

ANNUAL CONVENTION
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
GARDEN CITY, KANSAS
SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 1967
Remarks of Congressman Bob Dole

FIRST, LET ME WELCOME MY V.F.W. COMRADES FROM ALL OVER KANSAS TO THIS, THE 47TH ANNUAL VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS CONVENTION AND THE 40TH ANNUAL LADIES AUXILIARY CONVENTION. I JOIN WITH DICK EDDINGTON, COMMANDER OF V.F.W. POST 2279, AND WITH ROSE NAAB, PRESIDENT OF THE LADIES AUXILIARY, IN EXTENDING A SPECIAL WELCOME TO YOU FROM ALL THE PEOPLE IN GARDEN CITY, KANSAS.

TO OUR DEPARTMENT COMMANDER, GEORGE MATSON, AND OUR DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY PRESIDENT, MERITHAL MATHIAS, I EXTEND MY THANKS FOR THE GREAT CONTRIBUTIONS EACH OF YOU HAS MADE TO VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS IN KANSAS THROUGH YOUR YEARS OF ACTIVE AND DEDICATED SERVICE.

ON NOVEMBER 11, 1965, I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF APPEARING ON THE VETERANS DAY PROGRAM IN GARDEN CITY. AT THAT TIME, I POINTED OUT THAT THE LATEST ESTIMATES OF AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL IN VIET NAM WERE APPROXIMATELY 145,000. I SAID, "THE CASUALTY FIGURES ARE SADDENING. SINCE JANUARY 1, 1961, NEARLY 1000 AMERICAN BOYS IN AN UNDECLARED WAR AND UNDER PEACETIME DRAFT CONDITIONS HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES IN FULFILLMENT OF THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT IN VIET NAM. FOUR THOUSAND, TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY NINE (4,259) HAVE BEEN WOUNDED. IN THIS YEAR ALONE, AS OF OCTOBER 11, 551 HAVE DIED AND NEARLY 2735 HAVE BEEN WOUNDED."

I DOUBT THAT AT THAT TIME ANY OF US REALIZED THAT SOME 18 MONTHS LATER, TODAY, OUR TROOP STRENGTH IN VIET NAM WOULD MORE THAN TRIPLE TO 435,000 AND THAT OUR CASUALTIES WOULD INCREASE 10-FOLD. IF THE CASUALTY STATISTICS WERE SADDENING THEN, THEY ARE FRIGHTENING NOW BECAUSE THE AMERICAN DEATH TOLL IS NOW NEARLY 11,000 AND OVER 64,000 HAVE BEEN WOUNDED.

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I REMEMBER CAUTIONING THE AUDIENCE AT THAT TIME THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING THE MANY, MANY PRESSURES BEING EXERTED, ALL POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING TRADE WITH RUSSIA SHOULD BE APPROACHED WITH GREAT CAUTION. TO MANY THEN --- AND PERHAPS EVEN SOME NOW --- TRADE WITH COMMUNIST RUSSIA, OR ANY OTHER COMMUNIST NATION, IS PROPER AND SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED. WE HEAR TALK IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL ABOUT BUILDING BRIDGES, EVEN IN SPITE OF THE INCREASING CRISIS IN VIET NAM AND THE BRAND NEW CRISIS IN THE MID EAST. BECAUSE OF THIS, I THINK IT WOULD BE WELL TO DISCUSS FOR A MOMENT THE FACT THAT THE YEAR 1967 MARKS THE 50TH YEAR OF COMMUNISM --- THE GREATEST SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CANCER TO BE FOUND IN THE ENTIRE RECORD OF HISTORY. 50 YEARS IS A LONG TIME --- MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR A FUNDAMENTAL ASSESSMENT. THE RECORD, SINCE 1917 ALONE, PROVIDES MORE EVIDENCE THAN ONE CAN USE TO SHOW THAT COMMUNISM IS A FRAUD, A DELUSION, A CONSPIRACY, WHICH HAS EXPLOITED THE IGNORANCE, APATHY, AND INERTIA OF MASSES OF THE PEOPLE.

COMMUNISM IS NOT THE NAME OF A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY. IT DOES NOT IDENTIFY A RELIGION. IT DOES NOT PROVIDE THE LABEL FOR AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM. IT DOES NOT IDENTIFY AN ALTERNATIVE TO CAPITALISM. IT IS NOT WHAT IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE. IT IS NOT AS REPRESENTED. IT IS NOT ESTABLISHED BY, NOR RUN FOR, THE BENEFIT OF THE WORKING PEOPLE. IT IS NOT FOR THE BENEFIT OF ANYONE, IN MY OPINION, EXCEPT A FEW LEADERS, TEMPORARILY IN FRONT OF IT, AND A FEW HUNDRED CONSPIRATORS TEMPORARILY BEHIND IT AS A FRONT.

50 YEARS OF RESULTS OF ANYTHING INVOLVING SO MANY PEOPLE SHOULD PROVIDE MORE EVIDENCE FOR AN ASSESSMENT THAN CAN BE USED. A FEW OF THE HIGH POINTS WITH RESPECT TO COMMUNISM SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT.

FIRST, AND FOREMOST, IS THE FACT THAT COUNTRIES WITH POPULATIONS APPROACHING ONE BILLION HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UNDER THE TYRANNY OF COMMUNISM

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AND KEPT UNDER IT FOR MANY YEARS. ARE THE PEOPLE OF THESE COUNTRIES BETTER OFF IN 1967 THAN THEY WERE IN 1917? NOT ONE COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, I CAN THINK OF, THAT HAS COME UNDER COMMUNISM IS BETTER OFF THAN IT WAS BEFORE.

HAS THE CAUSE OF PEACE BEEN ADVANCED? THE ANSWER MUST BE NEGATIVE. THERE IS LESS PEACE IN THE WORLD IN 1967 THAN IN 1917. CONVERSELY, THERE IS MORE WAR IN THE WORLD THAN THERE WAS IN 1917.

SO-CALLED "ACHIEVEMENTS" OF COMMUNISM INCLUDE: DESTRUCTION OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THE CULTURES, ECONOMIES, AND WEALTH OF SATELLITE NATIONS; ENSLAVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE OF RUSSIA AND ALL SATELLITE NATIONS --- OVER 900 MILLION; ESTABLISHMENT OF PERPETUAL WAR, REVOLUTION AND CHAOS IN MOST OF THE WORLD -- VIET NAM IS A GLARING EXAMPLE; ESTABLISHMENT AND EXPANSION OF A WORLDWIDE WAR ON CHRISTIANITY AND RELIGION. AND THESE ARE ONLY A FEW.

THE RESPONSIBLE FORCES IN OUR COUNTRY IN THE YEARS AHEAD MUST WRESTLE WITH THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNISM AND THE GENERAL PROBLEM OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS. I KNOW OF NO ONE WHO DOES NOT HOPE AND PRAY THAT THE DAY WILL COME WHEN THE WORLD WILL LIVE IN PEACE. THERE ARE MANY, MANY WELL-INTENTIONED PEOPLE WHO NOW SEEK TO "BUILD BRIDGES". BILLS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS KNOWN AS THE EAST-WEST TRADE RELATIONS ACT. IS THERE A CHANCE TO IMPROVE EAST-WEST RELATIONS AND EASE THE TENSION BETWEEN WORLD POWERS BY EXTENDING NON-STRATEGIC TRADE? WHAT IS "NON-STRATEGIC" TRADE? SHOULD WE FOLLOW THIS COURSE AND TRADE WITH COUNTRIES WHO SUPPORT THE CAUSE OF OUR ENEMIES IN VIETNAM? THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY "NO" -- CERTAINLY NO DURING THIS CRITICAL PERIOD OF HISTORY. THEY SAY NO -- AND I ADMIT TO BEING IN THIS CATEGORY -- BECAUSE THE ENEMY WOULD BE INDIRECTLY AIDED IN VIET NAM; THE COMMUNIST ECONOMIC SYSTEM WOULD BE STRENGTHENED; WE WOULD BE OFFERING PRODUCTS THAT ARE UNIQUELY OURS TO OFFER.

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OTHER WELL-INTENTIONED PEOPLE SAY "YES", WE SHOULD EXTEND TRADE, BECAUSE THE EASTERN COUNTRIES CAN GET OUR PRODUCTS ELSEWHERE -- BECAUSE STABILIZATION OF THEIR ECONOMY WILL RAISE THE STANDARD OF LIVING AND PRODUCE A KIND OF COMMUNISM THAT IS MORE CONSUMER-ORIENTED -- AND, FINALLY, THAT AN EASING OF TENSIONS NOW SUPPORTS THE CHANCE OF PEACE LATER. THESE QUESTIONS ALMOST DEFY ANSWER.

LET ME ADD THAT -- BEFORE YOU CLAMOR TO BUILD BRIDGES -- REMEMBER THAT PRACTICALLY EVERY AMERICAN PLANE THAT HAS BEEN SHOT DOWN OVER NORTH VIET NAM HAS FALLEN VICTIM TO SOVIET-MADE AND SOVIET-SUPPLIED SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES, PLANES, OR ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERIES. IT HAS BEEN RECENTLY ESTIMATED THAT APPROXIMATELY 80% OF THE WEAPONS AND STRATEGIC MATERIALS OF WAR HAVE BEEN SUPPLIED BY COMMUNISTS IN VIET NAM, NOT BY THE RED CHINESE, BUT BY THE SOVIET UNION AND THEIR EASTERN EUROPEAN SATELLITES. YES, TRADE CONCEIVABLY MIGHT BE A USEFUL TOOL IN OUR REPEATED ATTEMPTS TO BRING PEACE TO THE WORLD, BUT LET US, IF WE MUST USE IT, USE IT AS A TOOL OF PEACE AND NOT AS AN EXPEDIENT, ONE OF WHOSE BY-PRODUCTS IS TO PERMIT THE ENEMY TO CONTINUE WAR. LET US USE TRADE INTELLIGENTLY IN PURSUIT OF PEACE, BY AT THE VERY LEAST DEMANDING AND OBTAINING MEANINGFUL CONCESSIONS THAT WILL BRING THE WORLD A STEP CLOSER TO PEACE. LET US DEMAND OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE EASTERN SATELLITES THAT THE PRICE OF TRADE IS A CLEAR DEMONSTRATION THAT PEACE, NOT WAR, IS THEIR INTENTION. BUT ABOVE ALL, AT THIS TIME, IT SEEMS HARDLY CONSISTENT TO THINK SERIOUSLY ABOUT "BUILDING BRIDGES" WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, WHILE WE BURY YOUNG MEN DAILY WHO HAVE DIED FIGHTING COMMUNIST AGGRESSION.

HAVE YOU HEARD OF A SINGLE RUSSIAN OR CHINESE COMMUNIST REPORTED AS A CASUALTY OF THE VIET NAM WAR? YOU HAVE NOT, AND I WOULD DARE SPECULATE THAT YOU WILL NOT. WHAT YOU SEE REPORTED WEEKLY IS AMERICAN AND VIETNAMESE

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CASUALTIES. THE QUESTION ALL OF US MUST ANSWER, VETERAN AND NON-VETERAN ALIKE, IS ---- IS TRADE SO SWEET AND PROFITS SO DESIRABLE AS TO BE PURCHASED AT THE PRICE WE NOW PAY IN DEATH AND AGONY? YES, THIS IS THE QUESTION, THOUGH I RECOGNIZE THAT PERHAPS EVEN SOME AMONG US WHO STILL VIEW THE VIET NAM CONFLICT AS A REMOTE AND PERHAPS AN UNIMPORTANT CONFLICT, OR FOR ANY OTHER REASON, MAY DISAGREE.

LET ME CLOSE IN SAYING, AS I DID HERE IN 1965, WE MUST BE REALISTIC, NOT OVERCOME BY THE INTENSE PROPAGANDA BARRAGE CONCERNING PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE. WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES AND FUTURE GENERATIONS, IN ADDITION TO TODAY'S VETERANS, TO MAKE CERTAIN THE DOLLAR SIGN DOES NOT CLOUD OUR THINKING IN DEALING WITH INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM. AMERICANS WANT, MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, LASTING PEACE. I SUGGEST THIS WILL NOT BE ACHIEVED AS LONG AS CONCESSIONS ARE MADE ON A UNILATERAL BASIS, BUT ONLY WHEN RUSSIAN LEADERS ARE WILLING TO DEAL WITH FREE WORLD COUNTRIES AT ARM'S LENGTH. LET US NEVER FORGET AS WE PAUSE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN VETERANS, LIVING AND DEAD, THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN RUSSIA'S GENERAL POLICY OF "BURYING US".