

STATEMENT BY U.S. SENATOR BCR: DOLE  
ON THE SENATE FLOOR  
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Mr. President:

First of all, I wish to concur with my colleague from Kansas, Senator Pearson, who stated last Wednesday: "President Nixon, Ambassador Smith and the other U.S. negotiators assert, in the strongest terms, that Congressional approval of the committee proposal is needed and is, in fact essential; and that such Congressional action offers the greatest chance for success of the SALT talks. It is against that assertion by the highest authority that I judge the path of my responsibility to be a resolution of whatever doubts I have in their behalf and to act in support of their position."

Mr. President, it is true that the Congress is a branch of the government equal to the Executive, but it is also true that the Executive, because of its unique nature, is often in a better position to garner all the information needed to make a correct decision.

In general, we recognize that fact here in the Congress and so long as we can have trust and confidence in the Chief Executive we are prone to accede to his wishes in those areas where he has the greater expertise or is charged under the Constitution with the greater responsibility.

NO CREDIBILITY GAP

Certainly, today there is no reason for any member of the Congress not to trust the President. There is no credibility gap.

The President is unwinding the war and bringing American soldiers home in accordance with what he has told the American people he would do.

The President brought American troops out of Cambodia on schedule.

The President has initiated a cease-fire in the Middle East.

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He has abided by his principles in matters both foreign and domestic, and he has kept his word with the American people.

Mr. President, there are some who would substitute their judgement for that of the President even though it is doubtful that they have the knowledge the President has on which to reach a superior judgement.

All of those with differing views perhaps are of the best intentions, though a few, for reasons unknown to me, appear to seek what amounts to surrender in Southeast Asia.

Some efforts of A.B.M. opponents are, in my opinion, detrimental to the defense of the United States and could cause a needless expenditure of Federal funds.

A prime consideration is the credibility of this Administration. It is the Nixon credibility that is making possible real progress toward peace.

That progress is best illustrated by the most recent news stories to the effect that the United States has offered to give up its A.B.M. deterrent entirely if the U.S.S.R. will do the same thing and will limit its numbers of offensive weapons.

This offer was made at the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks and was given in background form to the press. I am pleased, as all Senators are, at the general note of optimism.

However, I am convinced we would not have a reason for optimism if three things had not happened. FIRST, and perhaps most important, is the re-instillment throughout the world of a belief in the credibility of the President of the United States. Not only Americans, but world leaders everywhere know now that the President means what he says. They know he is not a paper tiger. They know he is determined that the United States will remain strong enough both to defend itself and to live up to its commitments throughout the world.

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SECOND, is the fact that the Senate -- narrowly you will recall -- voted last year to approve the first two A.B.M. sites.

THIRD, is the fact that the President has asked this year for enlargement of the program. If nothing else, this has given the U.S.S.R. the word that the President of the United States will take whatever political risks necessary to defend this nation and its credibility as a deterrent to aggression.

In light of this, it is most difficult to understand how anyone can doubt that the A.B.M. is a bargaining chip of the greatest importance.

BROOKE AMENDMENT

Let me now address myself to the amendment proposed by the Junior Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. Brooke.

That amendment, as proposed, says that "Funds authorized pursuant to this act for the procurement of anti-ballistic missile defenses may be used only for defense of strategic forces deployed at Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota, and Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana."

The words of this proposed amendment, Mr. President, seem simple and clear. But it is difficult to determine their intent. Does, for instance, the Senator seek to add one more Safeguard site, but at Grand Forks or Mamlstrom instead of at the proposed new base at Whitman?

Does he seek to provide a Minuteman defense capability at Grand Forks and Malmstrom equal to that the Modified Phase II defense would supply?

Does he seek reduction in the protection that can be provided for our strategic bomber force?

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PURPOSE??

In other words, Mr. President, we have yet to learn the purpose behind the Brooke Amendment. It obviously does not call for less money, only for less defense at the same price.

Does this make sense to those who seek a vast reordering of our priorities?

Certainly it doesn't make sense to those of us who have no intention of reordering our defense priority out of existence.

Nor does it make sense to those of us who wish to spend our defense money wisely.

Nor does it make sense to those of us who wish to provide the President with the best hand possible at the vital SALT talks.

I believe, Mr. President, it makes sense only to those who seek to reduce the effectiveness of America's defenses.

Because, in all candor, that is all the Brooke Amendment will do. It will give us less defense at the same price. Mr. President, I believe we need more, not less, defense, but if we are to settle for less defense -- and the devil take the consequences -- then we should also cut back on the amount of funds to be spent.

The Brooke Amendment does not do this.

Mr. President, I believe the Brooke Amendment is ill-considered and illogical, from every standpoint that is in the best interests of our nation's defense and our nation's chances to reach agreement on limiting strategic arms.

I will vote against it, and urge other members of the Senate to vote against it.