

News from Senator

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DOLE STATEMENT ON JORDAN ARMS SALE

WASHINGTON -- THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT BY SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE (R-KS.) ON THE RESOLUTION ON ARMS SALES TO JORDAN.

I am pleased to be joined by the distinguished Minority Leader and the chairman and the ranking minority member of the Foreign Relations Committee, and a large number of other senators, in co-sponsoring a joint resolution dealing with arms sales to Jordan.

The resolution is simple. It says that, prior to March 1, 1986, no letter of offer for any sale to Jordan of advanced weapons systems included in the administration's notification of October 21 shall be valid unless "direct and meaningful peace negotiations between Israel and Jordan are under way."

This formulation has been carefully constructed to meet the needs of all the parties in the debate over this issue.

It should enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of senators, since it encompasses two ideas strongly felt in this chamber: that direct negotiations between Jordan and Israel must be at the heart of any realistic effort to forge a regional peace and that such negotiations, if they take place, will do more than any arms to enhance the real security of both countries.

Passage of the resolution will also serve the president's needs, and I'm pleased that the administration has consented to our action on it. Most important, our formulation preserve's the President's strong hand as he deals with both Jordan and Israel, in an effort to get the peace process moving.

The resolution reflects the admiration of many us in the Senate for King Hussein's initiatives and the understanding we have of his legitimate need for an adequate defense against many of the radical forces that he confronts. For that reason, I especially regret the statements attributed to the king that our action today represents some kind of "blackmail." I hope the King didn't say that and doesn't believe it. For it's just not true. We are not trying to blackmail anyone. We are trying to take responsible actions to encourage negotiations for a true peace in the Middle East, which will be of more benefit to Jordan's security than anything else we can do.

The events of the past months -- the President's diplomacy, the King's initiatives, the forward-looking speech of Israeli Prime Minister Peres at the UN recently -- all of these offer some new hope that a real breakthrough in the peace process is possible. But we are in a very sensitive period, where many threads must come together.

This resolution will keep open the window of opportunity for that process. It will preserve our options as we deal with this evolving situation. The resolution deserves our unanimous support.