

KANSAS CITY, KANS. AMERICAN WAR MOTHERS

MEMORIAL HALL

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1968

REMARKS OF CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE

IN 1864, FACING AN AMERICA RIDDLED WITH STRIFE, HATRED  
AND DIVISION, ABRAHAM LINCOLN WROTE:

"THE WORLD HAS NEVER HAD A GOOD DEFINITION  
OF THE WORD LIBERTY, AND THE AMERICAN  
PEOPLE, JUST NOW, ARE MUCH IN NEED OF ONE."

TODAY, MORE THAN A CENTURY LATER, AMERICA SEEMS TO  
BE FACING ANOTHER CRISIS OF DOUBT AND DISSENSION. OUR  
GREAT CITIES ARE SEETHING HOTBEDS OF INSURRECTION; UNIVER-  
SITIES AND OTHER CENTERS OF LEARNING HAVE BECOME HEAD-  
QUARTERS FOR ANARCHY AND MORAL LICENSE; SEGMENTS OF THE  
CLERGY, ABANDONING THEIR ROLE AS MEN OF GOD, ENCOURAGE  
DISSIDENTS TO TAKE TO THE STREETS AND RESORT TO MOB ACTION;  
AMERICANS, THE FREEST AND MOST PROSPEROUS PEOPLE IN THE  
WORLD, NO LONGER FEEL SAFE WALKING THEIR OWN STREETS.

AND, BEYOND OUR OWN BORDERS, IN REMOTE AND UNFAMILIAR  
CORNERS OF THE GLOBE, THOUSANDS OF OUR YOUNG MEN ARE  
BLEEDING AND DYING WHILE SOME OF THEIR COUNTRYMEN, SAFE  
AT HOME, MOUTH COMMUNIST SLOGANS, DENOUNCE THEM AS  
"MURDERERS", BURN THEIR FLAG AND MARCH UNDER THE BANNER  
OF THE VIET CONG.

-2-

IS IT ANY WONDER THEN, THAT MANY GOOD AMERICANS FIND THEMSELVES BEWILDERED AND DISCOURAGED? IS IT REALLY SURPRISING THAT THE BASIC IMPULSE OF PATRIOTISM SEEMS TO BE WEAKENING UNDER A STEADY AND SEEMINGLY ENDLESS ATTACK?

PERHAPS, TO PARAPHRASE THE WORDS OF LINCOLN, "THE WORLD HAS NEVER HAD A GOOD DEFINITION OF THE WORD PATRIOTISM, AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, JUST NOW, ARE MUCH IN NEED OF ONE."

A DEFINITION OF PATRIOTISM, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PATRIOTISM IN TODAY'S PERPLEXING WORLD; THIS IS WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU TODAY. FOR I AM CONVINCED THAT THE NEED FOR PATRIOTISM IS AS GREAT TODAY AS IT HAS EVER BEEN IN THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY.

AND, IF OUR PATRIOTISM IS TO BE EFFECTIVE, WE MUST FIRST UNDERSTAND ITS ROOTS, ITS MEANING, AND THE REASONS BEHIND IT.

LIKE SO MANY COMPLICATED THINGS, PATRIOTISM IS OFTEN DEFINED IN VERY SIMPLE, ONE-DIMENSIONAL TERMS. TO MANY OF US IT IS SIMPLY A FEELING OF WARMTH AND PRIDE, A LUMP IN OUR THROATS AT THE SIGHT OF OUR FLAG UNFURLED IN THE BREEZE.

BUT THESE ARE REALLY ONLY SYMPTOMS OF PATRIOTISM. THEY ARE THE RESULTS RATHER THAN THE CAUSE OF REAL PRIDE IN OUR COUNTRY.

-3-

-THE FLAG-

ANY FLAG, AFTER ALL, IS ONLY A SYMBOL OF THE GROUP OR NATION IT REPRESENTS. IT IS A SIMPLE EMBODIMENT OF ALL THE GOOD AND ALL THE EVIL OF THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE LIVED UNDER IT. IT CAN BE A SKULL AND CROSSBONES ON A BLACK FIELD, AND STAND FOR MURDER AND LAWLESSNESS. IT CAN CARRY EMBLEMS OF SLAVERY AND DEATH LIKE THE DREADED HAMMER AND SICKLE OR THE SWASTIKA.

OR IT CAN BE A SYMBOL OF HOPE, LIGHT AND FREEDOM.

FOR NEARLY TWO CENTURIES, THE STARS AND STRIPES HAVE BEEN SUCH A BEACON. THEY HAVE STOOD FOR A NATION, AND A PEOPLE, COMMITTED TO THE HIGHEST HUMAN VALUES.

IN THE BEGINNING, THEY STOOD FOR THE RIGHT OF FREE MEN TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN DESTINY, AS WOULD-BE CONQUERORS FOUND OUT TO THEIR OWN MISFORTUNE. AND, ONCE BEGUN, THE MARCH OF THESE FREE MEN HAS CONTINUED UNINTERRUPTED TO THIS DAY.

THE QUESTION IS, WHY? WHAT BASIC UNDERLYING THREADS OF FAITH AND UNITY HAVE ALLOWED AMERICA TO CREATE AND ACHIEVE ON A SCALE GREATER THAN ANY OTHER NATION IN HUMAN HISTORY?

- NATION OF DIVERSITY-

ON THE SURFACE, IT IS HARD TO UNDERSTAND. AFTER ALL, MORE THAN ANY OF OUR EUROPEAN NEIGHBORS, WE ARE A NATION OF DIVERSITY. THE GREAT MELTING POT HAS BEEN FUELED BY PEOPLE OF EVERY DESCRIPTION. FEW SHARED A COMMON LANGUAGE, A COMMON RELIGION, OR EVEN PHYSICAL SIMILARITY. AND YET THEY HAVE, FOR THE MOST PART, MANAGED TO LIVE TOGETHER IN GREATER HARMONY AND PRODUCTIVITY THAN THOSE WHO REMAINED BEHIND THEM IN THE OLD WORLD.

AGAIN, THE QUESTION IS, WHY? WHAT IS THE BASIC INGREDIENT THAT MOLDED TOGETHER A HUNDRED CONFLICTING CULTURES, LANGUAGES AND FAITHS AND BUILT WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED "THE LAST, BEST HOPE OF FREEDOM"?

-FRAMEWORK OF GOVERNMENT-

ONE OF THE ESSENTIALS WAS, AND REMAINS, THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR GOVERNMENT. WE ARE, AND ALWAYS HAVE BEEN, A NATION BUILT ON LAWS, AND, EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, A NATION BUILT ON JUST LAWS. UNLIKE THE OLD WORLD, WHERE RULE WAS BASED ON BRUTE FORCE, SUPERSTITION, OR PERSONAL RULE, WE BEGAN LIFE AS A NATION OF LAWS; LAWS WHICH RECOGNIZE THE HUMAN DIGNITY OF ALL CITIZENS AND THE SPECIAL PRIVILEGES OF NONE.

-5-

TODAY, WE CAN STILL SEE THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE OLD WORLD AND THE NEW. IN RUSSIA, WHERE THE STATE IS BASED ON BRUTAL REPRESSION, THOUSANDS OF SILENT, DRAB PEOPLE LINE UP EACH DAY TO VISIT THE CORPSE OF LENIN, ENTOMBED IN A DANK, COLD MAUSOLEUM IN THE SHADOW OF THE KREMLIN.

IN AMERICA, THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE PEOPLE IS DIRECTED TO OUR NATIONAL ARCHIEVES WHERE THE GREAT DOCUMENTS ON WHICH OUR STATE WAS FOUNDED ARE PRESERVED, AND TO THE CAPITOL AND WHITE HOUSE WHERE, WITHOUT SECRECY OR INTIMIDATION, OUR SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS, NOT BEHIND CLOSED DOORS, BUT IN THE OPEN LIGHT OF DAY; A LIVING MONUMENT TO OUR HERITAGE AS AMERICANS.

BUT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO GIVE ALL OF THE CREDIT TO A SET OF LAWS, NO MATTER HOW WELL DRAWN-UP. WE KNOW THIS FOR A FACT, SINCE WE HAVE SEEN DOZENS OF COUNTRIES TRY TO IMMITATE THE AMERICAN SYSTEM, OFTEN WITHOUT SUCCESS.

- WHAT HAPPENED IN FRANCE -

IN 1789, A FEW YEARS AFTER OUR SUCCESSFUL WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE, FRANCE WAS CONVULSED BY A REVOLUTION OF HER OWN. MANY IDEALISTS HAD HIGH HOPES FOR FRANCE IN 1789. CERTAINLY, THEY SAID, IF A SMALL, UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY LIKE AMERICA CAN ESTABLISH A RULE OF LAW BASED ON INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM, THEN A MIGHTY NATION LIKE FRANCE CAN DO BETTER STILL.

-6-

THEY COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE WRONG!

INSTEAD OF BECOMING A SECOND AMERICA, FRANCE DESCENDED INTO ANARCY AND MAYHEM, AND A REIGN OF TERROR THAT, AMONG OTHER THINGS, WIPE OUT MORE OF THE IDEALISTS WHO HAD BEEN SO LOUD IN THEIR PRAISE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

AND, EVER SINCE, FRANCE HAS TOTTERED BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE EXTREMES OF MOB RULE AND DICTATORSHIP. THE CHAOTIC FRENCH REVOLUTION WAS FOLLOWED BY THE IRON RULE OF NAPOLEON. THE LAST CHAOTIC PERIOD, THE THIRD REPUBLIC AFTER WORLD WAR II, HAS BEEN FOLLOWED BY THE DICTATORSHIP OF DEGAULLE.

ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD, IN SMALL NATIONS OF AFRICA, ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA, THE AMERICAN SYSTEM HAS BEEN IMITATED ON PAPER.

- PERSONAL COMMITMENT-

BUT EVERYWHERE, THE LESSON HAS BEEN THE SAME. FOR THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF LAW AND JUSTICE TO WORK, THE RULES MUST BE WRITTEN IN THE HEARTS AS WELL AS THE BOOKS OF THE PEOPLE.

AND THIS, IT SEEMS TO ME, GETS TO THE ROOTS OF REAL PATRIOTISM: A BELIEF IN YOUR COUNTRY, AND A BELIEF IN YOURSELF AS A PART OF YOUR COUNTRY.

THE GREAT THING ABOUT THE PIONEER SPIRIT WHICH ENABLED OUR FOREFATHERS TO CONQUER THE WILDERNESS WAS A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO OUR NATIONAL IDEALS. IT WAS THEIR SELF-HELP SPIRIT AND COOPERATION WHICH MADE THEM SELF-SUFFICIENT IN A

-7-

SELF-SUSTAINING STATE.

THEIR FREEDOM TO DISAGREE ON MATTERS OF PARTY AND RELIGION ACTUALLY HELPED THEM TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE BUILDING OF A NATION.

NO MATTER HOW UNEDUCATED THEY WERE WHEN THEY REACHED OUR SHORES, AND NO MATTER HOW FAR THEY HAD TRAVELLED AND HOW LITTLE THEY BROUGHT WITH THEM, THEY KNEW WHY THEY HAD COME.

THEY KNEW WHAT LIFE WITHOUT FREEDOM WAS LIKE, AND FOR THAT REASON THEY KNEW THAT NO SACRIFICE WAS TOO GREAT TO ATTAIN FREEDOM.

- YOUTH AND FREEDOM -

PERHAPS THIS IS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS WITH TODAY'S YOUNG PEOPLE. HAVING BEEN BORN INTO A FREE SOCIETY AND NEVER HAVING KNOWN REAL SUFFERING AND DEPRIVATION, IT IS HARDER FOR THEM TO APPRECIATE THE MEANING OF THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE AND LESS EASY FOR THEM TO GRASP THE IMPORTANCE OF PATRIOTISM.

AND PERHAPS IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT EACH GENERATION MUST, THROUGH ITS OWN SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE, REDISCOVER THE MEANING OF FREEDOM AND LOVE OF COUNTRY.

-8-

I KNOW THAT WE DID IN OUR TIME, LIVING THROUGH THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR. BUT WE HAD ONE ADVANTAGE THAT TODAY'S YOUNG PEOPLE LACK -- TIME. IN THE THIRTIES, WHEN THE DEPRESSION HAD CRIPPLED OUR ECONOMY, WE AT LEAST WERE FREE FROM INTERNATIONAL ENTANGLEMENTS. FACED WITH A GRAVE FINANCIAL CRISIS AT HOME, WE WERE NOT BEING CHALLENGED OR SUBVERTED FROM ABROAD AT THE SAME TIME. THEN, IN THE FORTIES, EVEN WITH THE SURPRISE ATTACK OF PEARL HARBOR, WARFARE WAS STILL SLOW-MOVING ENOUGH TO GIVE US TIME TO MOBILIZE NATIONAL STRENGTH AND MORALE.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACED, THOUGH VERY REAL AND FULL OF DANGER, WERE OF A SIMPLER, MORE EASILY UNDERSTOOD VARIETY. AND, EQUALLY IMPORTANT, WE WERE NOT BESET WITH A HORDE OF PROFESSIONAL CRITICS WHO QUESTIONED THE MOTIVES OF EVERYTHING THEIR COUNTRY DID, AND ENCOURAGED TREASON IN THE NAME OF "FREE SPEECH".

TODAY, WHILE FACING CHALLENGES TO OUR WAY OF LIFE BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD, WE ARE NOT ONLY PLAGUED BY THE PROFESSIONAL CRITICS AND AGITATORS, BUT BY THE ACTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND JUDICIAL BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT WHICH SEEM HELL-BENT ON ENCOURAGING UNRULY DISSIDENTS.

-EROSION FROM THE TOP-

IF PATRIOTISM IS A WEAKER FORCE IN AMERICA TODAY THAN IN PAST YEARS, I AM CONVINCED THAT IT IS LARGELY THE FAULT NOT OF THE PEOPLE, BUT OF SOME OF OUR LEADERS.



-9-

IF OUR NATIONAL SPIRIT IS ERODING, IT IS ERODING FROM  
THE TOP DOWN.

NO WONDER MANY HONEST, PATRIOTIC AMERICANS SEEM TO BE  
LOSING HEART.

OF COURSE, MUCH MORE THAN THE ACTIVITIES OF ANY ONE PERSON  
ARE INVOLVED IN THE DOWN-GRADING OF PATRIOTISM AND NATIONAL PRIDE.  
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, IN MANY WAYS, DIRECT AND INDIRECT, THE  
FOUNDATIONS OF NATIONAL PRIDE ARE BEING CHIPPED AWAY BY MISGUIDED  
INDIVIDUALS.

JUST RECENTLY IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
TEACHERS WERE TOLD THAT THEY COULD DISPENSE WITH THE PLEDGE OF  
ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG. WHY? BECAUSE OF A HANDFUL OF STUDENTS  
WHO, EGGED ON BY ADULT TROUBLEMAKERS, CLAIMED THAT THEIR  
"CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS" WERE BEING VIOLATED.

ON THE NATIONAL FRONT, THE SUPREME COURT HAS STRIPPED  
OUR SCHOOLCHILDREN OF THE RIGHT TO MORNING PRAYERS ON SIMILAR  
GROUNDS. IN EFFECT, THEY HAVE MADE ATHEISM THE STATE RELIGION.

- THREE BASIC STRENGTHS -

THE PRAYER DECISION, AND OTHER ATTACKS ON OUR SPIRITUAL  
HERITAGE, ARE NOT A SEPARATE PHENOMENON. LONG AGO, AMERICA'S  
ENEMIES REALIZED THAT FREE SOCIETIES ARE HELD TOGETHER BY  
THREE BASIC STRENGTHS: FAMILY UNITY, MORAL AND SPIRITUAL  
VALUES, AND PATRIOTISM.

- 10 -

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANY ONE OF THESE IS WEAKENED, THE OTHERS ARE ALSO.

AND TODAY, AS I AM SURE YOU ALREADY REALIZE, ALL THREE OF THESE BASIC VALUES OF THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE ARE UNDER ATTACK AS NEVER BEFORE.

OUR CHILDREN ARE BEING URGED TO "TUNE IN, TURN ON AND DROP OUT": TO ABANDON EXISTING SOCIAL VALUES FOR AN UNINTERRUPTED BINGE OF DRUGS, SEX AND IRRESPONSIBILITY.

UNINTERRUPTED, THAT IS, UNTIL SOCIETY COLLAPSES AND ALL OF US -- HIPPIES AND SQUARES ALIKE -- FACE A DAY OF RECKONING.

HOW MANY OF OUR CHILDREN ARE TAKEN IN BY THIS CALL TO LICENSE WILL DEPEND ON US. FOR IT IS UP TO US TO SHOW THEM THAT THE AMERICAN DREAM IS IN FACT A REALITY, AND THAT OUR WAY OF LIFE, AND A PATRIOTIC BELIEF IN IT, ARE JUSTIFIED.

THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL MUST ONCE MORE INFUSE IN AMERICA'S YOUTH THIS BASIC BELIEF. FOR TOO LONG, EDUCATION, DESPITE THE DISTINGUISHED EFFORTS OF MANY INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS AND PROFESSORS, HAS FAILED IN THIS RESPECT. THE SAME MISGUIDED PEOPLE WHO ADVOCATED PERMISSIVENESS AND "PROGRESSIVE" EDUCATION, HAVE DONE THEIR BEST TO TAKE PRIDE, PRAYER AND PATRIOTISM OUT OF OUR SCHOOLS.

-11-

AL CAPP, THE FAMOUS CARTOONIST AND COMMENTATOR,  
POINTED UP THIS FAILING RECENTLY WHEN HE SAID THAT:

"WE HAVE TAUGHT OUR KIDS TO DEMAND AMERICAN COMFORTS, AMERICA PRIVILEGES, TO DEMAND EVERYTHING FROM AMERICA TO MAKE THEIR LIVES EASIER. BUT WE HAVEN'T TAUGHT THEM TO LOVE AMERICA. WE HAVE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PREPARED TO TEACH OUR YOUNG EVERY SUBJECT UNDER THE SUN, EXCEPT THE ONE THAT GIVES ALL THE OTHERS HEART AND MEANING. THE TIME HAS COME TO ESTABLISH ONE MORE CHAIR IN EVERY COLLEGE IN AMERICA -- THE CHAIR OF BASIC LOVE OF COUNTRY."

I COULDN'T AGREE MORE. WE HAVE SEEN WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO OTHER COUNTRIES AND OTHER CIVILIZATIONS WHEN PEOPLE BEGAN TO FORGET WHAT THEY STOOD FOR.

~~SOMEWHERE~~ -THREAT TO FREE WORLD-

SOMEWHERE, OUTSIDE THE GATES, THE BARBARIANS WERE ALWAYS WAITING, AND ONCE THE PROCESS OF DECAY, THE GROWTH OF SELFISHNESS AND ALIENATION, HAD TAKEN THEIR EFFECT, THEIR FATE WAS ALWAYS THE SAME.

TODAY, THE FREE WORLD FACES THE GREATEST AND MOST DETERMINED FORCE OF TYRANNY AND BARBARITY EVER TO BLIGHT THE WORLD. IN ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE, BEHIND THE IRON AND BAMBOO CURTAINS, THE LEADERS OF A SYSTEM ROOTED IN SLAVERY AND DEDICATED TO WORLD CONQUEST, ARE ANXIOUSLY FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS IN AMERICA.

-12-

THEY FULLY REALIZE THAT WE ARE THE ONLY NATION  
STANDING BETWEEN THEM AND DOMINATION OF THE FREE WORLD,  
AND THEY ARE DOING EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO SAP OUR  
STRENGTH AND UNDERMINE OUR MORALS.

IF THEY AND THEIR UNWITTING ALLIES SUCCEED IN  
DESTROYING PATRIOTISM, OUR BELIEF IN OURSELVES AS IN-  
DIVIDUALS AND AS A NATION, THEN HALF OF THEIR BATTLE HAS  
ALREADY BEEN WON, AND THE WORLD WILL FACE AN AGE OF TERROR  
AND ABJECT SUFFERING BEYOND ANYTHING WE HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED.

-IT'S UP TO US-

I BEGAN THIS SPEECH ON PATRIOTISM BY QUOTING ABRAHAM  
LINCOLN. MORE THAN MOST MEN, LINCOLN KNEW THE IMPORTANCE  
OF THE VALUES WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING HERE. AND HE ALSO  
KNEW WHERE THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR PRESERVATION  
LAY.

"AS A NATION OF FREEMEN," LINCOLN ONCE SAID, "WE  
MUST LIVE THROUGH ALL TIME OR DIE BY SUICIDE."

IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS UP TO US, YOU AND I AND EVERY  
OTHER AMERICAN, TO, IN THE WORDS OF LINCOLN, "HAVE THE  
FAITH THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THAT FAITH...DARE TO  
DO OUR DUTY AS WE UNDERSTAND IT."