

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
MIDWEST REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
DES MOINES, IOWA
SUNDAY, MAY 31, 1987

IT'S FITTING THAT THIS CONFERENCE IS BEING HELD IN IOWA THIS YEAR, AND NOT JUST FOR POLITICAL REASONS. IOWA SYMBOLIZES THE STRUGGLE OF FARMERS THROUGHOUT THE MIDWEST TO OVERCOME A REAL ECONOMIC CHALLENGE, AND IT'S ALSO THE TESTING GROUND FOR THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE NEXT DECADE. MAYBE SOME PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES CAN COME TO IOWA AND THE MIDWEST AND NOT TALK ABOUT AGRICULTURE. BUT NOT BOB DOLE.

AG TALK

I DON'T FAULT MY FRIENDS IN EITHER PARTY. BUT IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY CONVICTION THAT AGRICULTURE, AND THE COMMUNITIES THAT DEPEND ON IT, ARE THE REAL BACKBONE OF AMERICA -- AND THAT'S ESPECIALLY TRUE OF THE MIDWEST.

THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNS LATELY THAT THE FARM CRISIS MAY FINALLY BE TURNING THE CORNER: AFTER A SIX-YEAR SLUMP, EXPORTS ARE LOOKING UP; SOME OF OUR COMPETITORS AND CUSTOMERS OVERSEAS ARE HAVING POOR CROPS; AND FARM INCOME HAS STABILIZED, LARGELY DUE TO A SHARP INCREASE IN FEDERAL FARM PROGRAM BENEFITS.

BUT WE HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE RURAL AMERICA IS HEALTHY AGAIN.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

NOW, I SAID RURAL AMERICA. AS MIDWESTERNERS, WE UNDERSTAND THAT RURAL AMERICA IS MORE THAN THE FAMILY FARM -- IT'S THE SHOP ON MAIN STREET; IT'S THE RAILROAD WORKER; THE COUNTY SHERIFF; AND A GENERATION OF YOUNG AMERICANS WHO WONDER IF THERE IS A FUTURE THERE.

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THE CRISIS IN AGRICULTURE HAS TRIGGERED THE FLIGHT OF BUSINESS, FROM MAIN STREET TO LARGER TOWNS AND CITIES. AND THE RURAL POPULATION -- FARM AND NON-FARM -- IS FOLLOWING. THIS SAD EXODUS IS DESTROYING THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION OF OUR SMALL TOWNS, LEAVING IN ITS WAKE INADEQUATE SCHOOLS, BAD ROADS AND SECOND RATE HEALTH CARE.

THAT'S WHY I JOINED WITH TERRY BRANSTAD LAST YEAR IN ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON FARM AND RURAL AMERICA. MADE UP OF 30 REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, MOSTLY FROM MIDWEST STATES. ITS FOCUS IS SIMPLE -- EXPLORE EVERY POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO PUT RURAL AMERICA BACK ON ITS FEET AGAIN. OUR FIRST MAJOR INITIATIVE IS "THE RURAL RECOVERY AND REVITALIZATION ACT OF 1987", WHICH SENATOR GRASSLEY, MYSELF, AND OTHERS PLAN TO INTRODUCE NEXT WEEK.

IT INCLUDES A "RURAL FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT", UNDER WHICH USDA, IN COOPERATION WITH THE STATES, WOULD GUARANTEE AT LEAST \$1 BILLION IN COMMERCIAL LOANS TO SMALL BUSINESSES IN RURAL AREAS. THE GUARANTEES WOULD BE BACKED BY EITHER CASH OR COLLATERAL, IN THE FORM OF COMMODITIES OWNED BY THE COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION.

RIGHT NOW, THOSE COMMODITIES -- BILLIONS OF BUSHELS -- ARE LOCKED AWAY IN GRAIN ELEVATORS. THIS YEAR ALONE, THE TAXPAYERS WILL SPEND \$1.3 BILLION TO STORE THAT GRAIN. WHY NOT PUT THOSE ASSETS TO WORK IN THE RURAL ECONOMY?

AND OUR RURAL DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE WILL DO EVEN MORE: RANGING FROM RURAL SET-ASIDES -- ENSURING A FAIR SHARE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR RURAL CITIZENS; EDUCATION AND INFORMATION PROGRAMS; TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF RURAL PROGRAMS.

DEFICIT THREAT

STILL, ALL OF OUR HARD WORK FOR AGRICULTURE, AND ALL OUR INNOVATIVE PLANS FOR RURAL AMERICA, WON'T BE WORTH ANYTHING IF WE DON'T FACE UP TO THE FEDERAL DEFICIT.

AND TO JUDGE FROM THE POLLS, AND FROM WHAT I HEAR EVERYWHERE I GO IN THE COUNTRY, THERE IS A GROWING CONSENSUS THAT AGREES WITH ME: THE DEFICIT IS THE BIGGEST THREAT TO AMERICA'S WELL-BEING. WE CANNOT GO ON MORTGAGING AMERICA'S FUTURE BY GOVERNMENT SPENDING OUT OF ALL PROPORTION TO ITS REVENUES.

WE CAN'T LIVE WITH A FEDERAL DEBT OF \$2.3 TRILLION. IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT. IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN WILL PAY A TERRIBLE PRICE FOR OUR NEGLIGENCE.

BUT YOU CAN BET THE DEMOCRATS WILL BE ASKING US REPUBLICANS IN 1988, "WHAT HAPPENED FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS, WHEN THE DEBT WENT FROM LESS THAN \$1 TRILLION TO \$3 TRILLION?"

WELL, I CAN ANSWER THAT.

THE SEEDS OF THIS DISASTROUS DEBT WERE SOWN LONG BEFORE RONALD REAGAN EVER ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON, AND THEY ONLY CAME TO FULL BLOOM ONCE HE GOT THERE.

NOW I'M NOT CLAIMING THIS IS JUST A DEMOCRATIC PROBLEM; OR THAT WE REPUBLICANS ARE COMPLETELY BLAMELESS. I AM SAYING THIS IS A LONG-BREWING PROBLEM. AND WE BETTER START DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT. NOW.

THERE ARE NO EASY CHOICES.

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DON'T BE FOOLED

SO DON'T BE FOOLED BY THOSE WHO SAY: "WE ARE GOING TO GROW OUT OF IT." WE ARE NOT GOING TO GROW OUT OF IT -- WE HAVE GOT TO MAKE SOME TOUGH DECISIONS. WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO CUT SOME SPENDING IN AMERICA. BUT WHERE DO YOU CUT? ABOUT 15 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL BUDGET IS FOR INTEREST ON THE DEBT. YOU CANNOT CUT THAT -- YOU HAVE GOT TO PAY THE INTEREST. ANOTHER 30 PERCENT IS DEFENSE. ANOTHER 30 PERCENT IS SO-CALLED "ENTITLEMENT PROGRAMS". THAT IS 75 PERCENT RIGHT THERE, IN JUST THREE AREAS. AND EVERYTHING ELSE MAKES UP THE OTHER 25 PERCENT.

IT IS NOT GOING TO BE EASY. SO BEWARE OF THOSE WHO COME TO YOU AND SAY: "DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF."

IT WILL TAKE CARE OF US!

WHAT I AM SAYING IS THIS: IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO MAKE THE HARD CHOICES, THEN I'M NOT YOUR CANDIDATE.

ROOTS

THERE IS NOTHING VERY COMPLICATED ABOUT BOB DOLE. I COME FROM A LITTLE TOWN IN KANSAS. 6500 PEOPLE.

I AM ONE OF FOUR CHILDREN. THE ONLY ONE WHO GOT TO COMPLETE A COLLEGE EDUCATION.

MY MOTHER AND FATHER BOTH WORKED FOR A LIVING. MY MOTHER SOLD SEWING MACHINES, AND GAVE SEWING LESSONS. MY FATHER RAN A CREAM AND EGG STATION, AND LATER A GRAIN ELEVATOR.

MY FAMILY HARDLY HAD ANY WEALTH AT ALL. IN FACT, ONE OF THE SADDEST THINGS FOR ME AS RUSSELL COUNTY ATTORNEY WAS TO APPROVE WELFARE CLAIMS EVERY MONTH -- TWO OF THOSE CLAIMS WERE FROM MY GRANDPARENTS.

LIKE MANY OTHERS, I WENT OFF TO WORLD WAR II. THEY PUT ME IN THE TENTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION BECAUSE I CAME FROM KANSAS -- WHERE WE DON'T HAVE ANY MOUNTAINS! AND LIKE OTHERS, I WAS IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME: ON APRIL 14, 1945. I GOT TO SPEND ABOUT 39 MONTHS IN A HOSPITAL.

LEADERSHIP

I WOULD JUST SUGGEST THAT THOSE EXPERIENCES HAVE MADE ME A STRONGER PERSON. AND ALSO A MORE SENSITIVE PERSON WHEN IT COMES TO THE DISABLED AND TO OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS IN AMERICA WHO HAVE NOT HAD IT "THEIR WAY" ALL OF THE TIME.

THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT REHABILITATION AND SURVIVAL THAT MAKES YOU STRONGER. YOU LEARN PATIENCE. AND YOU LEARN THAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE REAL PROBLEMS, TOO. SOME MUCH WORSE THAN YOURS.

I'M NOT PERFECT; I'VE CAST SOME VOTES EVEN I'D LIKE TO HAVE BACK -- BUT I HAVE BEEN ON THE "FIRING LINE" EVERY DAY: MAKING THE TOUGH DECISIONS, SUPPORTING THE PRESIDENT, DOING WHAT I FELT WAS RIGHT FOR AMERICA.

MY RECORD IS THERE. YOU CAN LOOK IT UP -- I VOTED ABOUT 10,000 TIMES IN THE PAST 27 YEARS. IT'S ALL THERE IN BLACK-AND-WHITE. I BELIEVE IT REFLECTS MY CONSERVATIVE COMMON SENSE; AND I HOPE IT ALSO REFLECTS MY EXPERIENCE, LEADERSHIP AND STRENGTH.

BECAUSE I AM VERY PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN.

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AND WE ARE TALKING ABOUT AMERICA, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE STRENGTH OF THIS NATION, WHOSE FUTURE YOU HAVE IN YOUR HANDS. YES, YOU HAVE A DIFFICULT TASK AHEAD OF YOU, TO HELP SELECT THE NEXT PRESIDENT.

RONALD REAGAN HAS PRETTY MUCH LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR ALL OF US WHO SEEK THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION. NOW WE MUST TAKE THE NEXT STEP. YOU HAVE TO ASK YOURSELF: WHO DO I WANT MAKING THE HARD DECISIONS WHEN IT COMES TO SPENDING RESTRAINTS? WHO DO I WANT DEALING WITH THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES? WHO DO I WANT SEATED ACROSS FROM MR. GORBACHEV WHEN RONALD REAGAN IS GONE?

IN THE COMING MONTHS, AS CANDIDATES TRY TO DEFINE THEMSELVES, WE WILL SEE THE EMERGENCE OF CERTAIN CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN LIFE AS WE MIGHT LIKE IT, AND LIFE AS IT IS. IT REMINDS US THAT WE SHOULD TAKE CARE NOT TO CREATE ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE, BECAUSE THEY WILL COME BACK TO HAUNT US IF WE DO.

CONCLUSION

THE WONDERFUL, BUT AWESOME, THING ABOUT AMERICA IS THAT IT ALL DEPENDS ON US, ON "WE THE PEOPLE." ON THE DECISIONS WE MAKE, THE EXAMPLES WE SET, AND THE PRACTICAL, FAR-REACHING LEADERSHIP WE PROVIDE IN THE YEARS AHEAD. THAT MEANS ELECTING MEN AND WOMEN WHO KNOW WHAT HAS TO BE DONE, AND KNOW HOW TO GET IT DONE -- LIKE THAT BRILLIANT, PRACTICAL BAND OF PATRIOTS THAT MET IN PHILADELPHIA TWO CENTURIES AGO.

BETWEEN THEM, THEY WROTE AN INSPIRING FIRST CHAPTER IN THE STORY OF AMERICA.

ITS GREATEST PAGES MAY YET BE WRITTEN IN THE CENTURY AHEAD -- OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL ... A WORLD FREE AND AT PEACE ... AN END TO THE NUCLEAR NIGHTMARE ... AND UNDREAMT BREAKTHROUGHS IN HEALTH, EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

THESE ARE A FEW OF THE PAGES THAT COULD BE WRITTEN IN OUR LIFETIMES.

IT IS UP TO US TO WRITE THEM.

THANK YOU.

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