

REMARKS BY SENATOR BOB DOLE
67TH ANNUAL AMERICAN LEGION STATE CONVENTION
RAMADA INN DOWNTOWN-TOPEKA
MAY 18, 1985

IT'S A REAL PLEASURE TO JOIN ALL OF YOU THIS AFTERNOON MARKING THE 67TH ANNUAL AMERICAN LEGION STATE CONVENTION. I HAD THE RARE PRIVILEGE THIS MORNING OF REVIEWING 5,000 TROOPS AT FT. RILEY CULMINATING THE END OF ARMED FORCES WEEK. AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, THE 1ST DIVISION AT FORT RILEY HAS PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN BOTH WORLD WARS AND VIETNAM. WHAT IMPRESSED ME THE MOST WAS THE DISCIPLINE AND HIGH MORAL OF THESE TROOPS. THESE ARE SOLDIERS WHO ARE HIGHLY COMMITTED AND DEDICATED--NO DIFFERENT THAN INDIVIDUALS HERE TODAY WHO HAVE FOUGHT IN AMERICA'S PREVIOUS WARS--ESPECIALLY ONE WHERE A PARTICULAR VICTORY WAS CELEBRATED LAST WEDNESDAY, V-E DAY.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE WORLD WAR II ENDED SOME FOUR DECADES AGO. LAST WEEK THE SENATE PAID TRIBUTE TO THE AMERICAN VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF V-E DAY. THAT VICTORY REPRESENTED, AS THE WORLD LATER CAME TO REALIZE, THE TRIUMPH OF GOOD OVER UNSPEAKABLE EVIL, AND THE PROMISE OF A PEACEFUL FUTURE FOR A EUROPE RAVAGED BY THE BLOODIEST WAR IN ITS HISTORY. VICTORY WAS MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BECAUSE OF THE SELFLESS HEROISM OF THE 15,000,000 AMERICANS WHO SERVED. WHEN

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ALL THE GHASTLY TOTALS WERE ADDED UP, 40 MILLION EUROPEANS HAD LOST THEIR LIVES DURING THE WAR; ALONG SIDE THEM FELL 160,045 AMERICANS, 45,057 CANADIANS AND THOUSANDS OF OTHERS OF NON-EUROPEAN NATIONALITIES.

A PERSONAL 40TH ANNIVERSARY

AS ONE WHO FOUGHT IN THAT GREAT CONFLICT, IT IS ALSO DIFFICULT FOR ME TO BELIEVE THAT APRIL 14 WAS THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DATE ON WHICH I WAS WOUNDED NEAR THE ITALIAN MOUNTAIN TOWN OF CASTE D'AIANO. THAT PERSONAL ANNIVERSARY WAS MARKED IN ITALY LAST MONTH WHERE I LED A CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION IN MEETINGS WITH OUR NATO ALLIES. AS I PLACED A WREATH AT THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER IN ROME, I WAS REMINDED OF THE PEACE THAT HAS EXISTED IN WESTERN EUROPE SINCE THE WAR. IT REQUIRED SO MUCH OF US, IN MANPOWER, IN MONEY, AND ABOVE ALL, IN SPIRITUAL AND NATIONAL RESOLVE. THOSE OF US WHO TOOK PART IN THE FIGHTING BLESS THE SUBSEQUENT PEACE. WE HAIL THE FRIENDSHIPS THAT GREW OUT OF THE HOSTILITY AND WE PLEDGE OURSELVES ANEW TO THE CAUSE FOR WHICH SO MANY GAVE SO MUCH.

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THE PROSPERITY OF WESTERN EUROPE

ON MAY 8, 1945, ONE WORLD ENDED AND A NEW ONE BEGAN. OUT OF THE RAVAGES OF WORLD WAR II A NEW ALLIANCE WAS BORN, SPANNING THE ATLANTIC AND BRINGING TOGETHER THE FREE NATIONS OF WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA. THE WORLD'S GREATEST BATTLEGROUND IS NOW A CONTINENT REVIVED AND PROSPEROUS, FREE FROM WAR THESE LAST FOUR DECADES. SINCE THEN, THE NATIONS OF WESTERN EUROPE HAVE RISEN FROM THE RUBBLE AND GROWN INTO THE WORLD'S SECOND LARGEST ECONOMIC ENTITY. THE PROSPERITY AND SECURITY OF TODAY'S WESTERN EUROPE ARE SYMBOLS OF THE SUCCESS OF POLICIES INITIATED BY THE US IN THE AFTERMATH OF WORLD WAR II.

WE HONOR THOSE WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM

THERE IS ANOTHER WAR THAT WE CANNOT FORGET. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT YET FULLY RESOLVED OUR NATIONAL DEBATE ABOUT THE VIETNAM WAR AND OUR INVOLVEMENT IN IT, THERE IS ONE ASPECT OF THAT WAR ON WHICH THERE SHOULD BE UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT--THAT THE MORE THAN THREE MILLION AMERICANS WHO SERVED OUR COUNTRY IN THE VIETNAM THEATER DID SO WITH HONOR, WITH DISTINCTION, AND IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF OUR MILITARY SERVICES.

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SOME 57,000 OF THOSE SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN LOST THEIR LIVES DOING THEIR DUTY. TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED OF THEM ARE STILL LISTED AS MISSING IN ACTION, AND WE MUST CONTINUE TO DEMAND FROM THE COMMUNIST AUTHORITIES IN INDOCHINA A COMPLETE ACCOUNTING FOR THEM.

IT WAS IN THAT SPIRIT, THAT THE CONGRESS DECLARED MAY 7 AS VIETNAM VETERANS RECOGNITION DAY. IT IS NOT ONLY FITTING THAT WE SET ASIDE A DAY TO HONOR THEIR SERVICE AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION. IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT WE DO SO. IT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT WE ARE GIVING TO THE VIETNAM VETERANS--IT IS SOMETHING WE OWE TO THEM.

THE ALLIANCES WE KEEP

FORTY YEARS AFTER WORLD WAR II AND TEN YEARS AFTER VIETNAM, OUR FOREIGN POLICY, OUR NATIONAL STRATEGY MUST BE APPROPRIATE TO THOSE LIBERTIES WE FOUGHT FOR IN BOTH WARS, AND APPROPRIATE TO THE CHARACTER OF AMERICAN SOCIETY. THIS WILL MEAN HARD CHOICES ABOUT WHAT WE WANT TO DO IN THE WORLD, THE ALLIANCES WE MAKE, THE ADVERSARIES WE CHALLENGE, AND THE POLICIES WE INITIATE.

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YET, DANGERS WILL ALWAYS BE PRESENT. WHEN THE SENATE BEGINS DEBATE ON THE DEFENSE BILL NEXT WEEK, WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THE NEED FOR A STRONG AND EQUITABLE DEFENSE IS EVER PRESENT. SO LONG AS HUMAN FREEDOM IS THREATENED, WE MUST ALWAYS KEEP OUR WATCH. GENERAL MARSHALL, ARCHITECT OF VICTORY IN EUROPE, MAY HAVE PUT IT BEST: "THE ONLY WAY TO WIN A WAR" HE DECLARED, "IS TO PREVENT IT." THAT IS A RESPONSIBILITY ALL OF US -- THE PRESIDENT, THE CONGRESS, AMERICAN LEGION -- MUST SHARE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.