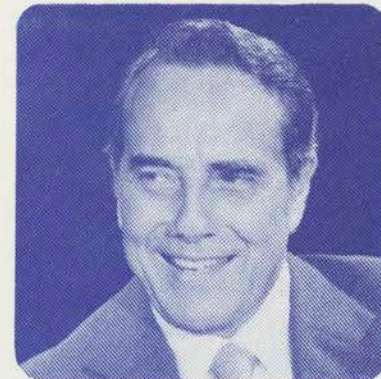


News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1987

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REPUBLICAN LEADERS CALL FOR HEARINGS ON SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

WASHINGTON -- SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE (R-KS.) AND HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB MICHEL (R-ILL.) HAVE JOINTLY WRITTEN THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS AND HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEES, ASKING THAT THEY CONVENE HEARINGS TO PROBE THE CURRENT STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND HOW THOSE POLICIES COULD AFFECT U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS.

"We're getting mixed signals here in the West about what's going on in the Soviet Union vis-a-vis human rights. Is there really a shift in attitude, in practice, or is it all p.r.? Now, when so much is going on, and so much hangs in the balance, it's critical for the U.S. to find out as much as we can about Soviet human rights and emigration policy," Dole said.

"Mr. Gorbachev's claim of "democratization" in the Soviet Union has to be weighed against the television footage of the KGB beating up defenseless Jews and threatening Western journalists," Michel said. Yes, there is something going on in the Soviet Union and we are glad for those who have thus far been released. But what we need are the facts behind the propaganda barrage."

The text of the letter is on the reverse side.

BOB DOLE
KANSAS

United States Senate

OFFICE OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7020

February 18, 1987

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Recent events in the Soviet Union have raised questions about the nature of Soviet human rights policy. Is the pardon of 140 political prisoners convicted of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" a sign of a "thaw" or a token gesture, made at little cost to the system under which such perversions of justice occur in the first place?

While we welcome the release of the prisoners (said by our State Department to be only 20% of all those imprisoned under the same laws) we feel basic human rights problems have not been addressed. The fact that the victims of injustice thus far released have had to sign statements requesting pardons, promising not to engage in "anti-Soviet activities", leads us to doubt that a "thaw" is in effect in the Soviet Union. Other "prisoners of conscience" are being held in prisons under different laws and their cases have not been addressed by the current series of pardons.

There has been a cosmetic change in emigration policy. But the effective policy, denying literally hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews and others to emigrate, remains in place. It is an issue, perhaps more than any other, that has aroused the indignation of the American people.

Given these unresolved questions, we request that immediate hearings begin in your committee dealing with the current status of human rights in the Soviet Union and the extent to which the current fate and future hopes of those denied human rights should affect our nation's relationship with the Soviet Union.

What we need now are facts so that American people can know the realities behind the headlines. In our view, nothing that has occurred in the Soviet Union during recent weeks in any way modifies or questions the totalitarian system whose rulers can put innocent people in prison much more swiftly than they can release them. We look forward to your thoughts on our request and to working with you in this important area of foreign policy.

Sincerely,



Robert H. Michel
House Republican Leader



Robert Dole
Senate Republican Leader