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HELSINKI COMMISSION MEMBER DOLE SCORES CONTINUED SOVIET OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN

WASHINGTON -- Despite recent political tensions in other parts of the globe, Senator Robert Dole (R.-Kan.) today urged his congressional colleagues and every other American to remember the brutal oppression of the people of Afghanistan at the hands of the Soviet Union.

Noting that Sunday, March 21, has been designated by President Reagan and the Congress as "Afghanistan Day", Dole called on America to honor and not forget the brave resistance of the Afghans.

As Co-Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, a commission that monitors international compliance of the Helsinki Accords, Dole called the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan "a blatant violation of all ten of the Principles of the Helsinki Final Act."

In a Senate statement for March 22, Senator Dole will deliver the following comments:

"The Soviet invasion and occupation of a formerly independent and non-aligned state has severely damaged the international climate, has done great harm to East-West relations and has greatly reduced the level of trust and security among all states," Dole said. "Repeated efforts by the Soviet Union to justify this brutal invasion and continued occupation--which has sent one-fifth of the entire nation into exile--have been rejected by virtually all objective observers. No one can seriously believe that a small, neutral, non-aligned country in any way threatened the security of the Soviet Union.

"The world has been shocked by reports of the use of chemical and biological warfare in Afghanistan. On March 8, the United States announced that it had firm evidence that at least 3,000 people in Afghanistan had been killed by poison gas and other chemical weapons in 47 separate incidents between the summer of 1979 and the summer of 1981. The possession and use of toxins is a blatant violation of both the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention," Dole added.

"The United States continues to favor a political settlement which would lead to restoration of a genuinely independent, neutral, non-aligned Afghanistan. I emphasize this can only be accomplished by putting an end to the massive, unspeakable violence now being employed against the people of Afghanistan," Dole continued.

"I urge my colleagues and fellow citizens to remember the brave resistance of the Afghan people, whose struggle against their Soviet invaders is now well into its third year. This Sunday has been set aside as a day to mark and honor their struggle. Let the day serve as a reminder to those who cherish liberty, and as a warning to those who would try to crush it."