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FROM:

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WASHINGTON, D.C., March 20 --- Special tribute will be paid to American prisoners of war and Americans missing in action in Vietnam, May 1, in Constitution Hall, U.S. Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kans.) announced today in a speech on the Senate floor.

Dole, a twice-wounded veteran of World War II, said that last month he was shocked that only 300 persons attended a rally in Constitution Hall in support of American prisoners of war and in protest of their treatment by North Vietnamese and Vietcong. The hall seats 3811. Dole said it was then he resolved that "Constitution Hall would be filled within 90 days in a resounding demonstration of support."

The purpose of the May 1 rally, Dole explained, is two-fold:

to demonstrate to the wives and other relatives that Americans do care, and

to show the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong that their conduct is not condoned by the American public.

Dole has enlisted the aid of six senators and six representatives in planning the program: Senators Peter H. Dominick (R-Colo.), Barry Goldwater, (R-Ariz.), Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.), George Murphy (R-Calif.), Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine), John Stennis (D-Miss.) and Representatives W.C. Daniel (D-Va.), Martin B. McKneally (R-N.Y.), Catherine May (R-Wash.), Richard L. Roudebush (R-Ind.), Robert L.F. Sikes (D-Fla.) and Olin E. Teague (D-Tex.).

The tribute will be completely non-partisan and non-ideological, Dole said. He explained that six members of the Congressional committee are Pepublicans and that six are Democrats. He stressed that while some Senate and House members have differing views on the conduct of the Vietnam war, all agree that American prisoners in Vietnam have not been treated in accord with the 1949 Geneva Convention

The Kansas senator is also coordinating plans with Mrs. James B. Stockdale, Coronado, Calif., National Coordinator of the National League of Families of America Prisoners in Southeast Asia; Mrs. James A. Mulligan, Virginia Beach, Va., Area Coordinator of that organization, and H. Ross Perot, Dallas, Texas industrialist who has been instrumental in promoting international efforts for the release of Americans.

Dole said that May 1, which is Law Day, is "an especially appropriate day to pay this tribute" because the joint resolution passed by Congress which designated Law Day specifically referred to international justice.

Dole said that he has been assured by nearly every veterans organization that they will actively assist in the program plans. He said he is confident that the combined efforts of all those concerned with the rally's preparation will clearly demonstrate America's concern for prisoners of war and those men who are missing in action.