

STATEMENT BY SENATOR BOB DOLE

MEMORIAL CEREMONY
30TH ANNIVERSARY, US ARMY 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION
VAIL, COLORADO
SUNDAY, JULY 9, 1972

THE YEARS SINCE WORLD WAR II, I NOTE, HAVE HAD THEIR EFFECT ON ALL OF US. THEY HAVE WROUGHT THEIR CHANGES. BUT THERE IS ONE THING, I AM SURE, THAT HAS NOT CHANGED -- ONE THING THAT MERE TIME COULD NEVER CHANGE. IT IS THE WAY WE FEEL ABOUT WHAT WE DID TOGETHER THOSE MANY YEARS AGO.

THEN AS NOW, WE ALL FELT, I AM SURE -- AND SHARED WITH THE NATION-- A CURIOUS MIX OF EMOTIONS ABOUT THE EVENTS OF WAR. AS ONE OF THE NEWEST, AND POSSIBLY GREENEST SECOND LIEUTENANTS, I FELT BOTH A SENSE OF REGRET AND A FEELING OF PRIDE. BOTH SENTIMENTS WENT TOGETHER. THEY BOTH HAD THE SAME OBJECT. BOTH WERE BROUGHT ON BY THE SAME CIRCUMSTANCE -- THE ADVENT OF WAR.

WE ALL FELT A DEEP REGRET THAT WAR HAD COME AT ALL. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, WE FELT A CERTAIN PRIDE THAT, SINCE IT HAD TO COME, WE COULD HELP RESOLVE IT, HELP BRING IT TO AN END.

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THESE MANY YEARS HAVE CHANGED US ALL, BUT IT HASN'T CHANGED THAT WAY WE FEEL ABOUT WAR. I FELT THE SAME MIX OF EMOTIONS THEN, AS YOUNG SECOND LIEUTENANT DOLE, AS I DO TODAY AS SENATOR DOLE.

THEN AND NOW -- ISSUE IS THE SAME

THIS ISSUE OF WAR AND PEACE STILL COMMANDS THE ANXIOUS ATTENTIONS OF THE WORLD. TODAY, IT IS FRAMED IN A DIFFERENT CONTEXT THAN WHAT WE REMEMBER FROM ITALY. THE ADVERSARIES ARE DIFFERENT. THE THEATER OF COMBAT IS DIFFERENT.

BUT IN A CERTAIN SENSE, IN FACT IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THE STAKES ARE THE SAME NOW AS THEY WERE IN THE ITALIAN ALPS IN THE EARLY 1940s. THE STAKES ARE THE SAME NOW IN THE SPECIFIC CASE OF VIETNAM AND IN THE GENERAL, GLOBAL CONTEXT OF WORLD RELATIONS.

THE ISSUE IS THE SURVIVAL OR LIBERTY AND THE MAINTENANCE OF A FREE WAY OF LIFE IN A WORLD WHERE THE THREATS TO IT ARE OMINOUS AND CONSTANT.

THE DEFENSE OF FREEDOM. IT IS A SIMPLE FORMULATION. BUT IT IS AN ACCURATE ONE. IT EXPLAINS WHAT WE DID TWENTY YEARS AGO AND WHAT THIS COUNTRY, AMERICA CONTINUES TO DO TODAY.

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IT IS A SIMPLE FORMULATION, BUT IT IS A PROFOUND PURPOSE.
IT IS THE SIMPLE ANSWER TO THE SPECIFIC QUESTION -- WHY
VIETNAM.

IT IS THE SIMPLE ANSWER TO THE GENERAL QUESTION -- WHY
A STRONG MILITARY POSTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES.

IT IS THE SIMPLE ANSWER -- AND THE PROFOUND PURPOSE --
WHICH MOTIVATES MOST OF US TODAY AND WHICH ONCE IMPELLED
THOUSANDS OF SECOND LIEUTENANTS LIKE SECOND LIEUTENANT DOLE,
WITH THE MIXED EMOTIONS I TALKED ABOUT, INTO WAR.

COMPLEX ARGUMENTS OVER SIMPLE QUESTION

THERE ARE THOSE, I KNOW, WHO WOULD COUNTER THAT IT IS NOT
QUITE SO SIMPLE. ALMOST DAILY ON THE FLOOR OF THE SENATE, I
HEAR THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST AMERICAN ACTIONS IN THE WAR
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. ALMOST DAILY, I HEAR THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND
AGAINST SPENDING 'X' NUMBER OF BILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR ONE
WEAPONS SYSTEM OR ANOTHER.

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THE ARGUMENTS ARE COMPLEX. ON THAT THERE CAN BE NO DISAGREEMENT.

BUT THE QUESTION, AS I CHOOSE TO FRAME IT -- THE QUESTION AS IT MUST BE PUT -- REMAINS A SIMPLE ONE.

DOES AMERICA CHOOSE TO REMAIN STRONG -- AND TO CONTINUE TO EXERCISE ITS STRENGTH WHERE NECESSARY -- IN ORDER THAT HER OWN FREEDOM AND THE FREEDOM OF HALF THE WORLD CAN ENDURE OR DOES IT NOT. THAT IS THE ISSUE. AND THAT IS AS SIMPLE, AS INDIVISIBLE, AS FUNDAMENTAL A QUESTION AS THIS COUNTRY HAS EVER FACED.

IS WHAT WE FOUGHT FOR IN THE 1940s -- AND WHAT MANY GOOD FRIENDS DIED FOR -- WORTH FIGHTING FOR TODAY IN THE 1970s.

IT REQUIRED SACRIFICE THEN, AND WE CAN REGRET THE FACT THAT SACRIFICES HAD TO BE MADE. IT REQUIRES SACRIFICE NOW, AND WE MUST STILL REGRET THAT AWFUL REALITY.

BUT THE FACT THAT WE MADE SACRIFICES THEN WAS CAUSE FOR PRIDE. FOR OUR OBJECTIVE WAS A PROUD ONE.

AND OUR OBJECTIVE TODAY IS THE SAME -- THE DEFENSE OF FREEDOM. OUGHT IT NOT, THEN, TO REMAIN A CAUSE FOR PRIDE?

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AMERICA IS A STRONG NATION. WHEN WE HAVE TO USE OUR STRENGTH, AS WE HAVE FOR EXAMPLE IN VIETNAM, IT IS REGRETTABLE. BUT WHAT MAKES IT SO IS NOT THE USE OF FORCE ITSELF, BUT THE FACT THAT IN THE WORLD THERE ARE STILL ADVERSARIES WHO WOULD THEMSELVES USE FORCE TO DEPRIVE OTHER MEN OF THEIR FREEDOM. WE USE OUR STRENGTH TO KEEP THAT FREEDOM SECURE. THOUGH THERE ARE THOSE WHO MIGHT DENY IT, THAT IS CAUSE ENOUGH FOR HONEST PRIDE.

CAUSE FOR HOPE

THERE IS GROWING SENTIMENT IN AMERICA TODAY FOR A LESSENEED INVOLVEMENT IN WORLD AFFAIRS. AS A UNITED STATES SENATOR AND ESPECIALLY AS NATIONAL CHAIRMAN OF MY PARTY, I OFTEN VIEW THE TREND AS A POLITICAL MATTER. BUT IT IS MUCH MORE THAN A QUESTION OF ELECTORAL POLITICS.

IT IS A MATTER OF NATIONAL PURPOSE. WE WERE STRONG IN THE 1940s AND TODAY, SEVERAL MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN WESTERN EUROPE ARE FREE BECAUSE OF IT. WHETHER WE REMAIN STRONG IN THE 1970s AND BEYOND, WILL DETERMINE WHETHER THOSE SAME PEOPLE AND THEIR CHILDREN -- AND OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN AND ALL THE FREE WORLD -- WILL REMAIN FREE.

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WE CAN BE HOPEFUL THAT SOME OF THE EVENTS OF EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE SUMMIT TALKS BY THE PRESIDENT WITH LEADERS OF CHINA AND OF RUSSIA WILL BRING US CLOSER TO A TIME WHEN CONFRONTATION BETWEEN NATIONS WILL GIVE WAY TO NEGOTIATION AND COOPERATION. WE CAN BE HOPEFUL THAT LASTING PEACE -- THE MOST PROPER MEMORIAL TO THOSE AMERICANS WHO HAVE DIED IN WAR -- CAN BE ATTAINED.

WE CAN BE HOPEFUL THAT ONE DAY SOON, THERE WILL BE NO NEED FOR THE SACRIFICES THAT WAR CALLS FOR, A DAY WHEN THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER CAUSE TO REGRET THAT SUCH SACRIFICE IS NEEDED.

BUT IF THAT DAY COMES IT WILL COME BECAUSE THIS NATION, AND THE INITIATIVES IT TOOK AND THE STRENGTH IT MAINTAINED, WILL HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE. THEN, THERE CAN BE CAUSE FOR PRIDE, AT LONG LAST, UNMIXED AND UNALLOYED WITH ANY REGRETS.

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