

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE CALLS FOR NEW LONG-TERM AGREEMENT ON SOVIET GRAIN TRADE

WASHINGTON -- Citing sharply declining sales of U.S. grain to the Soviet Union, Kansas Senator Bob Dole today called on the Reagan Administration to begin negotiations on a new long-term agreement (LTA) on agricultural trade with the Russians.

Dole made the call for a new LTA in a Senate resolution co-sponsored by Illinois Senator Charles Percy, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Kansas Senator is the ranking Republican on the Senate Agriculture Committee.

According to Dole, the U.S. export market was dealt a crippling blow by the Carter grain embargo of 1980, a move that severely reduced Soviet reliance on American grain.

"There is no question the Carter embargo substantially reduced foreign sales of farm products, depressed farm prices and income, and helped increase grain purchases by the Soviets from other countries," Dole said. "It is time for the Administration to renegotiate the existing U.S.-Soviet LTA, if we are to deal with, and repair, the unwelcome effects of the embargo."

The Dole LTA resolution expresses the Senate's determination to have the President:

- 1) report to Congress his intention to initiate negotiations on a new LTA, to be effective on October 1, 1983.
- 2) seek higher minimum and maximum purchase levels and include provisions for processed, or value-added products.
- 3) no later than April 30, 1983 report to Congress on the potential economic benefits impact of a new LTA on the U.S. farm industry.

"It is clear that the Soviet authorities are prepared to negotiate. In the past year, I have met three times with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin to discuss agricultural trade, in a continuing effort to establish a dialogue with the Soviets on this key issue. I believe that we succeeded, and that as a result, there has been growing recognition on the part of others who are less than enthusiastic about selling grain to the Russians that this dialogue is important to the American farmer and simply will not go away," Dole said.

"I also travelled to Moscow last November to take part in a meeting of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Trade and Economic Council. My delegation met with a number of high-ranking Soviet officials. I am satisfied the Russians are prepared to return to being reliable customers of the U.S. if we are ready to demonstrate the resolve to return to being a reliable supplier."