

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE ASKS FOR PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON FARM TRADE POLICY

WASHINGTON -- Citing the need to increase U.S. farm exports, Kansas Senator Bob Dole today asked President Reagan to appoint a Presidential Task Force on Agricultural Trade and Food Assistance Policy.

In a letter to the President, Dole recommended that the Task Force "review the effectiveness of the Food for Peace Program and other government-assisted foreign aid and export incentive programs in meeting world food requirements and maximizing U.S. agricultural exports."

Noting the number and diversity of federal programs involved in promoting farm exports and food assistance, Dole, the Senior Republican on the Senate Agriculture Committee, stated that "to my knowledge, no effort has even been made to rationalize their differing and, at times, contradictory objectives. I believe such an effort would result in a far more cost-effective approach to foreign assistance and would reduce overall budget outlays for domestic farm programs by increasing our agricultural exports."

Citing the interdependence of U.S. farmers and importing countries in the third-world, Dole also told the President that "our goal should be to reallocate our finite financial resources -- and our abundant agricultural resources -- to achieve a better balance between the world's food needs and the productive genius of the American farmer."

Referring to the Reagan Administration's announcement of a national agricultural export policy in March 1982, Dole indicated that "these assurances provide a sound base for development of a comprehensive and positive agricultural trade and food assistance program to meet the challenges facing American agriculture in the 1980's."

The Dole task force would also develop recommendations on how to appropriately memorialize the 30th anniversary of Public Law 480 (Food for Peace Program) on July 10, 1984. In calling for an official commemoration of the Food for Peace Program, initiated under President Eisenhower in 1954, Dole quoted the former President from a speech in 1959 in which he described the program as "an effort that I consider in full keeping with the American tradition -- that of helping people in dire need who with us are devoted to upholding and advancing the cause of freedom."

"Under P.L. 480," Dole added, "our commodities are donated or provided on concessional terms to the poorest countries under special programs. Since its inception in 1954, Food for Peace has enjoyed the unequivocal support of Presidents and members of Congress of both parties."