

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE BLASTS JAPANESE MOVE TO DROP AUTO EXPORT QUOTAS

FINANCE COMMITTEE ACTION IS POSSIBLE

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.), Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee which has jurisdiction over international trade, today strongly criticized statements by some Japanese officials in Tokyo that their Government would not extend its voluntary restraints on automobile exports to the United States for a fourth year.

"In several personal meetings with Japanese Government officials over the past two years, I was lead to believe that Japan finally recognized its responsibilities to the other major nations involved in international trade. These responsibilities include opening its markets, refraining from unfair trade practices, and understanding that entire basic industries will not simply be discarded by any nation in the face of severe import competition without allowing the workers and firms in that industry to attempt to adjust. Prime Minister Nakasone has made laudable strides in this regard, but the publicized statement by Minister of International Trade and Industry Sosuki Uno must call into question Japan's commitment to responsible participation in world trade," Dole said.

As a result of legislation considered by Senator Dole's Finance Committee in 1981, Japan agreed to restrict voluntarily its exports of automobiles to the United States for three years, beginning in April 1981, so that the U.S. industry might adjust to the recession and import competition in an orderly manner.

Noting that the current restraints do not expire until next April, Dole expressed surprise and disappointment that the Japanese Government is considering dropping an extension of the restraints.

"The recent recovery in the U.S. automobile industry, tracking the general recovery, is a welcome harbinger of the industry's future strength. But it is premature to declare that no further export restraints will be needed to allow the industry time to complete its adjustment. The Finance Committee withheld final action on the automobile quota legislation in 1981 in return for Japan's good faith efforts on auto exports; I think Congressional patience and Japanese good faith will expire simultaneously."

Dole concluded that "the Committee will monitor closely the state of the U.S. industry and will, if Japanese trade practices threaten its recovery, take remedial steps in the absence of Japanese cooperation."