way to a firm peace agreement in the Middle East and the forging of an equitable solution to the instability in Africa. The strong defense posture advocated by Gerald Ford has now been confirmed and adopted by the new President.

On this observance of the completion of President Carter's first 100 days, we pause to note our respect and gratitude to the former President, Gerald R. Ford, and his wife and family.