



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.-Kans.)

New Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 224-6521

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, May 8, 1978

CONTACT: JANET ANDERSON
ALDA WHITT

DOLE HEARS MR. ROSTROPOVICH'S TESTIMONY AT CSCE HEARING

Washington, D.C. --- Senator Bob Dole(R-Kansas)chaired the hearing of the CSCE Commission which listened to testimony by Mstislav Rostropovich, the world-famous Russian cellist and his wife, soprano, Galina Vishnevskaya. On March 15, 1978, the Soviet Government deprived both artists of their Soviet citizenship without a hearing, a right to defense or right of appeal.

In presenting his testimony, Maestro Rostropovich indicated that his harrasment by Soviet officials began after they allowed Alexander Solzhenitsyn to live at their "dacha" for four years. Their treatment by Soviet officials had steadily worsened since then.

Senator Dole indicated that the Soviet action violates the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act to which the Soviets are a signatore. He also pointed out, that while the Soviets violate the human rights provision of the Act, they are extremely interested in cultural exchange programs.

The Senator questioned the Maestro on his views about the cultural exchange programs and their worth. Mr. Rostropovich urged the United States to demand those performers whom they are interested in seeing, and not allow Soviet censorship to rule the demand. The Maestro indicated that only trusted artists are allowed to come to the West and, therefore, are often mediocre musicians. The accolades the West bestowes on the ones that do come, are used by Soviet officials to punish and discourage the young, talented, and innovative ones. The Maestro suggested to the Senate that the United States should ask for the young artists although the request would probably be refused. He specifically mentioned Valentin Silvestrov, a Ukrainian composer living in Kiev, Estonian composer Arvo Piart, who lives in Talinn, Estonia, and Nikolai Sidelnikov, a Russian composer in Moscow.

Following up on this suggestion, Senator Dole has written to John Reinhart, head of the United States Information Agency. The text of the letter follows:

As a member of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I listened to the testimony given by Maestro Rostropovich and his wife, Galina Vishnevskaya, last week.

Under questioning regarding our cultural exchange programs, the Maestro indicated that we often invite mediocre talents and allow the Soviets to censor our demands. Instead, the Maestro suggested that we extend invitations to such exciting and talented composers as Mr. Valentin Silvestrov, the Ukrainian composer living in Kiev, Mr. Arvo Piart, Estonian composer in Talinn, Estonia, and Nikolai Sidelnikov, the Russian composer in Moscow.

I believe such an invitation should be extended to them and I would appreciate hearing from you about the possibilities of having them visit this country.

Sincerely yours,

BOB DOLE
United States Senate