

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES
MINNEAPOLIS HIGH SCHOOL
MINNEAPOLIS, KANSAS
FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1976

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE TO JOIN WITH THE GRADUATES OF 1976 IN MARKING THIS OCCASION. GRADUATION IS A SIGNIFICANT EVENT IN THE LIFE OF EVERY STUDENT, AND IT CARRIES DIFFERENT MEASURES OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL WHO EXPERIENCES IT.

IN A SENSE, GRADUATION MARKS A TERMINAL POINT IN YOUR EXPERIENCE. A CHAPTER IN YOUR EDUCATION AND LIFE IS BROUGHT TO A CLOSE. BUT IN ANOTHER SENSE, THIS DAY REALLY MARKS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PHASE. FOR SOME, THIS BEGINNING WILL BE IN A JOB AND CAREER. FOR OTHERS, THIS BEGINNING WILL BE IN A NEW SCHOOL, AS YOU PURSUE FURTHER STUDIES.

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES
WYOMING HIGH SCHOOL
WYOMING, KANSAS
FRIDAY, MAY 27, 1977

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GRADUATES OF WYOMING IN MARKING THIS OCCASION. GRADUATION IS
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CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

BUT REGARDLESS OF YOUR INDIVIDUAL GOALS AND PATHS, TODAY--AND THESE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES--ARE AN OCCASION FOR TAKING STOCK OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE PAST, AND GOALS FOR THE FUTURE. A CELEBRATION IS ALSO IN ORDER.

AND NOT JUST A BRIEF CHEER AS THE LAST DIPLOMA IS HANDED OUT. RATHER, THE CELEBRATION THAT IS CALLED FOR IS ONE WHICH LOOKS BEYOND TODAY -- BACKWARD AND FORWARD -- AND BEYOND MINNEAPOLIS, OTTAWA COUNTY AND THE STATE OF KANSAS. NEITHER SHOULD IT LAST JUST ONE EVENING OR FOR ONLY A FEW WEEKS. IT SHOULD BE MEASURED IN YEARS, AND REFLECT NOT ONLY YOUR JOY AS GRADUATES, BUT OUR GREATNESS, STRENGTH AND PRIDE AS A PEOPLE. FOR MORE THAN ANY OTHER INHABITANTS OF THIS GLOBE, THOSE OF US LIVING TODAY -- AND ESPECIALLY YOUNG PEOPLE -- HAVE MORE TO CELEBRATE AND BE THANKFUL FOR IN THIS COUNTRY THAN EVER BEFORE. DURING OUR BICENTENNIAL, WE HAVE THE BEST REASONS FOR CELEBRATION AND THANKSGIVING EVER GIVEN TO ANY PEOPLE.

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HISTORY OF PROBLEM-SOLVING

OF COURSE, SOME MIGHT SAY -- BUT HOW CAN YOUR TALK THIS WAY ABOUT THE AMERICA OF 1976? WITH ALL THE TERRIBLE PROBLEMS FACING US TODAY, WHAT HAVE WE GOT TO CELEBRATE?

INDEED, VIRTUALLY EVERY AMERICAN INSTITUTION IS UNDER ATTACK FURING THE OFTEN BITTER DEBATE OF THIS ELECTION YEAR. BUT PROBLEMS HAVE SEEMED OVERWHELMING IN THE PAST, AND AMERICANS HAVE MASTERED THEM.

IN FACT, WE HAVE MASTERED THEM AND PROSPERED, WE ARE THE NUMBER ONE COUNTRY IN THE WORLD -- MITILARILY, DIPLOMATICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY -- AND WE HAVE DONE IT IN JUST 200 YEARS.

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A VITAL POINT

THIS IS A POINT WHICH I BELIEVE IT IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL TO COMMUNICATE, BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD AT THIS TIME WHEN AMERICA'S PROBLEMS, AMERICA'S SHORTCOMINGS, DOMINATE OUR NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND OUR IMAGE IN THE WORLD.

THERE IS A GREAT AND PRESSING NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF OUR STRONG POINTS AND BE SURE THAT NO ONE EVER ALLOWS THEM TO BE UNDERESTIMATED.

LET'S LOOK AT OUR PROBLEMS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF 200 YEARS OF PROBLEM-SOLVING. LET'S LOOK AT WHAT IS RIGHT WITH AMERICA.

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BASIC FREEDOMS

WHO DO YOU KNOW WHO CAN'T READ AND WRITE?

WE HAVE A LITERACY RATE OF 99 PERCENT AMONG
ALL AMERICANS OVER 14 YEARS OLD.

SCHOOLING IS AVAILABLE TO ALL CHILDREN. IN
FACT, IT'S AGAINST THE LAW FOR THEM NOT TO RECEIVE
SCHOOLING IF THEY'RE PHYSICALLY ABLE. AND IF THEY'RE
NOT, WE'LL BRING SCHOOL TO THEM -- OFTEN FREE OF CHARGE.

WE HAVE 12,500 PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

OVER 300,000 CHURCHES, BECAUSE WE'RE FREE TO
EXERCISE THE FAITH OF OUR CHOICE -- OR NONE AT ALL.

WE'VE GOT THE RIGHT TO DISSENT.

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IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE GOVENMENT, OR YOUR LANDLORD, YOU CAN SAY IT OUT LOUD. YOU CAN CRITICIZE THE PRESIDENT AND YOU ARE PROTECTED BY LAW. TRY THAT IN MOST OTHER COUNTRIES AND YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF IN JAIL.

UNDER OUR SYSTEM OF JUSTICE, FALSE ARREST IS ALMOST UNHEARD OF. FALSE IMPRISONMENT IS EVEN MORE RARE. IF YOU ARE ACCUSED OF A CRIME, AND YOU CANNOT AFFORD A LAWYER, YOUR COURTS WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH ONE.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE YOUR JOB, YOU CAN QUIT AND YOU CAN TAKE ANOTHER.

IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY, YOU MAY -- NOBODY WILL TRY TO STOP YOU. AND IF YOU WANT TO COME BACK, YOU CAN DO THAT TOO.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE WHERE YOU LIVE, YOU CAN MOVE.

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WE HOUSE OUR FAMILIES, AND FEED OUR FAMILIES, AND CARE FOR OUR FAMILIES BETTER THAN ANYBODY ELSE ON EARTH. WE HAVE POVERTY, BUT OUR MORAL FIBER IS SUCH THAT BY BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEANS, WE ARE THE MOST "GIVING" PEOPLE IN THE WORLD. OUR PRIVATE DONATIONS TO CHARITY ARE MORE THAN THE TOTAL NATIONAL BUDGET OF MOST COUNTRIES,

SOLUTIONS TAKEN FOR GRANTED

I RECITE THESE FACTS BECAUSE THEY'RE PART OF OUR BASIC -- YET PRECIOUS -- FREEDOMS. IF IT'S TRITE TO RECALL THEM, REMEMBER THAT THEY ARE THE RESULTS OF EVERYTHING WE'VE DONE IN THE PAST. THINGS WE'VE DONE WHICH OFTEN TOOK PLACE IN TROUBLED TIMES. THINGS WE'VE ACHIEVED IN SPITE OF SEEMINGLY INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES AND OFTEN THROUGH ADVERSITY -- THE ORIGINAL STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE NATIONHOOD, OPENING THE FRONTIER, THE CIVIL WAR, THE GREAT DEPRESSION, TWO WORLD WARS, DOUBLE-DIGIT INFLATION AND WATERGATE. WE HAVE SURVIVED AND TRIUMPHED, AND TRIUMPHED TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT WE NOW TAKE THE RESULTS FOR GRANTED.

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WE'RE STILL SUCCEEDING AND WE CAN CONTINUE TO TRIUMPH. OUR SELF-CONFIDENCE IS BASED, NOT ON SUCCESSES OF HISTORY ALONE, BUT ON SUCCESSES OF THE PAST DECADE, THE PAST YEAR, THE PAST MONTH, OF LAST WEEK.

OUR CURRENT PROBLEMS ARE SOLVABLE -- WE HAVE THE NATURAL RESOURCES; WE HAVE THE HUMAN RESOURCES; WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY. NOW ALL WE NEED IS THE CONTINUING WILL TO SOLVE THEM. THAT IS SOMETHING THE BICENTENNIAL CAN HELP GIVE US -- A REGENERATION OF THE "SPIRIT OF '76."

SPIRIT OF '76

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

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

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BUILDING BLOCKS

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.

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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.

THE WAY IN WHICH WE CELEBRATE THE BICENTENNIAL THIS YEAR 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.

REBIRTH AND REDISCOVERY

AND THAT IS WHAT THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IS ALL ABOUT -- A REBIRTH, AS WELL AS A BIRTHDAY -- A REDISCOVERY OF OUR SPIRIT, AS WELL AS A RE-DISCOVERY 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.

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IT WILL CROSS STATE BOUNDRIES AND PARTISAN
LINES. IT CAN BUILD BRIDGES ACROSS MINORITY AND ETHNIC
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 FOR A
GRADUATING CLASS TO CELEBRATE -- IN 1976 OR ANY OTHER
YEAR -- AMERICA IS THAT CAUSE, AND THE TIME IS NOW.

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