

DOLE WITHDRAWAL STATEMENT

LAWRENCE, KANSAS

SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 1980

ON JANUARY 26, I TOLD A KANSAS DAY AUDIENCE IN TOPEKA THAT KANSANS WOULD BE THE FIRST TO KNOW WHEN I MADE A FINAL DECISION CONCERNING MY PRESIDENTIAL EFFORT. SO TODAY, I FORMALLY ANNOUNCE MY WITHDRAWAL FROM THE REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST. IT WAS A 'LONG SHOT' FROM THE START -- BUT WORTH THE EFFORT. WHILE I MAY FEEL I DESERVED BETTER, FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS THE CAMPAIGN NEVER REALLY DEVELOPED.

A HOPE -- BUT NO ILLUSIONS

HAVING SAID THAT, LET ME EMPHASIZE THAT I HARBORED NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE ODDS WHEN I ANNOUNCED IN RUSSELL LAST MAY 14. RONALD REAGAN WAS THE REPUBLICAN FRONTRUNNER THEN, AS HE IS NOW. THERE WERE ALSO OTHER OUTSTANDING CANDIDATES TO CONTEND WITH. I BELIEVED THEN THAT IF GOVERNOR REAGAN'S SUPPORT ERODED, I WOULD INHERIT MUCH OF IT -- BUT OBVIOUSLY THAT DID NOT HAPPEN. REAGAN'S SUPPORT WAS SOLID, HENCE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO MAKE ANY INROADS WITH CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICANS, AND DIFFICULT TO DEVELOP OTHER "CONSTITUENCIES".

IT HAS BEEN CLEAR FOR QUITE SOME TIME THAT I DID NOT HAVE THE TIME, MONEY, MANAGEMENT OR ORGANIZATION TO REMAIN A VIABLE CANDIDATE. BUT IN ANY EVENT, I'M GLAD I SAID YES TEN MONTHS AGO. I'VE MET THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE OF BOTH PARTIES, PEOPLE WHO SHARE MY CONCERN ABOUT WHERE THE COUNTRY IS GOING, AND HOW IT CAN BE TURNED AROUND. IT WAS A VALUABLE EXPERIENCE, AND IT MAKES ME FEEL BETTER THAN EVER ABOUT THE BASIC STRENGTH OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, THEIR DECENCY AND THEIR DETERMINATION TO PREVAIL OVER ANY ROADBLOCK ON THE ROAD TO GREATNESS.

A JOB TO DO

I LEAVE THE RACE, AS I ENTERED IT, PROUD TO REPRESENT THE PEOPLE OF KANSAS IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE, HONORED TO GIVE VOICE TO THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. I HAVE NO INTENTION OF WITHDRAWING FROM THOSE DEBATES. I DO NOT BELIEVE THE PEOPLE OF KANSAS WOULD WANT ME TO RETREAT FROM THE GREAT ISSUES OF WAR AND PEACE, AND A HEALTHY ECONOMY. I BELIEVE MANY KNOW OF MY WORK AS RANKING REPUBLICAN ON THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE. MANY KNOW MY RECORD ON AGRICULTURE. YES, AND MY WORK ON HEALTH CARE, FOOD STAMPS, PROGRAMS FOR THE HANDICAPPED, VETERANS, SENIOR CITIZENS, AND OTHERS.

IT IS THAT RECORD, EXTENDING OVER 19 YEARS, THAT I BELIEVE QUALIFIED ME FOR THE PRESIDENCY. YET THERE WAS A CONFLICT THAT TOOK ITS TOLL. FOR 4½ MONTHS (OCTOBER THROUGH JANUARY) DEBATE RAGED ON THE WINDFALL PROFITS TAX BILL -- WHICH, UNFORTUNATELY FOR ME POLITICALLY, CAME AT A CRUCIAL TIME, INsofar AS THE IOWA AND NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARIES WERE CONCERNED. I MAINTAINED A VOTING RECORD OF 95% WHILE MANAGING THE BILL ON THE REPUBLICAN SIDE. I CAMPAIGNED ON WEEKENDS AND DURING CONGRESSIONAL RECESSES, BUT IT WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT PRODUCTIVE. I DON'T REALLY COMPLAIN ABOUT THIS. BUT THE BASIC IRONY IN ALL THIS IS A BIT PAINFUL: WHAT I CONSIDERED MY GREATEST ASSET IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN -- A RECORD OF EXPERIENCE AND PERFORMANCE IN THE SENATE -- ACTUALLY TURNED INTO MY GREATEST LIABILITY. I LEARNED VERY QUICKLY THAT WHEN YOU DON'T GET STARTED EARLY AND CANNOT BE A FULL-TIME CANDIDATE, IT'S HARD TO RAISE MONEY OR PUT TOGETHER AN ORGANIZATION.

I OFFER NO EXCUSES. WE HAD OUR SHARE OF MONEY, MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION PROBLEMS. BUT I HAVE LEARNED A FEW THINGS ABOUT HOW WE NOMINATE AND ELECT OUR PRESIDENTS. I PUT THEM FORWARD NOW IN THE HOPE THAT THE CANDIDATES NOW IN THE RACE, AS WELL AS THE MEDIA WHO ARE SO INFLUENTIAL IN SHAPING PERCEPTIONS OF THOSE CANDIDATES, WILL HEED SOME DISTURBING WARNING SIGNALS.

MEDIA POLITICS

WORRISOME TO ME IS THE TENDENCY OF RECENT CAMPAIGNS TO STRESS CAMPAIGNING SKILLS OVER LEADERSHIP SKILLS. IT MAY WELL BE NECESSARY FOR A MAN OR WOMAN TO WORK FULL-TIME FOR FOUR YEARS TO LAUNCH A SERIOUS CAMPAIGN. THIS MEANS THAT CANDIDATES WHO ALREADY HOLD OFFICE -- WHO ARE PRESUMABLY PARTIALLY TRAINED FOR THE PRESIDENCY BY THEIR YEARS IN OFFICE, AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOVERNING PROCESS -- OPERATE AT A DISADVANTAGE IN THE RACE FOR FUNDS, DELEGATES AND MEDIA ATTENTION.

EQUALLY SERIOUS IS THE WAY IN WHICH THE 1980 CAMPAIGN, SO FAR AT LEAST, HAS YIELDED PRECIOUS LITTLE IN THE WAY OF NEW OR ATTRACTIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE CRITICAL PROBLEMS CONFRONTING AMERICANS. ISSUES, RECORDS, VISIONS -- THE INDEXES BY WHICH WE HAVE TRADITIONALLY MEASURED OUR CANDIDATES -- HAVE BEEN SWALLOWED UP BY MEDIA PERCEPTIONS OF WHO'S AHEAD IN WHAT STATE IN WHICH WEEK. THE RACE ITSELF HAS REPLACED THE REASON FOR RUNNING. MOMENTUM HAS COME DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO REPLACING EXPERIENCE AND IDEAS AS THE CRITERIA BY WHICH WE CHOOSE THE LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD.

IN OUR OWN CAMPAIGN, I SOUGHT, PROPERLY I HOPE, TO CAPITALIZE ON A 19 YEAR RECORD IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE, COMBINED WITH EXPERIENCE AS THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN OF MY PARTY, AND PRESIDENT FORD'S RUNNING MATE IN 1976. I TALKED ABOUT ISSUES AND PROPOSED SPECIFICS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS OF INFLATION, ENERGY, EXCESSIVE FEDERAL REGULATION AND DIMINISHED RESPECT FOR AMERICA ABROAD.

WHILE I SOUGHT TO ADDRESS ISSUES WHICH CONCERNED ALL AMERICANS VITALLY, MEDIA ATTENTION FOCUSED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY WITH HOW MUCH MONEY I'D RAISED, WHO MY CAMPAIGN MANAGER WAS OR WHERE I STOOD IN THE POLLS. SOME WERE WRITTEN OFF BEFORE THERE WAS ANY REAL ATTEMPT BY THE MEDIA TO FOCUS ON THE CANDIDATES, THE ISSUES, AND THEIR EXPERIENCE.

A WATERSHED ELECTION

TO THOSE WHO HAVE DEPARTED, I THANK THEM FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE PROCESS. TO THE CANDIDATES WHO REMAIN, I WISH THEM LUCK. I WILL WORK HARD TO SEE WHOEVER IS NOMINATED IN DETROIT IS ELECTED IN NOVEMBER. FOR AMERICA NEEDS A REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION TO SOLVE OUR WORSENING ECONOMIC CRISIS AND RESTORE A SENSE OF RESPECT FOR THE FLAG ABROAD.

BUT FOR THESE CANDIDATES, I ALSO ASK MORE ATTENTION THAN EVER BEFORE TO THE GRAVE ISSUES THAT MAKE THIS YEAR'S ELECTION A WATERSHED IN AMERICAN HISTORY. FOR THIS YEAR WE WILL MAKE DECISIONS IN THE VOTING BOOTH THAT WILL DECIDE FOR DECADES TO COME WHAT KIND OF ECONOMY WE WISH TO HAVE, WHAT KIND OF WORLD LEADERSHIP WE WISH TO UNDERTAKE, WHAT PROMISES TO OURSELVES AND MANKIND WE WILL KEEP.

THE STAKES ARE ENORMOUS. THE NEED FOR RATIONAL, DETAILED,
CANDID DEBATE IS JUST AS GREAT. INSOFAR AS MY VOICE, RAISED
FROM THE FLOOR OF THE U.S. SENATE, CAN CONTRIBUTE TO SUCH
DEBATE, I WILL RAISE IT.