

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, May 15, 1986

CONTACT: BRENT BAHLER
(202) 224-6521

DOLE URGES NIGERIA TO DROP WHEAT IMPORT BAN

Washington, DC -- Unless Nigeria changes its mind about a recently announced plan to ban the import of wheat, the United States could decide to look elsewhere for its purchase of foreign oil, Sen. Bob Dole warned today.

Nigeria currently imports nearly 1.2 million metric tons of wheat from the U.S., but has announced it will ban imports beginning January 1, 1987. The U.S. supplies approximately 85-percent of the wheat Nigeria imports but runs a \$2.5 billion trade deficit with that country.

In a letter to Deputy Sec. of State John Whitehead, Sen. Dole said, "Losing such a large market would be a major blow" to U.S. agriculture. "A termination of U.S. wheat exports would also further undermine the U.S. trade position in Nigeria and globally," Dole wrote.

"I hope that the State Department and our embassy in Nigeria will make prompt and strenuous representations to the Nigerian government on this issue," Sen. Dole said in his letter to Whitehead, "urging that the wheat import ban plan be dropped and reminding the Nigerians that - in this era of plentiful oil - we will pick our suppliers in part based on overall trade balance considerations."

The Nigerian ban is said to be caused by a massive balance of trade problem generated by the drop in oil prices and that country's potential to increase domestic food production. Virtually all of Nigeria's exports consist of oil, and prior to the oil boom it was a net exporter of food.