

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES
INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL
INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS
MAY 31, 1974

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE WITH YOU TODAY AND TO JOIN IN
CELEBRATING YOUR GRADUATION. THIS IS A GREAT SEASON OF THE YEAR,
WITH THE SPRING STILL HANGING IN THE KANSAS AIR AND THE PROMISE OF
SUMMER NOT FAR AWAY. THE FIELDS ARE GREEN, AND THE CROPS ARE
GROWING TOWARD THE FULLNESS OF THEIR SUMMER BOUNTY. ALL IS FRESH
AND YOUNG IN NATURE'S CYCLE AS THE EARTH RENEWS AND REFRESHES ITSELF.

THIS IS ALSO A GREAT SEASON IN YOUR LIVES--WITH THE LAST CHAPTER
CLOSING ON YOUR YOUTH AND THE FIRST PAGE BEING TURNED IN YOUR YOUNG
ADULTHOOD.

-2-

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

PERHAPS NO GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL CLASS IS EVER QUITE FULLY PREPARED FOR THE EXPECTATIONS SOCIETY HOLDS FOR IT. EACH YEAR NEW DEMANDS ARE PLACED UPON THE YOUNGER GENERATION, AND EACH YEAR THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACING OUR WHOLE SOCIETY BECOME MORE COMPLEX, MORE TRYING AND LESS VULNERABLE TO QUICK AND EASY ANSWERS. THEREFORE, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR TEACHERS, PARENTS AND OTHERS WHO ARE IN THE GENERAL BUSINESS OF "EDUCATING" YOUNG PEOPLE TO EVER PREPARE THEM FOR ALL THAT IS IN STORE. IN MANY WAYS THEY CANNOT EVEN PREPARE THEMSELVES TO PASS SOME OF THIS WISDOM ALONG TO YOU--JUST AS THEIR TEACHERS AND OTHER ELDERS WERE UNABLE TO DO SO TWENTY OR THIRTY OR MORE YEARS AGO.

-3-

AFTER ALL WHO TWENTY YEARS AGO IN 1954 COULD HAVE FORESEEN POCKET CALCULATORS, FIVE-HOUR COAST-TO-COAST JET FLIGHTS, HEART TRANSPLANTS OR THE ELIMINATION OF POLIO AS A MASS KILLER AND CRIPPLER OF OUR PEOPLE? AND JUST FIVE YEARS AGO WHO COULD HAVE PREDICTED AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO CHINA, A WORLDWIDE ENERGY CRISIS OR WHEAT PRICED AT THREE, FOUR OR EVEN FIVE DOLLARS.

CERTAINLY, MOST OF OUR PARENTS AND TEACHERS HAD NO SUCH FORESIGHT; I KNOW I DID NOT. BUT THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT YOUNG PEOPLE--AND OLDER ONES TOO--DID NOT HAVE TO REACT AND RESPOND TO THESE STRANGE EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS. AND IN THE SAME WAY, SOCIETY WILL EXPECT YOU TO REACT TO AND DEAL WITH ALL THE UNEXPECTED, FANTASTIC, TRAGIC AND OTHERWISE UNPREDICTABLE THINGS THAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN YOU ENTER THIS SO-CALLED ADULT WORLD.

-4-

MEANING AND PERSPECTIVE

BUT WHERE DOES ALL THIS LEAVE YOU--AND US. SURELY, I DID NOT TRAVEL HALF THE DISTANCE ACROSS OUR COUNTRY FROM WASHINGTON, D.C., TO TELL YOU SOMETHING THAT IS REALLY FAIRLY OBVIOUS--THAT YOU CAN EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED IN THE DAYS AND YEARS AHEAD.

SURELY, THERE IS MORE IN THIS AGE OF VASTLY EXPANDED TECHNOLOGICAL EXPERTISE AND ENLARGED INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS THAT CAN BE PASSED ALONG FROM MY GENERATION TO YOURS. AND I BELIEVE THERE IS.

IT IS REALLY AN OLD MESSAGE AND AN OLD STORY. BUT AT A TIME WHEN MOST PEOPLE HAVE LITTLE CONFIDENCE IN OUR BASIC INSTITUTIONS--AND ESPECIALLY OUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS EXECUTIVE OR LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES, THIS IS A MESSAGE WHICH BEARS REPEATING. AND IT REQUIRES RETELLING HERE IN INDEPENDENCE AND IN OTHER KANSAS TOWNS AND CITIES, AND THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

AMERICA IS THE MESSAGE

THAT MESSAGE IS AMERICA--ITS PAST, ITS TRIUMPHS AND ITS PROMISE
FOR THE FUTURE.

AS WE APPROACH THE OBSERVANCE OF THE UNITED STATES' 200th
ANNIVERSARY--OUR BICENTENNIAL--WE COULD TAKE A LONG LOOK BACK AT THE
MANY PROBLEMS WHICH AROSE IN THOSE YEARS AND AT THE MANY SOLUTIONS--
SOME ALMOST MIRACULOUS--WHICH WERE BROUGHT ABOUT.

THE ORIGINAL STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE NATIONHOOD, THE BURNING OF
WASHINGTON BY THE BRITISH, THE STRUGGLE TO PUSH BACK THE FRONTIER AND
THE WRENCHING HEARTBREAK OF THE CIVIL WAR WERE ALL PART OF OUR FIRST
100 YEARS. RECONSTRUCTION, CHILD LABOR, THE GREAT DEPRESSION, TWO
WORLD WARS AND KOREA MARKED THE FIRST TWO-THIRDS OF THE SECOND CENTURY.
AND THE SHADOWS OF DOUBLE-DIGIT INFLATION, WATERGATE AND THE ENERGY

CRISIS MAY SEEM TO THREATEN THE CELEBRATIONS WHICH ARE PLANNED FOR THE OFFICIAL, BICENTENNIAL YEAR SET TO BEGIN ONLY NINETEEN MONTHS FROM NOW.

RECENT PROGRESS

BUT RATHER THAN FOCUS ON DISTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR THE PRESSING DIFFICULTIES OF THE MOMENT, LET US CONSIDER A SHARPER PERSPECTIVE AND LOOK AT WHAT IS RIGHT WITH AMERICA TODAY. AND LET US GIVE SOME THOUGHT TO THE REASONS WE HAVE TO GIVE THANKS FOR BEING AMERICANS IN THIS YEAR, 1974, AND AS OUR BICENTENNIAL APPROACHES.

-7-

THE U.S. AND PEACE

FIRST AND FOREMOST, THERE IS PEACE. THE UNITED STATES IS NOT ENGAGED IN HOSTILITIES ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. AND THROUGH OUR EFFORTS, THE HOPE OF LASTING PEACE AMONG ALL NATIONS IS BRIGHTER THAN AT ANY TIME IN THE MEMORY OF THIS GRADUATING CLASS AND MOST OF YOUR PARENTS.

THERE IS NO BERLIN BLOACKADE. THERE IS NO KOREAN CONFLICT. WE ARE OUT OF VIETNAM. AND TODAY IN GENEVA A MAJOR STEP TOWARD A DURABLE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST WAS FORMULIZED AFTER A SOLID MONTH OF THE MOST INTENSIVE DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS EVER UNDERTAKEN BY AN AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE.

THE MEANING OF PEACE

I WOULD SAY THIS MEANS THERE IS SOMETHING VERY BIG AND VERY "RIGHT" ABOUT AMERICA IN 1974. AND THIS CARRIES OVER VERY DIRECTLY TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL. FOR YOU YOUNG MEN WHO RECEIVE DIPLOMAS TONIGHT NO LONGER HAVE THE MILITARY DRAFT HANGING OVER

-8-

YOUR HEADS. AND NEITHER DO YOUR MOTHERS, FATHERS AND FRIENDS
FACE THE PROSPECT OF YOUR BEING SENT TO FIGHT AND PERHAPS TO DIE,
BE WOUNDED OR TAKEN PRISONER IN SOME FAR-OFF WAR.

I AM SURE THAT SEVERAL IN THIS AUDIENCE HAD SONS OR OLDER BROTHERS
WHO GRADUATED FROM IHS IN, SAY, BETWEEN 1964 AND 1970. PERHAPS SOME
OF YOU WERE IN THOSE VERY CLASSES. AND YOU KNOW THE PRESSURES AND
CONCERNS THAT THE DRAFT AND AN ONGOING WAR CREATED IN THE YOUNG LIVES
OF THAT TIME.

AND I JUST WONDER HOW YOU WOULD RATE THE "RIGHTNESS" FACTOR IN
AMERICA IN 1974--COMPARED TO BACK IN THOSE DAYS WHEN YOUNG MEN LEAVING
HIGH SCHOOL FACED NOT ONLY THE ECONOMIC AND EMOTIONAL UNCERTAINTY OF
STARTING OUT IN THE ADULT WORLD BUT CONFRONTED GRAVE UNCERTAINTY AS TO
BEING ABLE TO PLAN FOR THEIR FUTURE AND TO SURVIVE IT.

-9-

HUMAN ACHIEVEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

BUT WHILE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT, PEACE IS NOT THE ONLY THING WHICH
IS RIGHT WITH OUR COUNTRY TODAY.

WE ARE BETTER NOURISHED, HEALTHIER AND BETTER EDUCATED THAN AT
ANY PREVIOUS TIME IN OUR HISTORY.

THE AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY--NOW INEXCESS OF 71 YEARS--HAS BEEN
INCREASED BY APPROXIMATELY ONE MONTH PER YEAR OVER THE PAST TWO
DECADES.

THE YOUNG WOMEN WHO GRADUATE TONIGHT HAVE GREATLY EXPANDED
OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT.
THEIR RIGHTS AS FULLY PARTICIPATING MEMBERS OF OUR BUSINESS, LEGAL
AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS ARE MORE EFFECTIVELY PROTECTED AND STRENGTHENED
THAN AT ANY EARLIER TIME--AND THE PROCESS IS CONTINUING TO GAIN

-10-

MOMENTUM AND FORCE IN EVERY ASPECT OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE.

ECONOMIC STRENGTHS

AN ALL-TIME RECORD NUMBER OF AMERICANS HOLD JOBS TODAY--SOME 86 MILLION MEN AND WOMEN WHO CONSTITUTE ABOUT 95 PERCENT OF THE ENTIRE WORK FORCE. THEIR PERSONAL INCOME IS HIGHER--AS ARE THE PROFITS OF THE COMPANIES FOR WHICH THEY WORK. AND THE GREAT AMERICAN FREE-ENTERPRISE SYSTEM IS ONCE AGAIN UNSHACKLED FROM THE GRIP OF ARBITRARY AND STIFLING GOVERNMENTAL CONTROLS WHICH DISTORTED THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND FORCES WHICH CAN MOST EFFECTIVELY REGULATE OUR ECONOMY.

ALL IN ALL I BELIEVE WE CAN SAY--WITH MUCH BETTER REASON THAT 5 YEARS AGO^AOR TEN YEARS AGO--THAT A GREAT DEAL IS RIGHT WITH AMERICA IN 1974.

CONCLUSION

WE INDEED HAVE MANY PROBLEMS STILL REMAINING. BUT THE GREAT
THING ABOUT THIS COUNTRY IS THAT THEY CAN ALL BE SOLVED. WE ARE THE
FIRST COUNTRY OF THE WORLD MILITARILY, DIPLOMATICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY,
AND WE HAVE DONE IT IN JUST 200 YEARS. WE HAVE THE NATURAL RESOURCES;
WE HAVE THE HUMAN RESOURCES; WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY. NOW ALL WE NEED
IS THE WILL TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS. THAT IS SOMETHING AN AWARENESS OF
THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE CAN HELP GIVE TO US--REGENERATION OF THE SPIRIT
OF '76.

THE SPIRIT OF '76

WHAT WAS THAT SPIRIT--AND INDEED WHAT IS THAT SPIRIT?

IT IS A SPIRIT OF LIBERTY COURSING THROUGH OUR NATIONAL VIEWS.
IT IS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT ONE MAN'S FREEDOM, ONE WOMAN'S FREEDOM IS
MORE PRECIOUS THAN ANYTHING ELSE ON EARTH.

IT IS THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE--OF SHARING BURDENS AND CONFLICTS.

IT IS THE SPIRIT OF OPTIMISM--OF KNOWING THAT WE CAN ALWAYS MAKE
THINGS BETTER IF ONLY WE WOULDN'T SPEND SO MUCH TIME BEMOANING HOW THEY
COULD BE WORSE.

IT IS THE SPIRIT OF THE FRONTIER--OF NOT FEARING TO GO WHERE MAN
HAS NOT REACHED.

IT IS THE SPIRIT OF CONFIDENCE--OF NOT BEING CONSTRAINED BY EARTHLY
BOUNDARIES AND OF THE CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE THAT MAN CAN MASTER HIS FATE.

IT IS THE SPIRIT OF DIVERSITY--ALLOWING EVERYONE HIS OWN VIEW AND
HIS DISTINCTIVE WAYS, AND WELCOMING THE DIFFERENCES IN OUR SOCIETY.

-13-

INDEED, THE "SPIRIT OF '76" WAS, AND IS, MANY THINGS, EACH OF WHICH HAS BEEN A BUILDING BLOCK OF OUR NATIONAL GREATNESS. OUR COUNTRY GREW ON THAT SPIRIT AND PROSPERED ON THAT SPIRIT.

THE WAY IN WHICH WE CELEBRATE AND COMMEMORATE AMERICA'S 200th BIRTHDAY WILL HAVE A PROFOUND INFLUENCE ON THE MANNER AND SPIRIT IN WHICH WE ENTER OUR THIRD CENTURY AS A NATION. THE BICENTENNIAL OFFERS US A CHANCE TO REKINDLE THE SPIRIT THAT IN 200 YEARS BUILT THIRTEEN SMALL DEPENDENT COLONIES INTO THE STRONGEST NATION IN THE WORLD.

GOOD REASON TO CELEBRATE

AND THAT IS WHAT THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IS REALLY ALL ABOUT-- A REBIRTH, AS WELL AS A BIRTHDAY--A REDISCOVERY OF OUR SPIRIT, AS WELL AS A REDISCOVERY OF OUR STRENGTH AND POTENTIAL AS A FREE PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER. IT WILL BE A BANNER UNDER WHICH ALL AMERICANS CAN MARCH, HOWEVER, DISPARATE THEIR VIEWS. IT WILL CROSS STATE BOUNDARIES AND PARTISAN LINES. IT CAN BUILD BRIDGES ACROSS MINORITY AND ETHNIC

-14-

DIVISIONS AND ACROSS GENERATION GAPS. IT OFFERS US A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO REMEMBER OUR PAST, TO RENEW OUR COMMITMENT TO THE PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH THIS NATION WAS FOUNDED, AND TO GIVE NEW MEANING TO THOSE GOALS OF LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

AND IF THERE WERE EVER GOOD CAUSE TO CELEBRATE--FOR THE CLASS OF '74 OR ANY OTHER YEAR--AMERICA IS THAT CAUSE, AND THE TIME IS NOW.

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