

SPEECH BY SENATOR BOB DOLE
ST. JOHN'S MILITARY ACADEMY

SALINA, KANSAS

OCTOBER 12, 1980

THANK YOU ED.

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE AT ST. JOHN'S MILITARY ACADEMY THIS AFTERNOON FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE VANIER CENTER.

ONE OF THE REAL REWARDS OF BEING AN ELECTED OFFICIAL IS THAT YOU GET INVITATIONS FROM TIME TO TIME TO SPEAK TO GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELVES. I REALLY MEAN THAT -- IT IS HEARTWARMING TO BE HERE WITH YOU, WITH YOUR PARENTS, AND WITH THE MANY FRIENDS OF THIS FINE ACADEMY.

I'M NO STRANGER TO YOUR SCHOOL, BY THE WAY.

WHEN I WAS FIRST RUNNING FOR CONGRESS, WAY BACK IN THE EARLY 1960'S, I USED TO SPEAK TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT CALSS HERE AT THE ACADEMY -- AND

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THEN CATCH A FREE MEAL AT THE MESS HALL. I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS BECAUSE I HAD VERY MEAGER RESOURCES AT THAT TIME, OR PERHAPS BECAUSE I WAS EXPOSED TO U.S. ARMY FOOD AS A G.I., DURING WORLD WAR II, BUT I SURE THOUGHT THE FOOD HERE WAS GOOD. IN FACT, I CAME SO OFTEN, THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT CLASS THOUGHT I WAS THEIR REGULAR INSTRUCTOR. POLITICIANS, LIKE ARMIES, TRAVEL ON THEIR STOMACHS.

UNFORTUNATELY, I'VE NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE AS FREQUENT A VISITOR TO YOUR ACADEMY IN RECENT YEARS. BUT THOSE YEARS HAVE TREATED THE SCHOOL WELL. I AM TOLD THAT ENROLLMENT IS UP. AND THE FINE BUILDING WE ARE DEDICATING TODAY, THE JOHN J. VANIER ACADEMIC CENTER, IS A TRIBUTE TO A GREAT KANSAN AND TO THE STRENGTH AND VITALITY OF THIS INSTITUTION.

THERE WERE UNDOUBTEDLY SOME TOUGH YEARS FOR THIS SCHOOL IN THE LATE 1960'S AND EARLY 1970'S. THOSE WERE ALSO DIFFICULT YEARS FOR OUR NATION AS A WHOLE. AUTHORITY WAS QUESTIONED. TRADITIONAL VALUES WERE CHALLENGED. AND, IN SOME CASES, NEEDED CHANGES WERE MADE.

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BUT IT WAS ALSO DISCOVERED THAT SOME VALUES DON'T CHANGE. RESPECT FOR FAMILY AND COUNTRY. HARD WORK. A BELIEF IN SOMETHING BEYOND SELF.

AND PEOPLE REALIZED THAT A SCHOOL LIKE ST. JOHN'S CAN NURTURE THESE VALUES, MAKING THEM MORE RELEVANT THAN EVER.

FOR A FEW MOMENTS THIS AFTERNOON I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT ONE OF THOSE TRADITIONAL VALUES -- RESPECT FOR THE MILITARY.

THERE WAS A TIME IN THIS COUNTRY, NOT SO MANY YEARS AGO, THAT A MAN OR WOMAN IN MILITARY DRESS WAS RESPECTED, EVEN HONORED.

AND THERE WAS A TIME, MORE RECENTLY, WHEN A PERSON IN UNIFORM WAS RIDICULED OR EVEN ABUSED. THE TRAGEDY OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM BROUGHT ABOUT A TRAGIC DECLINE IN THE PRESTIGE ATTACHED TO MILITARY SERVICE.

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TODAY WE ARE IN A NEVER-NEVER LAND IN BETWEEN. THE MILITARY IS NEITHER REJECTED OR RESPECTED -- BUT SIMPLY FORGOTTEN. OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE TREATED WITH BENIGN NEGLECT. SOME ARE ON FOOD STAMPS. OTHERS LEAVE AFTER THEIR FIRST HITCH, BITTER AND EVEN ANGRY THAT THEY CANNOT RECEIVE A DECENT LIVING WAGE. STILL OTHERS STAY ON -- AND WONDER IF THEIR UNITS WILL BE READY SHOULD THEY RECEIVE THEIR MARCHING ORDERS.

I VIEW THIS AS A NATIONAL TRAGEDY. IT TRANSCENDS PARTISAN POLITICS AND ELECTION YEAR RHETORIC, FOR THE PROBLEM WILL STILL BE THERE NO MATTER WHO GETS THE MOST VOTES IN NOVEMBER.

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A GREAT NATION. WELL, WHY DON'T WE START ACTING LIKE ONE. A GREAT NATION DOESN'T TURN ITS BACK ON OLD ALLIES ACROSS THE GLOBE. A GREAT NATION DOESN'T TRY TO PLACATE IMPLACABLE MOBS. A GREAT NATION DOESN'T SLASH HER MILITARY CAPACITY, NOR DAWDLE FOR MONTHS IN THE FACE OF INTERNATIONAL BLACKMAIL. A GREAT NATION DOESN'T SIGN AWAY THE CANAL SHE BUILT AND OPERATED IN PANAMA. A GREAT NATIONAL PREFERS COMPETITION TO SURRENDER.

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AND A GREAT NATION KNOWS THAT SHE HAS RESPONSIBILITIES TO THOSE IDEALS WHICH GIVE HER CHARACTER. SHE KNOWS THAT SHE MUST SPEND DOLLARS FOR DEFENSE -- OR SHE WILL BE DOOMED TO SPILL BLOOD IN COMBAT.

THE WASTE OF WAR

I KNOW ALL ABOUT THE BATTLEFIELD. I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO SEE YOUR BEST BUDDY GUNNED DOWN AT YOUR FEET, AND WATCH BOYS BECOME HEROES AMIDST THE SCREAM OF BULLETS. I KNOW WHAT A WASTE WAR INVOLVES, AND I DON'T EVER WANT OUR CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN TO PAY AGAIN FOR WHAT WE HAVE PAID SO DEARLY FOR.

AMERICANS ARE NOT WARMONGERS -- JUST THE OPPOSITE. BUT RECENT YEARS HAVEN'T BEEN GOOD ONES FOR AMERICA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD. WE'VE COMPROMISED WITH EVIL, AND VACILLATED IN THE FACE OF ENEMIES. WE'VE GIVEN NO CLEAR SIGNAL TO OUR FRIENDS, AND TO OUR FOES WE HAVE PREACHED RECONCILIATION WHILE THEY WENT ON INEXORABLY BUILDING UP THEIR ARRAYMENTS OF DESTRUCTION.

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WE HAVE ALLOWED WISHFUL THINKING TO SUPPLANT COLD, HARD LOGIC -- AND AS A RESULT WE FIND OURSELVES NO BETTER THAN EVEN WITH A SOVIET JUGGERNAUT THAT ROLLS SERENELY ON, CONFIDENT THAT NO AMERICAN PRESIDENT WILL DARE TO RALLY HIS OWN PEOPLE BEHIND A POLICY OF CONTAINMENT AND MILITARY SUPERIORITY.

FUELING THE SOVIET JUGGERNAUT

TODAY, THE SOVIET UNION SPENDS \$60 BILLION MORE THAN WE DO ON DEFENSE -- EACH AND EVERY YEAR. THEIR MILITARY BUDGET CONTINUES TO GROW AT A STEADY 3 PERCENT CLIP, WHILE OURS, ALLOWING FOR INFLATION, WILL ACTUALLY DECLINE THIS YEAR. AIR FORCE GENERAL JONES, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS HAS TOLD THE HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE THAT THE CARTER DEFENSE BUDGET IS NOT ENOUGH -- AND I'M INCLINED TO GO ALONG WITH HIS ESTIMATE.

LOOK AT OUR NAVY. THE RUSSIANS START CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW GENERAL-PURPOSE SUBMARINE ABOUT ONCE EVERY FIVE WEEKS. WE START ONE A YEAR. COMPARED TO 1964, OUR FLEET IS ABOUT HALF ITS FORMER SIZE. JUST TO KEEP PACE, WE NEED TO BUY 17-18 SHIPS AND 330 AIRCRAFT EACH YEAR -- AND WE'RE FALLING SHORT OF EVEN THAT MINIMAL GOAL.

THEN THERE'S THE INDIRECT AID WE ACTUALLY PROVIDE TO THE SOVIETS IN THEIR RELENTLESS CAMPAIGN TO ACHIEVE MILITARY SUPERIORITY. OVER THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS, WESTERN TRADE AND CREDITS HAVE AMOUNTED TO ABOUT SEVENTY BILLION DOLLARS FOR ALL EASTERN BLOCK NATIONS. THAT'S SEVENTY BILLION DOLLARS FREED UP FOR MILITARY INVESTMENT.

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ACCORDING TO ONE COMMON MARKET HIGH COMMISSIONER, QUOTED RECENTLY IN NEWSWEEK, "THERE IS NO WAY THE SOVIET UNION COULD CONTINUE TO SPEND 13-15 PERCENT OF ITS GNP ON THE MILITARY WITHOUT WESTERN ASSISTANCE."

HE'S RIGHT, OF COURSE. IF YOU WANT A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE, JUST LOOK ACROSS THE AFGHANISTAN FRONTIER. YOU'LL FIND THE SOVIETS ARE USING TRUCKS AND TANK ENGINES IN THEIR INVASION THAT WERE MANUFACTURED IN THEIR KAMA RIVER TRUCK PLANT -- UTILIZING 130 U.S. LICENSES. WESTERN EQUIPMENT PRODUCES 80 PERCENT OF RUSSIA'S POLYETHYLENE, 75 PERCENT OF ITS CHEMICAL FERTILIZER AND 40 PERCENT OF ITS CEMENT.

A CLEAR AND DEADLY TREND

THE FACT IS, WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING IT, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE HELPING TO FUEL THE RUSSIAN JUGGERNAUT. IN THE MISGUIDED HOPE THAT THE HARDLINERS IN THE KREMLIN MIGHT ONE DAY CALL OFF THEIR PLANS FOR INTERNATIONAL DOMINATION A REALITY.

CLEARLY WE CANNOT REVERSE ALL OF THIS OVERNIGHT.

BUT WE MUST BEGIN.

MUCH OF WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE WILL REQUIRE SACRIFICE. MUCH WILL COST MONEY. WE NEED TO BETTER COMPENSATE OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM, FOR A START.

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AND WE NEED TO GIVE THEM THE KIND OF EQUIPMENT THAT WILL GIVE THEM CONFIDENCE IN THEMSELVES -- EQUIPMENT SO GOOD, SO SUPERIOR TO THAT USED BY ANY POTENTIAL ADVERSARY, THAT IT WILL NEVER HAVE TO BE USED.

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT. WE HAVE A DEFENSE CAPABILITY SO THAT WE MAY HAVE THE CAPACITY TO WAGE PEACE, NOT WAR. SO THAT WE WON'T HAVE TO SEND YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOU INTO COMBAT.

FINALLY, I'D LIKE TO MAKE ONE POINT. EVEN BEFORE WE MAKE A COMMITMENT TO SPENDING MORE ON DEFENSE WE CAN ALL DO SOMETHING THAT WILL STRENGTHEN OUR NATION. IT IS A SIMPLE THING, REALLY. IT DOESN'T COST A CENT. BUT THAT MAKES IT NO LESS IMPORTANT.

WE CAN BEGIN TO SHOW SOME RESPECT FOR OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM.

WE OWE THEM NO LESS.

THANK YOU.