

Undated: General: Vietnam

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers
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Speech by SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE

VIETNAM

THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND, TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE AMERICANS HAVE DIED IN VIETNAM AS OF TWO WEEKS AGO. TWO HUNDRED, TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND, SEVEN HUNDRED AND TEN HAVE BEEN WOUNDED. SOME OF THESE WILL ALSO DIE. ONE THOUSAND THIRTY-TWO ARE MISSING IN ACTION.

SOME SEVENTY THOUSAND PARENTS AND SOME THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND WIVES AND SWEETHEARTS HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE. THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED THE TERRIBLE SHOCK--THE AWFUL KNOWLEDGE THAT ONE SO DEAR TO THEM HAS DIED IN THE VIETNAM WAR.

AND WE HAVE SPENT OF OUR TREASURE SOME \$81 BILLION DOLLARS OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS IN

SUPPORT OF

SUPPORT OF OUR VIETNAM EFFORT. AT THE PRESENT,
WE ARE SPENDING APPROXIMATELY \$70 MILLION PER DAY
TO CONTINUE THAT EFFORT.

IN RESPONSE TO THESE GRIM STATISTICS, TO THE
FEARS, AND THE PRESSURES THEY GENERATE, AND TO
THE PROBLEMS LEFT UNRESOLVED BECAUSE OF VIETNAM,
WE WITNESS DAILY RIOTS ON OUR CAMPUSES AND IN OUR
CITIES, AND WE SEE THE POSSIBILITY OF A REAL REVOLU-
TION DEVELOPING IN OUR LAND.

ALL OUR WARS HAVE BEEN UNPOPULAR. WARS
ALWAYS ARE. EVEN WORLD WAR II BECAME UNPOPULAR
AS IT CONTINUED AND AS VICTORY PROVED NEITHER QUICK
NOR EASY. CERTAINLY THE CIVIL WAR WAS REplete WITH

DRAFT RIOTS

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DRAFT RIOTS AND REBELLION. THE MEXICAN WAR AND
THE WAR OF 1812 HAD VERY LIMITED SUPPORT. UNPOPULARITY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN BRITAIN MAY HAVE HAD MORE TO DO WITH OUR VICTORY THAN THE LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR REVOLUTION IN OUR COLONIES.

AS WE DRAW HISTORICAL COMPARISONS, HOWEVER, I DO BELIEVE THIS VIETNAM WAR IS THE MOST UNPOPULAR IN OUR HISTORY.

A PRESIDENT WHO WAGED IT WAS FORCED TO RESIGN.

A MAJOR POLITICAL CONVENTION WAS MADE A SHAMBLES, THE PARTY TORN TO SHREDS, AND CONSIGNED TO DEFEAT, BECAUSE OF THE UNPOPULARITY OF THIS WAR.

DRAFT CARD BURNINGS;

DRAFT CARD BURNINGS; DRAFT BOARD OFFICES INVADED AND
RECORDS DESTROYED; NON-NEGOTIABLE DEMANDS TO END
ROTC; PRIESTS, MINISTERS, AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN JAIL--
ALL THESE ATTEST TO THE LACK OF SUPPORT FOR THIS
CONFLICT.

WE HAVE NOW BEEN ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THIS
CONFLICT FOR MORE THAN A DECADE. FIRST AS ADVISORS
AND LATER CARRYING THE MAJOR COMBAT BURDEN.

IT IS THE LONGEST WAR IN OUR HISTORY--AND WE
AMERICANS ARE AN IMPATIENT PEOPLE.

FOR MORE THAN A YEAR, WE HAVE BEEN ENGAGED
IN PEACE TALKS IN PARIS SEEKING A RESOLUTION TO THIS
WAR. WE HAVE SPENT WEEKS DEBATING THE SHAPE OF THE
TABLE, AND MANY MORE DISCUSSING WHO SHALL SPEAK--AND

WITH WHAT AUTHORITY

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WITH WHAT AUTHORITY. WE HAVE SUFFERED OVER
TWELVE THOUSAND DEAD WHILE THESE "TALKS" CONTINUE.

YES, WE ARE TIRED OF WAR--AND WE ARE TIRED OF
TALKING PEACE WHICH BRINGS NO END TO WAR.

NOW WE HAVE A NEW PRESIDENT WHO IS ADDRESS-
ING HIMSELF TO THIS PROBLEM. MY PRAYERS, AND I KNOW
THE PRAYERS OF ALL IN OUR NATION, GO WITH HIM IN
THIS SEARCH. MAY HE HAVE THE WISDOM AND UNDERSTAND-
ING TO BRING THIS WAR TO AN END, FOR THIS IS NOW HIS
PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITY.

PEOPLE LOOK TO THEIR ELECTED LEADERS FOR
AN ANSWER--AS PROPERLY THEY SHOULD. WHAT ARE WE
GOING TO DO TO SOLVE THIS MOST VEXING PROBLEM?

ON MAY 14th

ON MAY 14th OF THIS YEAR, PRESIDENT NIXON ANNOUNCED HIS "PLAN" TO END THE WAR. WHILE THE OTHER SIDE HAS REJECTED IT IN SUMMARY FASHION, IT IS ALSO BEING STUDIED. WE HOPE IT WILL EVENTUALLY BE ACCEPTED.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE SUGGESTED THAT AN EASY SOLUTION FOR US WOULD BE TO PACK UP OUR BAGS AND LEAVE VIETNAM. ONE DISTINGUISHED SENATE COLLEAGUE HAS SERIOUSLY RECOMMENDED THAT WE ANNOUNCE OUR VICTORY AND THEN UNILATERALLY WITHDRAW. SUCH WITHDRAWAL, UNCONDITIONAL AND UNILATERAL, IS ALSO THE NON-NEGOTIABLE DEMAND OF OUR OPPONENTS AT THE PARIS TALKS.

IT IS A TEMPTING SOLUTION--PARTICULARLY FOR THE YOUNG. BUT VICTORY OR DEFEAT ARE NOT THE

CREATURES OF

CREATURES OF SELF-ANNOUNCEMENTS. THEY ARE RATHER
THE ACTUALITIES OF POWER.

THE QUESTION TODAY IS NOT WHETHER WE SHOULD
HAVE SO INVOLVED OUR NATION AND OUR HONOR IN VIETNAM--
FOR INVOLVED WE ARE--AND WITHDRAWAL NOW CANNOT BE
JUSTIFIED BY THE SIMPLE ACCEPTANCE THAT OUR PRESENCE
WAS ILL ADVISED.

WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM CANNOT BE ISOLATED
FROM OUR GENERAL INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS--PARTICULARLY ASIATIC AFFAIRS.

WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, THE UNITED STATES
IS A PACIFIC POWER. PERHAPS, I SHOULD SAY THE
PACIFIC POWER.

UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL, SIMPLE THOUGH IT

MAY APPEAR

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MAY APPEAR, WILL SIGNAL TO FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE
THAT WE ARE WITHDRAWING NOT JUST FROM VIETNAM
BUT FROM ALL OF SOUTHEAST ASIA.

IF WE ARE GOING TO UNILATERALLY WITHDRAW
WE SHOULD BE BIG ENOUGH--AND HONEST ENOUGH--TO
TELL OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES THROUGHOUT SOUTHEAST
ASIA THAT ALL BETS ARE OFF. WE MUST SAY TO THEM
"YOU CAN NO LONGER DEPEND ON US AND UPON OUR MUTUAL
AGREEMENTS."

CALL IT WHAT YOU MAY, BUT UNILATERAL WITH-
DRAWAL WILL CERTAINLY BE CONSIDERED AN ADMISSION OF
DEFEAT BY THE OPPOSITION AND CONVINCED THEM THAT
WAR IS AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT OF "NATIONAL LIBERATION."

AT THIS MOMENT, SUCH A "WAR OF LIBERATION" IS

BEING CARRIED

BEING CARRIED ON IN NORTHEAST THAILAND. THE SAME
IS HAPPENING IN LAOS WHERE WE NOW FIND FORTY
THOUSAND NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS. THE RECENT
STATEMENT OF THAILAND'S PRIME MINISTER, GENERAL
KITTIKACHORN, THEREFORE, HAS SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE.
HE' SET FORTH HIS INTERPRETATION OF OUR TREATY OBLI-
GATIONS. THESE INCLUDE NOT ONLY ASSISTANCE IN CASE
OF EXTERNAL AGGRESSION, BUT ALSO OUR PLEDGE TO COME
TO THEIR ASSISTANCE IN CASE OF EXTERNALLY SUPPORTED
REVOLT OR REBELLION. IT WOULD BE TRAGIC INDEED
AND RIDICULOUS, FOR AMERICAN ARMED FORCES TO PULL
OUT OF SOUTH VIETNAM NOW AND A FEW MONTHS LATER TO
MOVE INTO THAILAND TO FIGHT A NEW WAR.

WHEN YOU TELL

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WHEN YOU TELL THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA THAT ALL BETS ARE OFF, YOU CAN BE SURE THERE WILL BE AN IMMEDIATE REASSESSMENT OF OUR TREATY OBLIGATIONS IN OTHER PARTS OF ASIA SUCH AS SOUTH KOREA, THE PHILIPPINES, AND JAPAN AS WELL.

WE ARE IN VIETNAM, WE CANNOT START OVER AS IF WE HAD THAT DECISION TO MAKE ANEW.

OUR MOST VALUED CURRENCY IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS IS CREDIBILITY. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO RETAINING THE CONFIDENCE OF FRIENDS AND ALLIES ALIKE. IT IS ALSO ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT MISJUDGMENT OF OUR INTENT, BY ANY ENEMY.

TO UNILATERALLY WITHDRAW WOULD MAKE OF

OUR SOLEMN

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OUR SOLEMN COMMITMENTS A SHAM. IT WOULD THROW
INTO QUESTION IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD THE AMERICAN
WORD, WILL, AND CHARACTER. NOTHING COULD BE BETTER
DESIGNED TO SHAKE INTERNATIONAL STABILITY.

I AM CERTAIN SUCH A WITHDRAWAL WOULD NOT
RECEIVE APPROVAL IN THE CONGRESS. I COULD NOT SUP-
PORT IT AND FULFILL MY OATH OF OFFICE.

WE COME, THEREFORE, TO THE QUESTION--
WHAT CAN WE DO? HOW CAN WE RESOLVE THIS CONFLICT.
MAY I HUMBLY OFFER SOME SUGGESTIONS.

FIRST, WE SHOULD SECURE A CEASE FIRE, OR
AT VERY LEAST, THE MAXIMUM REDUCTION IN MILITARY
ACTION CONSISTENT WITH THE SECURITY OF OUR FORCES

IN VIETNAM

IN VIETNAM.

ALL OUR LEADERS HAVE PROCLAIMED A MILITARY SOLUTION IMPOSSIBLE. WE HAVE HALTED THE BOMBING OF THE NORTH--A UNILATERAL AND PARTIAL CEASE-FIRE. THIS DID GET THE OTHER SIDE TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE.

I FEAR THE BOMBING HALT MAY HAVE BEEN MIS-INTERPRETED BY HANOI, HOWEVER, AS OUR RESPONSE TO INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC CRITICS AND NOT AS A DESIRE FOR AN END TO THE FIGHTING, FOR IT HAS BEEN UNACCOMPANIED BY ANY EFFORT AT A REDUCTION IN AMERICAN OFFENSIVE ACTION IN THE SOUTH.

THE OTHER DAY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE REITERATED AMERICAN MILITARY POLICY, "MAXIMUM MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE ENEMY CONSISTENT WITH THE

LOWEST CASUALTIES."

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LOWEST CASUALTIES. "

THIS IS DOUBLE TALK. IT IS BUT A REPHRASING
OF "PUSH AS HARD AS YOU CAN AS LONG AS THE KILL RATIO
IS IN OUR FAVOR. "

A SATISFACTORY KILL RATIO BASED ON SOMETIMES
DOUBTFUL BODY, OR WEAPONS COUNT, IS DECLARED
SUFFICIENT JUSTIFICATION IN ITSELF.

BODY COUNT, KILL RATIO, THIS IS NOT THE
LANGUAGE OF PEACE. IT IS AS THOUGH 5 OR 10 VIETCONG
DEAD IS A SUFFICIENT VALUE RECEIVED FOR THE LIFE
OF A GI OR AN AMERICAN MARINE. IS THIS REALLY THE
PRICE TAG WE PLACE ON OUR SONS--OR THEIRS?

HOW THEN DO WE DE-ESCALATE THE FIGHTING?

ANY FRONTLINE

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ANY FRONTLINE SOLDIER KNOWS THAT "SEARCH AND DESTROY"
ON THE TERRAIN OF VIETNAM REALLY MEANS EXPOSE YOUR-
SELF--YOUR LEAD MAN--UNTIL YOU DRAW THE ENEMY'S
FIRE AND THEN ENGAGE HIM WITH YOUR SUPERIOR FORCE.

WHILE WE CANNOT HAVE A UNILATERAL CEASE-
FIRE, WE CAN CUT DOWN THE LEVEL OF OUR LOSSES--AND
OUR COSTS--BY LIMITING OUR ACTION--BY LETTING THE
ENEMY KNOW THAT WE WILL HOLD OUR POSITIONS AND
USE OUR FULL MILITARY FORCE ONLY IF THREATENED OR
ATTACKED OR IF THE CITIES AND AREA UNDER OUR CONTROL
ARE THREATENED OR ATTACKED.

A BY-PRODUCT IN SUCH A POLICY WOULD BE A
MAJOR REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF OUR CASUALTIES

INFLICTED BY OUR

INFLECTED BY OUR OWN OR FRIENDLY FORCES--AND CASUALITIES
TO NON-COMBATANTS AS WELL.

THE WELL KNOWN MILITARY WRITER, S. L. A.
MARSHALL, RECENTLY ESTIMATED 40 PER CENT OF AMERICAN
CASUALTIES ARE THE RESULT OF SUCH "FRIENDLY" ERRORS
OR ACCIDENTS.

IT IS INCONSISTENT TO TALK ABOUT RESOLVING
THE WAR AND SEARCHING FOR PEACE WHILE WE FIGHT FOR
HILLTOPS AND SEE HOW MANY WE CAN KILL--AT WHAT
FAVORABLE RATIO.

THE ENEMY HAS DEMONSTRATED HIS WILLINGNESS
TO ACCEPT SUCH LOSSES. WILL OUR DEMONSTRATION OF
A LIKE DISREGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE LEAD TO PEACE? OR

TO AN ATMOSPHERE

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TO AN ATMOSPHERE WHICH WILL BRING MORE FRUITFUL
DISCUSSIONS? I THINK NOT.

I KNOW WHAT I HAVE SAID ON THIS MATTER WILL
BE STRONGLY OPPOSED BY THE MILITARY COMMAND. THEY
ARE THERE TO FIGHT, AND TO WIN. BUT THEY ARE FIRST
AND FOREMOST THERE TO PROTECT AND FURTHER AMERICAN
INTERESTS AND COMMITMENTS. WE CIVILIAN LEADERS,
PARTICULARLY THE PRESIDENT AND HIS ADVISORS, MUST
IN FACT BE IN CHARGE.

SECOND, AND THIS SUGGESTION MAY BE VIOLENTLY
CRITICIZED, BUT I THINK IT IS TIME IT WAS CLEARLY STATED.

THE TIME FOR PERMITTING OURSELVES TO BE
BLACKMAILED BY OUR SOUTH VIETNAMESE ALLIES IS OVER.

WE MUST TELL

WE MUST TELL THEM CLEARLY THAT WE WILL NO
LONGER BEND TO THEIR VIEW OF THINGS UNDER THE THREAT
THAT THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO THEIR APPROACH IS A
COMMUNIST TAKOVER.

IT IS TIME--INDEED LONG OVERDUE--THAT WE
FORCED THE GOVERNMENT OF THIEU AND KY TO ACT TO
INCREASE THEIR SUPPORT FROM THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH
VIETNAM, FOR IT IS TO THE PEOPLE WE HAVE MADE OUR
COMMITMENT.

IT IS THEREFORE, TIME THAT WE FORCED THE
GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON TO TAKE MEANINGFUL ACTION TO
INCREASE THEIR CAPACITY TO GOVERN.

IT IS TIME THEY TOOK MEANINGFUL ACTION ON
LAND REFORM. FOR THE VIETNAMESE COMMON MAN, NO

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SINGLE FACTOR IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN OWNERSHIP
OF HIS LAND. WE ENCOURAGED AND ASSISTED THE TWO
MOST SUCCESSFUL LAND REFORM PROGRAMS IN ASIA--JAPAN
AND IN TAIWAN. WE MUST DO NO LESS IN SAIGON IF WE ARE
TO DEVELOP STABLE AND FREE INSTITUTIONS.

IT IS ALSO TIME THAT WE FORCED AN END TO
OFFICIAL CORRUPTION AND GOVERNMENTALLY CONDONED
CORRUPTION. WHILE THIS CONTINUES, THE PEOPLE WILL
HAVE NO FAITH IN THEIR GOVERNMENT--NOR SHOULD THEY.

IT IS ALSO TIME WE INSISTED ON FREEDOM FOR
THE POLITICAL PRISONERS BEING HELD BY THE GOVERNMENT
IN SAIGON. WE CANNOT DEVELOP FREE GOVERNMENTS
UNDER EITHER THE THREAT OR ACTUALITY OF IMPRISONMENT

FOR THOSE WHO

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FOR THOSE WHO CONTEST FOR PUBLIC SUPPORT THROUGH
PEACEFUL MEANS.

IN SHORT, IT IS TIME FOR US TO TELL THIEU AND
KY TO SHAPE UP OR SHIP OUT. NEITHER THE PEOPLE OF
SOUTH VIETNAM--NOR THE PEOPLE AND LEADERS OF
NORTH VIETNAM NOR ELSEWHERE--WILL RESPECT THEM
AS LEADERS, RATHER THAN AS PUPPETS, UNTIL THEY
DEMONSTRATE A WILLINGNESS TO FACE UP TO THE HARD
DECISIONS; DECISIONS WHICH DENY THEIR CRONIES WHILE
SERVING THEIR PEOPLE.

WE MUST CALL THEIR BLUFF. OUR COMMITMENT
IS TO THEIR PEOPLE--AND TO OURS. THE TIME IS OVERDUE
WHEN THATFACT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR TO ALL. WE HAVE

TOO LONG

TOO LONG CONFUSED THE TRAPPINGS, THE COURTESIES,
AND THE CEREMONIES OF AUTHORITY, WITH THE REALITIES
OF LEADERSHIP. THIS CAN NO LONGER CONTINUE.

THIRD, WE SHOULD BEGIN NOW A LIMITED WITH-
DRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS. SUCH A WITHDRAWAL
WOULD BE LARGELY SYMBOLIC. BUT IT WOULD PASS THE
MESSAGE TO SOUTH VIETNAM THAT THIS IS OUR INTENT AND
THEY HAD BETTER BE PREPARED TO BEAR A GREATER
SHARE OF THE COST OF SECURING THEIR COUNTRY. IT
WOULD ALSO PASS THE WORD TO HANOI THAT THIS IS OUR
GOAL--A MESSAGE WHICH CANNOT BE TRANSMITTED IN WORDS
ALONE.

FOURTH, AS WE

FOURTH, AS WE BEGIN THE LIMITED WITHDRAWAL OF OUR TROOPS, AND CONTINUE OUR SEARCH FOR PEACE AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR OUTSIDE PEACEKEEPING FORCES TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM WHILE THE CONTESTING FORCES WORK OUT THEIR POLITICAL FUTURE.

SUCH FORCES SHOULD NOT BE EUROPEAN. REGARDLESS OF THE CONCERN OF THE DANES, OR THE SWISS, OR THE SWEDES, FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND FOR A WORLD AT PEACE, THEY ARE STILL EUROPEANS. THEY LOOK, THINK, ACT, AND ARE EUROPEANS, AND TO ASIANS THEY ARE A CONSTANT REMINDER OF COLONIALISM.

PEACE KEEPING FORCES

PEACE KEEPING FORCES MUST BE ASIANS--FROM
CEYLON, BURMA, CAMBODIA, THE PHILLIPINES, AND OTHER
INTERESTED PARTIES. WE WILL NEED TO PROVIDE MUCH
OF THE RESOURCES -HOPEFULLY THROUGH THE UNITED
NATIONS.

TO INSTITUTE THIS STEP, WE SHOULD RECONVENE
THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ON INDO CHINA. WE MUST
CONSIDER NOT ONLY THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES IN
VIETNAM, BUT ALSO THE EFFECTIVE NUETRALIZATION OF
LAOS, CAMBODIA, AND THAILAND.

I WISH TO UNDERSCORE THE WORD EFFECTIVE, FOR
THE 1962 CONFERENCE ALSO AGREED TO THE NEUTRALIZATION

OF LAOS

OF LAOS. INSTEAD, THE CONTESTING FORCES HAVE
ACCELERATED THE CONFLICT THERE. THIS WILL REQUIRE
THE PRESENCE OF A STRONG NEUTRAL MILITARY FORCE.
UNLIKE THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL CONTROL COMMISSION,
THIS FORCE MUST HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO SUPERVISE
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS--TO SUPERVISE FREE ELECTIONS
WITH ALL PARTIES PARTICIPATING. IT MUST ALSO HAVE
THE POWER, NOT ONLY TO REPORT, BUT TO PREVENT VIO-
LATIONS, AND TO ENFORCE THEIR EDICT.

WHILE HISTORY AND STRATEGY DEFINE OUR
NATIONAL INTEREST, THIS IS ONLY PART OF OUR CONCERN.
THE OTHER IS HUMAN. WE MUST USE OUR PLACE IN THE
PACIFIC WORLD TO MAKE IT TRULY PACIFIC--PEACEFUL--

FOR OUR CHILDREN

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FOR OUR CHILDREN--AND FOR THEIRS.

IN SO DOING, WE MUST HAVE THE COURAGE
TO FACE THE REALITIES OF THIS WORLD. AND I AM
CONFIDENT THAT EXCEPT FOR A TINY THOUGH NOISY
MINORITY, WE AMERICANS ALL SHARE CERTAIN BASIC
COMMITMENTS. WE BELIEVE PASSIONATELY TODAY, AS
WE DID 193 YEARS AGO, IN LIBERTY BOTH FOR OURSELVES
AND FOR OTHERS. WE DO NOT ASPIRE TO BE THE WORLD'S
POLICEMAN. WE DO ASPIRE TO BE THE BROTHER OF EVERY
FREE MAN WHO PROVES THE COURAGE OF HIS CONVICTIONS.