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WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 22 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) today took issue with a recent statement by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) that there have been more than one million civilian casualties in Vietnam since 1965, with 300,000 deaths.

Kennedy, as quoted in the Dec. 3 issue of the WASHINGTON POST, said some of the deaths and in and injuries were caused by Vietcong terrorism "but the majority...have been stimulated by ARVN (South Vietnamese) and U.S. Forces."

Dole, in a statement in the Senate, asked Kennedy to be more specific about his figures and to disclose where the Senate Refugee Subcommittee obtained the figures. Kennedy is chairman of the subcommittee.

"Since his (Kennedy's) interview was reported," Dole said, "I have asked the Department of Defense to verify the figures used by the Senator. They have not been able to do so, and in fact, claim there are no reliable figures available on the total number of civilian casualties."

Excerpts from the Dole statement follow:

"...It is unclear what the Senator means by his statement that the ARVN and the United States Forces had 'stimulated' the large number of casualties he disclosed.

"As with his comments on battle tactics at the time of the U.S. assault on Hamburger Hill, one wonders if the Senator is placing himself in the role of a military strategist by such statements.

"Further, it must be established whether the Senator is talking about non-combatant civilians or civilians who, in reality, are members of the Vietcong and are engaged in guerilla warfare.

"...It is common knowledge that there are no well-established battle fronts and uniformed soldiers in a guerilla war. In Vietnam, not only men, but women and teenagers who often dress very much alike are members of the Vietcong. They shoot Americans. They throw grenades. They lay mines. They rig booby traps.

"Are these the civilians the Senator refers to?

"I wonder if the Senator realizes that the numbers of murders and atrocities and kidnappings by the Vietcong in South Vietnam are so numerous that a weekly list is compiled in order to keep up with them. I wonder if he has looked at the annual totals on Vietcong terrorism since 1962. (Here Dole noted annual totals, beginning with 1719 civilian deaths in 1962 to 5,953 so far in 1969.)

"Since 1957, it is estimated that well over 100,000 persons have been victims of Vietcong terror -- killed, wounded, kidnapped, raped, home destroyed and crops stolen.

"Does the Senator mean to imply that the U.S. and its allies are equally guilty?

"Regardless of how badly one may want to end this war, I find it highly improper to make unproved and unprovable charges about American troops and American intentions. We should face up to the truth, and we should condemn any acts of atrocity by Americans. But must we label all of our men with the same brand? Must we ignore the many fine and humane things American soldiers have done? Must we set out to destroy America's confidence in American fighting men? Is this the price we pay for peace?..."