



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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STATEMENT OF
SENATOR BOB DOLE
1202 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C.
1:30 P.M., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1976

In addition to his role as a legislator, every Member of Congress wants to be genuinely responsive to the needs and concerns of his constituents. When those he represents have problems they believe to be of legitimate interest to their government, he tries to make every effort to assist them in communicating directly with the appropriate Federal agencies.

I have personally received hundreds of inquiries during the past year regarding the activities and practices of the Unification Church. More recently, I have been presented with a petition bearing the signatures of over 14,000 parents from the State of Kansas and surrounding jurisdictions demanding to have their views heard with respect to this and related organizations.

This afternoon, I am providing them that opportunity. Individuals representing some 30 States have come here at their own expense to talk face to face with officials from those Federal Departments they feel should have an interest in what they have to say.

I should stress in that regard that the members of the Executive Branch who have come here at my request are really themselves the audience. Their answers can, understandably, be phrased only in the most general of terms -- but certainly, any disappointing limitations on the substance of replies should be more than offset by the satisfaction of knowing those giving them care enough to listen.

Every Senator has the privilege of requesting space within our Capitol buildings to accommodate activities he deems to be of significant importance to those he serves. So just as an individual Congressman made the Caucus Room in the House of Representatives available for the Reverend Sun Myung Moon to give an address two months ago this date, I have arranged this gathering to give those who feel adversely affected by what he advocates a chance to speak.

The nature and format of this proceeding are not to be misconstrued by those present as anything other than what it is. I wish to emphasize that, contrary to distorted representations that may have been circulated prior to this meeting, it is not a Congressional hearing; it is not any kind of investigation; it is not a public speech-making forum; and above all it is not a debate between opposing points of view.

It is, very simply, an informal question and answer session involving two predesignated panels of participants whom I have brought together to discuss subjects of possible mutual concern. While it could very appropriately have taken place in my own private office, the widespread interest among both the general public and the press led me to select a larger and more open facility.

Since there may be those who disagree with what is said or done, I want to remind all in attendance that this room is under my control and that the open seating is made available as a courtesy to those desirous of acting as observers. Accordingly, everyone should be on notice that one of the groundrules will be to recognize for questions only those who are not seated at -- or who later come to one of the microphones on -- the front table.

Along with the privilege and discretion to sponsor an unofficial forum such as this goes the responsibility and authority to see that it is conducted in a smooth and orderly manner. I have every intention of doing precisely that and solicit your cooperation.