

FROM: THE OFFICE OF U.S. SENATOR BOB DOLE
NEW SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510
(202) 225-6521

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WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 21 -- "It is time that the United States demands an accounting from North Vietnam of our American servicemen who are being held prisoners of war," U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) said today.

Dole, Congressman Thomas N. Downing (D-Va.) and Mrs. Louise Mulligan, Virginia Beach, Va., wife of an American POW, were among guest speakers at the Washington's Birthday Freedom Rally held at Constitution Hall.

"Like us," Dole said, "Washington was faced with the same heartache and dilemma caused by an enemy which refused to recognize basic humanitarian principles in dealing with prisoners of war. During the course of our country's struggle for independence, Washington constantly had to remind the enemy of its obligation toward proper treatment of Americans held in captivity.

"Today," Dole continued, "hundreds of Americans are missing or captured in North and South Vietnam, but the number and identities of many of these men are known only to the North Vietnamese."

The North Vietnamese have "persistently and callously" violated the 1949 Geneva Convention regarding the treatment of prisoners of war, although they ratified the agreement in 1957, Dole said. He said the government of North Vietnam and the Viet Cong has refused to uphold the following points:

- *to provide proper nourishment and humane treatment for all POWs;
- *to provide information about detention camps and allow access to them by neutral observers;
- *to identify all POWs;
- *to give proper medical aid to the seriously ill and wounded, and
- *to allow all POWs to communicate regularly by mail with their families.

"Just as Washington reminded the enemy of their

obligations to their prisoners of war, we have reminded the North Vietnamese. There has been little response and the time for reminders has passed. Americans must demand that North Vietnam abide by the provisions of the Geneva Convention."