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STATEMENT BY U.S. SENATOR BOB DOLE (R-KANS.)
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... ON PRESIDENT NIXON'S VIETNAM MESSAGE

"President Nixon's Vietnam message is a comprehensive, flexible document, setting forth a realistic foundation for a negotiated settlement in Paris.

"As the President stressed, 35,000 American lives have been lost, and it is time to put aside the rhetoric of the past and make new initiatives to get the apparently stalemated negotiations off dead center.

"The statement very properly reaffirmed the U.S. commitment in South Vietnam and underscored a primary American objective -- free elections in the country -- will not be compromised.

"With all Americans, I hope the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong approach President Nixon's proposals with a seriousness hitherto unknown in the Paris peace talks.

"The President's statement that even without an affirmative response, the American people could look forward to a gradual withdrawal of our boys as the South Vietnamese assume greater responsibilities for the war is greatly encouraging and is the least we can expect in the next year."

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