

Bob Dole

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

**NEWS
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POW/MIA COMMITTEE REPORT

POW/MIA REPORT: HISTORY REWRITE, OR JUST THE FACTS?

WASHINGTON -- Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole (R-Kansas), an ex-officio member of the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, today issued the following statement regarding the committee's final report, which is due Wednesday:

"The Senate Select Committee on POW/MIAs is nearing the conclusion of its long and difficult 15 month investigation. As it readies its final report, due tomorrow, it is my hope that it will reflect real balance and fairness. Frankly, I am dismayed by recent press reports and leaks that indicate that laying blame might be more important to some than simply laying out the facts.

"It seems to be part of the hottest fad in town these days, rewriting history. If you don't like history -- usually, if you don't like Republicans -- trash the truth, leak your rewrite to some cheerleaders in the media, and then watch the real record go up in smoke. But let's be clear: fixing blame and rewriting history was never the mission of the committee. No doubt, it's a tough, thankless task that holds no easy answers.

"Nevertheless, it seems to me that a determined few are trying to blame every conceivable Viet Nam controversy on Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger and any other Republican who might make for a convenient punching bag. In these historical rewrites, it's not surprising that the Democrat congress gets a free ride. If it escaped accountability this past election year for the economy, the deficit and partisan gridlock, it isn't about to fess up to its undeniable 1973 role in tying President Nixon's hands at the critical moment where he needed strength and bi-partisan support to force Hanoi to meet our POW/MIA demands.

"But no, Congress didn't want to send a tough signal, even though it was clear Hanoi was ignoring the Paris peace accords. Congress blinked and ducked, easily defeating a Dole amendment that would have given the President the authority to resume military action if the North Vietnamese did not provide a full accounting of our missing heroes. By a 56-25 "no" vote, Congress turned its back on the families, the POW's and every other American concerned about this emotional issue, and also sent a dangerous signal to the Vietnamese that the President would not be playing a strong hand at the negotiating table. So, if there is going to be blame spread around, Congress should be right at the top of the list. Of course, you won't find that story in your friendly local liberal newspaper.

"It is unfortunate that legitimate efforts to set the record straight by President Nixon, Henry Kissinger and many other experts who lived the history, are now being smeared by the history rewriters. Let's let the record speak for itself for a change, and when it comes to the blink and duck Congress of 1973, let's finally tell it like it is."

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