

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
VETERANS MEMORIAL MONUMENT
DAKOTA CITY, IOWA
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1979

ONLY THE DEAD HAVE SEEN THE END OF WAR.

IT IS AN AGE-OLD LAMENT, THE FORLORN BUT ALL TOO TRUTHFUL
CRY OF UNTOLD GENERATIONS. YOU AND I HAVE SEEN FIRSTHAND
THE HORRORS OF COMBAT. WE HAVE WATCHED MEN DIE AT OUR
FEET. SOME OF US CARRY WITH PHYSICAL AS WELL AS EMOTIONAL
SCARS INFLICTED BY WHAT DOUGLAS MACARTHUR CALLED "THE
MOST MALIGNANT SCOURGE OF MANKIND."

BUT WE CARRY WITH US OTHER MEMORIES AS WELL. WE REMEMBER
COURAGE AND DEDICATION AND THE SELFLESSNESS THAT WAR CALLS
FORTH. AND IN DEDICATING THIS MONUMENT TODAY, WE
COMMEMORATE THE SACRIFICE MADE BY TOO MANY MEN AND WOMEN ON TOO
MANY BATTLEFIELDS. WE PRAY THAT THE DAY WILL ONE DAY DAWN
WHEN THE LIVING, TOO, WILL HAVE SEEN THE END OF WAR.

A DAY FOR MORE THAN MEMORIES

WE SHOULD NOT LOSE SIGHT OF PRACTICAL REALITIES ON THIS VETERAN'S DAY. SADLY, MANY AMERICANS ARE ALL TOO WILLING TO OVERLOOK WHAT YOU DID FOR THEM. TOO MANY FORGET THAT ANY GREAT NATION MUST REMAIN ON CONSTANT GUARD LEST ITS FREEDOMS PERISH. TOO MANY THINK THAT PEACE IS AN AUTOMATIC PROCESS, SECURED THROUGH GOOD INTENTIONS OR ELOQUENT WORDS ALONE.

THEY IGNORE THE HARSH REALITIES OF THE MODERN WORLD, WHEN ONLY AMERICAN MILITARY STRENGTH IS AN ADEQUATE GUARANTEE OF A WORLD AT PEACE, AND A WORLD THAT KNOWS SOME DEGREE OF DEMOCRATIC FREEDOM. WHEN THEY TELL US THAT WE SHOULD CANCEL THE B1 BOMBER AND DELAY THE MX MISSILE AND REDUCE OTHER DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS, THEY MISTAKE THE REAL WORLD FOR THEIR IDEAL ONE. WHEN THEY DENOUNCE FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS IN IRAN AND LATIN AMERICA AND ASIA, THEY BETRAY AN IGNORANCE OF INTERNATIONAL REALITIES THAT WE CAN ILL AFFORD.

THE FACT IS, THE VETERANS OF THIS NATION COMPOSE A
POTENTIALLY CRITICAL INFLUENCE UPON THE COURSE OF AMERICA'S
MILITARY POSTURE. I ASK YOU TO JOIN WITH ME AND OTHERS
WHO INSIST UPON A DEFENSE SECOND TO NONE. THIS IS
OUR RIGHT. THIS IS OUR OBLIGATION TO COLLEAGUES WHO
FOUGHT AND SUFFERED AND SOMETIMES DIED AT OUR SIDE.
FOR THE THOUSANDS OF MEN WHOSE LIPS ARE FOREVER STILLED,
WHO LIE ON BATTLEFIELDS IN FRANCE AND ITALY, OR BENEATH
THE STILL WATERS OF THE PACIFIC, WE HAVE A DUTY TO SPEAK
OUT. WE HAVE A SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY TO FULFILL -- TO
MAKE CERTAIN THAT THEIR SACRIFICE WAS NOT IN VAIN.

PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH -- THAT SHOULD BE OUR MESSAGE,
ON THIS AND EVERY VETERAN'S DAY.

RESTORING VETERAN'S RIGHTS

BUT VETERAN'S DAY IS NOT ONLY A TIME TO ASSESS OUR MILITARY POSITION ABROAD. IT IS, FIRST AND FOREMOST, A DAY ON WHICH TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED THEIR NATION IN WAR AND PEACE.

AND IT SHOULD BE A DAY ON WHICH WE RENEW OUR COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING OUR VETERANS WITH A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING AND THE BENEFITS OF EDUCATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT WHICH ARE THE LEAST A GRATEFUL NATION CAN DO TO EXPRESS ITS APPRECIATION.

LAST YEAR, AFTER MANY ATTEMPTS, WE FINALLY PERSUADED THE CONGRESS TO INCREASE PENSION BENEFITS FOR OVER TWO MILLION VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS. SOME BENEFITS HAVE NEARLY DOUBLED AS A RESULT. NOW NO ONE WILL SUFFER BENEFIT LOSSES BECAUSE OF COST OF LIVING INCREASES IN SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS.

WE ALSO ADOPTED LEGISLATION WHICH WILL REDUCE SERVICE REQUIREMENTS FOR VIETNAM VETERANS TO BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR VA HOME LOAN BENEFITS, AND WILL INCREASE THE MAXIMUM VA LOAN GUARANTEE FROM \$17,500 TO \$25,000.

WE HAVE EXPANDED THE RIGHTS OF DISABLED VETERANS TO FILE COMPLAINTS OF EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FEDERAL CONTRACTORS. AND WE ARE DETERMINED TO CONTINUE TO RESIST EFFORTS BY THOSE WHO WOULD MODIFY VETERANS PREFERENCE IN FEDERAL HIRING. TO DENY SUCH PREFERENCE TO MEN OR WOMEN WHO RISKED THE SUPREME SACRIFICE WOULD BE SHODDY. THANKS INDEED.

NOW ALL THESE INITIATIVES ARE GOOD NEWS. ALL WILL PROVE USEFUL TO THE VETERANS OF IOWA. BUT BECAUSE WE HAVE SCORED SOME SUCCESSES IN RECENT MONTHS DOES NOT FOR A MOMENT MEAN THAT WE CAN LET DOWN OUR GUARD. MORE MUST BE DONE.

JUST LAST WEEK, I CO-SPONSORED A SUCCESSFUL AMENDMENT TO LIFT THE 7% PAY CAP IMPOSED ON THE ALL VOLUNTEER ARMED FORCES. SINCE 1972, THE COST OF LIVING HAS INCREASED BY MORE THAN 60%. BUT THE COMPENSATION GIVEN OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL -- BASE PAY PLUS HOUSING ALLOWANCES AND THE LIKE -- ROSE BY LESS THAN 2/3 OF THAT AMOUNT. AS A RESULT, THE ARMED FORCES HAVE FALLEN VICTIM TO A DEADLY SQUEEZE PLAY.

THIS IS UNFAIR. IT CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO GO ON. AND THAT IS WHY I STRONGLY SUPPORT AN ADDITIONAL 3.4% PAY RAISE FOR OUR NATION'S MILITARY PERSONNEL.

FINALLY, I HAVE INTRODUCED A BILL, AND SECURED THE SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION, TO AUTHORIZE RESERVE ENLISTED MEMBERS OF THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE TO RETIRE WITH AN IMMEDIATE RETIREMENT ANNUITY AFTER COMPLETING 20 YEARS OF ACTIVE SERVICE. SUCH TREATMENT AND BENEFITS ARE NOW AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE OTHER ARMED FORCES; JUSTICE DEMANDS EQUAL TREATMENT UNDER THE LAW.

NOW ALL OF THESE ISSUES ARE POCKETBOOK ISSUES, IN A SENSE. EACH INVOLVES TANGIBLES LIKE THE COST OF LIVING, THE AVAILABILITY OF DECENT HOUSING, A GOOD EDUCATION, AND THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT COME WITH SUCH A STAKE IN SOCIETY.

POW'S AND MIA'S: A MORAL COMMITMENT

THERE IS ANOTHER ISSUE THAT WE CANNOT FORGET ON THIS VETERAN'S DAY. THERE ARE MEN NOT WITH US TODAY, SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN WHO WENT OFF TO FIGHT IN AMERICA'S MOST UNPOPULAR WAR AND HAVE YET TO COME BACK. CAN WE POSSIBLY DEDICATE THIS MEMORIAL WITHOUT EACH OF US SAYING A SILENT PRAYER FOR OUR POW'S AND MIA'S? CAN WE ALLOW THE DAY TO PASS WITHOUT RENEWING OUR EFFORTS TO GET A COMPLETE ACCOUNTING OF THESE LOVED ONES?

CAN WE FOR A MOMENT COUNTENANCE TURNING OUR BACKS ON THE YOUNG WIVE'S, THE STILL ANXIOUS PARENTS, THE CHILDREN NOW APPROACHING ADOLESCENCE, FOR WHOM EVERY DAY BRINGS THE SAME AGONIZING UNANSWERED QUESTION?

OF COURSE WE CANNOT, NOT AS LONG AS WE CLAIM TO BE A
NATION WITH A HEART -- AND A BACKBONE.

YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT, I CONTINUE TO FILE LEGISLATION
TO REQUIRE THE ADMINISTRATION TO OBTAIN A COMPLETE
ACCOUNTING OF ALL MISSING AMERICANS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.
I WILL CONTINUE THIS EFFORT, AND I WILL CONTINUE TO OPPOSE ANY
NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THIS NATION AND THE NORTH
VIETNAMESE SO LONG AS A SINGLE POW OR MIA REMAINS
UNACCOUNTED FOR.

TO EACH ONE OF YOU, I ASK YOUR HELP: DO NOT ALLOW THIS
CONGRESS OR THIS GOVERNMENT TO FORGET OUR BROTHERS OR
FATHERS OR SONS OR HUSBANDS WHO WENT OFF TO FIGHT IN
VIETNAM AND NEVER CAME HOME -- EVEN IN A BOX. ANY GREAT
NATION, ANY COUNTRY WITH A SOUL, WOULD INSIST ON
NOTHING LESS.

THE LESSONS OF VETERAN'S DAY

THESE ARE DANGEROUS DAYS, MY FRIENDS. THE WORLD IS
A FORBIDDING PLACE. WE LIVE ONLY A PUSHBUTTON AWAY
FROM INSTANT DESTRUCTION. BUT THROUGH ALL THE CRISES OF
MODERN LIFE, AMIDST TURMOIL AND UPHEAVAL AND OPPRESSION
HALF A GLOBE AWAY, WE LIVE SECURE IN THE PROTECTION OF
OUR ARMED FORCES. TO THEM WE OWE A GRATITUDE THAT CANNOT
BE CONTAINED ON A SINGLE DAY IN THE CALENDAR. TO THEM
WE OWE OUR VERY FREEDOMS, OUR VERY LIVES.

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN SO.

SO AS WE DEDICATE THIS MEMORIAL, LET US ALSO DEDICATE OURSELVES. LET US WORK FOR THAT DAY WHEN ALL MEN AND WOMEN SHALL HAVE SEEN THE END OF WAR. BUT LET US NEVER LET DOWN OUR GUARD, NOR EMBRACE A FALSE PEACE, NOR LOSE THE IMPERISHABLE RESPECT AND VENERATION OWED THOSE WHO FIGHT A NATION'S WARS AND PRESERVE A NATION'S PEACE.

THE GHOSTS OF THOUSANDS WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US, IN BLUE AND GRAY, IN OLIVE DRAB AND NAVY BLUE -- THEY LOOK OVER OUR SHOULDERS ON THIS DAY. THEY STRENGTHEN OUR WILL AND REINFORCE OUR COURAGE. TO THEM WE TURN FOR RENEWED INSPIRATION. WERE WE TO BETRAY THEIR SACRIFICE, OR TARNISH THEIR TRADITIONS, WE WOULD UNDERMINE THE VERY FOUNDATION OF THE REPUBLIC.

MAY GOD GRANT THAT SUCH A DAY WILL NEVER DAWN. MAY HE GIVE US THE STRENGTH TO PERSEVERE, AND TO PREVAIL.