

*Va. Bar Association*

SENATOR BOB DOLE

OPENING REMARKS

HOT SPRINGS, VIRGINIA

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THIS ADMINISTRATION'S RECORD IN THE FIELD OF FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF REAL CONCERN TO MANY OF US IN THE SENATE. WE DO NOT WANT TO BE CARPING CRITICS; WE WANT TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT WHEN WE FEEL HE IS RIGHT AND ACTING IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF OUR COUNTRY. BUT THERE IS AN OBLIGATION TO POINT OUT WHAT WE SEE AS SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES IN OUR FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICIES WHEN NECESSARY, AND TO OFFER CONSTRUCTIVE ADVICE WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

AS THE LEADER OF THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD, AMERICA SHOULD PROJECT AN IMAGE OF STRENGTH AND COMMITMENT TO CONSISTENT PRINCIPLES IN OUR RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS. I AM CONCERNED THAT OUR FOREIGN POLICY, DURING THE PAST 18 MONTHS, HAS NOT PROJECTED SUCH AN IMAGE. OUR GOALS SEEM BLURRED, OUR COMMITMENTS TO ALLIES ARE QUESTIONED, AND OUR RESOLVE IN DEALING FIRMLY WITH ADVERSARIES IS INCREASINGLY DOUBTED. IT JUST SEEMS TO MANY AMERICANS TODAY THAT UNCERTAINTY, CONTRADICTION, AND INCONSISTENCY ARE THE MAIN HALLMARKS OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY.

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WHEN MORALITY AND FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES APPEAR TO COME INTO CONFLICT -- WHEN POLITICAL INTERESTS SEEM TO CONTRADICT MORAL RESPONSIBILITY -- WE, AS A NATION, MUST DO SOME REAL SOUL-SEARCHING. I THINK MR. BENNET AND I AGREE THAT INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES MUST ALWAYS BE WEIGHED IN ANY GIVEN INSTANCE. IT IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO BE PERFECTLY CONSISTENT IN THE APPLICATION OF MORAL POLICY, SIMPLY BECAUSE THE DILEMMAS WE FACE ARE NOT CONSISTENT IN NATURE. OUR NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS MUST ALWAYS BE AN OVERRIDING CONSIDERATION.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST SHOW STRENGTH OF PURPOSE IN THOSE AREAS -- HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, SELF-DETERMINATION -- FOR WHICH OUR NATION STANDS. BLIND INTRANSIGENCE, WITHOUT ATTENTION TO INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, IS FOOLISH. ON THE OTHER HAND, FIRMNESS OF CONVICTION AND COMMITMENT TO PRINCIPLE ARE QUALITIES WHICH ANY GREAT NATION MUST POSSESS AND EXERCISE -- AND WHICH WILL FURTHER OUR POLITICAL AND SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE LONG RUN.

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TOO OFTEN, THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS APPEARED WEAK AND UNCERTAIN IN ITS APPROACH TO IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS, AND IN OUR RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS. IN MY OWN OPINION, ONE OF THE PROBLEMS WAS THIS ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORT TO ACCOMPLISH TOO MUCH TOO QUICKLY IN THE FIELD OF FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH LED TO POORLY PREPARED INITIATIVES AND MISPLACED PRIORITIES. IN THIS REGARD, WE WITNESSED AN EFFORT LAST FALL TO INVITE THE SOVIETS BACK INTO THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS. THE ADMINISTRATION JOINED BRITAIN IN PROPOSING A SETTLEMENT ARRANGEMENT FOR RHODESIA, WHICH ALL COMPETING FACTIONS HAVE REJECTED. DURING THE FIRST MONTHS OF THIS ADMINISTRATION, THERE WERE PREMATURE MOVES TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH CUBA, VIETNAM, AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. AND, OF COURSE, THIS YEAR THE SENATE WAS CONFRONTED WITH AN ILL-ADVISED ARMS SALES "PACKAGE" FOR THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH THREATENED TO ALIENATE ALL OF THE PARTIES IN THE REGION.

RETREATS

MANY OF US HAVE ALSO BEEN TROUBLED BY A SERIES OF RETREATS AND CONCESSIONS ON THE PART OF THIS ADMINISTRATION, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE POLICY AND HUMAN RIGHTS. ONE OF THE PRESIDENT'S FIRST MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS WAS HIS DECISION TO WITHDRAW ALL AMERICAN GROUND TROOPS FROM SOUTH KOREA DURING THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. A UNILATERAL DECISION WAS MADE EARLIER THIS YEAR TO HALT ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON. AN EFFORT IS UNDERWAY TO STALL APPROPRIATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF OUR NUCLEAR AIRCRAFT CARRIERS. AND, OF COURSE, BOTH THE PANAMA CANAL AND STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TREATIES HAVE RAISED SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STRENGTH OF OUR COMMITMENTS TO LATIN AMERICA AND WESTERN EUROPE.

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TOO OFTEN, HUMAN RIGHTS RHETORIC HAS TAKEN PRECEDENCE OVER SUBSTANCE. THROUGHOUT THE PAST YEAR, AS THE SOVIET UNION HARASSED DISSIDENTS IN VIOLATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORD, WE WERE TOLD THAT OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS PREVENTED A STRONGER RESPONSE. IT HAS TAKEN A LOUD OUTCRY FROM CONGRESS TO MOVE THIS ADMINISTRATION TOWARDS ACTION THAT CONVEYS OUR DEEPEST CONCERN THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED. SIMILARLY, THERE HAS BEEN A LACK OF CONCRETE ACTION TO PROTEST THE SEVERE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CUBA, VIETNAM, AND CAMBODIA, WHICH HAVE GONE PRACTICALLY UNNOTICED BY THIS ADMINISTRATION.

I ALSO BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO CONVENE A CONFERENCE OF ALL SIGNATORIES TO THE HELSINKI ACCORD, TO RE-EVALUATE COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS. IN THIS WAY, WE MIGHT DETERMINE JUST WHAT TO EXPECT FROM OTHERS IN THE YEARS TO COME, AND HOW WE MIGHT BEST RESPOND TO SOVIET VIOLATIONS IN THE FUTURE.

IT JUST SEEMS THAT, TOO OFTEN, LOFTY IDEALISM HAS TAKEN THE PLACE OF HARD-NOSED REALITY IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S APPROACH TO OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS PROXIES.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

IN HIS ADDRESS AT ANNAPOLIS IN JUNE, THE PRESIDENT EXPRESSED A REALIZATION THAT DETENTE, TO THE SOVIET'S, MEANS CONTINUING STRUGGLE FOR ADVANTAGE AND INFLUENCE. HE PROMISED TO MEET THAT CHALLENGE, BUT THAT PLEDGE MUST BE MATCHED BY DECISIVE STEPS IN THE DAYS AHEAD. I THINK WE CAN DEMONSTRATE OUR COMMITMENT BY SHORING UP OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE POSTURE IN BOTH CONVENTIONAL AND STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES. IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED BY REAFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT TO NATO, AND BY DEDICATING OUR ACTIVE AND CONSISTENT EFFORTS TO THE SUPPORT OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS IN EASTERN EUROPE, CAMBODIA, AND AROUND THE GLOBE. AND I BELIEVE WE SHOULD INSIST UPON SOMETHING IN RETURN BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH NORMALIZATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CUBA OR CHINA, AND BEFORE WITHDRAWING ALL OUR GROUND TROOPS FROM SOUTH KOREA.

WE DON'T WANT TO RETURN TO THE DAY-TO-DAY TENSIONS OF THE COLD WAR. WE ARE ASKING ONLY FOR REALISM IN THE CONDUCT OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY AND FOR CONSISTENT COMMITMENT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY.