

REMARKS OF CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE
RUSSELL HIGH SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT
RUSSELL, KANSAS
8:00 P.M., FRIDAY, MAY 24, 1968

LET ME SAY AT THE OUTSET THAT I DEEPLY APPRECIATE BEING HERE THIS EVENING. THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY NOT AFFORDED MANY ALUMNI AND ONE I PROBABLY DO NOT DESERVE. IT IS A RARE PRIVILEGE TO SPEAK, ON ~~AN OCCASION LIKE THIS~~, TO YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WHOSE PARENTS WERE MY CONTEMPORARIES.

THERE IS ALWAYS A TEMPTATION, UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, TO DWELL ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, RECOUNT FOND MEMORIES AND RELIVE THE PAST. I CONCLUDED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH AN EXERCISE WOULD ADD LITTLE OR BE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT VALUE TO THOSE BEING HONORED THIS EVENING. I WOULD HOPE THAT EVERYONE PRESENT THIS EVENING RECOGNIZES THAT THROUGH THE YEARS, RUSSELL HAS HAD SCHOOL FACILITIES AND FACULTIES, SECOND TO NONE. THIS HAS BEEN POSSIBLE BECAUSE MEN AND WOMEN OF VISION HAVE HAD THE COURAGE AND INITIATIVE NEEDED TO MOVE FORWARD. IN MY OPINION, PEOPLE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE, AND RUSSELL HAS BEEN TRULY BLESSED WITH INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED ABOUT THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF ONE GENERATION AFTER ANOTHER. THIS CONTINUING CONCERN APPLIES TO THE TEACHERS, MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION, PARENTS, NON-PARENTS, AND THE TAXPAYERS OF RUSSELL.

THIS FACT WAS NEITHER FULLY APPRECIATED NOR FULLY UNDERSTOOD BY ME, BACK IN THE DARK AGES, 1941. AS MANY OF US KNOW, THE GOOD THINGS IN LIFE SEEM TO BE APPRECIATED MORE WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME. ALSO YOU WILL NEVER REALLY KNOW TO WHAT DEGREE YOUR CHARACTER, JUDGMENT, ABILITY -- OR FOR THAT MATTER, YOUR LIFE -- IS INFLUENCED OR MOLDED BY HOMETOWN FRIENDS AND ATTITUDES. I PERSONALLY FEEL THAT ANY SUCCESS I HAVE HAD, OR MAY HAVE IN THE FUTURE, HAS BEEN, OR WILL BE, DUE TO THE LESSONS LEARNED AND EXPERIENCES IN MY HOMETOWN, MANY YEARS AGO. MY POINT IS THAT YOU ARE WHAT YOU ARE NOW, NOT JUST BECAUSE OF YOUR EFFORTS, BUT BECAUSE OF THOSE OF YOUR PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND YOUR MANY, MANY FRIENDS.

I KNOW THAT FEELING OF PRIDE YOU ARE EXPERIENCING AT THIS MOMENT,
A PRIDE IN WHICH YOU ARE JOINED BY YOUR PARENTS, FACULTY AND COMMUNITY.

AND ALONG WITH THAT PRIDE MUST GO A LONG SIGH OF RELIEF, ESPECIALLY
FROM YOUR PARENTS AND TEACHERS. YOU KNOW, THEY SAY WRINKLES ARE
HEREDITARY -- PARENTS GET THEM FROM THEIR CHILDREN. NOT TOO MANY YEARS
FROM NOW, THE WRINKLES WILL BE PASSED ON TO YOU BY ANOTHER GENERATION
OF AMERICANS.

AND IN A FEW MORE YEARS, ONE OF YOU MAY STAND BEFORE THIS PODIUM
ADDRESSING ANOTHER GRADUATING CLASS. WHICHEVER ONE OF YOU THAT SPEAKER
IS WILL HAVE SOMETHING TO PASS ALONG TO THE GRADUATING CLASS. EVERY
GENERATION OF AMERICANS HAS ADDED SOMETHING OF VALUE TO OUR WAY OF LIFE,
AND YOU ARE THE MOST PROMISING GENERATION EVER TO COME ALONG.

- YOUR STAKE AND THE ODDS -

I WOULD GUESS THAT EVERY GRADUATING CLASS IS PROBABLY TOLD ABOUT FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND POSSIBILITIES. YOU MAY BE ASKING YOURSELF THIS VERY MOMENT -- WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR ME FOLLOWING GRADUATION, AND WHAT ARE THE ODDS?

AT STAKE IS A WAY OF LIFE THAT HAS GIVEN YOU A BETTER CHANCE AND A GREATER OPPORTUNITY TO DO GOOD THAN ANY PAST GENERATION.

THE ODDS ARE FRIGHTENING, BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE. TRUE, YOU ARE ENTERING A WORLD FILLED WITH PERILS, SWEEPED BY DISCONTENT AND THROBBING WITH HATREDS AND RESENTMENTS. BUT YOU ARE ENTERING IT ARMED WITH BETTER EDUCATIONS THAN ANY OF YOUR ANCESTORS, AND WITH A DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT WHICH IS AT LEAST THEIR EQUAL.

YOU REPRESENT A GREAT NEW WAVE OF YOUNG AMERICANS OF ENORMOUS TALENT AND UNLIMITED VITALITY, BETTER EDUCATED THAN EVER, POSSESSING MORE UNDERSTANDING AND INSIGHT THAN PREVIOUS GENERATIONS.

- ALIENATION, BEATNIKS AND BURNERS -

ALL OF US KNOW THINGS ARE NOT PERFECT. DESPITE THE CREATIVE SURGE OF YOUR GENERATION, OUR NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES AND TELEVISION ARE FILLED WITH FOREBODINGS OF A "GENERATION GAP". THEY CLAIM THAT AN INSEPARABLE BARRIER EXISTS BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR PARENTS. THE PUBLIC MEDIA ARE FILLED WITH LURID STORIES AND PICTURES OF BEATNIKS, PEACENIKS, HIPPIES, ADDICTS, BURNERS AND LOOTERS. THEY WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE THAT SUCH PRACTICES AND CONDUCT ARE THE RULE AMONG AMERICAN YOUTH RATHER THAN THE EXCEPTION.

I DENY THESE ALL-INCLUSIVE ACCUSATIONS. THEY ARE NOT THE RULE. THE FACTS PROVE THAT THEY ARE THE EXCEPTION. UNFORTUNATELY, TOO OFTEN THE EXCEPTIONS MAKE THE BIGGEST, BOLDEST HEADLINES.

- THE SILENT AMERICANS -

THE MAJORITY OF OUR YOUTH IN HIGH SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ARE PURSUING THEIR EDUCATION AT A HIGHER LEVEL THAN EVER BEFORE. IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES THEY ARE ACHIEVING NEW HEIGHTS. IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY, MANY OF THEM ARE, AT THIS VERY MOMENT, PROVING THAT, AS IN THE DAYS OF LINCOLN, THEY WILL GIVE THEIR "LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION" IF NECESSARY.

BUT THESE ARE THE SILENT AMERICANS. THEY ARE THE DOERS, NOT THE NOISE-MAKERS. LIKE YOU, THEY MAKE PROGRESS, NOT HEADLINES. LIKE YOU, THEY ARE TOO BUSY LEADING PRODUCTIVE LIVES AND BUILDING A MEANINGFUL SOCIETY TO MAKE SENSATIONAL NEWS.

AND SO THE FRINGE GROUPS AND SMALL MINORITIES HOG THE LIMELIGHT, THREATENING OUR COMMON WELFARE WHETHER BY BURNING THE FLAG OR PUTTING WHOLE CITIES TO THE TORCH, AND CRIME RATES RISE AND VIOLENCE AND DISORDER SPREAD, TAKING ON THE DIMENSIONS OF A NATIONAL CRISIS.

PUBLIC APATHY, INDIFFERENCE, PERMISSIVENESS AND A LACK OF LEADERSHIP
HAVE ALLOWED THESE EVILS TO FLOURISH. IT WILL TAKE THE ALL-OUT ENDEAVOR
OF ALL CITIZENS TO ELIMINATE THEM AND THEIR ROOT CAUSES.

- YOUTH IN THE VANGUARD -

IN THE VANGUARD OF THIS FIGHT FOR DECENCY AND SAFETY, IN MY OPINION,
WILL BE YOUNG AMERICA, UNWILLING TO SEE THEIR OWN LIVES AND FUTURE
BETRAYED BY SMALL, OFTEN SENSELESS MINORITIES WHOSE OUTRAGES CAN ONLY
TEAR DOWN, NEVER BUILD. IT IS TIME FOR YOU, THIS CLASS OF '68, TO JOIN
WITH ALL CITIZENS OF GOOD WILL, OF ALL AGES, RACE OR CREED, PICK UP
THE TORCH -- NOT TO BURN OR DESTROY -- BUT TO LIGHT THE WAY TOWARD A
UNIFIED NATION DEDICATED TO INSURE EQUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL.

- REASON, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY -

OUR OWN SENATOR FRANK CARLSON, IN A RECENT SPEECH REFERRING TO THE INHERENT DANGERS OF ANOTHER MARCH ON WASHINGTON, ON THE SENATE FLOOR SAID IN PART, "I AM GRAVELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE NEW ERA THAT SEEMS TO BE DAWNING IN AMERICAN POLITICS -- AN ERA OF VIOLENCE AND RULE BY DEMONSTRATION. I FEEL THE SITUATION IS SO GRAVE THAT AMERICANS STAND A VERY REAL CHANCE OF LOSING THEIR INDIVIDUAL VOICE IN THEIR GOVERNMENT. IN ESSENCE, DEMOCRACY IS ON TRIAL ... LET US REPUDIATE DEMONSTRATIONS AND VIOLENCE THAT DESTROY LAW AND ORDER AND MUTUAL RESPECT BETWEEN FELLOW AMERICANS. LET US END THIS ERA OF (GOVERNMENT BY VIOLENCE). FREEDOM AND EQUALITY WALK HAND IN HAND WITH REASON, RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY. LET US JOIN OUR HANDS IN THIS MUTUAL EFFORT."

ON THE RECENT DISORDERS AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY WHERE A RELATIVELY FEW STUDENTS TOOK OVER AND VANDALIZED BUILDINGS AND DISRUPTED THE EDUCATIONAL PURSUITS OF 25,000 OR MORE FELLOW STUDENTS, FORMER GOVERNOR ALF M. LANDON WARNS "ACADEMIC FREEDOM IS NOT ACADEMIC LICENSE". VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY SAID HE WAS "SICKENED" BY WHAT HAPPENED AT COLUMBIA."

SO, WE SEE THE EXCESSES AND LICENSE OF THE VIOLENT FEW FRUSTRATING AND ENDANGERING THE LIVES AND RIGHTS OF ALL THE REST OF US. THE VIOLATORS HIDE BEHIND THE VERY RIGHTS THEY CIRCUMVENT. FREE SPEECH, FREE ASSEMBLY, ACADEMIC FREEDOM, INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY, ALL THESE WE TAKE FOR GRANTED.

- DEMOCRACY AND THE INDIVIDUAL -

IN A DEMOCRACY WE BELIEVE IN DISCUSSION. WE BELIEVE IN DEBATE. WE BELIEVE IN THE RIGHT OF DISSENT AND THE RIGHT OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO EXPRESS HIMSELF FULLY. WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN ANYONE'S RIGHT TO COERCE ANOTHER HUMAN BEING INTO A BELIEF WHICH HE OR SHE DOES NOT CONSCIENTIOUSLY ACCEPT. WE HAVE BUILT A DEMOCRACY DESIGNED TO GIVE INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND FREEDOM OF BELIEF, FREEDOM FROM COMPULSION OR POLICE STATE CONFORMITY. WE MUST NOT LET THE VIOLENT FEW TEAR DOWN THE STRUCTURE OF DEMOCRACY WHICH SO MANY HAVE BUILT.

- HONESTY, COOPERATION, HARD WORK -

HONESTY, COOPERATION AND HARD WORK MAY SOUND OLD-FASHIONED, BUT THEY GET RESULTS. WHETHER WE CONSIDER THE TREMENDOUS RACIAL PROBLEM FACING OUR NATION, THE DIVISIONS WHICH SEPARATE LABOR AND CAPITAL OR THE PROBLEMS FACING THE POOR, THE ONLY REAL PROVEN REMEDY INVOLVES THESE THREE SIMPLE BUT IRREPLACEABLE REMEDIES: HONESTY, COOPERATION AND HARD WORK.

THINK ABOUT IT FOR A MOMENT. THESE THREE ESSENTIALS ARE WHAT BUILT AMERICA. THEY ARE WHAT GAVE FORCE AND DIRECTION TO THE GREAT AND THE HUMBLE WOMEN AND MEN WHO CONTRIBUTED, IN A THOUSAND DIFFERENT WAYS, TO OUR COMMON INHERITANCE. AND FOR THAT MATTER, THEY ARE WHAT GOT THE CLASS OF '68 WHERE THEY ARE TODAY, AND WILL KEEP ON PROPELLING YOU FORWARD IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

TAKE AWAY THESE THREE ESSENTIALS AND THE LIFE OF A NATION OR AN INDIVIDUAL WILL COLLAPSE LIKE DOMINOES.

KEEP THEM ALWAYS BEFORE YOU, AND NOTHING WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE.

- THE BIG CRISES -

I WOULD BE UNREALISTIC IF I DID NOT POINT OUT SOME OF THE HARD, GRIM FACTS FACING OUR NATION AND THE PROBLEMS YOU WILL SOON ENCOUNTER.

NOT LONG AGO I LISTED FOUR MAJOR CRISES THAT I BELIEVE TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE MANY PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THIS COUNTRY.

WE MUST ACHIEVE A JUST AND HONORABLE PEACE IN VIETNAM.

WE MUST ELIMINATE RACIAL STRIFE, RIOTS AND VIOLENCE AND THEIR CAUSES IN OUR CITIES.

WE MUST STRENGTHEN THE SOUNDNESS OF THE DOLLAR, STOP RECKLESS SPENDING AND INFLATION, AND PUT OUR ECONOMIC HOUSE IN ORDER.

WE MUST RESTORE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE IN THEIR GOVERNMENT AND ITS LEADERS BY SIMPLY TELLING THE TRUTH.

AMERICA IS BEING CHALLENGED AT HOME AND ABROAD AS NEVER BEFORE. THE VERY FOUNDATION OF OUR SOCIETY IS BEING THREATENED. WE ARE AT A CROSSROADS. IT IS TIME TO FACE THE REALITIES OF AMERICA 1968 AND RESOLVE TO RECLAIM THE AMERICAN DREAM OF FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL.

SUCH A CRUSADE CALLS NOT FOR COMPLACENCY, BUT FOR COMMITMENT -- NOT FOR DERISION BUT FOR DEDICATION -- NOT FOR INDIFFERENCE BUT FOR INVOLVEMENT. THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION LIES WITHIN YOU AND ME.

- WE CAN SOLVE THE PROBLEMS -

THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALL INTERRELATED AND ALL STEM FROM ONE LARGER PROBLEM -- THE CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP IN AMERICA TODAY, LEADERSHIP ON ALL FRONTS: GOVERNMENT, PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, PRIVATE CITIZENS. IMAGINATIVE NEW LEADERSHIP THAT CAN INSPIRE AND EXCITE OTHERS IS DESPERATELY NEEDED -- LEADERS WHO BELIEVE IN PEOPLE AS INDIVIDUALS RATHER THAN MEN LUSTING FOR POWER AND GLORY AND OBSESSED BY PERSONAL AMBITION.

THIS THEN IS THE GREAT CHALLENGE FACING YOUNG AMERICANS TODAY. YOU CAN PROVIDE THE LEADERSHIP NEEDED -- AND I AM CONFIDENT YOU WILL.

IN A FEW MINUTES YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR DIPLOMAS, CLOSING THESE
WONDERFUL YEARS OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL LIFE. IN THE YEARS TO COME, LOOKING
BACK ON THIS PERIOD OF YOUR LIVES, YOU WILL MORE AND MORE APPRECIATE HOW
PRECIOUS YOUR HIGH SCHOOL DAYS HAVE BEEN.

I SALUTE YOU IN YOUR GRADUATION AND JOIN WITH YOU IN FAITH AND HOPE
AS YOU STRIVE FOR NEW ACHIEVEMENTS. I PREDICT THAT YOU WILL MEET THE
CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE, REACH YOUR GOALS, ENJOY PROSPEROUS AND FRUITFUL
LIVES AND HELP MAKE OUR WORLD A BETTER PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE.