

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS ROTARY CLUB
TOWN HOUSE HOTEL
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS
September 5, 1967
Remarks of Congressman Bob Dole

PACIFICATION AND THE WAR IN VIETNAM

PROBABLY THE SINGLE ISSUE THAT DOMINATES THE THINKING OF MOST AMERICANS THESE DAYS IS THE WAR IN VIETNAM. RIOTS, TAXES, THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT ---- THESE SUBJECTS HAVE ALL PRE-EMPTED THE TOP SPOT AND COMMANDED THE HEADLINES AT VARIOUS POINTS THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE SUMMER, BUT ONLY TO BE REPLACED BY YET ANOTHER MATTER OF CONCERN. THE WAR HAS REMAINED PAGE-ONE NEWS ALL ALONG. AS LONG AS UNITED STATES TROOPS CONTINUE TO FIGHT AND DIE THERE -- AND AS LONG AS THE WAR REMAINS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN THE LIVES OF ALL WHO PAY TAXES OR WHO ARE OF DRAFT AGE OR HAVE FAMILY OR FRIENDS IN THAT CATEGORY -- THE WAR WILL CONTINUE TO BE OUR NUMBER ONE PREOCCUPATION.

SUPPORTERS PAINT GLOWING PICTURE

RECENTLY, THE SUPPORTERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S CONDUCT OF THE WAR AND ITS ATTENDANT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL OFFENSIVES HAVE REDOUBLED THEIR EFFORTS TO CONVINCING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THAT ALL IS GOING WELL FOR THE UNITED STATES IN VIETNAM. THEY HAVE ESCALATED, SO TO SPEAK, THEIR CRIES THAT A MILITARY STALEMATE DOES NOT EXIST, THAT THE U. S. IS FINALLY BEGINNING TO WIN THE WAR -- AND HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE HEARD SECRETARY MCNAMARA OR OTHER SUCH SPOKESMEN MAKE THAT STATEMENT? -- AND ABOVE ALL, THAT PROGRAM WHICH HOLDS THE REAL KEY TO THE SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF A FREE, NON-COMMUNIST NATION OF VIETNAM, THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM, IS MAKING RAPID STRIDES TOWARD ACHIEVING ITS ENDS. SOME RECENT OBSERVERS WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE THAT IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT U. S. EFFORTS ARE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL.

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TOTAL EFFORT NOT GOING WELL

INFORMED REPORTS, BOTH ON THE PART OF PRESS CORRESPONDENTS STATIONED IN VIETNAM AND ON THE PART OF WELL-STAFFED CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATING TEAMS, INDICATE THAT THE SITUATION IS NOT SO SATISFACTORY AS SOME HAVE INDICATED.

I HAVE NEVER BEEN IN AGREEMENT WITH THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE ~~EX-~~
~~PERMITS~~ PEACENIKS THAT THE U. S. POSITION IN VIETNAM IS IN SOME WAY IMMORAL, THAT THIS COUNTRY IS COMMITTING ARMED AGGRESSION AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF THAT NATION, OR THAT THE U. S. SHOULD PROMPTLY AND UNCONDITIONALLY WITHDRAW FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA. I HAVE NO SYMPATHY WITH THIS STAND AND FEEL THAT IT HAS CONTRIBUTED NOTHING OF A POSITIVE NATURE TO THE DISCUSSION OF U. S. POLICY IN VIETNAM. NEITHER WOULD I WISH TO BE GUILTY OF BEING OVERLY CRITICAL OF THE PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE, NOR ABOVE ALL, OF THE SUPREME EFFORT EXPENDED AND THE COURAGE SHOWN BY THE FIGHTING MEN OF OUR COUNTRY IN THE PROSECUTION OF THE WAR. IT WOULD BE INCORRECT -- TO SAY THAT NO PROGRESS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED. LIKEWISE, HOWEVER, I FEEL THAT IT IS INCORRECT TO PAINT AS GLOWING A PICTURE OF OUR SUCCESSES AS SOME HAVE DONE. A "POLLYANNA" POSITION ON VIETNAM -- THAT ALL IS GOING WELL FOR OUR SIDE AND THAT WE HAVE NOTHING TO CONCERN OURSELVES WITH BUT PUMPING MORE MEN AND MORE MONEY INTO THE CONFLICT TO HASTEN THE INEVITABLE -- ALSO CONTRIBUTES VERY LITTLE, IN MY OPINION, TO A RATIONAL DISCUSSION OF OUR POLICY.

BY THE LAST WEEK OF AUGUST, MORE THAN 12,500 AMERICANS HAD BEEN LISTED AS KILLED AND MORE THAN 76,500 AS INJURED; MILLIONS OF ARTILLERY SHELLS AND BILLIONS OF RIFLE BULLETS HAD BEEN FIRED; AND OVER 850 AIRPLANES HAD BEEN SHOT DOWN. THE WAR COSTS THE UNITED STATES MORE THAN \$2 BILLION EACH MONTH. BY JUNE OF NEXT YEAR, THE PRESIDENT PLANS TO HAVE MORE THAN 525,000 U. S. TROOPS IN

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VIETNAM. AND YET, IN THE OPINION OF MANY DISTINGUISHED OBSERVERS, THE TOTAL WAR EFFORT, AND I EMPHASIZE TOTAL, IS NOT REALLY GOING WELL.

WHAT DO I MEAN BY "NOT GOING WELL"? I AM NOT A MILITARY EXPERT, BUT THE FACTS INDICATE AT BEST A STALEMATE IN THE MILITARY SITUATION IN VIETNAM. BUT THE MILITARY WAR IS NOT BY ANY MEANS THE WHOLE STORY. THE WAR THAT MUST BE WON BEFORE THE CONFLICT CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVED IS THE STRUGGLE FOR THE HEARTS AND MINDS -- FOR THE LOYALTY -- OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. IT IS THIS WAR -- THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM -- THAT IS MOST CONSPICUOUSLY NOT GOING AS WELL AS IT MUST.

SLOW PROGRESS IN PACIFICATION EFFORTS

FOR OVER A YEAR AND ONE-HALF, I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS. NO COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS HAS CARRIED ON A MORE THOROUGH APPRAISAL OF THE VITAL PACIFICATION PHASE OF OUR VIETNAM EFFORTS THAN THIS PANEL WHOSE VESTED RESPONSIBILITY IS TO OVERSEE THE OPERATION OF FOREIGN PROGRAMS OF THE U. S. GOVERNMENT. IN THE LAST YEAR COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF PERSONNEL HAVE MADE FOUR TRIPS TO VIETNAM. IN JULY OF 1967, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE, ACCOMPANIED BY A MEMBER OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE'S SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN OPERATIONS, CONDUCTED INVESTIGATIONS ON THE PROGRESS OF U. S. ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. VISITING VIETNAM FOR CLOSE TO A WEEK, THE TWO CONGRESSMEN HELD FORMAL HEARINGS WITH AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER U. S. MISSION OFFICIALS IN SAIGON. THEY ALSO CONFERRED WITH AMBASSADOR ELLSWORTH BUNKER AND OTHER SENIOR DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY OFFICIALS, BOTH IN SAIGON AND AT BIEN HOA AND NHA TRANG. THEIR FINDINGS AS DETAILED IN THE MASSIVE VOLUMES OF TESTIMONY TAKEN AND EMBODIED IN A SERIES OF 10 REPORTS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE AND THE FULL COMMITTEE WERE THAT THE

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PROGRESS OF THE MUCH-HERALDED PACIFICATION PROGRAM IS NOT ENCOURAGING.

THE VIETNAMESE ECONOMY IS BADLY OUT OF KILTER, WRACKED BY INFLATION, INDUSTRIAL STAGNATION, AND DECLINING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. CORRUPTION IS STILL AT AN APPALLING LEVEL. INEFFICIENCY ON THE PART OF A.I.D. ADMINISTRATORS, AND A LACK OF COOPERATION ON THE PART OF OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM, WERE TWO RECURRENT THEMES OF THE REPORTS.

PERHAPS MOST DISCOURAGING IS THE REPORT THAT, DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF OVER 30,000 PACIFICATION WORKERS, HUNDREDS OF WHOM HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES, AND THE EXPENDITURE OF \$400 MILLION BY THE AMERICANS AND \$135 MILLION BY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE THIS YEAR, ONLY 168 OF THE 12,537 RURAL HAMLETS ARE CLASSIFIED AS UNDER TOTAL GOVERNMENT CONTROL. FURTHERMORE, FEWER THAN 2000 ARE EVEN UNDER PARTIAL CONTROL -- A TERM WHICH IS DEFINED BY MANY EXPERIENCED AMERICAN OFFICIALS AS A HAMLET IN WHICH ITS CHIEF IS WILLING TO SLEEP AT NIGHT. THE VIET CONG, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE CONCEDED -- BY THE AMERICAN MISSION -- CONTROL OF OVER 4000 HAMLETS WITH THE BALANCE CONTESTED. INDICATIONS ARE THAT CONDITIONS HAVE ACTUALLY DETERIORATED SOMEWHAT SINCE THE INSTITUTION OF THE CIVILIAN OPERATIONS REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (CORDS). THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN DESCRIBED BY ONE REPORT AS BEING FURTHER FROM ITS GOAL THAN THE DIEM REGIME'S "STRATEGIC HAMLET" SCHEME NEARLY A DECADE AGO. OPTIMISTIC ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS ARGUE THAT THE CORDS PROGRAM IS BOUND TO BE SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE OF THE MASSIVE RESOURCES INVOLVED, THAT IF ENOUGH MANPOWER AND MONEY ARE POURED OUT OF SAIGON, SOME OF IT SOMEHOW MUST HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE PEASANTS. BUT PROGRESS, IF WE CAN CALL IT THAT, HAS BEEN PAINFULLY SLOW.

THE GOAL FOR THIS YEAR HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AS THE PACIFICATION OF 1,100 HAMLETS, MOST OF THEM IN 26 PRIORITY AREAS. EVEN THIS MODEST GOAL SEEMS BEYOND ACCOMPLISHMENT NOW. OF THE 44 PROVINCES, 26 ARE BEHIND SCHEDULE. AMERICAN OF-

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FICIALS CONCEDE THAT PACIFICATION IS AT BEST PROCEEDING IN THREE-QUARTERS OF THE COUNTRY AND IS AT A VIRTUAL STANDSTILL IN THE NORTHERN REGIONS.

COMPETENT PACIFICATION WORKERS ARE BECOMING MORE DIFFICULT TO RECRUIT. THE GOAL OF 41,000 BY THE END OF THIS YEAR WILL PROBABLY NOT BE REACHED. THOSE ALREADY AT WORK ARE BEING KILLED AT THE RATE OF ALMOST 15 PER WEEK. THE 53 SOUTH VIETNAMESE REGULAR ARMY BATTALIONS SUPPOSEDLY PROTECTING THE WORKERS ARE NOT DOING SO. MORALE HAS REACHED SUCH A LOW POINT THAT 13 OF EVERY 100 WORKERS ARE EXPECTED TO DESERT DURING 1967. TERRORISM, AS WE HAVE SEEN AGAIN JUST THIS LAST WEEK, IS STILL A POWERFUL TOOL IN THE HANDS OF THE VIET CONG -- AND THE PEASANTS CONTINUE TO REFUSE TO LEND THEIR ASSISTANCE TO ALLIED FORCES TO DEAL WITH THE CULPRITS. IT IS OFTEN EVEN UNSAFE TO TRAVEL IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF SAIGON. THIS ALL DOES NOT STRIKE ME AS EVIDENCE OF WIDESPREAD SUCCESS.

CREDIBILITY GAP IN VIETNAM

PERHAPS THE REASON FOR THIS LACK OF SUCCESS IS THE FACT THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT THAT WE HAVE MAINTAINED IN POWER HAS SIMPLY NOT FOLLOWED THROUGH ON MANY OF ITS PROMISES -- EVEN IN VIETNAM THERE EXISTS A CREDIBILITY GAP!!

LAND REFORM FOR EXISTENCE, TO WHICH WE HAVE PAID LIP SERVICE AND WHICH OFFERS PERHAPS THE GREATEST INDUCEMENT, NEXT TO PROVIDING SECURITY, IN ATTRACTING THE RURAL POPULATION'S LOYALTY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM, HAS NOT BEEN SERIOUSLY DEALT WITH BY U. S. OR VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS. SCANT ATTENTION HAS BEEN PAID TO THE ALMOST HALF A MILLION REFUGEES OF THE CONFLICT -- LESS THAN 50% HAVE RECEIVED EVEN TEMPORARY RELIEF PAYMENTS AND LESS THAN 25% HAVE RECEIVED RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF MEDICAL TEAMS OPERATING IN THE PROVINCE UNDER THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM, ONLY 65 MEDICAL FACILITIES OUT OF 257 AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL ARE NOW RECEIVING CONSISTENT

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COVERAGE AND ONLY HALF OF THE UNITED STATES A.I.D. MEDICAL POSITIONS FOR VIETNAM HAVE BEEN FILLED, LEAVING ONLY ABOUT 100 VIETNAMESE PHYSICIANS AVAILABLE TO CARE FOR A 15-MILLION CIVILIAN POPULATION. CORRUPTION, WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION HAS DEPLORED AND WHICH THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT HAS VOWED TO ELIMINATE, STILL EXISTS. SOME OFFICERS OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMY OFTEN WORK 4 1/2-DAY WEEKS, SPENDING THE REST OF THE TIME "LIVING IT UP" IN SAIGON. FOOD AND OTHER SUPPLIES CONTRIBUTED BY THE U. S. FOR THE REFUGEES HAVE OFTEN BEEN SOLD FOR PERSONAL PROFIT BY VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THE PEOPLE RESENT THINGS SUCH AS THE DELTA PROVINCE CHIEF WHOSE WATERWORKS AND ELECTRICAL PLANT SERVE HIS HEADQUARTERS AND HIS HOUSE, BUT NOT A SINGLE PEASANT HUT; THEY RESENT THE HIGHLANDS PROVINCE CHIEF WHO SOLD THEM DISEASED PIGS BOUGHT WITH AMERICAN AID FUNDS, AT ENORMOUS PROFIT TO HIMSELF.

MY PURPOSE, I REPEAT, IS NOT TO SAY THAT WE HAVE MADE NO PROGRESS AT ALL, RATHER IT IS TO SAY THAT WE HAVE MUCH ROOM LEFT FOR IMPROVEMENT. THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM SIMPLY HAS NOT BEEN A SUCCESS.

PACIFICATION PROGRAM NEEDS REVITALIZATION

IN MY OPINION, NO AMOUNT OF MILITARY OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WILL BRING SECURITY AND SELF-DETERMINATION TO SOUTH VIETNAM. THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE MUST BELIEVE THEY HAVE A STAKE IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY'S FUTURE AND A FUTURE UNDER THEIR OWN COUNTRY'S GOVERNMENT. INSTILLING THIS BELIEF IS THE JOB OF THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM. YET, TODAY THERE STILL APPEARS TO BE LITTLE SIGNIFICANT ALIGNMENT OF THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT. ONE REPORT INDICATES THAT EVEN IF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND AMERICAN TROOPS WERE MAGICALLY WHISKED AWAY, THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE REGIME WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY CRUMBLE WITHIN MONTHS, SO LITTLE HAVE THE ROOT PROBLEMS BEEN TOUCHED. THE CIVILIAN POPULATION CONTINUES TO DISPLAY AN ATTITUDE OF DISINTEREST, AND THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS APPEAR MORE INTERESTED IN PROTECTING PERSONAL PREROGATIVES THAN IN DEVELOPING

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POPULAR SUPPORT.

IT WOULD APPEAR THAT UNLESS WE CAN BREATHE LIFE INTO THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM, THERE WILL BE LITTLE HOPE AND LESS SUCCESS IN INVOLVING THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM IN THE DEFENSE AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR COUNTRY. UNITED STATES MILITARY SUCCESSES -- IF THEY ARE TO COME -- ARE NOT THE ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM OF THE VIET CONG. ONLY BY BRINGING THE PEOPLE OF VIETNAM TO THE POINT WHERE THEY ARE WILLING TO FIGHT THIS WAR -- AND IT CANNOT BE FORGOTTEN THAT IT IS THEIR WAR TO FIGHT -- CAN IT BE BROUGHT TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION. WE MUST NOT ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE DIVERTED FROM THIS TASK BY THE GLOWING REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATION SPOKESMEN.

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Report - Please