

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

MEMORIAL DAY  
TOPEKA, KANSAS  
SUNDAY, MAY 28, 1972

IT IS A SPECIAL PLEASURE TO BE HERE TODAY WITH YOU AND TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS WITH YOU AN ISSUE THAT IS VITAL TO ALL OF US. IT IS AN ISSUE THAT HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEGUN TO RECEIVE THE MEDIA COVERAGE IT MERITS AND WHICH STILL, IN SPITE OF INCREASING ATTENTION BY SOME OF OUR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, BY GOVERNMENT AND SOME BUSINESSMEN, IS NOT GETTING THE KIND OF CONSIDERATION IT DESERVES.

IT IS AN ISSUE THAT INVOLVES US ALL -- AND THAT, IN A REAL SENSE -- INVOLVES THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY AND THAT TESTS, AS WELL, OUR DETERMINATION AS A PEOPLE TO LIVE UP TO THE VERY BEST IN OUR PAST.

AS THE PRESIDENT RETURNS FROM MOSCOW, FROM A MISSION THAT ALL HOPE -- AND WHICH I BELIEVE -- HAS BROUGHT US CLOSER TO AN ERA OF PEACE, WE CANNOT FORGET OUR OBLIGATIONS TO THOSE WHO HAVE BORN THE BURDEN OF WAR.

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IN A DAY WHEN PEACE IS ON THE ASCENDANCY -- WHEN THE PRESIDENT'S INAUGURAL PREDICTION THAT THE "TIMES ARE ON THE SIDE OF PEACE" APPEARS TO BE PROVING TRUE -- WE MUST TAKE SPECIAL CARE TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE SACRIFICED FOR AMERICA, WHO HAVE MADE SACRIFICES IN THE CAUSE OF PEACE BY BEARING ARMS IN EARLIER WARS.

AND ESPECIALLY WE MUST REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT, AND HAVE NOW RETURNED FROM BATTLE IN VIETNAM.

THAT STRUGGLE HAS BEEN A LONG ONE. HOPEFULLY, THE COURAGEOUS INITIATIVES OF THE PRESIDENT INTENDED TO CUT OFF THE ENEMY'S SUPPLIES AND THEREBY TO CUT OFF HIS CAPACITY TO WAGE WAR HAS NOW BROUGHT US CLOSER THAN EVER TO AN END TO THAT BITTER STRUGGLE. WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE -- AND THE RESOLVE OF THIS AMERICAN PRESIDENT -- I BELIEVE WE MAY SOON SEE AN END TO THE FIGHTING THERE. I PRAY THAT IT IS SO.

BUT EVEN NOW, AS SO MANY THOUSANDS OF AMERICAN MEN RETURN FROM THE WAR, AND AS WE LOOK FOR THE RETURN OF EVEN MORE IN THE COMING WEEKS, WE ARE FACED WITH A CHALLENGE IN MANY WAYS WITHOUT PRECEDENT.

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A BAFFLING EXPERIENCE

WE NOW ARE EMERGING FROM A WAR DIFFERENT FROM ANY IN OUR HISTORY. IT HAS BEEN A LONG AND BAFFLING EXPERIENCE IN WHICH CONFUSION HAS CONFOUNDED OUR PURPOSES AND DOMESTIC CONFLICT HAS GROWN FROM THE SEEDS OF FOREIGN CONFLICT. IT HAS BEEN AN EXPERIENCE WHICH HAS DIVIDED OUR PEOPLE ON THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES OF WAR AND PEACE, OF THE PURPOSES OF ONE AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE OTHER.

IT HAS CREATED HUMAN PROBLEMS FOR EACH OF US, AND NONE MORE PROFOUND THAN THE PROBLEMS OF OUR VETERANS -- THE MEN WHO BORE THE BATTLE IN VIETNAM. IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO IGNORE THE BITTERNESS AND DEEP RESENTMENT RAISED BY THESE PROBLEMS. IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS TO IGNORE THE FACT THAT SOME AMONG US WANT A TARGET -- A SCAPEGOAT -- SOMETHING OR SOMEBODY THEY CAN TURN THEIR ANGER AND FRUSTRATIONS ON.

VETERANS MUST NOT BE VICTIMS

I HOPE, AND I BELIEVE, THAT WHATEVER ELSE WE HAVE SACRIFICED IN THIS WAR, WE HAVE NOT LOST OUR REASON NOR OUR COMPASSION NOR OUR SENSE OF BEING ONE PEOPLE IN PURSUIT OF ONE NATIONAL DESTINY. WE MUST NOT SEEK TO BREAK THE VETERANS OF THIS LONG AND TRAGIC WAR ON THE RACK OF NATIONAL RESENTMENT -- NOR

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CAN WE PERMIT OTHERS TO DO SO.

IT IS NOT MY PURPOSE TODAY TO DISCUSS THE CAUSES OF THIS WAR, OR WHO IS RESPONSIBLE, OR WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE. RATHER, IT IS THE BUSINESS OF HISTORY TO JUDGE THIS, AS IT IS THE BUSINESS OF THIS GOVERNMENT OF A FREE AND POWERFUL PEOPLE TO MEET THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF FREEDOM AND TO FULFILL THE OBLIGATIONS OF POWER. THIS WE HAVE DONE. WE WERE ABLE TO DO IT BECAUSE A GENERATION OF YOUNG AMERICANS STOOD, AS OTHER GENERATIONS HAVE STOOD, ON BEHALF OF THIS NATION TO MEET ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS.

BUT UNLIKE OTHER GENERATIONS IN OTHER WARS, THESE YOUNG MEN, AT BEST, COME HOME IN ANONYMITY TO BE MET WITH INDIFFERENCE. SOMETIMES THEY FIND GENUINE HOSTILITY. THEY ARE CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE OF PUBLIC OPINION. I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS IS ACCEPTABLE IN AMERICA.

#### SACRIFICE NOT RECOGNIZED

THESE ARE OUR YOUNG MEN, WHOM WE HAVE ASKED TO SERVE, AND TO BE PREPARED TO SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES FOR US. MORE THAN FIFTY THOUSAND OF THEIR COMRADES HAVE DIED. MANY THOUSANDS MORE HAVE LOST LIMBS OR SIGHT OR ARE CASUALTIES IN OTHER WAYS. AND IN A TIME WHEN WE ARE TRYING TO HELP THEM RECOGNIZE THAT WHAT THEY DID WAS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO AMERICA, WE FREQUENTLY FAIL EVEN TO DEMONSTRATE TO THEM THAT WE CARE.



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NO BANDS WELCOME THESE MEN HOME, NO FLAGS, NO PARADES, NO WARM WELCOMES -- EXCEPT PERHAPS FROM A FAMILY GRATEFUL TO HAVE THE SON OR BROTHER OR HUSBAND HOME. VERY LITTLE HOMAGE IS PAID TO THESE PEOPLE. INSTEAD, THE LAND THEY FOUGHT FOR -- THE LAND SO MANY OF THEIR BROTHERS DIED FOR -- NOW SO OFTEN TURNS ITS FACE AWAY.

#### ADJUSTMENTS TO PEACETIME

WE HAVE MANY READJUSTMENTS TO MAKE IN ACCOMMODATING OUR NATION AND OUR ECONOMY TO PEACE ONCE AGAIN. THE ROAD WILL BE LONG AND HARD. IT WILL BE ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT FOR THE MEN WE ARE BRINGING HOME, BUT WE CAN AT LEAST WALK WITH THEM AND NOT TURN ASIDE. AND WE MUST -- BECAUSE, WHEN AMERICA CALLED THEM, THEY DID NOT TURN ASIDE.

#### SPECIAL PROGRAMS CREATED

THROUGH THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, AND, AS WELL, THROUGH PRIVATE EFFORTS, WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE FOR HOMECOMING VIETNAM VETERANS IN A BROAD VARIETY OF WAYS. THE PROBLEM OF DRUG ADDICTION, AS YOU KNOW, IS CRITICAL. THE PRESIDENT HAS TAKEN THE INITIATIVE AGAINST THIS PROBLEM WITH EFFORTS TO CURB ADDICTION AND REHABILITATE ADDICTS. SPECIAL CARE IS BEING PROVIDED FOR RETURNING VETERANS WHO ARE ADDICTED AND MANY THOUSANDS WILL RECEIVE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION THROUGH V.A. FACILITIES.

THE JOBS FOR VETERANS PROGRAM, WHICH PRESIDENT NIXON CREATED TWO YEARS AGO, IS ACTIVE IN FORTY-SEVEN STATES AND 285 CITIES, AND IS BEGINNING TO HAVE

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A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON VETERAN EMPLOYMENT. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS HAVE BEEN INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY, AND PROVISION HAS BEEN MADE FOR SPECIAL TUTORING AND REMEDIAL TRAINING. FUNDS ARE PROVIDED FOR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS. THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY HAS FUNDED A NEW PROGRAM TO HELP DISADVANTAGED VETERANS INTO JOBS AND JOB TRAINING, USING OTHER VETERANS TO HELP WITH THIS EFFORT. MANY BUSINESS LEADERS ARE ASSISTING IN THE EFFORT TO PUT VETERANS INTO JOBS, AND THE PRESIDENT HAS PLEDGED THE FULL WEIGHT OF HIS OFFICE TO THE WELFARE OF THESE MEN.

PROGRAMS NOT ENOUGH

BUT LET US RECOGNIZE THAT PROGRAMS ALONE ARE NOT ENOUGH. WE NEED SUCH PROGRAMS OF ASSISTANCE, BUT WE ALSO NEED SOMETHING THAT IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT, SOMETHING THAT WILL DO FAR MORE GOOD NOT ONLY FOR OUR VETERANS, BUT FOR OUR COUNTRY ITSELF.

WE NEED THIS GREAT NATION TO PUT ASIDE ITS BITTERNESS, AND NOT INFLICT IT ON THE VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM CONFLICT.

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#### OUTREACH REQUIRED

I HAVE TALKED WITH MANY OF THESE PEOPLE COMING HOME, AND I KNOW THAT ONE OF THEIR GREATEST PROBLEMS IS JUST SIMPLE COMMUNICATIONS. MANY HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE MOST DIFFICULT TIME THEY WILL EVER KNOW IN THEIR LIVES. THEY HAVE NOT BEEN THROUGH THESE THINGS WITH A FEELING OF HAVING THE FULL SUPPORT OF THEIR COUNTRYMEN BEHIND THEM. INSTEAD, THEY HAVE A SENSE OF ISOLATION FROM WHAT THEY CALL "THE WORLD" -- BY WHICH THEY MEAN THEIR OWN HOMELAND.

THEY OFTEN FIND THEMSELVES FORCED BACK INTO A COMMUNITY OF THEIR OWN -- A COMMUNITY OF OTHER VETERANS CREATED BY COMMON EXPERIENCE AND COMMON NEED. OF ALL THEIR DIFFICULTIES, PERHAPS THE MOST AGONIZING IS THE FEELING SO MANY HAVE OF NOT REALLY BEING A PART OF THEIR OWN PEOPLE ANY LONGER -- OF BEING EXILES IN THEIR OWN LAND -- OF NOT REALLY BEING ABLE TO RETURN AGAIN TO A SENSE OF BELONGING.

#### INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

I THINK THAT OF ALL THE PROBLEMS WHICH CONFRONT OUR VETERANS, THIS IS THE ONE EACH ONE OF US AS AN INDIVIDUAL CAN MOST DIRECTLY HAVE A HAND IN SOLVING.

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WE CAN DO IT SO EASILY, AND IN A WAY WE KNOW WELL -- AN AMERICAN WAY. WE CAN DO IT BY SIMPLY REACHING OUT OUR HANDS TO THEM, LISTENING TO THEM, LETTING THEM KNOW THAT WE DO CARE ABOUT WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN THROUGH, AND THAT WE ARE GRATEFUL.

AND IN A LARGER SENSE, WE NEED TO BIND UP THE WOUNDS AMONG US ALL, AND NOT PROBE THEM FOR THE JUSTIFICATION OF ONE POSITION OR ANOTHER.

WE NEED TO OPEN THE DOORS OF DISCOURSE ONCE AGAIN, AND DETERMINE WHERE WE WILL GO FROM HERE, AND WHAT KIND OF NATION WE WANT TO BE. IT IS GIVEN TO FEW NATIONS IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD TO BE SO RICH, SO POWERFUL, AND SO FREE THAT THEY CAN DETERMINE THEIR OWN DESTINY, AND NOT HAVE IT DETERMINED FOR THEM. WE CAN DO THAT, IF WE WILL.

THERE IS GOOD REASON TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE CHANCES FOR PEACE IN THE YEARS AHEAD. THE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THIS COUNTRY, JUST COMPLETED BY THE PRESIDENT, HIS NEW INITIATIVES IN VIETNAM, HIS OVER-TURES TO CHINA AND THE NEW SENSE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THIS COUNTRY AND HER ALLIES ALL COMBINE TO BEAR OUT THE PRESIDENT'S PREDICTION THAT THE TIMES ARE



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ON THE SIDE OF PEACE.

LET US, TOO, BE ON THE SIDE OF PEACE -- PEACE ABROAD AND PEACE AT HOME.

LET US BE ON THE SIDE OF PEACE -- AND LET US TAKE CARE, AT THE SAME TIME, THAT WE STAY ON THE SIDE OF THOSE WHO BY THEIR SACRIFICE HAVE HELPED TO MAKE PEACE POSSIBLE.

IT IS FOR US HERE TO SPREAD THE WORD AND TO SHOW BY OUR EXAMPLE THAT THE VETERAN DESERVES MORE THAN BITTERNESS. THAT HE HAS EARNED MORE THAN THE APATHY AND INDIFFERENCE MANY HAVE SHOWN HIM.

HE MERITS NOT OUR INDIFFERENCE, NOR OUR HOSTILITY -- AND MORE BY FAR, THAN JUST A FEW KIND WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE ON A DAY LIKE THIS ONE.

HE DESERVES OUR CONTINUING CONCERN AND OUR ACTION. HE DESERVES OUR RESPECT AND OUR GRATITUDE.

HE BORE THE BATTLE FOR OUR SAKE AND FOR THE SAKE OF FUTURE PEACE.

SURELY TODAY, HE DESERVES TO BEAR HIMSELF PROUDLY IN THE SOCIETY HE FOUGHT TO PROTECT.

THE TIMES ARE ON THE SIDE OF PEACE. LET US BE ON THE SIDE OF THOSE WHO HELPED TO BRING THAT ABOUT.

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SO LET EACH WHO BORE THIS BATTLE IN HIS HEART REACH OUT TO THOSE WHO BORE IT ON THEIR BODIES, RESOLVING THAT THE LESSONS OF THIS TIME HAVE NOT BEEN TAUGHT IN VAIN, THAT THE SEEDS OF SACRIFICE SHALL NOT HAVE FALLEN ON BARREN GROUND, AND THAT THIS NATION, WITH GOD'S GUIDANCE, SHALL TURN FROM THIS HARSH WINTER OF WAR TO A NEW AND LASTING SPRING OF PEACE AND HOPE AND PROMISE FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE.