

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
CAWKER CITY HIGH SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT
CAWKER CITY, KANSAS
THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1974

IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO BE HERE WITH YOU ON THIS MOST IMPORTANT DAY AND TO BE ABLE TO TAKE PART IN THE CELEBRATION OF YOUR GRADUATION FROM THE CAWKER CITY HIGH SCHOOL.

THESE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES OCCUR AGAINST A NATIONAL BACK-DROP OF DOUBT AND CONCERN ABOUT MANY OF OUR INSTITUTIONS. SOME OF OUR MOST DEEP-ROOTED FEELINGS ABOUT OUR SYSTEM, OUR COUNTRY, HAVE BEEN CALLED INTO QUESTION.

AND MANY FEAR FOR THE FUTURE OF AMERICA.

-2-

OUTLOOK BRIGHT

BUT I AM NOT HERE TO JOIN WITH THOSE WHO SAY THAT OUR COUNTRY IS SICK, OUR PEOPLE UNCARING, OR OUR SYSTEM DEBILITATED. WHAT A PALL THAT WOULD CAST OVER THESE FESTIVITIES IF THAT ASSESSMENT WERE TRUE.

BUT IT IS NOT TRUE. THIS I FIRMLY BELIEVE.

FAR FROM IT. YOU AND THE THOUSANDS LIKE YOU WHO ARE GRADUATING IN CEREMONIES THIS SPRING HAVE A HEALTHY FUTURE AHEAD OF YOU AT LEAST IN PART BECAUSE THIS COUNTRY, IN WHICH YOU WILL LIVE AND WORK AND RAISE YOUR FAMILIES, HAS A SECURE FUTURE.

I DON'T MEAN TO WRITE OFF AS INSIGNIFICANT, THE TROUBLES WE PRESENTLY FACE. WE HAVE PROBLEMS AND THEY ARE REAL. BUT ALL OF THE, WHEN THEY ARE ADDED TOGETHER AND PUT IN PERSPECTIVE, TAKE A DIFFERENT DIMENSION THAN WE MIGHT OTHERWISE THINK.

-3-

ALL OF THEM WHEN ADDED TOGETHER AND PUT IN PERSPECTIVE ARE NOT
ENOUGH TO DIMINISH THE BASIC STRENGTH OF THIS SOCIETY OF OURS NOR
ALTER ITS FUNDAMENTAL RESILIENCY AND PROVEN CAPACITY TO BOUNCE BACK
FROM REVERSALS AND REMEDY THE MISTAKES MADE IN THE PAST.

-4-

BASIC STRENGTH

IF THE PROBLEMS WHICH PRESENTLY TROUBLE THIS NATION ARE BASICALLY AS I SEE THEM, THEN THE SOLUTION TO THEM WILL COME FROM AN INTELLIGENT, INFORMED CITIZENRY WHICH IS ABLE TO PUT THEM IN THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE.

A NATION WITH A LESS WORTHY, LESS INFORMED AND LESS DETERMINED CITIZENRY MIGHT REALLY FIND ITSELF IN DANGER IF IT FACED THE SAME SET

-5-

OF DIFFICULTIES WE PRESENTLY CONFRONT -- ENERGY CRISIS, INFLATION,
COMMODITY SHORTAGES, AND POLITICAL SCANDAL.

A LESSER NATION, IN SHORT, WOULD BE IN REAL TROUBLE.

OVERCOMING OUR PROBLEMS

BUT QUITE THE CONTRARY, WHILE AMERICA IS A TROUBLED NATION THESE
DAYS, IT IS NOT A NATION IN TROUBLE.

-6-

FOR WITH ALL OUR PROBLEMS, ALL OUR CAUSE FOR CONCERN AND ALL THE CONFUSING, DISORIENTING NEWS THAT EVERY NEW DAY BRINGS -- WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE OVERCOME OBSTACLES IN THE PAST AND WE KNOW THAT EVEN NOW, WE ARE MAKING REAL PROGRESS TOWARDS THE RESOLUTION OF MANY MORE.

YES, WE ARE FLOODED WITH THE BAD NEWS OF WHAT WE ARE DOING WRONG, OF THE MISTAKES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE. BUT I AM HERE TO BRING SOME GOOD NEWS. GOOD NEWS AND A CHALLENGE. AND, AS THEY SAY, I'LL GIVE YOU THE GOOD NEWS FIRST.

AT PEACE AND TOWARD A WIDER PEACE

WE ARE NOT JUST A NATION AT PEACE WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD. WE ARE A NATION WHICH IS ACTIVELY PURSUING PEACE FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD. WE WANT OTHERS TO ENJOY THE PROFOUND SENSE OF RELIEF WE FELT WHEN OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR CAME FINALLY TO AN END. TO THOSE WHO SAY THAT THE COUNTRY IS PARALYZED BY ITS PRESENT PROBLEMS, I COUNTER WITH THE

-7-

HEADLINES OF JUST A FEW DAYS AGO WHICH SHOW THAT THE MID-EAST IS COOLING DOWN. AN AREA OF THE WORLD WHICH HAS BEEN FLUCTUATING BETWEEN OUTRIGHT WAR AND LESS SPECTACULAR BUT ALWAYS BITTER HOSTILITIES ALMOST CONTINUOUSLY FOR THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, IS CLOSER NOW THAN EVER TO PEACE AND STABILITY.

THIS COUNTRY, WHICH SOME SAY HAS BECOME A TOOTHLESS GIANT IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, -- AND THE STRENGTH OF ITS DIPLOMATIC SKILLS -- IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT. THIS COUNTRY, WHICH SOME SAY IS PRESENTLY STYMIED BY INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND FORCED TO LOOK INWARD AND AWAY FROM INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL MATTERS, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROGRESS BEING MADE DAILY TOWARDS SOLVING THAT PERSISTENT CONFLICT.

RESOLUTION OF DOMESTIC PROBLEMS

IT HAS BECOME FASHIONABLE THESE DAYS TO ADMIT THAT AMERICA HAS BEEN

-8-

A FORCE FOR GOOD IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS. BUT THE MYTH PERSISTS THAT PROGRESS ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT HAS BEEN SLOWING DOWN DURING THE SAME PERIOD AND HAS ACTUALLY COME TO A VIRTUAL HALT IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS.

I HAVE BEEN A PERSISTENT CRITIC OF THE POINT OF VIEW THAT GOVERNMENT ACTION IS THE BEST SOLUTION TO THE BULK OF OUR PROBLEMS. I HAVE BEEN A CRITIC, I MIGHT ADD, OF THAT ATTITUDE IN THE CONGRESS. NONETHELESS, I MUST SAY THAT WE HAVE INDEED MADE SOME REAL PROGRESS ON A VARIETY OF DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AND THAT PROGRESS PUTS THE LIE TO THE CHARGE THAT GOVERNMENT IS PARALYZED.

WE HAVE MADE, FOR EXAMPLE, IMPORTANT STRIDES IN ANTI-POLLUTION EFFORT IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. LAWS -- LAWS WITH TEETH IN THEM -- HAVE BEEN ENACTED WHICH DISCOURAGE, OR PROHIBIT COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND EVEN

ACTS OF POLLUTION. AND EVEN A SEVERE ENERGY SHORTAGE HAS NOT BEEN ENOUGH TO DETER US, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE, FROM THE FIRM COMMITMENT TO PRESERVE THE ENVIRONMENT.

PROTECTION LAWS ENACTED

SWEEPING NEW LAWS TO PROTECT CONSUMERS HAVE BEEN ENACTED. THE AMERICAN CONSUMER HAS RECENTLY BECOME AWARE OF THE DEGREE TO WHICH SOME BUSINESSMEN, SOME RETAILERS, SOME MANUFACTURERS ARE INCLINED TO CHEAT, DECEIVE AND OTHERWISE HOODWINK HIM.

THEY WANTED SOMETHING DONE ABOUT IT. AND THEY ARE GETTING RESULTS. FIRST THERE WAS THE TRUTH IN LENDING LAW, REQUIRING FULL DISCLOSURE TO A BORROWER OF THE PRECISE TERMS AND COST OF HIS LOAN.

THEN, IN 1970 THERE WAS THE FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT, ASSURING TO THE CONSUMER HIS OR HER RIGHT TO BE INFORMED WHEN SOME IMPERSONAL CREDIT REPORT RESULTS IN AN EMPLOYMENT, CREDIT OR INSURANCE TURN-DOWN.

EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO OBTAIN MORE ACCURACY AND LESS INFLATED CLAIMS IN ADVERTISING, THE ALMOST UNIVERSALLY PERVASIVE AND OFTEN INTRUSIVE METHOD BY WHICH OUR HABITS OF CONSUMPTION ARE SHAPED.

IT IS TRUE, PERHAPS, THAT THE PROGRESS WE ARE MAKING MUST BE MEASURED IN INCHES AND FEET, RATHER THAN MILE. IT IS TRUE THAT IN THE FACE OF SO MANY PROBLEMS, OUR EFFORTS TO SOLVE THEM AND OUR IMPATIENCE TO SOLVE THEM MAKES OUR PROGRESS ALWAYS SEEM INADEQUATE.

IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS EFFORTS FOR EXAMPLE WHICH HAS SO DOMINATED THE LAST TWENTY YEARS OF AMERICAN POLICY-MAKING, PROGRESS HAS BEEN MEASURED IN TERMS OF DECADES. BUT THE PROGRESS IS THERE AND MEASURABLE, EVEN OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS. FOR DURING THAT PERIOD, THE PRACTICAL DISMANTLING OF THE OLD DUAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IN THE SOUTH WAS FINALLY ACHIEVED. IN NORTH

-11-

AND SOUTH, MEMBERS OF MINORITY GROUPS ARE ASSUMING ELECTIVE OFFICE IN UNPRECEDENTED NUMBERS AND MINORITIES GENERALLY ARE BEGINNING AT LONG LAST TO GET THEIR RIGHTFUL SHARE OF AMERICA'S PROSPERITY.

THE PROGRESS WE MAKE IS SOMETIMES SLOW, BUT IT IS REAL AND UNDENIABLE. AND IT IS SO, I REPEAT BECAUSE THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THIS COUNTRY -- ITS GOVERNMENT, ITS CITIZENRY, ITS PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS, ITS LAWS AND TRADITIONS -- THAT WHEN YOU PUT THEM ALL TOGETHER YOU END UP WITH A COMMITMENT TO PROGRESS. WE HAVE A TRADITIONAL ATTITUDE ABOUT OURSELVES -- NAMELY THAT WE ARE PROBLEM SOLVERS.

THAT -- IN PART AT LEAST-- IS THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT AMERICA. WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, WE HAVE A LOT MORE GOING FOR US IN THIS COUNTRY THAN WE HAVE GOING AGAINST US.

-12-

THE CHALLENGE

BUT I SAID I HAD SOME GOOD NEWS -- AND A CHALLENGE.

AND THE CHALLENGE IS SIMPLY THIS -- GET INVOLVED IN THIS SYSTEM OF OURS. THE ONE THING THAT HAS KEPT US GOING, AND PROSPERING AND ADVANCING OVER THE YEARS HAS BEEN THE FACT THAT GOOD PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELVES HAVE BECOME INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS.

I DO NOT MEAN BY THIS THAT ALL OF YOU SHOULD BECOME INVOLVED IN POLITICS IN THE ACTIVIST, PARTISAN AND LIMITED SENSE WHICH THAT WORD SOMETIMES CONNOTES. BUT OUR PROCESS ADMITS OF EFFECTIVE ACTION AND INFLUENCE IN THE POLITICAL REALM IN MANY WAYS.

LIMITS OF GOVERNMENT

I WAS FIRST ELECTED TO FEDERAL OFFICE AND WENT TO WASHINGTON THIRTEEN YEARS AGO, I HAVE BECOME MORE AND MORE CONVINCED OF THE RELATIVE INABILITY OF BIG GOVERNMENT TO MEANINGFULLY DEAL WITH THE VAST MAJORITY OF THOSE

-13-

CONCERNS -- THOSE SO-CALLED PEOPLE PROBLEMS -- WHICH MOST DIRECTLY INVOLVE 200 MILLION AMERICANS.

IN WASHINGTON, WE CAN APPROPRIATE FUNDS, DEVISE PLANS, AUTHORIZE RESEARCH, PASS LAWS. WE CAN DO THINGS WHICH CAN HELP -- OR MAKE MISTAKES WHICH CAN HINDER -- THE EFFORTS OF PEOPLE AROUND THE COUNTRY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS.

BUT ONLY IN THE RAREST INSTANCES CAN WE DIRECTLY ACT (TO REMEDY A BAD SITUATION.

WE AUTHORIZE FUNDS FOR CARE OF THE DISADVANTAGED. BUT THAT IS, AT BEST A STOPGAP. IT IS LOCAL BUSINESSMEN OR LABOR ORGANIZATIONS OR PRIVATE GROUPS WHICH STIMULATE THE JOBS AND THE JOB CREATING PLANS, AND THE PROGRAMS WHICH CAN PROPEL THE DISADVANTAGED INTO SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

WE PASS LAWS TO PREVENT DISCRIMINATION -- BUT IT IS LOCAL PEOPLE WORKING IN LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WHO TURN THE "SHALT NOTS" OF OUR LEGAL PROHIBITIONS INTO POSITIVE ACTION TO ENSURE THAT ALL SHARE NOT JUST EQUAL PROTECTION OF THE LAWS, BUTTEQUAL ACCESS TO THE GOOD LIFE AMERICA HAS TO OFFER.

THE REAL PROBLEM SOLVERS

WHILE SOME ARE LOOKING AT THE RELATIVE DISARRAY AROUND US AND PROCLAIMING THAT THE ROOF HAS FALLEN IN ON THE AMERICAN DREAM, I ASK YOU TO LOOK AT THE RECORD OF GOOD THIS COUNTRY HAS ACHIEVED.

BECOME A PART OF THE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH THAT RECORD WAS WRITTEN AND GO OUT AND WRITE A RECORD OF YOUR OWN. DO IT HERE IN COFFEYVILLE OR WHEREVER YOU CALL HOME. DO IT IN WASHINGTON IF YOU ARE SO INCLINED,

THROUGH FORMAL INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNMENT OR DO IT AS WORKINGMAN OR WOMAN,
AS PARENT, AS CITIZEN.

BUT I ASK YOU TO RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGE OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP,
WHICH YOU, NOW AS GRADUATES, ARE PREPARED TO DO IN A UNIQUE WAY AND TO
PROVE BY YOUR RESPONSE THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THEMSELVES AND NOT JUST
THEIR GOVERNMENT ARE A NATION OF PROBLEM. SOLVERS.