

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 1, 1991

CONTACT: WALT RIKER
(202) 224-5358

McCONNELL/LEAVENWORTH/ FT. RILEY: TORNADO SHELTERS

DOLE AMENDMENT: STUDY NEED & PLAN FOR SHELTERS AT BASES IN KANSAS

WASHINGTON -- THE U.S. SENATE, SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT WEDNESDAY, UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AN AMENDMENT AUTHORED BY SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE (R-KANSAS) DIRECTING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT TO ASSESS THE NEED AND OUTLINE PLANS FOR TORNADO SHELTERS AT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN TORNADO-PRONE STATES SUCH AS KANSAS. SENATOR DOLE'S STATEMENT SUPPORTING THE AMENDMENT TO THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZATION BILL FOLLOWS:

THREE MONTHS AGO, ON APRIL 26, A DEVASTATING TORNADO WITH WINDS APPROACHING 300 MILES PER HOUR RIPPED ACROSS KANSAS. AS MANY OF YOU SAW IN THE DRAMATIC NEWS TAPE OF THIS AWESOME TWISTER, HOMES AND BUSINESSES WERE DESTROYED AND TRAGICALLY, LIVES WERE LOST. AFTER TOURING THE TORNADO AREA, I CALLED PRESIDENT BUSH TO TELL HIM HOW SERIOUS THE DAMAGE WAS, AND I WAS GRATEFUL FOR HIS RESPONSE: THE PRESIDENT QUICKLY DECLARED A STATE OF EMERGENCY AND FEDERAL OFFICIALS WERE ON THEIR WAY TO ASSIST IN THE REBUILDING EFFORT.

THE TORNADO'S PATH ALSO WENT DIRECTLY THROUGH WICHITA'S MCCONNELL AIR FORCE BASE, CAUSING MORE THAN \$70 MILLION IN DAMAGE. THE HOSPITAL, GYM, AND RECREATION CENTER WERE TOTAL LOSSES. IN ADDITION, MORE THAN 100 UNITS OF FAMILY HOUSING WERE DESTROYED. YET, DESPITE THIS DEVASTATION--WHICH OCCURRED AROUND 6 O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING WHEN MANY MILITARY FAMILIES WERE AT HOME--NOT A SINGLE LIFE WAS LOST.

CAN'T RELY ON LUCK TO PROTECT MCCONNELL PERSONNEL & FAMILIES

WAS THAT BECAUSE THE OCCUPANTS TOOK REFUGE IN THEIR BASEMENTS OR IN SPECIAL TORNADO SHELTERS? NO! IT WAS SHEER LUCK. THESE HOUSES DON'T HAVE BASEMENTS, NOR DOES THIS HOUSING COMPLEX EVEN HAVE A TORNADO SHELTER! WHEN THE TORNADO SIRENS WENT OFF, THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE SOUGHT SHELTER IN THE SMALL CLOSETS UNDER THE STAIRS, OR WHEREVER ELSE THEY COULD. AND, MIRACULOUSLY, THESE PEOPLE ESCAPED HARM.

THIS TIME WE WERE LUCKY. REAL LUCKY. BUT, WE CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE THAT CHANCE THE NEXT TIME A TORNADO STRIKES. WE NEED TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT OUR MILITARY INSTALLATIONS ARE SAFE TO WORK AT AND LIVE ON. THAT IS WHY I AM OFFERING THIS AMENDMENT TODAY, REQUIRING THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE TO ASSESS THE NEED FOR TORNADO SHELTERS AT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN TORNADO-PRONE STATES.

I DON'T KNOW IF MCCONNELL AIR FORCE BASE IS THE ONLY INSTALLATION WITHOUT ADEQUATE PROTECTION AGAINST TORNADOES FOR ITS CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES, MILITARY PERSONNEL AND THEIR DEPENDENTS. WHAT I DO KNOW, IS THAT MCCONNELL COULD HAVE BEEN A TRAGEDY.

MCCONNELL NEEDS SHELTERS; PENTAGON MUST DRAFT PLANS

THIS AMENDMENT SIMPLY REQUIRES THAT THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ASSESS THE NEED FOR TORNADO SHELTERS AT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN TORNADO PRONE STATES, AND REPORT THIS INFORMATION TO THE CONGRESS BY APRIL 15 OF NEXT YEAR. IN ADDITION, THE AMENDMENT REQUIRES AN OUTLINE OF HIS PLANS TO BUILD SUCH SHELTERS WHERE HE DETERMINES THEM TO BE NECESSARY.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT WON'T OVERLOOK OTHER BASES IN KANSAS

WE KNOW THAT MCCONNELL AIR FORCE BASE NEEDS SUCH SHELTERS, BUT THIS AMENDMENT WILL ENSURE THAT OTHER INSTALLATIONS WITH SUCH A REQUIREMENT WILL NOT BE OVERLOOKED. THIS AMENDMENT WILL ALSO ENSURE THAT WE HAVE A PLAN FROM THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE TO ADDRESS THIS NEED FOR TORNADO SHELTERS ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS, WHEREVER THEY ARE LOCATED. I URGE MY COLLEAGUES TO SUPPORT THIS AMENDMENT.

CONGRESS CAN'T CONTROL WHERE TORNADOES GO, BUT WE CAN PROVIDE SAFE SHELTER FOR OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILIES.

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