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"ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL" THAT TREATY BE CLARIFIED BY AMENDMENT SAYS DOLE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole said today that it is "absolutely essential" that specific American rights of defense and passage be incorporated into the Panama Canal treaties themselves. In response to remarks by U.S. negotiators Sol Linowitz and Ellsworth Bunker today before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Dole said it is clear that the United States is expected to accept much on "good faith" alone.

"Mr. Linowitz made it very clear in his remarks that the Carter-Torrijos statement last Friday would never have been made if Members of the Senate had not raised the issue of ambiguity. He said that the specifics had been 'understood' by leaders of both Panama and the United States. In my opinion, this is precisely the thing we need to avoid -- unwritten and unenforceable 'understandings.' If there is a meeting of the minds on issues concerning American defense and use rights, it should be spelled out in black and white, for all to see."

On Monday, Senator Dole proposed amendments to the Panama Canal Treaty on Permanent Neutrality containing the same language used in the Carter-Torrijos "clarification" issued last Friday. Today, Linowitz said the Administration would oppose efforts to add that language to the treaty and thereby make it legally binding when the treaty is ratified. Linowitz said that General Torrijos had not been asked to sign any agreement or understanding on clarification of treaty terms.

"The Administration cannot expect the American people to accept this verbal clarification on good faith alone," Dole said. "I am not arguing with the treaty itself, but instead with the ambiguity and uncertainty of its language. Clarification must be amended to the treaty in order to be effective."