

News from Senator

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THE REPUBLICAN AGENDA -- THE 101ST CONGRESS
DOLE INTRODUCES FIVE BILLS AS CONGRESS RETURNS

FIRST, LET ME PUBLICLY CONGRATULATE OUR NEW MAJORITY LEADER, GEORGE MITCHELL. WE WILL BE SPENDING MANY HOURS SEATED ACROSS THE AISLE FROM EACH OTHER DURING THE COMING MONTHS. AND SOME OF THOSE HOURS WILL, NO DOUBT, BE DIFFICULT. BUT AT THE OUTSET, I WANT TO PLEDGE MY COOPERATION AND MY COMMITMENT TO DO WHAT I CAN TO MAKE THE SENATE "WORK" -- TO SEE THAT THE SENATE FUNCTIONS AS SMOOTHLY AND EFFECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE. MY REPUBLICAN COLLEAGUES AND I WANT TO SEE OUR "QUALITY OF LIFE" IMPROVE, AND WE WANT THE QUALITY OF OUR WORK TO BE AS HIGH AS THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PEOPLE WHO ELECTED US.

I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH SENATOR MITCHELL AND CONTINUING THE PURSUIT OF BIPARTISANSHIP AND ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT I SHARED WITH SENATOR BYRD, OUR NEW SENATOR PRO TEMPORE.

WRITING ON A CLEAN SLATE

EVERY TWO YEARS THE SENATE STARTS WITH A CLEAN SLATE. IT IS A SLATE UPON WHICH GREAT ACTS MAY BE WRITTEN, NEW IDEAS TAKE SHAPE, OLD ONES MATURE. AS SENATORS, AS LEGISLATORS, WE FACE AWESOME RESPONSIBILITIES AND AWESOME POSSIBILITIES. AND THOSE OF US ON THIS SIDE OF THE AISLE FACE AN ADDED CHARGE -- TO SUPPORT AND FURTHER THE CAUSE OF OUR NEW REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT.

ONLY FIVE DAYS AGO, GEORGE BUSH WAS INAUGURATED THE 41ST PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. HE ASSUMES THE REINS OF POWER FROM RONALD REAGAN, WHO HISTORY WILL NOTE CHANGED THE COURSE OF AMERICA'S FUTURE. A MAN WHO PUT US ON A TRUE COURSE THAT HAS LED TO THE TWO THINGS MOST NEEDED, MOST CHERISHED BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE -- PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

STAY THE COURSE

FROM EVERYTHING HE HAS SAID, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT GEORGE BUSH INTENDS TO "STAY THAT COURSE" -- TO MAKE CORRECTIONS WHEN THEY ARE NEEDED, TO CHART NEW DIRECTIONS WHEN CALLED FOR, BUT NEVER TO LOSE SIGHT OF OUR ULTIMATE GOALS: TO PROVIDE EACH AND EVERY CITIZEN WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM, AND TO ENSURE THAT THEY DO SO IN A WORLD AT PEACE.

THAT, AFTER ALL, IS WHAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SAID THEY WANTED LAST NOVEMBER 8. THEY HEARD WHAT GEORGE BUSH SAID, THEY READ HIS LIPS, AND THEY AGREED WITH HIM -- OVERWHELMINGLY.

ON FEBRUARY 9, OUR NEW PRESIDENT WILL ADDRESS THE STATE OF THE UNION. IN THAT SPEECH HE WILL OUTLINE HIS PROGRAM, HIS PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEAR. AND WHILE IT IS UNLIKELY IT WILL MIRROR THE AGENDA OUTLINED BY SENATOR MITCHELL, I EXPECT THAT MANY OF THE SAME CHALLENGES ARE LIKELY TO BE ADDRESSED.

FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE -- ON THE REPUBLICAN SIDE OF THE AISLE -- THERE ARE FOUR MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN THAT WE SHOULD TACKLE DURING THE COMING SESSION. AND THERE ARE FIVE SPECIFIC PIECES OF LEGISLATION THAT I AM PERSONALLY INTRODUCING TODAY, REFLECTING MY OWN PRIORITIES.

ECONOMIC CONCERNS

TOPPING THE LIST ARE ECONOMIC ISSUES -- FIRST AND FOREMOST, OF COURSE, THE DEFICIT. WE ALL AGREE THAT WE HAVE TO TAKE SERIOUS ACTION TO CUT THE DEFICIT AND COMPLY WITH THE GRAMM-RUDMAN-HOLLINGS TARGET. AND TO DO IT, AS THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE SAID, WITHOUT RAISING NEW TAXES. MAJOR DECISIONS ON THE BUDGET WILL HELP SHAPE DECISIONS ON OTHER POLICY MATTERS -- FROM NATIONAL SECURITY TO HEALTH CARE. IN ADDITION TO THE BUDGET NUMBERS, I BELIEVE IT IS FINALLY TIME TO INSTITUTE REFORMS, INCLUDING THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO BALANCE THE BUDGET AND ENHANCED RESCISSION AUTHORITY.

IN FACT, TODAY I WILL INTRODUCE TWO PIECES OF LEGISLATION ADDRESSING BUDGET REFORM. MY PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT WOULD PROHIBIT CONGRESS FROM PASSING A BUDGET IN WHICH OUTLAYS EXCEEDED RECEIPTS EXCEPT BY A THREE-FIFTHS VOTE. AND TO PRESERVE A BIAS IN FAVOR OF CONTROLLING SPENDING, THE AMENDMENT REQUIRES THAT INCREASES IN THE LEVEL OF TAXATION CANNOT BE PASSED EXCEPT BY A MAJORITY OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE; NOT JUST THOSE PRESENT AND VOTING.

IT ALSO SEEMS TO ME IT IS TIME TO GIVE THE PRESIDENT GREATER AUTHORITY TO ELIMINATE SPENDING FOR SPECIFIC PROGRAMS. ONE APPROACH IS THE LINE ITEM VETO -- AN AUTHORITY I BELIEVE THE PRESIDENT ALREADY HAS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION.

THE PRESIDENT HAS RESCISSION AUTHORITY AS WELL. BUT THIS BUDGETARY TOOL HAS NEVER REALLY WORKED BECAUSE CONGRESS CAN, AND USUALLY DOES, SIMPLY IGNORE THE PRESIDENT'S RESCISSION REQUESTS. THE BILL I WILL INTRODUCE TODAY WOULD FORCE CONGRESS TO EITHER APPROVE OR REJECT THE PRESIDENT'S RESCISSION WITHIN A TEN DAY REVIEW PERIOD. MEMBERS ARE QUICK TO CRITICIZE PORK BARREL SPENDING, BUT SLOW TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. THIS BILL MAKES MEMBERS PUT THERE VOTES WHERE THERE RHETORIC IS.

OTHER ECONOMIC ISSUES WE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE GRAPPLING WITH INCLUDE THE SAVINGS AND LOAN CRISIS, AND WHETHER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD PLAY A ROLE IN THE LEVERAGED BUYOUT PHENOMENON.

PEOPLE ISSUES, SOCIAL SECURITY

THEN THERE ARE PEOPLE ISSUES: HEALTH -- LONG-TERM CARE, AIDS, AND PRE-NATAL CARE; WORKERS' CONCERNS -- MINIMUM WAGE AND MANDATED BENEFITS; AND CHILDREN'S NEEDS, CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION; AND OF COURSE, THE HOMELESS.

ONE ISSUE OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO ME, AND OF SPECIFIC RELEVANCE TO SENIOR CITIZENS IS THEIR ABILITY TO WORK, AND AT THE SAME TIME RECEIVE THEIR FULL SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS. TO ADDRESS A PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT SYSTEM, I AM TODAY PROPOSING LEGISLATION THAT WOULD PHASE OUT THE SOCIAL SECURITY EARNINGS LIMIT FOR THOSE OVER 65. I CAN THINK OF NO BETTER WAY TO HARNESS THE UNUTILIZED TALENT OF THE ELDERLY THAN TO REPEAL THIS LAW, WHICH DISCOURAGES SENIOR CITIZENS FROM PRODUCTIVE WORK.

AMERICA'S ELDERLY HAVE ALREADY BORNE THE BURDEN OF DECADES OF HARD WORK. THEY HAVE PAID SOCIAL SECURITY TAXES THROUGHOUT THEIR WORKING LIVES. IS IT FAIR THAT THEY LOSE SOME OF THOSE BENEFITS SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY CHOOSE TO CONTINUE OFFERING THEIR SKILL AND ABILITY TO AMERICA? I DON'T BELIEVE IT IS.

IN ADDITION TO THE FIVE MAJOR BILLS I AM INTRODUCING TODAY I WILL SUBMIT A NUMBER OF OTHER MEASURES, INCLUDING A MEASURE TO DEAL WITH THE VERY SPECIAL PROBLEMS SMALL RURAL HOSPITALS FACE. AND TO HELP PROVIDE A MEASURE OF SUPPORT TO THESE INSTITUTIONS, I AM RE-INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TODAY THAT WOULD ENSURE THAT HOSPITALS OF 100 BEDS OR LESS, IN WHICH MEDICARE PATIENTS COMPRISE AT LEAST 70 PERCENT OF THEIR DISCHARGES, RECEIVE PAYMENTS OF AT LEAST THEIR REASONABLE COST. THIS PROGRAM WOULD LAST FOR THREE YEARS, GIVING US THE OPPORTUNITY TO CAREFULLY EXAMINE HOW WE MIGHT DO AWAY WITH THE CURRENT MEDICARE PAYMENT BIAS AGAINST RURAL INSTITUTIONS.

FINALLY, IN THE DOMESTIC AREA, WE FACE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS WITH BOTH ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT: NUCLEAR ENERGY AND NUCLEAR WASTE DISPOSAL, THE CLEAN AIR ACT RENEWAL AND TOXIC WASTE -- ALL ARE PROBLEMS THAT SHOULD BE CONFRONTED AND RESOLVED IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

IN THE DAYS AND MONTHS AHEAD THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL CONFRONT A NUMBER OF ISSUES AFFECTING OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOREIGN NATIONS AND OUR OWN SECURITY. CERTAINLY, HIGH ON THE LIST IS WHAT DIRECTION U.S. SOVIET RELATIONS TAKE. I THINK IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE, THE U.S., TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND SET THE AGENDA WITH THE SOVIETS. BUT IN ORDER TO DO THAT, THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS MUST BE IN SYNC -- WE MUST WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY ENCOMPASSING ARMS CONTROL, REGIONAL CONFLICTS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY FRONT, WE MUST AGAIN DEBATE THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF OUR DEFENSE CAPABILITY AND HOW THAT RELATES TO THE ARMS CONTROL AGENDA. AND IN THAT CONTEXT AS WELL, WE SHOULD DISCUSS WHETHER OUR ALLIES SHOULD ASSUME GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN SECURITY.

ON ONE ITEM, I BELIEVE THERE IS BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS: THE TIME HAS COME TO RE-EXAMINE THE WAR POWERS RESOLUTION. THIS IS AN ISSUE OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO THE ADMINISTRATION, AS WELL. SO, I HOPE THAT BEFORE WE START HEARINGS ON SPECIFIC LEGISLATION, ALL SIDES HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS, AND PERHAPS SEE IF SOME COMMON GROUND EXISTS. GIVEN RECENT EVENTS, I HOPE WE WILL CAREFULLY EXAMINE WHAT ACTIONS WE MIGHT TAKE TO COMBAT TERRORISM, AND PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION CHEMICAL WEAPONS.

THE UNCHECKED SPREAD OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IS THE MOST IMMEDIATE THREAT TO REGIONAL PEACE AND AMERICAN INTERESTS IN THE REAL WORLD OF 1989. IF THE CAPACITY TO CREATE, STORE AND DELIVER CHEMICAL WEAPONS FINALLY FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF LUNATICS LIKE QADDAFI, THEN WE WILL TRULY BE IN NOT A BRAVE, BUT A SCARY, NEW WORLD. THE BILL I AND OTHERS WILL INTRODUCE TODAY IS CERTAINLY NOT A PANACEA -- BUT IT IS AN ESSENTIAL STEP IN WHAT MUST BE A BROAD STRATEGY. A CHEMICAL WEAPONS CAPABILITY IS NOT A "HOME GROWN" PRODUCT IN LIBYA -- THE EXPERTISE, AND MUCH OF THE EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL, MUST BE IMPORTED.

OUR BILL WILL REQUIRE A REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT ON WHAT FOREIGN COMPANIES ARE AIDING AND ABETTING THE SPREAD OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AROUND THE WORLD; AND THAT REPORT WILL TRIGGER SANCTIONS AGAINST THOSE COMPANIES, SHUTTING THEM OUT OF THE AMERICAN MARKET FOR A LONG TIME. THE LEVERAGE IS REAL, AND THE MESSAGE WILL BE CLEAR -- DO BUSINESS WITH THE LIKES OF QADDAFI, AND YOU CAN KISS GOOD-BYE TO THE AMERICAN MARKET. THE BILL WILL ALSO TIGHTEN UP OUR DOMESTIC CONTROL REGIME, TO INSURE THAT AMERICAN FIRMS ARE NOT KNOWINGLY OR INADVERTENTLY FACILITATING THE SPREAD OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

FINALLY, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES WE MUST CONFRONT -- CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM, CHIEF AMONG THEM.

A GROUP OF REPUBLICAN SENATORS WILL JOIN ME TODAY AS I INTRODUCE THE 1989 CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN REFORM ACT. THIS BILL IS DESIGNED TO BRING THE INDIVIDUAL BACK INTO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE MAIN STREET AMERICAN -- NOT THE WALL STREET EXECUTIVE, THE LABOR UNION BOSS, OR THE PAC DIRECTOR -- WHO SHOULD ULTIMATELY HAVE THE INFLUENCE IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. TOWARD THAT END, THIS BILL WOULD REDUCE PAC CONTRIBUTIONS, ADJUST INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS, IMPOSE STRICT DISCLOSURE RULES ON "SOFT" MONEY EXPENDITURES, TIGHTEN RESTRICTIONS ON INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES AND CLOSE THE SO-CALLED MILLIONAIRE'S LOOPHOLE.

IN ADDITION TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM, WE MUST ALSO COME UP WITH RULES TO MAKE SURE THAT THOSE WHO WORK IN GOVERNMENT -- WHETHER CONGRESS OR THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH -- COMPLY WITH THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE ETHICAL STANDARDS. THIS IS AN ISSUE WHICH THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION IS ADDRESSING THIS VERY DAY AND I KNOW INTENDS TO PURSUE VIGOROUSLY.

FULFILLING OUR CHARGE

NONE OF US WANTS TO SEE ANY MAN OR WOMAN WHO WANTS A JOB, UNEMPLOYED; OR A CHILD WHOSE PARENTS WORK, UNCARED FOR. NONE OF US WANTS PEOPLE LEFT HOMELESS, SLEEPING ON THE STREETS OR IN OVER-CROWDED SHELTERS; OR OUR ELDERLY DEPRIVED OF ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE, OUR CHILDREN RECEIVING A SECOND-RATE EDUCATION. NONE OF US WANTS OUR BEACHES CLOSED DOWN BECAUSE OF POLLUTION. NONE OF US WANTS TO SEE OUR DEFENSE CAPABILITY THREATENED BECAUSE WE CAN NOT PRODUCE THE NECESSARY NUCLEAR COMPONENTS SAFELY, OR OUR CITIZENS PREVENTED FROM TRAVELING FREELY BECAUSE OF THE THREAT OF TERRORISM.

WE CAN'T SOLVE ALL OF THESE PROBLEMS, AND IN SOME INSTANCES, WE, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULDN'T EVEN TRY. THE RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD BE STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S OR EVEN THE PRIVATE SECTOR'S. BUT I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THOSE OF US HERE TODAY, ON BOTH SIDES OF THE AISLE, ARE COMMITTED TO TRYING.

SO, DURING THIS, OUR BICENTENNIAL CONGRESS, LET US USE OUR CLEAN SLATE WISELY. IF WE DO, WE WILL FULFILL OUR CHARGE AS MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND KEEP THE BEACON OF LIGHT AND HOPE THIS NATION RADIATES TO ITS OWN CITIZENS AND THE WORLD'S BEAMING BRIGHTLY.