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DOLE CALLS CONGRESSIONAL HEARING TO REVIEW RESULTS OF GENEVA TRADE MEETING

GENEVA—Senator Robert Dole (R-KS), Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over international trade, today set a January 25th hearing to analyze the results of this week's GATT Ministerial meeting.

According to Dole, the Finance Committee review will also assess the terms of U.S. participation in the multi-lateral trading system, following passage of a Senate GATT resolution earlier this year.

Dole noted that in May the Senate unanimously adopted a committee resolution which called for agreement by the ministers to take action in four specific trade areas: (1) to review the adequacy of the rules regarding subsidies, particularly in the agriculture area; (2) to improve the disputes settlement procedures; (3) to initiate work programs in the areas of trade in services, performance requirements, and high technology products; and (4) to complete an agreement on rules for safeguard measures.

"I am convinced that the GATT system is in serious difficulty, Dole said. "Countries with major stakes in world trade have become free riders--they seek only the advantages, but not the responsibilities, of the multilateral system. While professing to support free trade, they engage in active policies of imposing customs barriers, quotas, and massive subsidization to protect domestic industries and to gain an unfair advantage in third markets. The United States has largely refrained from such policies--though we too have sinned--but the underpinnings of U.S. support for this restraint are quickly eroding."

"The Senate resolution represents a strong statement of congressional concern about the confirmed vitality of the multilateral trading system," Dole continued. "We recognize the demonstrated benefits of that system: In the past three decades, total trade as a component of our gross national product has more than doubled, to approach 20 percent. Access to expanded world markets means more jobs, a fact that is essential to public support in our country for a liberal world trading system."

"The Finance Committee will closely examine the prospects for U.S. participation in the GATT in light of what the Senate has resolved is necessary for its continued vitality. The United States cannot afford unilaterally to participate in and to defend a system that works in reality far different from what we intend."