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STATEMENT BY U.S. SENATOR BOB DOLE  
ON THE SENATE FLOOR  
MAY 28, 1970

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mr. President, the amendment which I have offered will serve not only as notice to the enemy of the United States' determination to do whatever is possible and necessary to secure the release of American captives. It will also stand as an expression of the Senate's concern to the parents, wives and families of captured and missing American servicemen.

This is not an idle gesture. Those who await the return of their loved ones believe -- and with reason -- that every bit of pressure which is put on the enemy results in better treatment for their men. And every action taken by our government -- whether at the negotiating table in Paris, at the White House, or in the halls of Congress -- everything done to show concern, interest and awareness gives some measure of comfort and strength to the brave and courageous families who keep watch for their absent fathers, sons and husbands.

Earlier this month, I received a letter from the wife of an Air Force Major missing since November, 1967. In closing she said, "Our five children and I have been sustained by the belief that our government will not abandon my husband and his fellow servicemen..."

Mr. President, what more clear cut notice of abandonment could be given than through legislation which would forbid American troops to cross an imaginary, meaningless line in an Asian jungle -- even if that crossing were to secure the freedom of captive Americans?

The Cooper-Church amendment, as it now reads, would forbid U.S. forces from entering Cambodia even if the purpose of their mission were to rescue Americans being held prisoners of war by the enemy.

Mr. President, the Senate cannot serve such cold and abrupt notice on the men who are being held prisoner, on the men who daily risk capture or on their families.

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I urge my colleagues to consider these points and to join in approving this amendment as an expression of concern for our military personnel and their loved ones. An expression to them and to the enemy as well.

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Text of the Dole amendment:

The provisions of subsection (a) of this section (i.e. the Cooper-Church amendment) shall be inoperative during any period that the President determines that citizens or nationals of the United States are held as prisoners of war in Cambodia by the North Vietnamese or the forces of the National Liberation Front.