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DOLE RESOLUTION WOULD REJECT U.S. ARMED PEACE-KEEPING FORCE IN MIDEAST

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today introduced a resolution in the Senate to express the sense of the Congress that the President should make no commitment to station American military forces in the Middle East as a peace-keeping or "buffer" force, in conjunction with any proposed settlement between Israel and Egypt.

The resolution would also stress that any U.S. military presence in the area in the future should be a matter for prior consultation with Congress.

"President Carter should be commended for his efforts to bring Mr. Begin and Mr. Sadat together to try to work out their differences," Dole said. "Recent peace efforts have been discouragingly slow. However, I must express concern over any possible commitment the President may make during this mediatory effort that would physically involve the United States in a peace-keeping role in the Middle East."

A move to inject U.S. armed forces into the area "would expose American troops to terrorist violence and possibly involve us as something other than neutral peace-keepers," he said.

COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL REMAINS

Dole expressed concern that such a move would wrongly imply that Israel should withdraw from disputed territories, "which would then be left to an uncertain future."

"Israel," he said, "has reasonably insisted that its army must remain the 'center pillar' of security in the occupied territories and that American troops cannot be a substitute for an Israeli military presence. Prime Minister Begin has stated that Israel 'does not want foreign soldiers to protect her people,' which logically reflects the determination of the Israeli people to remain the trustees of their own destiny.

"We should also bear in mind that Israel has been a loyal and valuable ally of the United States for 30 years," Dole added. "Beyond moral considerations, our own national security interests remain closely related to those of Israel. Therefore, it is to our own benefit that any permanent solutions must necessarily involve ironclad guarantees for the security of Israel. It would be a serious mistake for the United States to break Israel's resolve at the summit simply because the President's prestige is on the line."