

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

THE 100TH CONGRESS BEGINS

IT IS A NEW YEAR; A NEW CONGRESS; AND YES, A NEW AND DIFFERENT SENATE. AS WE OPEN THE HISTORIC ONE-HUNDRETH CONGRESS, LET ME WELCOME ALL OF MY NEW COLLEAGUES -- REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS -- TO THIS GREAT INSTITUTION.

I WANT TO ESPECIALLY CONGRATULATE SENATOR ROBERT BYRD WHO IS ONCE AGAIN THE MAJORITY LEADER OF THIS DISTINGUISHED BODY. HE HAS BEEN A TIRELESS AND EFFECTIVE LEADER FOR HIS PARTY. OUR TITLES MAY HAVE CHANGED, BUT WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER AS WE HAVE IN THE PAST.

LET ME ALSO SALUTE ONE OF THE TRULY GREAT FIGURES IN THIS BODY, THE DISTINGUISHED SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI JOHN STENNIS. AS OUR NEW PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE, HE WILL CONTINUE IN THE FINE TRADITION OF HIS PREDECESSOR, ANOTHER SENATE LEGEND, THE DISTINGUISHED SENATOR FROM SOUTH CAROLINA STROM THURMOND. CONGRATULATIONS ALSO, TO THE REST OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM THE DEMOCRATS HAVE CHOSEN.

REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP

I ALSO WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP -- MY HARDWORKING AND FAITHFUL ASSISTANT REPUBLICAN LEADER, ALAN SIMPSON; THE CHAIRMAN OF THE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE, JOHN CHAFEE, THE SECRETARY OF THE CONFERENCE, THAD COCHRAN; BILL ARMSTRONG, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE; AND A NEW FACE ON OUR TEAM, RUDY BOSCHWITZ, WHO WILL BE CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATORIAL COMMITTEE.

LET ME SALUTE, TOO, MY NEW REPUBLICAN COLLEAGUES--SENATOR CHRISTOPHER "KIT" BOND OF MISSOURI, AND JOHN MCCAIN OF ARIZONA. I HAVE NO DOUBT THEY WILL BE ABLE AND INFLUENTIAL MEMBERS OF THE SENATE.

CHANGE OF COMMAND

I MUST ADMIT THAT IT MAY TAKE A FEW DAYS FOR ME, AND MY REPUBLICAN COLLEAGUES, TO ADJUST TO OUR NEW ROLE AS MEMBERS OF THE MINORITY. MAKE NO MISTAKE, WE ENJOYED OUR ROLE AS LEADERS. WE ACCEPTED THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNING AS A POSITIVE CHALLENGE -- OUR AIM WAS TO USE CONTROL OF THIS CHAMBER TO SHAPE A BETTER PRESENT AND FUTURE FOR OUR NATION AND I BELIEVE WE WENT A LONG WAY TOWARD FULFILLING THAT GOAL.

I KNOW THE NEW SENATE MAJORITY FEELS THE SAME WAY. AND I TRUST THAT WE, REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS, CAN WORK TOGETHER, TO PUT THE NATIONAL AGENDA AHEAD OF PERSONAL OR POLITICAL GAIN. ULTIMATELY, AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES WE REPRESENT, WE WILL BE JUDGED NOT BY OUR RHETORIC, BUT BY OUR DECISIONS.

WE WILL BE JUDGED BY THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY; BY OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES; BY THE QUALITY OF LIFE OUR CITIZENS ENJOY; AND BY THE ADVANCE OF DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM AROUND THE GLOBE. WE WILL BE JUDGED AS LEADERS BY WHETHER WE WERE WILLING TO MAKE THE HARD CHOICES FOR A BETTER FUTURE.

CHALLENGES OF THE 100TH CONGRESS

THE CHALLENGES FACING THE 100TH CONGRESS WILL CERTAINLY TEST OUR METTLE. WHETHER IT IS THE BUDGET, TRADE DEFICITS, HEALTH CARE, SAVING THE FAMILY FARM, ARMS CONTROL OR AID TO FREEDOM FIGHTERS, THE ISSUES ARE AS DIFFICULT AS THEY ARE CRITICAL.

WITH ALL THESE POLICY DECISIONS FACING US, THE SENATE, AND THE COUNTRY FOR THAT MATTER, CANNOT AFFORD TO BE CONSUMED BY THE IRANIAN ARMS SALES AFFAIR. I HOPE THE SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THIS MATTER WILL BEGIN ITS WORK QUICKLY, THAT IT WILL DO A THOROUGH JOB, AND THAT IT WILL REPORT BACK TO THE SENATE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

AS THE REPUBLICAN LEADER IN THE SENATE, AS A SUPPORTER OF THE PRESIDENT, AND AS A CITIZEN, THERE IS NO ONE MORE COMMITTED THAN I TO GETTING ALL THE FACTS OUT AND WE CAN START BY RELEASING THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT. BUT WHILE WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF DIGGING UP THE FACTS, WE SHOULD NOT LOSE FOCUS.

THERE ARE TOO MANY OTHER PROBLEMS -- DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN -- PROBLEMS THAT ARE NOT GOING TO GO AWAY. YESTERDAY THE PRESIDENT SUBMITTED HIS 1988 BUDGET TO CONGRESS. WE HAVE A NUMBER OF FOREIGN POLIICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES TO DEAL WITH IN THE COMING WEEKS. THEY CANNOT -- AND SHOULD NOT -- BE SWEEPED ASIDE BECAUSE OF AN OBSESSION WITH THE IRANIAN AFFAIR.

PLEDGE OF COOPERATION

IT IS GOING TO TAKE COOPERATION, ALL OF US ROLLING UP OUR SLEEVES AND WORKING TOGETHER.

THE 100TH CONGRESS HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR BEING JUST AS HISTORIC AS ITS TITLE. THE POTENTIAL WITHIN THE BODY IS ENORMOUS -- WE HAVE TALENTED AND ENERGETIC PEOPLE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE AISLE. LET'S USE THAT POTENTIAL. LET'S PLEDGE TODAY, WHILE THE SLATE IS STILL BLANK, TO WRITE A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT THAT WE AND THE COUNTRY CAN TAKE PRIDE IN. A RECORD THAT WILL PROVE WE WERE WORTHY OF THEIR CONFIDENCE, WORTHY OF BEING UNITED STATES SENATORS.

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