

REMARKS OF HONORABLE BOB DOLE

LINCOLN DAY DINNER
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1972

PERHAPS SOME OF YOU HAVE ALREADY SEEN PRESIDENT NIXON'S LINCOLN DAY MESSAGE. IN IT, HE WRITES THAT "IN COMMEMORATING THE BIRTHDAY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, WE PAUSE TO RECALL THE QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP WHICH THIS STRONG YET SIMPLE MAN BROUGHT TO A DIVIDED NATION OVER A CENTURY AGO....."NOW," SAYS THE PRESIDENT, "WE WORK IN A DIVIDED WORLD TO ESTABLISH A PEACE TO END ALL WARS, AND WE SEEK TO MOVE AMERICA FORWARD HERE AT HOME, BRINGING ITS PEOPLE TOGETHER AND BUILDING A NEW AND LASTING PROSPERITY. WE NEED MORE THAN EVER THE QUALITIES OF LINCOLN TO INSPIRE US AND GIVE US CONFIDENCE TO DO OUR DUTY AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, TO SERVE AMERICA BETTER SO THAT AMERICA MAY BETTER SERVE MANKIND."

IT WAS LINCOLN'S FORESIGHT AND WISDOM THAT GAVE HIM THE ABILITY TO LEAD A NATION SO BADLY DIVIDED. AND I BELIEVE WE HAVE THOSE QUALITIES AGAIN IN THE WHITE HOUSE. WE HAVE HAD THEM THESE FIRST THREE YEARS OF RICHARD NIXON'S FIRST TERM, AND BECAUSE OF THAT, I AM CONFIDENT WE WILL HAVE THEM AGAIN IN THE FOUR YEARS OF RICHARD NIXON'S SECOND TERM.

PRESIDENT NIXON HAS POINTED THIS NATION IN THE DIRECTION OF PEACE. HE IS PURSUING PEACE WITH ALL THE CONSIDERABLE COURAGE, STRENGTH AND WISDOM AT HIS DOMMANC. AND I BELIEVE THAT HE HAS THE SUPPORT OF ALL AMERICANS IN THIS GREAT EFFORT.

IT IS CERTAIN THAT THERE IS A PLACE FOR DISCUSSION OF THE PRESIDENT'S EFFORTS, THERE IS A PLACE AND A TIME FOR CRITICISM. THERE CAN NEVER BE A TIME IN AMERICA FOR CRITICISM TO BE STIFLED. BUT THERE IS A TIME AND A PLACE FOR RESPONSIBLE CRITICISM, AND THE HIGHER THE STAKES, THE HIGHER THE COST OF MISJUDGMENT, THE MORE VITAL IT IS THAT RESPONSIBILITY BE A PARAMOUNT CONCERN OF THE CRITIC.

FEW PEOPLE BEAR GREATER RESPONSIBILITY THAN A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. ALL THAT HE DOES AND SAYS BECOMES MUCH MORE THAN SIMPLE CRITICISM -- THESE THINGS BECOME ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN THE EQUATION BY WHICH THE FUTURE ACTIONS OF THIS NATION'S GOVERNMENT ARE MEASURED AND ASSESSED. THUS, IT IS ONE MATTER TO CRITICIZE THIS NATION'S PEACE EFFORTS. IT IS QUITE ANOTHER TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION, INTENTIONALLY OR OTHERWISE, OF REJECTING THOSE EFFORTS. GUT THE WORSE COURSE OF ACTION POSSIBLE IS TO UNILATERALLY PROPOSE A SPECIFIC NEGOTIATING POSITION.

A NATION MUST SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE IN ITS FOREIGN DISCOURSE. WHEN IT APPEARS TO SPEAK WITH MORE THAN ONE VOICE, THEN THOSE IN OTHER COUNTRIES WILL LISTEN TO THE VOICE THE PREFER TO HEAR. THEY MAY WELL BE MISLED. IN THIS CASE, I AM SURE

THEY WILL BE MISLED IF THEY SUPPOSE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO TOLERATE ANOTHER 11 MONTHS OF WAR, ANOTHER 11 MONTHS OF DEATHAND DESTRUCTION, ONLY IN ORDER TO BETRAY AN ALLIED GOVERNMENT, FORSAKE A PEOPLE WHO WISH TO BE FREE, AND SURRENDER THE SACRIFICES OF SO MANY YOUNG AMERICAN LIVES ON INAUGURATION DAY, 1973.

BUT IT WOULD BE A TRAGEDY IF WE HAD TO WAIT UNTIL NOVEMBER TO PROVE TO HANOI THAT RICHARD NIXON SPEAKS FOR HIS PEOPLE, AND THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE ALREADY HEARD THE MOST GENEROUS AND REASONABLE OFFER THEY CAN HOPE FOR FROM THE UNITED STATES.

SENATOR MUSKIE HAS LAID THE GROUND WORK FOR SUCH A TRAGEDY BY MAKING A PROMISE WHICH IT IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN HE CAN NEVER DELIVER ON.

SENATOR MUSKIE MADE A MISTAKE. LET'S ASSUME THAT IT WAS AN HONEST MISTAKE, BUT IT WAS NEVERTHELESS A MISTAKE OF SUCH DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES THAT IT RAISES SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS CANDIDACY. UNLESS RECTIFIED, THE CONSEQUENCES IN SOUTH VIETNAM COULD BE EVEN MORE TRAGIC.

I BELIEVE THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY FOR THE SENATOR TO RECTIFY HIS MISTAKE, TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THAT HIS FIRST PRIORITY IS TRULY PEACE, AND TO DEMONSTRATE TO HANOI THAT THEY HAVE NO HOPE BUT TO NEGOTIATE A JUST PEACE NOW.

I CALL UPON SENATOR MUSKIE TO DEMONSTRATE HIS COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND HIS COMMITMENT TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE BY WITHDRAWING HIS CANDIDACY FOR THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT.

I ASK THIS AS AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, AND AS AN AMERICAN, I WANT TO REMIND THE SENATOR THAT ONE OF THE GREAT LEADERS OF HIS OWN PARTY, TRAPPED INTO AN ENDLESS WAR BY THE ERRORS OF HIS PREDECESSORS, BUT DESIRING PEACE ABOVE ALL ELSE -- PEACE FOR AMERICA -- THAT MAN, LYNDON B. JOHNSON, STEPPED DOWN FROM HIS HIGH OFFICE, AND STEPPED UP INTO THE ANNALS OF MEN WHO DID WHAT THEY BELIEVED WAS RIGHT FOR THEIR COUNTRY, AND NOT MERELY EXPEDIENT FOR THEMSELVES.

2-11-72

For SENATOR DOLE, dictated over the phone by Mr. Kirk:

Senator Muskie has gone from irresponsibility to outright misrepresentation in his efforts to wring political profit from the Vietnam war. Immediately after the President made his recent peace proposal to Hanoi, and before Hanoi had a chance to respond, Senator Muskie denounced the peace plan. He then compounded that grievous error by offering Hanoi an alternative negotiation position. Now that he has been properly criticized for this action, the Senator yesterday tried to deflect the issue by accusing the President of the United States of "aiding and abetting the enemy." The Senator's campaign is daily beginning to sound more and more like an episode from Alice in Wonderland. This chapter is entitled "Edmund in Trouble." To support his unusual claim that President Nixon aided the enemy Senator Muskie has dug out a quote from 1966, in a period when this nation was moving toward putting more than a half million men in Southeast Asia, and the best the Senator can produce is the fact that Richard Nixon -- a private citizen, a non-presidential candidate -- said the United States was going "overboard". This is the criticism through which Senator Muskie claims that Mr. Nixon aided the enemy.

Since there is a question of the President's sense of responsibility and of presidential-candidate Muskie's irresponsibility, I think it is important that we look at precisely what Mr. Nixon said in 1968 when he ran for the highest office in the land, and when Lyndon Johnson was trying to negotiate a peace in Southeast Asia.

On August 1, 1968, he said this: "With regard to the war in Vietnam, the Republican Party faces the question of how a complex, emotionally charged and highly sensitive issue can be handled during the election year in a responsible way.

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For SENATOR DOLE, Continued

"The manner in which we conduct ourselves on this issue can bear heavily on the chances for peace.

"The Republican Party must address this issue in its platform. What I intend to do, and what I believe the Party should do, is to separate those questions that can responsibly be discussed from those that cannot. The present administration's emissaries in Paris must be able to speak with the full force and authority of the United States. Nothing should be offered in the political arena that might undercut their hand."

Where appropriate Mr. Nixon criticized the handling of the war. He did not criticize the President's effort to wage peace. Contrast this with Senator Muskie ten months before the election -- indeed, before he is even sure he can be nominated -- Senator Muskie is trying to destroy three years of painstaking peace negotiations with a single ill-advised, ill-considered effort to outbid the President of the United States.

Far from aiding the enemy, when he was a candidate, Richard Nixon supported the President of the United States. Peace would be closer if Senator Muskie would do the same.