

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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PASSAGE OF MIA-POW RESOLUTION IS PROPER PATH TO FULL ACCOUNTING, DOLE SAYS

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) says that passage of his legislation calling for the creation of a commission to undertake further investigations into the whereabouts of MIAs and POWs in Southeast Asia "would bring an end to the tragedy and haunting memory associated with the Vietnam war."

Dole is urging Senate colleagues to pass the legislation (S. Con. Res. 17) by Wednesday, July 18, which has been proclaimed National POW-MIA Recognition Day by President Carter. On Monday, Dole wrote to Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio), chairman of the subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific affairs, asking for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to favorably report the resolution out of committee. This bill, originally introduced in the House by Rep. Tennyson Guyer (R-Ohio), was passed unanimously by the full House on July 10.

Dole's resolution would create a commission to pick up where the past investigatory groups left off in securing a full accounting of POWs and MIAs in Southeast Asia, and would be authorized to take any steps necessary to do so.

"While I recognize that just as equal a need exists to account for the whereabouts of our servicemen from all wars of the recent past, I am addressing the Vietnam war MIAs in particular because of a gross lack of action in addressing their plight," Dole said today. "In the past we have received next to no cooperation from the Socialist governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and it appears that most efforts on our part to continue searching have been dropped. It is imperative that we act now on this before too much more time elapses, thus making it even more difficult to gather information regarding these men.

"Evidence abounds -- through letters written home, pictures from newspapers, magazines and television, and through the re-appearance of Marine Private Garwood -- that men were captured alive and never released. The Department of Defense has recently released a 10,000-page report of information, much of which deals with reported sightings of Americans still in captivity as late as 1978. It is evident that there is much information that needs further attention and investigation.

"Wednesday has been proclaimed National POW-MIA Recognition Day by President Carter. It is altogether appropriate that we pay our respect and show our gratitude to these men to whom we owe a great debt with ceremonies and speeches, as the President has requested. However, while parades and ceremonies are a very appropriate tribute, they will not ease the suffering and the agony experienced by the families and friends of those 2,500 men still unaccounted for. What is needed far more than ceremonies is some concrete action to address this concern and to resolve the doubts and questions haunting the loved ones of these servicemen. Human compassion and a deep sense of obligation for their service dictate that this be done."

Last week Dole wrote to the President asking for his support of the resolution.