

BOB DOLE



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DOLE SAYS U.S. ILL-PREPARED FOR PERSIAN GULF SHOWDOWN

TOPEKA, KS.-- The United States is not prepared for a military showdown in the Persian Gulf-- nor does it have the oil resources here at home to long survive a shutdown of petroleum leaving that area.

That's the assessment of Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas). Dole, speaking at a Topeka, Kansas, news conference, said that U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf region are "woefully inadequate," and that the long-promised rapid-deployment force "is a rapid-deployment farce."

Our Carriers Not Ready

"The Joint Chiefs of Staff have warned that the Soviets possess substantial advantages in both strategic and conventional forces in the Middle East-Persian Gulf-Indian Ocean area. Apparently, if one consults with Pentagon officials, or even reads Jack Anderson's Oct. 8, 1980 column, they'll learn that our latest 'show-of-strength' in the region is more show than strength," Dole said.

"For one thing, our carriers are not fully combat ready. They are rated 'C-3', with C-1 being combat ready," Dole said.

The Empty Reserve

"The really tragic aspect of all this is that our Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) is all but empty. It currently has 91 million barrels of oil in it-- barely enough to keep our nation supplied for 12 days. If President Carter had followed the advice of Senator Bill Bradley, Senator Bennett Johnston, Senator Bob Dole and others, we'd have 500 million barrels in that reserve-- and we'd be a lot more secure during this Middle East crisis. Instead, the cupboard is bare. And, with inflated oil prices, it would literally take billions more to fill it now than would have been the case 18 months ago," said Dole.