

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1977

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REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE ON BALTIC FRIENDSHIP DAY IN PRAIRIE VIEW, ILLINOIS

It is an honor and pleasure to be with you today for this annual Baltic Friendship celebration.

Freedom does not come easily to any nation--as you of Baltic origins know all too well. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania had to fight hard to achieve their independence after World War I.

After only 20 years of freedom, first German--then Soviet forces--swept through your former homelands. In spite of treaties signed to the contrary, the Soviets incorporated the Baltic states into the Soviet Union. The United States has never recognized this illegal incorporation, and we must continue to stand firm in our commitment to the people of these three valiant nations.

I know that you, and many other groups throughout the free world, are concerned over the fate of dissidents and prisoners of conscience suffering in Soviet hard labor camps, psychiatric wards and the wastelands of Siberia. The petition you submitted on behalf of Miss Sudanaite was impressive. The concern over the Estonian human rights fighters, like Matik, Soldatov, Yuskevick and Kiirend has not gone unnoticed.

Nor have the recent arrests of Viktoras Pyatkus and Antonas Tyerlaytskac, two members of the Helsinki Watch Committee in Vilnius, gone unobserved.

I know that you are gravely concerned over the russification of the three Baltic states. The Russians have used a variety of devious techniques to achieve their nefarious end. For example, in Latvia and Estonia, forced industrialization is used as a means to achieve permanent colonization, while the arrest of two members of the Lituuanian Helsinki Watch Committee is just another in a long series of Soviet efforts to denationalize the Lithuanian people.

Reaffirm Self-Determination for Captive Nations

It was for these very reasons that I introduced Senate Resolution 224--co-sponsored by Senator Percy--calling for a reaffirmation of the principles of self-determination at the Belgrade Conference this fall. I had in mind the fate of all the captive nations, from the Baltic states to Russia itself.

I am also aware that the other problems the Baltic states are experiencing are common to all countries under the Soviet regime. Restrictions on travel and exchange of information, freedom to worship--basic human rights we in America take for granted--are severely curtailed.

As a member of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I have had the opportunity to listen to dozens of witnesses give first hand accounts of Soviet violations of the Helsinki Accords. In July of this year, I travelled to Austria and Yugoslavia in order to speak personally with refugees from Soviet oppression. I was deeply moved by the dedication to the principles of human rights and freedom that these people possess

The Soviets want to cooperate with the West when it is to their advantage. They obtain extensive benefits from cultural and scientific exchanges--and they want and need our superior technology and our agricultural products.

U.S. Concern Unwavering

But they must realize that the U.S. has a firm and unwavering concern for human rights in the Baltic states, Ukraine, Eastern Europe, and the rest of the Soviet Union.

This cannot be an on-again, off-again stance. It must be a long term policy of the United States. The Soviet Union must come to understand that respect for human rights is an integral part of the thinking of the American people.

Clearly, they are upset at these new standards of human rights. For far too long we have agreed to play according to the dictates they found acceptable. If the Soviets protested, we modified our stand and our tone of voice. Even now the Soviet press is gearing up for an attack on the Helsinki Commission Report. About two weeks ago, an article appeared in a leading Soviet newspaper which reviled the Commission and its report.

Continue Dedication to Human Rights

We must continue on--and strengthen--our new course. Dedication to human rights can be the inspiration and motivating force. If visitation and visa applications could be easily obtained, if religion could be practiced openly without fear of persecution, if criticism of the abuses of the Soviet regime could be tolerated, there would be profound changes within the Soviet system and the Baltic states.

For this to happen, however, you and I know that the United States must take a firm and strong stand. We must make the Soviets face up to the ultimate responsibilities they have assumed by signing such documents as the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Final Act.

I am sure there will be more attacks against the so-called meddling of the Commission. There will be more arrests and harassment of dissidents. But if the people enduring these injustices can stand firm, surely we as a nation can remain resolute in our support of them.

We must continue to monitor Soviets acts of repression. The World Press will continue to report it. The Voice of America and Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty will continue to broadcast it to the Soviet people. We are serious about this concern and will continue to be serious about it in the future.

President Carter has started out in the right fashion, but he must not let those who are sensitive to Soviet criticism and disapproval discourage him. He will be pressed by the leadership of the Soviet Union to subdue his statements and will be urged to abandon his human rights campaign.

Will Not Bargain for Rights

It is not as if we didn't have proof of the effectiveness of pro quo method. Whenever the most favored nation status for Warsaw Pact nations comes up for discussion, there is a flurry of activity in the human rights area. Many cases which seem to be insoluble, are resolved as if by magic.

While the Communists are prepared to use human rights as bargaining chips to improve their economic condition, we should not allow ourselves to be swayed by this obvious trickery. We should continue to press them at every opportunity to see to it that their commitment to human rights becomes a permanent state of affairs.

If the Soviet Union seeks respectability in our eyes and the eyes of the world, it must take our concern for human rights seriously.

When I go to Belgrade this fall, I will do all in my power to make sure that our delegation stands firmly on the issue of human rights. There must be a full discussion of human rights violations by the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact nations. The evidence the Helsinki Commission and the State Department have compiled is extensive. It must be reviewed thoroughly and I will do all in my power to see that it is. I know that I have your full support in this endeavor.

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