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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE SOVIET ACTIONS IN AFRICA THREATEN S.A.L.T.

Mr. Dole. Mr. President, the successful conclusion of a nuclear arms control pact with the Soviet Union will, in large part, depend upon the status of United States-Soviet relations during the next few weeks. It seems to this Senator that the relationship is now threatened at a concluding stage of the SALT II negotiations -- not because of United States intransigence -- but because of direct Soviet military influence in Africa, and similar Soviet provocations elsewhere. I believe that Secretary of State Cyrus Vance would be well advised to inform Moscow, during his discussions there this week, that there will be no SALT Treaty unless aggressive Soviet-Cuban military adventurism in Africa is halted, and the military presence withdrawn.

Before leaving the country last week, Secretary Vance reiterated the Administration's policy that there need be "no linkage between the negotiation of a SALT agreement and the activities of the Soviet Union in Africa." I believe it is unrealistic and somewhat naive for Secretary Vance to maintain that there will be "no linkage" between the two matters, at least so far as the Senate is concerned.

According to the latest intelligence estimates, Ethiopia has been saturated with more than 16,000 Cuban troops, and with Soviet military hardware including 50 MIC jet fighters and more than 400 tanks. There is no way imaginable that the United States Senate could ignore this Soviet military presence in Africa in the context of our consideration of SALT II. Not only are peaceful intentions of the Kremlin called into question by its aggressive African policies, but the credibility of Soviet pledges are cast into serious doubt as well.

There should be no mistake on our part about the fact that the Soviet Union is anxious to conclude a SALT II Treaty agreement with the United States. Their own economy would suffer from a continued arms race, and they would prefer to see the United States development of strategic weapons curtailed at present levels. Yet, the Kremlin leadership continues to insist that only further American concessions can bring about a new Treaty. Further concessions on our part, however, would be unjustified and dangerous to the national interest.

UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS

Despite the unavoidable indications of continuing Soviet adventurism in Africa, and unrestrained development of strategic weapons, the Administration has shown little inclination to face the hard facts. In his speech delivered at Wake Forest University last month, President Carter expressed concern about Soviet force increases "beyond the level necessary for defense" and its "ominous inclination... to intervene in local conflicts... as we observe today in Africa." Had Mr. Carter heeded his own words, I believe he would have recognized the necessity of proceeding with the neutron bomb, at least until some gesture of self-restraint was made by the Soviets.

It is fine to speak of working towards further reductions and limitations of nuclear weapons consistent with the national security interests of the United States and of our allies. Yet, while President Carter has called for the necessity of multilateral cooperation in this area, every cancellation and postponement of a defense program in his Administration has represented unilateral action by the United States. We experienced this self-denial of major weapon systems not only with the neutron bomb decision, but also with the cancellation of the B-1 Bomber production, curtailment of full-scale development of the M-X Missile, and serious cutbacks on construction on Naval ships.

There is simply no prevailing rationale -- no predictable consistency -- in the confusing pattern of strategic policies set forth by this administration. Even Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev seems astonished by what he terms Mr. Carter's "indecision and inconsistency" on policies affecting U.S.-Soviet relations. Mr. Brezhnev's confusion about U.S. policy is shared by many Americans, as well.

until the Soviet Union begins to match our long list of defense concessions, it is simply not in the best security interest of this country and that of our allies to cancel one major weapon system after another. And so long as Moscow shows no sign of restraint in Africa or in its posture towards Europe, we should reflect carefully upon any new commitments that would limit our ability to respond to future Soviet provocations.

For that reason, Mr. President, I believe the United States Senate will scrupulously examine the final SALT agreement that is submitted for our consideration. And it would be well for the Administration to recognize the reality of the situation now, and advise the Soviet Union accordingly; that we will make no further substantive concessions in the SALT negotiations, and that Soviet aggression on the African continent must cease immediately.

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