

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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50TH ANNIVERSARY OF WORLD WAR II

WASHINGTON -- Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole today offered a Sense of the Senate resolution to recognize the courage and sacrifice of America's World War II veterans and their families. Senator Dole's statement follows:

Next week, America will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in the Pacific.

As we mark this anniversary, we should pay tribute to and remember the over three million American airmen, soldiers, sailors, and Marines who served in the Pacific and Asian theaters from 1941-1945.

General Douglas MacArthur described those who fought in the Pacific with these words:

"He plods and groans, sweats and toils. He growls and curses. And at the end, he dies, unknown, uncomplaining, with faith in his heart, and...a prayer for victory on his lips."

The story of the Pacific and Asian theaters is a story of courage. It is the story of places like Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and Guadalcanal, where American soldiers fought in some of the most brutal battles of the war. Their heroism and their sacrifice will live forever in the annals of history.

This anniversary has also stirred some debate over the wisdom of President Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb to bring the war to a conclusion.

Some revisionist historians have suggested that Japan was so weak in August 1945, an Allied victory could have been achieved through a military invasion.

The best response to that assertion comes from our colleague, Senator Mark Hatfield. Senator Hatfield was one of the first Americans to visit Hiroshima in the days following Japan's surrender, and he saw the weapons that would have been used to repel American soldiers invading Japan.

Senator Hatfield was scheduled to participate in such an invasion, and he has said that, as he looked at the weapons, he had no doubt that he--like countless thousands of other Americans--would have been killed.

The veterans of the war in the Pacific and all Americans can take pride in the fact that Japan is now one of America's most important allies. America did not enter the war seeking territory, we entered to defend democracy. And when war was finished, we set about the work of rebuilding a free and democratic Japan.

In short, at war's end, we looked to the future with hope, instead of to the past with recrimination.

And that, perhaps, is the great lesson of World War II, and the great lesson of this century. As long as America is engaged...as long as America leads, then the future will be filled with hope.

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