



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.-Kans.)

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SENATOR BOB DOLE SALUTES BYELORUSSIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas), speaking on the floor of the Senate, saluted the people of Byelorussia on their independence day. The following are his remarks:

"March 25 is a day dear to the hearts of the Byelorussian people. On that day in 1918 they ended years of suffering under the tyranny of czarist Russia by proclaiming the establishment of the Byelorussian Democratic Republic.

"Russian tyranny has, however, again engulfed Byelorussia. In direct contradiction to the Helsinki agreements, the Soviet Union perpetrates, almost daily, violations of the rights of Byelorussians. Svetlana Misiuk, an eighth grade girl, was beaten for believing in God. Aleksandar Krut'ko has been threatened with confinement to an asylum if he continues his efforts to gain permission to join his children in the United States. Many brave Byelorussians have faced this oppression, and stood up to it. Today I would like to pay tribute to two of these men," said Dole.

"Yauhin Ivanovich Buzinnikav has spent twelve years in jail for his support of human rights. Now he has been arrested once more. What is his "crime"? Buzinnikav was corresponding with fellow dissident Andrei Sakharov, listening to and disseminating foreign radio broadcasts, and allegedly requesting to print works by Byelorussian writer Mykola Rudenko. For these offenses against Soviet totalitarianism, acts which are guaranteed by the Helsinki Accords, Buzinnikav was thrown into prison.

"Writer Michal Kukabaka, one of the most eloquent exponents of Byelorussian identity, has long protested Soviet violations of human and political rights. In the past year, he has published one of his finest essays on the Byelorussian consciousness, "The Stolen Motherland", and has taken the bold step of renouncing his Soviet citizenship. Mr. Kukabaka has been imprisoned by the Soviet authorities, and remains behind bars. To this date he has not been charged with any crime. Indeed, what has he done that deserves any kind of censure? I have written to Ambassador Dobrynin and to the Director of the prison where Mr. Kukabaka is now incarcerated; urging Mr. Kukabaka's immediate release.

"With courageous leaders such as Mr. Kukabaka and Mr. Buzinnikav, the idea of freedom, like the mythical call of the sirens, is irresistible. The quest for freedom can be delayed; it cannot be thwarted," said Dole.