



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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DOLE SAYS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S SUPPORT OF ISRAEL HAS ERODED

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today charged that President Carter's support of Israel has "virtually evaporated."

"For 15 months the character of the Carter Administration's dealings with the state of Israel has oscillated between a lack of understanding of the most fundamental aspects of recent Middle Eastern history, and spitefulness toward the government of Israel," Dole said in a statement from his Washington office.

"The familiar pattern has been for President Carter to take a bullying stance, and then to dispatch Vice-President Mondale to assure those concerned with Israel's welfare that the President means well.

"The evidence supporting that contention has always been painfully thin. It has virtually evaporated in the past three days.

"At the same time the President is flailing away at the Soviets over their presence in Africa, he is threatening to bring them back into the Middle East. This suggests the absence of any rational and consistent policy, much less a policy that acknowledges Israel's legitimate interests.

"The President has nearly destroyed whatever influence he may have had with the elected government of Israel and its domestic political opponents, and is now engaged in squandering Vice-President Mondale's influence.

"It is difficult to understand how we can persuade Israel's adversaries that we support her when we can no longer persuade Israel herself.

"It is this, and not any failing on Prime Minister Begin's part, which now complicates the search for peace in the Middle East.

"It is a sad commentary of President Carter's grasp of American values that on the eve of our celebration of independence, we are striving to undercut the one democracy in that critical area of the world, and are jeopardizing the security of the people who have suffered so long and sacrificed so much to get and keep their own independence."