

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

2213 Dirksen Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1980

CONTACT: BILL KATS, BOB WAITE
(202) 224-8947, -8953

IRAN TV RE-RUN SEASON STARTS AGAIN, DOLE SAYS

WASHINGTON -- "At 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon we saw a repeat of the weekly, pre-primary, get-tough-on-Iran news conference," Senator Bob Dole (R-Kansas) said today.

"Yesterday I spoke about the empty symbolism and rhetoric President Carter insists upon using to cloud all the issues, foreign and domestic, every time we have an important primary coming up. Always it is an 'important new development' or a 'significant step' in achieving the release of our hostages in Iran, and once the primary or caucus is over we find that no particular breakthrough has actually occurred. It seems to many that this has become almost a weekly ritual, and sure enough, yesterday, four days before the Pennsylvania primary where some polls show the President trailing, we see him holding a press conference on Iran.

"A reporter from the Washington Post wondered aloud at the timing of so many of these historic, foreign policy bulletins, just before contests the President's chief opponent might win. The President said there were so many primaries it was purely chance that his press conferences coincided so neatly with the primaries. Yet he failed to explain why so many of these conferences are nothing but rhetoric, filled with hollow symbolism, enacting policies and actions that had either already been in effect for months or could have been from the very beginning of the crisis. And many of us urged that they be done from the very start.

"Yesterday, in a *deja vu* performance we have come to expect, President Carter announced a five-point program of 'new' sanctions against Iran. First, a prohibition of all financial transfers to Iran, a move that blocks practically no assets that weren't already stopped.

"Second, a ban on all imports from Iran, of which there are practically none.

"Third, a prohibition of all travel by American citizens to Iran. The only Americans I know of trying to go there have been U.S. ministers providing religious services to the hostages, and the mother of one of our soldiers held so long by the militants in the embassy -- and they won't even let her get into the country.

"Fourth, military equipment that was paid for by Iran was seized to be resold or used by our own government, but we had already impounded this equipment.

"Fifth, an authorization through Congress to pay reparations from Iranian funds to the hostage families and to re-imburse the government and U.S. firms for losses and claims due to the crisis. But these funds were already frozen months ago, and several lawsuits have already been filed against them to pay for these same grievances.

In sum, the President's highly publicized media event before the Pennsylvania primary was 'full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing.' The Iranian official response has been, predictably, extremely mild compared to their previous outbursts. They cannot help but realize that nothing new has been imposed upon them; no new burden to give them an incentive to release our hostages.

"It is my hope that we have seen the last of these shallow events. It does no good for American foreign policy. It does not help the hostages. It does the public a disservice by clouding the important issues of rampant inflation, high interest rates, rising unemployment, and unbounded Russian military adventures. These are vital issues that the voters should be judging, not being whipsawed by ersatz developments on Iran."