

REMARKS OF HONORABLE BOB DOLE

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY FREEDOM RALLY
CONSTITUTION HALL, WASHINGTON, D.C.
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1970

Mr. Dalmash
Mr. Muller
Tom Dole
Walter
Mrs. Dole

WE ARE ASSEMBLED HERE TODAY TO HONOR THE FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY
A MAN OF ARMS, A MAN OF THE PEOPLE, AND A MAN OF PEACE.

GEORGE WASHINGTON WAS A GALLANT SOLDIER AND GENERAL. HE WAS
STEADFAST IN DANGER AND BRAVE IN BATTLE. BUT ABOVE ALL, HE POSSESSED
AN UNYIELDING LOVE AND CONCERN FOR THE MEN UNDER HIS COMMAND.

ONE OF THE HEAVIEST BURDENS HE BORE DURING THE REVOLUTION WAS
THE HEARTACHE AND UNCERTAINTY OF KNOWING HIS MEN WERE BEING CAPTURED
AND INCARCERATED UNDER QUESTIONABLE CIRCUMSTANCES. DURING THE COURSE
OF OUR COUNTRY'S STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM, HE CONSTANTLY REMINDED THE
ENEMY OF THEIR OBLIGATION TOWARD THE PROPER TREATMENT OF AMERICANS
HELD IN CAPTIVITY.

ON AUGUST 11, 1775, HE WROTE THE FOLLOWING IN A LETTER TO
LIEUTENANT GENERAL THOMAS GAGE, COMMANDER OF BRITISH FORCES IN AMERICA:

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"THE OBLIGATIONS ARISING FROM THE RIGHTS OF HUMANITY.....
ARE UNIVERSALLY BINDING AND EXTENSIVE. THESE I SHOULD HAVE
HOPED, WOULD HAVE DICTATED A MORE TENDER TREATMENT OF THOSE
INDIVIDUALS WHOM CHANCE OR WAR HAD PUT IN YOUR POWER....."

OUR DILEMMA TODAY

TODAY, AMERICANS ARE FIGHTING AND DYING FOR FREEDOM, AGAINST
A DIFFERENT ENEMY IN A DIFFERENT PLACE. HOWEVER, OUR CONCERN FOR
THE ENEMY'S TREATMENT FOR CAPTURED AMERICANS IS SIMILAR TO WASHINGTON'S.
IT IS OUR EARNEST HOPE THAT THE CONFLICT IN VIETNAM WILL SOON BE TER-
MINATED AND THE TASK OF REBUILDING BEGUN. BUT HUNDREDS OF AMERICANS
ARE MISSING OR CAPTURED IN NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM. THE NUMBERS AND
IDENTITIES OF THESE CAPTIVES ARE KNOWN ONLY TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE.
FOR EACH UNIDENTIFIED MAN IS A WIFE, A CHILD, OR A PARENT FRANTICALLY

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CONCERNED WITH HIS FATE. THE CRUEL UNCERTAINTY AND DESPAIR GROW AS EACH DAY PASSES.

OUR CONCERN IN THIS MATTER IS HUMANITARIAN, NOT POLITICAL. THIS CONCERN CRIES OUT IN THE QUESTION OF THE WIVES WHO HAVE GONE TO PARIS TO ASK THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, "AM I A WIFE OR A WIDOW?"

NORTH VIETNAM - NLF VIOLATIONS: POWs

BY DESIGN, BOTH NORTH VIETNAM AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT HAVE PERSISTENTLY AND CALLOUSLY VIOLATED THE 1949 GENEVA CONVENTION RELATIVE TO THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR. THESE CONVENTIONS WERE RATIFIED BY NORTH VIETNAM ON JUNE 28, 1957. NOTWITHSTANDING RATIFICATION AND THE CLEAR LANGUAGE OF THE CONVENTIONS, HANOI AND THE VIET CONG HAVE ENGAGED IN THE FOLLOWING CALCULATED VIOLATIONS:

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- (1) THEY HAVE REFUSED TO PROVIDE PROPER NOURISHMENT AND HUMANE TREATMENT FOR ALL AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR;
- (2) THEY HAVE REFUSED TO GIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR DETENTION CAMPS AND HAVE REFUSED TO ALLOW ACCESS TO THESE CAMPS BY NEUTRAL OBSERVERS;
- (3) THEY HAVE CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO IDENTIFY ALL AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR;
- (4) THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO DETAIN THE SERIOUSLY ILL AND WOUNDED; AND
- (5) THEY HAVE DENIED TO AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR THE RIGHT TO COMMUNICATE REGULARLY BY MAIL WITH THEIR FAMILIES.

THESE CYNICAL VIOLATIONS OF THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF NATIONS HAVE NOT GONE UNNOTICED BY THE BODY CHIEFLY CONCERNED WITH THE APPLICATION OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS. IN A LETTER DATED JUNE 11, 1965, THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS, JACQUES FREYMOND, TOLD SECRETARY OF STATE DEAN RUSK:

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"ALL PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT, THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ARE BOUND BY THE FOUR GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF AUGUST 12, 1949, FOR THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF WAR, HAVING RATIFIED THEM AND HAVING ADHERED THERETO. THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT TOO IS BOUND BY THE UNDERTAKINGS SIGNED BY VIETNAM."

ON SEPTEMBER 13, 1969, THE XXI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS CLEARLY DEFINED THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF NATIONS IN THEIR TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR. THE RESOLUTION UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED AT THE ISTANBUL CONFERENCE READS -- IN PERTINENT PART:

".....EVEN APART FROM THE CONVENTION, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS CONSISTENTLY DEMANDED HUMANE TREATMENT FOR PRISONERS OF WAR, INCLUDING IDENTIFICATION AND ACCOUNTING FOR ALL PRISONERS, PROVISIONS OF AN ADEQUATE DIET AND MEDICAL CARE,

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THAT PRISONERS BE PERMITTED TO COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH THE EXTERIOR, THAT SERIOUSLY SICK AND WOUNDED PRISONERS BE PROMPTLY REPATRIATED, AND THAT AT ALL TIMES PRISONERS BE PROTECTED FROM PHYSICAL AND MENTAL TORTURE, ABUSE AND REPRISALS."

UNITED CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

WE IN CONGRESS ARE DOING OUR UTMOST TO DEMONSTRATE THE CONTINUING AMERICAN CONCERN FOR CAPTURED AND MISSING AMERICAN SERVICEMEN. WE WISH TO ASSURE THEIR FAMILIES THAT THE CONGRESS UNDERSTANDS THEIR ANGUISH AND ACTIVELY SUPPORTS THE EFFORTS OF OUR GOVERNMENT AND OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO SECURE THE HUMANE TREATMENT OF AMERICAN PRISONERS.

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ON FEBRUARY 5, I APPEARED BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF SENATE RESOLUTION 271, AS ITS AUTHOR AND SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE 36 OTHER SENATORS WHO HAD JOINED IN ITS SPONSORSHIP. ARTICLE FIVE OF THIS RESOLUTION CITES THE ENEMY'S TREATMENT OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR; IT DEMANDS THAT NORTH VIETNAM IMMEDIATELY PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THEIR STATUS AND GIVE EVIDENCE THAT THEY ARE BEING HUMANELY TREATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION.

ON WEDNESDAY (FEBRUARY 18), THE SENATE JOINED THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN ADOPTING A RESOLUTION, TO PROTEST THE TREATMENT OF AMERICAN POW'S HELD BY HANOI AND THE VIET CONG.

THIS RESOLUTION CALLS ON THE COMMUNISTS TO COMPLY WITH THE GENEVA CONVENTION AND ENDORSES EFFORTS BY THE UNITED STATES, THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS "TO OBTAIN HUMANE TREATMENT AND RELEASE OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR."

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SENATE ACTION ON THIS RESOLUTION HAS UNITED CONGRESSIONAL VOICES OF CONCERN AND HAS AFFIRMED A UNIFIED CONGRESSIONAL STATEMENT OF OUTRAGE AGAINST THE TREATMENT OF OUR CAPTURED FIGHTING MEN.

AMERICAN - SOUTH VIETNAMESE TREATMENT OF POWs

IT SHOULD BE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE UNITED STATES AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM HAVE PLACED GREAT EMPHASIS ON PROPER TREATMENT OF ENEMY PRISONERS OF WAR HELD IN SOUTH VIETNAM. WE HAVE RECOGNIZED AND ADHERED TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS.

NORTH VIETNAMESE AND VIET CONG FORCES CAPTURED IN SOUTH VIETNAM ARE DETAINED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM IN POW CAMPS WHICH ARE INSPECTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS.

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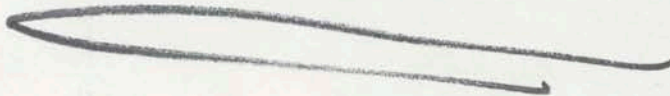
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENEVA CONVENTION, SICK AND WOUNDED PRISONERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED AND REPATRIATED TO NORTH VIETNAM. WE HAVE PROVIDED SUCH TREATMENT NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT IS REQUIRED, BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT IS HUMANE.

WE HAVE HOPED THAT OUR ADVERSARIES WOULD RECIPROCATE. REGRETTABLY, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AND THE VIET CONG HAVE NOT FOLLOWED OUR EXAMPLE.

OUR TASK TODAY

WE GATHER TODAY AT THIS FREEDOM RALLY BECAUSE THE TIME HAS COME FOR AN ACCOUNTING. IT IS TIME THAT ALL AMERICA SPEAK TO THE REST OF THE WORLD AND DEMAND THAT NORTH VIETNAM GIVE AN ACCOUNTING OF THESE MEN. IF THE REST OF THE WORLD KNOWS THE ANGUISH AND TEARS OF THE FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES OF AMERICAN PRISONERS, HANOI WILL BE PRESSURED TO CHANGE ITS COURSE.

over - 1400
150 men



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ON BEHALF OF THESE MEN WHO HAVE FOUGHT SO VALIANTLY FOR THEIR COUNTRY AND THEIR FAMILIES, I URGE YOU TO SPEAK OUT PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY TO INFORM YOUR FELLOW AMERICANS OF THE TRAGIC PLIGHT OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR. I URGE YOU TO TAKE THE LEAD IN HELPING STIMULATE WORLD OPINION ON BEHALF OF THESE MEN.

LET US PROCLAIM FROM THIS DAY FORWARD THROUGHOUT AMERICA AND THE WORLD THAT THESE MEN SHALL NOT BE FORGOTTEN.