

FIRST DISTRICT YOUNG REPUBLICANS CONVENTION
PRATT, KANSAS
OCTOBER 14, 1967
Remarks of Congressman Bob Dole

LAND REFORM IN VIETNAM

TODAY I WANT TO SPEAK BRIEFLY OF FAILURE ---- TOTAL, ABJECT, HUMILIATING FAILURE ---- THE LAND REFORM PROGRAM IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.

BEFORE GOING INTO THE SPECIFICS OF THAT LAND REFORM PROGRAM, LET ME HASTEN TO POINT OUT THAT OUR NATION HAS NOT BEEN REMISS -- WE CANNOT BE ACCUSED OF DENYING THIS PROGRAM OUR USUAL BALM FOR THE WORLD'S ILLS: OUR MONEY. THE UNITED STATES BEGAN ITS SUPPORT AS EARLY AS THE BEGINNING OF THE DIEM REGIME; BETWEEN 1955 AND 1960 WE CONTRIBUTED \$9.2 MILLION TO THE LAND REFORM EFFORT. SINCE THAT TIME, THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS OF SOUTH VIETNAM HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING AN ADDITIONAL \$12.2 MILLION THROUGH FISCAL 1968 PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COUNTERPART FUNDS TO DEFRAY ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.

THE RESULTS OF THIS EFFORT ARE DISMAL TO AN UNBELIEVABLE DEGREE. THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT HAS HAD 4.8 MILLION ACRES AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION SINCE 1954. BUT WITH 4.8 MILLION ACRES TO DISTRIBUTE, AND MILLIONS OF LANDLESS PEASANTS TO SERVE, THE GVN HAS ONLY BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE 667,000 ACRES TO INDIVIDUALS DESIRING OWNERSHIP.

BETWEEN 1962 AND 1967, VIRTUALLY NO LAND AT ALL WAS DISTRIBUTED UNDER THE PROGRAM. SINCE JANUARY 1, 1967, 51,800 ACRES HAVE BEEN PROVIDED TO ABOUT 12,000 FAMILIES. WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS PROVIDED \$1,626,600 TO THE LAND REFORM PROGRAM DURING FISCAL 1967, THE AVERAGE COST TO THE UNITED STATES PER ACRE LAST YEAR FOR SOUTH VIETNAMESE LAND REFORM WAS APPROXIMATELY \$32.00. IF THE UNITED STATES FACES SIMILAR COST IN EACH LAND REFORM PROGRAM UNDERTAKEN THROUGHOUT THE DEVELOPING WORLD, OUR TREASURY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO STAND ALL THE PROGRESS.

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GOVERNOR DOCKING, AFTER RETURNING FROM VIETNAM, EXPRESSED GREAT HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE LAND REFORM PROGRAM. HE PRAISED THE EFFORTS ALREADY MADE TO MORE EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTE THE LAND AMONG THE PEOPLE. I DO NOT KNOW WHERE HE OBTAINED HIS INFORMATION, BUT THE FACTS AS DETERMINED BY AN 18 MONTHS' STUDY OF THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM BY THE FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS ARE AT ODDS WITH HIS FINDINGS. THE FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE LAND REFORM ASPECT OF THE OVERALL PACIFICATION EFFORT WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC LATER THIS MONTH OR EARLY NEXT MONTH IN A COMMITTEE REPORT ENTITLED "LAND REFORM IN VIETNAM".

I AM A MEMBER OF THIS COMMITTEE, AND WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT LAND REFORM IS MOST IMPORTANT TO MEET THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM. WE DEPLORE THE FACT THAT THE VIET CONG LAND REFORM PROGRAM IN THE AREAS THEY CONTROL HAS BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE THAN OUR OWN, IN THE AREAS THE ALLIES CONTROL. PERHAPS MORE THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE PROGRAM, LAND REFORM IS NECESSARY TO SECURE THE ALLEGIANCE OF THE PEOPLE.

THE RECORD OVER THE PAST 13 YEARS IS SO DISMAL THE COMMITTEE HAS CONCLUDED THERE IS SCANT HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF ANY MEANINGFUL APPROACH THAT IS INSTITUTED. THE COMMITTEE FURTHER FOUND, AFTER 13 YEARS OF INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAMESE LAND REFORM, OUR OWN OFFICIALS ON THE SCENE ARE UNABLE TO AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES AS TO WHAT WOULD BE THE BEST PROGRAM FOR THE COUNTRY.

IN MY OPINION, THE ADMINISTRATION MUST PROVIDE UNMISTAKABLE DIRECTION IN THE AREA OF LAND REFORM. THE UNITED STATES HAS SUFFERED OVER 100,000 CASUALTIES IN THIS WAR, AND THE END IS NOWHERE IN SIGHT. IF INDEED LAND REFORM IS ESSENTIAL TO THE WINNING OF THE WAR, AS IT APPEARS, THEN WE MUST BE ABOUT IT WITH ALL THE FORCE AND DIRECTION WHICH CAN BE MUSTERED.