

DOLE CHARGES MUSKIE WITH TURNING FOREIGN INTO "POL. POLICY"

TOPEKA, Kan. -- At a Topeka press conference today Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) charged President Carter with "waging a desperate re-election campaign endangering U.S. national security interests with his politization of his cabinet secretaries, particularly the secretaries of state and

"Never before in our political history has a president used so extensively the Secretary of State as the point man in his campaign," Dole said, "nor allowed our traditional bipartisan foreign policy to become so polarized by campaign promises and rhetoric. Muskie has become so enmeshed in partisan politics and speeches on the campaign trail that instead of a national foreign policy, we just have a partisan political policy.

"Mr. Muskie should retreat to the sidelines and tend to the nation's business, not Mr. Carter's personal, political fortune. The world's in danger of blowing up as the Iran-Iraq war threatens to spread in the Mid-East, and our Secretary of State is out making speeches on the stump like a political hack.

"At the same time, the Secretary of Defense is out trying to make the last three-and-a-half years of Administration cutbacks, delays and cancellations on defense issues sound like President Carter has been busy building America into the mightiest military power on Dole said. "Well that's not the case and Mr. Brown knows it. Every recent increase in defense capability has been brought about by the will of the people through Congress, the Administration kicking and screaming all the way. Once the inevitable was made clear to them, like the pay increase for the volunteer army, they have then shifted position and tried to take credit for it.

"Mr. Brown, like Mr. Muskie, is eroding his domestic and international credibility in an attempt to "sell" half-truths about the Carter presidency to the electorate. In a supposedly non-political speech in El Paso ten days ago, the Secretary of Defense "misspoke" on at least one major arms project, as the Pentagon later admitted. He told a defense-oriented audience that the U.S. is as strong as ever and listed many supposed examples, including an increase of our attack helicopter fleet next year -- but those helicopters won't be ready until 1983 or later and only half of our present 1000 Cobras are equipped to fire the antitank missiles he claimed. Such exaggerations for political gain destroy the Secretary's credibility for the future," said Dole, "and Mr. Brown ought to consider joining Mr. Muskie on the sidelines until after the election, and let his boss defend his own record to the voters."