

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

73RD BOMB WING REUNION
HOLIDAY INN
HAYS, KANSAS
MAY 22, 1976

IT IS AN HONOR TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FIRST REUNION OF THE 73RD BOMB WING. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE STATE, WELCOME BACK TO KANSAS. MANY THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE YOU TRAINED AT AIR FIELDS LOCATED NEAR GREAT BEND, PRATT, SALINA, AND WALKER ARMY AIR FIELD NEAR HERE, BUT I TRUST YOU WILL STILL ENJOY THE SAME HOSPITALITY AS YOU RENEW OLD ACQUAINTANCES.

73RD'S TRADITION

I WISH TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY NOT ONLY TO WELCOME YOU BUT ALSO TO PAY TRIBUTE TO YOU, YOUR EFFORTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND THE TRADITION YOU HAVE LEFT FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. THE EFFORTS OF THE 73RD BOMB WING WERE A HEAVY CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN THE UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER OF JAPAN WITHOUT THE NECESSITY OF A GROUND INVASION OF THE ISLAND, AN INVASION WHICH WOULD PROBABLY HAVE COST MANY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF AMERICAN LIVES.

IN THE FACE OF AN AGGRESSOR -- AN ENEMY UNDER ARMS COMMITTED TO INVASIONAL MILITARY DOMINATION OF THE UNITED STATES -- YOU AND MILLIONS OF AMERICANS LIKE YOU RESPONDED TO THE CHALLENGE. YOUR ACTIONS PROVED THE VALUE OF KEEPING OUR NATION MILITARILY STRONG.

NATIONAL DEFENSE EQUALLY IMPORTANT TODAY

TODAY THE NATIONAL DEFENSE ISSUE IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS IT WAS IN 1944. THE ENEMY IS LESS TANGIBLE AND THE THREAT IS LESS IMMINENT. BUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF A WEAK NATIONAL DEFENSE POSTURE ARE NO LESS DEVASTATING THAN THEY WERE DURING WORLD WAR II. IN FACT IT IS BECAUSE THE DANGER IS LESS IMMINENT AND THE BENEFITS LESS TANGIBLE THAT THE TASK OF MAINTAINING STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE HAS BEEN MORE DIFFICULT.

CHANGING ROLE OF OUR DEFENSE SYSTEM

RATHER THAN FACING THE THREAT OF INVASION, WE ARE NOW TALKING ABOUT MAINTAINING A MILITARY POSTURE WHICH WILL KEEP US FROM BEING SUBJECTED TO UNDUE PRESSURE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA. RATHER THAN FACING AN ARMY IN COMBAT, WE ARE SEEKING TO DEVELOP A NUCLEAR DETERRENCE WHICH WILL PREVENT AGGRESSION IN THE FIRST PLACE. RATHER THAN DEFENDING OUR SHORES AGAINST AN IMMINENT INVASION, A STRONG DEFENSE TODAY IS CALLED UPON TO DEFEND STRATEGIC RESOURCES AROUND THE GLOBE, TO PROTECT OUR ALLIES, AND TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE OF POWER WHICH SERVES TO DAMPEN THE FERVOR OF ANY POTENTIAL AGGRESSOR. A STRONG DEFENSE TODAY DOES NOT IMPLY THE ABILITY TO PROTECT A CONVOY OF SHIPS CARRYING SUPPLIES OR TROOPS OVERSEAS, BUT INSTEAD IT PROVIDES A FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH WE CAN EXPAND TRADE TO FOREIGN NATIONS AND HAVE ACCESS TO THE IMPORTED ITEMS WE NEED.

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INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

A STRONG DEFENSE BENEFITS EVERY AMERICAN EVERY DAY -- NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF THE FREEDOM HE ENJOYS, BUT ALSO ECONOMICALLY. BUT THESE BENEFITS ARE NOT THE TYPE OF THINGS THAT YOU OR I DAILY ATTRIBUTE TO OUR DEFENSE CAPABILITY. FOR THAT REASON, IT IS EASY TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE REAL VALUE OF A STRONG DEFENSE CAPABILITY. AND THAT IS WHY GROUPS SUCH AS THE 73RD BOMB WING ASSOCIATION ARE SO VALUABLE. YOU AND GROUPS LIKE YOU THROUGHOUT THIS NATION HAVE KEPT THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM ALIVE AND THE SUPPORT FOR A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE SOLID.

PEOPLE SUPPORT KEEPING AMERICA #1

AND I THINK THERE IS CURRENTLY GREAT PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR A DEFENSE CAPABILITY SECOND TO NONE. I RECENTLY SENT A QUESTIONNAIRE TO CONSTITUENTS. ONE OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED WAS, "DO YOU FEEL NATIONAL SECURITY REQUIRES THE UNITED STATES TO MAINTAIN A DEFENSE CAPABILITY EQUAL OR SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE SOVIET UNION?" 84% OF THOSE RESPONDING HAVE ANSWERED THAT QUESTION IN THE AFFIRMATIVE.

THIS I FEEL ATTESTS TO THE CORPORATE WISDOM OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE BASIC RESOURCE WHICH HAS MADE AND KEPT THIS NATION STRONG.

PUBLIC GROUNDSWELL FOR STRONG DEFENSE

LESS THAN TWO YEARS AGO, THIS COUNTRY, STILL STUNNED BY VIETNAM, WAS CALLING OUT FOR RETRENCHMENT AND MASSIVE REDUCTIONS IN DEFENSE SPENDING. WHENEVER EFFORTS WERE MADE TO TRIM THE BUDGET TO SAVE TAX DOLLARS, THE CRY WAS, "TAKE IT OUT OF DEFENSE". WELL, WE TOOK IT OUT OF DEFENSE AND TRIMMED DEFENSE SPENDING IN REAL TERMS BY MORE THAN ONE THIRD FROM THE 1968 WARTIME PEAK. DEFENSE SPENDING TODAY IS ABOUT 25% OF THE TOTAL FEDERAL BUDGET -- THE LOWEST PERCENTAGE OF THE FISCAL BUDGET SINCE FISCAL YEAR 1940, SHORTLY BEFORE PEARL HARBOR. BY WAY OF COMPARISON, IN PREWAR 1964, DEFENSE SPENDING AMOUNTED TO 43% OF THE FEDERAL BUDGET. AND AS CONGRESS CONVENED THIS YEAR, A MAJORITY OF ITS MEMBERS WERE POUNDING THE TABLE CALLING FOR MORE CUTS IN FEDERAL SPENDING TO BE ACHIEVED BY "TAKING IT OUT OF DEFENSE". THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SAID NO.

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THEY DON'T WANT TO BE NUMBER TWO AND THEY ARE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE. BDGRUDGINGLY, CONGRESS FOLLOWED THE TEMPERAMENT OF THE VOTERS AND PASSED A DEFENSE BUDGET AUTHORITY OF \$112.5 BILLION, THE FULL AMOUNT REQUESTED BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE AMOUNT NECESSARY TO RETAIN BOTH A CONVENTIONAL AND STRATEGIC CAPABILITY WHICH IS SECOND TO NONE.

CONTINUED REVIEW NECESSARY

ADMITTEDLY, THERE ARE STILL CUTS THAT CAN BE MADE WITHIN THE DEFENSE CATEGORY. PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES NEED TO BE REVIEWED AND IMPROVED. POLICIES NEED TO BE CLOSELY ANALYZED WITH AN EYE TOWARD SAVING TAX DOLLARS. IMPORTANT DECISIONS NEED TO BE MADE ON THE TYPES OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS NEEDED IN THE FUTURE. BUT THE KEY QUESTION HAS BEEN ANSWERED BY THE PEOPLE. WE ARE GOING TO RETAIN A DEFENSE CAPABILITY WHICH IS SECOND TO NONE.

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OTHER COMPONENTS OF NATIONAL SECURITY

BUT MILITARY STRENGTH IS NOT THE ONLY FACTOR IMPORTANT TO A STRONG NATIONAL SECURITY POSITION. ECONOMIC STRENGTH, DOMESTIC COHESION, POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, AND DIPLOMATIC SKILL ARE ALSO VITAL INGREDIENTS IN OUR OVERALL NATIONAL SECURITY PICTURE. A MILITARY CAPABILITY IS USELESS IF OUR NATION LACKS THE WILL TO USE IT OR OUR POLITICAL PROCESS IS SO DIVIDED AND CONCERNED WITH TEMPORARY DOMESTIC POLITICAL GAINS THAT OUR ENEMIES CAN BE ASSURED THAT MILITARY CAPABILITY WE ACTUALLY POSSESS WILL NEVER BE USED AGAINST THEM.

CONGRESS -- THE WEAK LINK

AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE ULTRA LIBERALS HAVE MADE CONGRESS THE WEAK LINK IN OUR FOREIGN POLICY-NATIONAL DEFENSE CHAIN. CONSTANTLY CLAMORING FOR A LARGER ROLE IN KEY DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, WHICH IT RIGHTLY SHOULD HAVE, LIBERALS IN CONGRESS HAVE FINALLY INCREASED CONGRESSIONAL INPUT IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS BUT HAVE FAILED TO UTILIZE THE NEW AUTHORITY IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER.

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CONGRESS PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AS IT COMMITS FUNDS TO FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE ISSUES AND REVIEWS POLICY DECISIONS. UNLESS CONGRESS EXERCISES THE NEW AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLY, ALL THE MILITARY MIGHT IN THE WORLD WILL BE OF NO VALUE TO US.

ENERGY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LONG-TERM PROGRAM IS ALSO VITAL TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY. CURRENTLY, WE ARE IMPORTING MORE CRUDE OIL THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY. DOMESTIC PRODUCTION IS DOWN AND IMPORTS HAVE INCREASED TO THE POINT WHERE THEY ARE PROVIDING NEARLY HALF OF OUR NATION'S REQUIREMENTS. ANY DEFENSE MOBILIZATION ACTIVITY IS HEAVILY DEPENDENT UPON ADEQUATE AND AVAILABLE ENERGY SUPPLIES WHICH ARE NOW MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH FOREIGN SOURCES WHICH THE 1973 EMBARGO PROVED ARE LESS THAN RELIABLE.

UNTIL CONGRESS IS WILLING TO SUPPORT A STRONG PROGRAM WHICH WILL LEAD TO ENERGY INDEPENDENCE, THE ENERGY RESOURCE AVAILABILITY WILL REMAIN A WEAK LINK IN OUR NATIONAL SECURITY CHAIN.

STABLE ECONOMY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

AVAILABLE AND REASONABLY PRICED ENERGY SUPPLIES ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO OUR DOMESTIC ECONOMIC STABILITY WHICH IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY. LESS THAN A DECADE AGO, AMERICA WAS THE PREDOMINANT FORCE IN THE WORLD ECONOMIC MARKET. AS TECHNOLOGY IN THE DEVELOPING NATIONS HAS GROWN, WE HAVE LOST OUR PRE-EMINENCE. WE ARE STILL A WORLD ECONOMIC POWER, BUT WE ARE NO LONGER IMMUNE FROM THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OTHER NATIONS OF THE WORLD FACE. THIS FACT MAKES IT DOUBLY IMPORTANT THAT OUR ECONOMY REMAIN PRODUCTIVE AND HEALTHY. OUR NATIONAL SECURITY POSITION WILL SUFFER IF WASTEFUL FEDERAL DEFICIT SPENDING AND UNNECESSARY FEDERAL REGULATIONS WHICH THREATEN THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM ARE NOT BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL.

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NATIONAL SECURITY PRESENTS A COMPLEX CHALLENGE --
A CHALLENGE WHICH PAST GENERATIONS HAVE MET AND FUTURE
GENERATIONS WILL MEET. YOUR CONTRIBUTION BOTH IN THE PAST
AND IN THE PRESENT IS COMMENDABLE AND I THANK YOU FOR THE
OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE A FEW BRIEF MOMENTS OF YOUR REUNION
WITH YOU TODAY.