

REMARKS OF HONORABLE BOB DOLE
CONGRESS OF COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETIES
ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1971

I AM GRATEFUL FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH SOME OF THE LEADERS OF COUNTY AND LOCAL MEDICAL SOCIETIES FROM AROUND THE NATION. I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE HEALTH FIELD, WHICH I INTEND TO DO. HOWEVER, BESIDES BEING LEADERS IN THE MEDICAL FIELD, YOU ARE ALSO LEADERS IN YOUR COMMUNITIES, AND I WOULD LIKE TO SPEND PART OF MY TIME WITH YOU TODAY TALKING ABOUT THE QUALITY OF AMERICAN LEADERSHIP TODAY AND ITS PROSPECTS FOR TOMORROW.

RESPONSIVE, RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

I BELIEVE THAT A MAJORITY OF AMERICANS WOULD AGREE THAT, IN THE FIELD OF MEDICINE, AS IN OTHER FIELDS, THAT LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN BOTH RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE UNDER THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION.

IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL HEALTH STRATEGY, THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION SET OUT TO DETERMINE HOW AMERICA'S OUTSTANDING HEALTH CAPA-

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BILITIES COULD BEST BE USED TO MEET ITS HEALTH NEEDS. TWO THINGS THAT SOON BECAME APPARENT WERE THE REMARKABLE CAPABILITIES OF THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION OF OUR GOVERNMENT HEALTH EFFORTS. THERE WAS AN OVERABUNDANCE OF FUNDING AND MANPOWER IN SOME AREAS AND A SHORTAGE IN OTHERS. SOME NEEDS WERE OVER STRESSED. OTHERS WERE DISREGARDED.

IN DEVISING A STRATEGY TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS, WHICH WERE BEING UNCOVERED, THE ADMINISTRATION WAS GUIDED BY FOUR BASIC BELIEFS.

THESE WERE:

- (1) EVERY AMERICAN HAS THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE REGARDLESS OF HIS RACE, HIS INCOME, OR WHERE HE LIVES.
- (2) EVERY AMERICAN HAS THE RIGHT TO TREATMENT OF MAJOR ILLNESSES WITHOUT FEAR THAT THE COST WILL BE DISASTROUS FOR HIS FAMILY.
- (3) EVERY AMERICAN HAS THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM ANY DISEASE OR ACCIDENT THAT COULD BE PREVENTED BY ADEQUATE CARE.
- (4) EVERY AMERICAN SEEKING HEALTH CARE HAS THE RIGHT TO FIND EFFECTIVE AND COMPETENT CARE THROUGH A VARIETY OF SYSTEMS OF CARE AND PAYMENT.

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ANY SUCCESSFUL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM MUST BE BUILT AROUND THESE FOUR BASIC BELIEFS.

TECHNOLOGY PRESENT

WE NOW HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE ALL OUR PEOPLE WITH THE CARE THEY NEED. WE ALSO HAVE THE RESOURCES. THE PROBLEM LIES IN INTEGRATING THESE ELEMENTS INTO A TRUE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM. IT IS THIS ROLE -- THAT OF GUIDING REFORM -- WHICH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST UNDERTAKE DURING THE NEXT DECADE IF OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IS TO ADEQUATELY SERVE OUR CITIZENS.

EVERY SOCIETY HAS A MECHANISM FOR CHANGE THAT IS THE TRADITIONAL RESPONSE OF THE SOCIAL ORDER TO THE NEED FOR PROGRESS. IN AMERICA, THERE IS A REFORM TRADITION THAT HAS HISTORICALLY SERVED TO ADJUST THE DELICATELY BALANCED FUNCTIONS OF OUR SOCIETY, AVOIDING ANY RAPID, IMPULSIVE CHANGE THAT WOULD DAMAGE THE GOOD IN EXISTING SYSTEMS, YET PRODUCING PROFOUND AND NEEDED CHANGES IN OUR INSTITUTIONS. THIS PROCESS OF REFORM IS UNSETTLING FOR SOME AND TOO SLOW FOR OTHERS, BUT ON BALANCE, IT BRINGS TO THE MAJORITY A CONSENSUS POSITION REFLECTING THEIR DESIRES AND NEEDS.

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GOOD LEADERSHIP, THEN, MUST BALANCE THE NEED FOR CHANGE WITH THE NEED FOR STABILITY. FREE SOCIETIES REMAIN VITAL AS LONG AS THEY REMAIN RESPONSIVE TO REAL NEEDS FOR CHANGE. BUT, SUCH SOCIETIES MUST ALSO ADHERE TO THEIR TRADITIONAL VALUES. IF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS TO BE EFFECTIVE IN IMPLEMENTING A TRUE SYSTEM FOR HEALTH CARE, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT IT FOLLOWS THIS MODERATE COURSE.

MODERATE COURSE BEST

THIS IS THE WAY THAT BEST INSURES THAT THE RIGHTS OF ALL OUR CITIZENS WILL BE PROTECTED. AND THIS IS THE WAY THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS CHOSEN IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH CARE, BETWEEN THE EXTREME POSITIONS OF THOSE WHO REFUSE TO RECOGNIZE THE PROBLEM ON ONE HAND, AND THOSE WHO WOULD SOCIALIZE OUR ENTIRE HEALTH SYSTEM THROUGH A COSTLY, COMPULSORY GOVERNMENT HEALTH INSURANCE SYSTEM ON THE OTHER. I BELIEVE THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE PUBLIC, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION RECOGNIZE THE WISDOM OF THIS COURSE AND SUPPORT IT.

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FORESIGHT -- THE ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE AND ACT ON A PROBLEM BEFORE IT IS OUT OF CONTROL AND OUT OF BALANCE; THE ABILITY TO DO SO IN A CALM, REASONED WAY THAT SKIRTS EXTREMISM AND IRRESPONSIBILITY -- THIS IS THE HALL-MARK OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S LEADERSHIP IN THIS AND OTHER FIELDS.

I AM NOT HERE TODAY TO BE CRITICAL OF THE KIND OF ALTERNATIVES BEING OFFERED BY THE OPPOSITION PARTY IN CONTRAST TO THE LEADERSHIP OFFERED BY PRESIDENT NIXON, BUT I WOULD SUGGEST TO YOU THAT TODAY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE GETTING THE QUALITY OF PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBLE APPROACHES TO NATIONAL CHALLENGES WHICH ARE NEEDED TO ASSURE PROGRESS AND STABILITY IN OUR COUNTRY'S FUTURE.