



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

New Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 225-6521

Joe Reppert—Press Secretary

STATEMENT BY SENATOR BOB DOLE ----- APRIL 8, 1972

FOR RELEASE -- A.M., SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 1972

PEACE OR POLITICS???

Since last week when the government of North Vietnam opened a massive invasion against the South Vietnamese people, we have witnessed a rising crescendo of the disproven cliches of defeatism which again reflect the political opportunism and considerable ignorance which has too often governed our debate. The same charges which have been voiced in the past, but which now have been incontrovertably been proven false, are once more brought forth in the face of tragic evidence of their untruth, all in the interest of domestic political, self interest.

CIVIL WAR MYTH LAID TO REST

Once more, and notwithstanding, the thousands of living examples to the contrary, we hear the charge that U.S. forces must withdraw from what is a civil war in South Vietnam. While the myth was exploded long before U.S. participation, by the presence and capture of huge quantities of North Vietnamese and other foreign material and military forces, this subterfuge has persisted in this chamber to mask what has been naked aggression on a major scale for over seven years in South Vietnam. At this point, twelve of North Vietnam's thirteen regular army divisions are engaged in aggression outside its borders against Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam. Hanoi is currently engaged in a three division offensive against the northern part of South Vietnam. These forces include accompanying sophisticated armor, artillery and anti-aircraft equipment far beyond the scale or capability of any guerilla force to operate. It is time that this irresponsible and misleading diversion be terminated, and that the facts be addressed as they are. The North Vietnamese operation across the demilitarized zone is clearly an open invasion by conventional military forces supported by sophisticated foreign equipment.

THE DEFENDERS OF SOUTH VIETNAM

As well we continue to hear the charge that Vietnamization is a pretense for continued U.S. domination of the war, such mis-statements reflect an astonishing ignorance or surely an alarming disregard of the facts as to who is bearing the burden of battle in South Vietnam. South Vietnam is a country of 18.7 million people. Notwithstanding the disruption of their economy and the continued daily peril in which any fruitful enterprise may be conducted, these people have raised a force of 1.1 million men under arms dedicated to the defense of their country and to the survival of their families. This investment represents 6 percent of their population. I wonder if my colleagues understand the magnitude of that human dedication to survival. A parallel effort on the part of the United States would mean that 12 million Americans would be in uniform. I wonder further how it can be alleged that such an obvious human investment could or would be continued if the people felt no loyalty to their cause or support for their country's policies as is frequently alleged in this chamber.

THE RING OF POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM

That such mis-statements, and one-sided interpretations can continue in this body particularly from those who were most vocal in support of our early involvement in this tragic conflict can only reflect the political opportunism which is so detrimental to the President's policies for bringing an early end to this conflict. History has recorded the facts with regard to the expansion of this war. This Administration is moving with all possible haste toward recording its early termination. An end to the fighting and the return of all American forces to our shores is an objective we all share. I believe strongly that the time has come when we must all recognize the facts as they are; the aggressor as borne out by the experience of the past week and the total dedication of the South Vietnamese to the defense of their homeland. The President has thus far, under the immediate circumstances, shown great restraint in response to North Vietnamese indiscriminate shelling of densely populated areas by long-range artillery and rockets, the President has directed that our air power and naval gunfire support be directed against military targets in the immediate area supporting the tactical situation. No U.S. ground forces have been committed. The U.S. is also providing such help as is appropriate in providing care for the refugees and civilian casualties caused by the North Vietnamese attack. The United States stands ready, together with the government of the Republic of Vietnam to work for an early end to the fighting and for a just peace in Indochina. We remain committed to a negotiated solution as the quickest way to end the war. We are prepared to give the opponents to participate fully and peacefully in the political process through internationally supervised elections run by an independent run electoral

commission, but we cannot accept the response Hanoi has shown towards the allies
good will for peace. Under these circumstances, it is incumbent on all of us to
focus on the facts as they are and to unite in support of the President's
restrained response and in support of his continued efforts to bring an end to
this tragic chapter in that country's history.