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DOLE BLASTS TORRIJOS REMARKS ON PANAMA CANAL TREATIES

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole today lashed out at Panamanian General Omar Torrijos for his remarks yesterday rejecting Senate amendments to the proposed Panama Canal Treaties. "The General's closed-mind attitude toward any modification of the treaties is, in my opinion, arrogant and irresponsible. He may call the shots on this issue in Panama, but our Constitution guarantees the right of Congressional review of all international treaties, and we intend to exercise it.

"The General says he is 'not interested' in any further talk about the treaty provisions," Dole continued. "Well, I suggest that he had better start listening, because Congressional debate on the matter has just started. We are going to analyze these accords point-by-point, and we are not about to buckle under to whining or ranting by any foreign leader."

DOLE AMENDMENTS AT ISSUE

General Torrijos issued a statement during his visit to Washington on Monday warning that he would not accept any amendments to the Canal treaties which might be approved by the U.S. Senate. The General's remarks appeared aimed specifically at amendments and reservations introduced by Senator Dole on Friday of last week.

Dole said his proposals are "completely in accord with the Senate's responsibilities under Article II of the U.S. Constitution to advise and consent on international treaties concluded by the President. They should, and will, be considered in full by the U.S. Senate regardless of what threats General Torrijos may make. This is a part of our Constitutional system of government, and it will not be thwarted by foreign blusterings."

Dole's amendments and reservations would guarantee the U.S. right to priority passage through the Canal and to intervene militarily to protect the Canal; they would guarantee continued protection for American citizens in Panama; they would reduce U.S. payments to Panama substantially; they would permit the U.S. to build a new Canal anywhere in the Western hemisphere; and they would provide for review of the treaties by the House of Representatives as well as the Senate.