



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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DOLE TO SPONSOR HEARING ON CULT PHENOMENON

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.), along with Sen. Edward Zorinsky (D-Neb.) and Reps. Robert Giaimo (D-Conn.), Richard Ottinger (D-N.Y.), Hamilton Fish (R-N.Y.) and G. William Whitehurst (R-Va.), will sponsor a special informal hearing for members of Congress to explore the cult phenomenon in the United States. The hearing is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 5, 1979, from 9 to 11 a.m., in Room 318, Russell Senate Office Building (Senate Caucus Room).

The purpose of the hearing is to sensitize senators and representatives to the complexities of the issue and to obtain sufficient and credible information to determine whether the matter should be studied further.

Thirteen persons, including psychiatrists, former cult members, clergy, educators, authors, and other experts, will offer testimony at the hearing. Names of the individual participants will be released later this week.

"Hopefully, this hearing will not only provide members of Congress with a better understanding of cults, but will also help determine what, if any, role government should play in addressing this issue," Dole said.

"I have had a longstanding personal interest in the cult phenomenon. In 1976, I sponsored a hearing bringing together government officials and parents of children in cults, and just last year I requested that the Senate Finance Committee investigate the tax-exempt status of so-called 'religious' organizations. As ranking Republican on the Finance Committee, I will urge that this matter be addressed this session.

"I hope that this hearing will help give direction and leadership to what has been up to this point a disjointed approach to dealing with the cult issue."

Reserved seating at the hearing will be available for members of Congress. A section will also be reserved for the working press. Public seating will be limited due to space.