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STATEMENT BY BRUCE HERSCHENSOHN ON THE RADIO FREE ASIA ACT

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In 1861, Abraham Lincoln spoke to a crowd assembled before him at Independence Hall. He proclaimed that the essence of the Declaration of Independence was its promise not only of liberty "to the people of this country, but hope to the world that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance" of freedom.

With this thought in mind, Presidents of the United States have sought to engage our country in the noble pursuit of freedom for people half a world away. They knew that if freedom were allowed to prosper in Southeast Asia, it would, in turn, be strengthened here at home.

Therefore, while we seek to safeguard our national interests at home, we must not lose sight that it is our national duty to ensure human interests everywhere. For those very interests - life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness - are what our republic was founded upon. And because I believe that our country should honor these obligations, I am in complete support the Radio Free Asia Act.

America's effort to help people in lands far away is an illustration that we, in our finest moments, realize our duties and responsibilities as the standard bearer of liberty around the world.

Those from Asia who have come here, while enriching our society beyond belief with their hard work and talents, long for liberty for their relatives and their country of heritage. They seek an end to the oppression of communism and totalitarianism.

The Commission on Broadcasting in Asia is presently engaged in a review of the Radio Free Asia Act. I urge them to recommend ratification of a service which will bring news and information to Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, China, Burma and North Korea, for whose regimes information is deadly. When the countries of eastern Europe became free, the people there said it was the radio broadcasts of America and other free nations that helped them to throw off the yoke of oppression. The people of Asia deserve the same.

If we are to fulfill President Kennedy's pledge of 1963 "to build a world of peace, where the weak are safe and the strong are just", then it is absolutely critical for our nation to support this great and worthy cause.



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