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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R-Kans.)

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THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 1977 MYRON KUROPAS

DOLE MEETS NATALIA SHARANSKY: EXPANDS HELSINKI COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole met today with Natalia Sharansky, wife of Anatoly Sharansky, the Soviet Jewish dissident leader recently arrested by the Soviet KGB in Moscow.

After thanking Senator Dole for signing a letter to Secretary Brezhnev requesting the release of her husband, Mrs. Sharansky expressed her deep concern for his safety. Dole said he was "proud to have signed the letter," and further stated that Americans "must continue to do everything we can to call attention to the plight of Soviet Jews seeking to emigrate to Israel and to publicly support brave men like Anatoly Sharansky who refuse to surrender their human rights to the dictates of a totalitarian regime."

In an effort to gain more information concerning human rights violations in Warsaw Pact nations, Dole, a member of the Helsinki Commission, has also formed an advisory council of ethnic Americans familiar with the state of affairs in Eastern Europe. Representatives of the Czech, Estonian, Jewish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Slovak, Russian and Ukrainian communities in American met with Dole for the first time Wednesday, March 30.

"I learned a great deal during our first meeting, and I am impressed with the amount of information that Council members had concerning their homelands," Dole said. "The dissident movement in Eastern Europe is more widespread than most Americans believe and it appears to be growing. This is an obvious internal weakness of the Warsaw Pact nations and we should watch it carefully to see if this activity has any future implications for considering a different approach to the Soviet Union."

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