



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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PUBLIC AHEAD OF CONGRESS IN RECOGNIZING NEED FOR STRONG DEFENSE, SAYS DOLE

HAYS -- Speaking to the First Reunion of the 73rd Bomb Wing in Hays Saturday morning, Senator Bob Dole called for a U.S. defense capability second to none and applauded the spirit and tradition of the 73rd Bomb Wing which he said "even today helps sustain the American commitment to a strong national defense."

The 73rd Wing, a B-29 fleet, trained at Great Bend, Pratt, Salina and Walker Air Force Base near Hays during World War II. In October, 1944, they transferred to Saipan for the long-range bombing of Japan.

In remarks prepared for delivery, Dole said that the American public is clearly ahead of Congress in recognizing the need for an adequate defense budget. "The American people have said they don't want to be second when it comes to national defense and they are willing to pay the price. The 1977 defense budget authority of \$112.5 billion reflects broad-based public support for defense and was approved in spite of Congress, not because of Congressional leadership on the issue."

Dole called for continued public support for a strong national defense, stating that, even with this year's budget increases, defense spending will comprise the smallest percentage of the total federal budget since 1940. "There are those in Congress who still believe the only way to cut the budget is to 'take it out of defense.' We have cut the defense budget each of the prior four years. Though we must continue to closely scrutinize the defense budget, across-the-board cuts in defense will only mean a weakened defense posture. There just isn't any fat left," Dole said.

Dole noted also that military standing is only one aspect of national security. He labeled economic strength and stability, political leadership, and domestic cohesion as important elements in maintaining the proper U.S. role in the world balance of power.