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Dole holds out hope for Pratt's proposal

By Ray Hemman
The Hutchinson News

No matter where McDonald Douglas decides to locate its new aircraft plant, Pratt and south central Kansas already are winners in the process, said Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan.

McDonald Douglas Aircraft Co. is looking for a site for a new assembly plant for its MD-12X aircraft. The company is looking at sites in Kansas, Texas, Louisiana, Utah, Missouri and Oklahoma.

During his regular weekly telephone press conference with Kansas journalists, Dole said officials from the Pratt Community Development Corp. contacted him about McDonald Douglas.

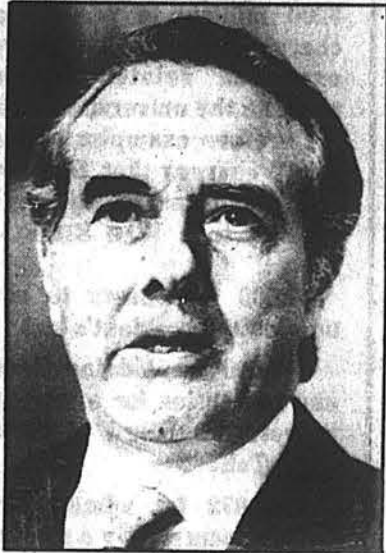
"We've been working with Pratt for a number of years," he said. "In fact, I've been out there a couple times. We've had town meetings. We've had some of the officials back here. They have been very aggressive in seeking economic development. They've got the (old Army Air Force) base there that's unique. They've got a great story to tell about the Kansas work ethic and the labor force and the quality of life. These aren't just unique to Pratt, but they are appealing when you go around talking to people."

Dole said his staff had contacted McDonnell Douglas officials and told them that the firm should consider Pratt for its plant.

And should the McDonald Douglas plant not work out, there will be more opportunities in the future, Dole said.

"It's an opportunity," he said. "It may not develop, but I think we ought to, anytime we get a chance, give it our best effort."

... They (McDonald Douglas)



Bob Dole

knew all this. They knew all the strengths and weaknesses when they included Kansas in the group. So my view is we are still in the running. It's not quite like the NCAA tournament. You may be around longer than some of the teams there. But I think we've got a case to make. We may not succeed on this, but at least there's going to be some recognition and some visibility, and maybe people will start looking to Kansas for some opportunities."

Also during the 30-minute press conference, Dole said he remained undecided on his political future. The state's senior senator and the Senate's minority leader may choose to run again in 1992 or to retire.

Dole made it clear he's not ready to be rushed.

"I haven't made a judgment yet," he said. "1992 is a long way off. The election is 20 months off. It (his decision) will be early enough for anyone and everyone."

Welcome should honor all vets, Dole says

By SHARON MONTAGUE
Staff Writer

Sen. Bob Dole hopes to be among the well-wishers greeting troops when they return to Fort Riley in May.

And he hopes their welcoming is used to honor veterans of all wars.

Dole, R-Kan., told Kansas journalists in a telephone news conference Friday that an advance group of First Division soldiers from Fort Riley should return the third week in May.

It may take until the end of June before all of the soldiers return, he said.

Asked what he would say to the soldiers, Dole said he would tell them that Kansas definitely "produced some well-disciplined Americans to fight this war."

"We have soldiers who served in Grenada, Panama, Vietnam, Lebanon," Dole said. "It seems to me this is an opportunity for Americans to honor all veterans, specifically the Gulf war veterans and then the Vietnam veterans."

"It's time to finally recognize some men and women who were literally snubbed or ignored when they came home from Vietnam."

Dole hadn't received word about when members of the Kansas National Guard's 170th



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Maintenance Co., based in Goodland, Hays and Colby, would return. He said they probably would return later than the Big Red One soldiers.

As for developments in the Gulf region, Dole said "things are in chaos" in Iraq, and the country is devastated. Turmoil abounds with Kurdish rebels fighting loyalists of Saddam Hussein in some areas and Muslims challenging the loyalists in the south.

Because of the devastation in Iraq, Dole said, he supported humanitarian aid such as food to the Iraqis.

"There are a lot of innocent Iraqis who are poor and starving," Dole said.

He said the aid should be distributed through the International Red Cross or a United Nations organization to make sure it gets to the

people who need it.

As for negotiations to bring a lasting peace to the Middle East, Dole said Israel has to be more flexible in dealing with its Arab neighbors.

"Israel doesn't have to give before the Arabs, but they all need to talk and work out their problems," Dole said. "If their Arab neighbors would recognize Israel, that would be a big step."

Dole noted that one U.N. resolution calls for Israel granting land for peace, and that should be taken into account.

Dole said that no matter how difficult the negotiations for a lasting peace may be, President George Bush is determined to see the Middle East through to a solution.

"I'm convinced Bush isn't going to give up on

this," Dole said. "He's really going to push. He decided this was an opportunity and a challenge for him to try to solve problems that have been around for thousands of years."

One thing that should come out of the conclusion of the Gulf war is a new energy plan, Dole said. But such a plan probably has less than a 50 percent chance of passing this year, he said.

Dole said most people realized that one reason for the Gulf war was energy, "and if we come out of this without an energy policy, it's going to be looked on as a failure by some."

The Gulf war already has had some political fallout.

Dole said Democrats were "witch hunting" and "frantic to find a place to land" when they criticized April Glaspie, U.S. ambassador to Iraq, saying she had misread Saddam's intentions shortly before he invaded Iraq and mistakenly told Saddam the U.S. didn't have any opinion about Arab-Arab conflicts such as that between Iraq and Kuwait.

congressional testimony this week, saying Saddam had lied about his intentions. She also said the Iraqis had edited a transcript of her meetings with them, leaving out key points.

Hutchinson News Saturday, March 23, 1991

Dole: Big Red One troops set to start coming home in late May

The Associated Press

FORT RILEY — Thousands of members of the 1st Infantry Division would begin returning from the Persian Gulf to Fort Riley about the middle of May under tentative plans announced Friday.

Col. Gary L. LaGrange, interim commander of the Kansas Army base, said some 15,000 troops were expected to return by June. The Fort Riley unit, also known as the Big Red One, started troop shipments to Saudi Arabia in November.

He said the division will not be able to leave Iraq until the official cease-fire agreement is signed. "That's why they're still in Iraq,"

"That's why I say it's a plan," he said. "And we hope it's executed just as everyone else. We'd like to see them back here safe and sound," he said.

Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., said in a telephone news conference with Kansas broadcasters and newspapers Friday that an advance party of about 250 troops will re-

turn to Fort Riley about the third week of May. He said the return of all Fort Riley troops could take a month or longer.

Dole also read from a letter he had received from Maj. Gen. Thomas G. Rhame, commander of the Kansas-based unit. Rhame described the performance of the division's soldiers as magnificent and said, "Kansas produced tough, disciplined Americans to fight this war."

LaGrange said some non-divisional units — such as the 937th Engineer Group, reserve units and National Guard units which left the United States before the 1st Infantry Division — may return sooner.

"The plan now is to greet every airplane just as we greeted the initial airplane (of soldiers)" when

175 troops returned early in March, he said.

To speed up the return, LaGrange said, the troops will switch immediately from their planes arriving at Forbes Field in Topeka to buses for the one-hour trip to Fort Riley.

"We'll bring them all back to the hangar just as we did for the 175 who returned and do a welcome ceremony with flags waving, family members there, community members there, just as we did for the others," he said.

"We intend to give each one of them a ceremony that will stand on its own," LaGrange said.

After the soldiers have been given time with their families, officials plan one big celebration at Fort Riley — which will include a parade, carnival and concert.

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Topeka joins running for aircraft plant

By Ray Hemman
The Hutchinson News

McDonnell Douglas Corp. is looking at two Kansas sites for the production of its new MD-12 aircraft, Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., said Friday.

During his weekly telephone press conference with Kansas journalists, the Senate minority leader said sources from McDonnell Douglas informed his office that Topeka had been added to the list of 12 potential sites for the new MD-12 aircraft plant. Previously, Pratt had been placed on the list.

Earlier this year, Dole had written to McDonnell Douglas, encouraging the airplane maker to consider a World War II Army Air Force Base at Pratt for its MD-12 plant. McDonnell Douglas has said it is looking outside of California, its current base for commercial aircraft, for a site to construct a manufacturing plant.

Apparently McDonnell Douglas has expanded the search to include the former Forbes Air Force Base south of Topeka. Currently, Forbes Field is a municipal airport for Topeka and is



Bob Dole

home of an Air National Guard unit flying KC-135 tankers.

"Prior to my letter to Douglas Aircraft President Bob Hood, Kansas didn't appear on their list of candidate sites," Dole said. "Then we found out they put Pratt on the list. Now we understand Topeka could be under ac-

tive review. Topeka has an existing infrastructure in Forbes field, plus they have a labor base in proximity and a quality of life that ought to be attractive."

"So we tried to outline the advantages to Mr. Hood to producing aircraft in Kansas, long known to have the reputation of being the aviation center of the United States. We've got a lot to offer, and I hope McDonnell Douglas can find the right combination in Kansas."

Jeanette Siemens, director of the Pratt Area Chamber of Commerce, said she had heard a rumor to the effect that Topeka was in the running. The competition does not concern her, however.

"We feel really confident in what we have to offer," she said. "We do feel we have very good facilities."

Pratt's airport began as a training base for B-29 pilots during World War II. The 5,500-foot-long runway is expected to be upgraded to heavy aircraft status in the future. The runway could be extended to 9,000 feet.

Industry officials familiar with

the MD-12 project, however, have said McDonnell Douglas will want a 10,000-foot runway.

Forbes Field, meanwhile, has a 13,000-foot northwest-southeast runway with a second 8,000-foot runway that runs from northeast to southwest. The runways are 200 feet wide and can handle planes of any weight.

David Stremming, president of the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority, said any aircraft from the tiny Cessna 152 trainer to the lumbering C-5B cargo plane can be accommodated.

The facility has about 2,700 acres of land that can be developed by a company, such as McDonnell Douglas.

Topeka also has a large number of machinists and the ability to find housing for large numbers of workers that might be drawn from other areas into the city for work at such a plant.

Stremming said he could not confirm or deny any contacts between the airport authority and McDonnell Douglas. The authority assures its potential clients of confidentiality until the client decides to go public.

Topeka also is connected to the coasts via I-70 and the north-south borders of the nation by the Kansas Turnpike and I-35. Mrs. Siemens said that four-lane highway was "one of those things we don't have to work with," adding that a majority of Kansas towns are not linked to Wichita or another community by a four-lane road.

Also during his 40-minute press conference, Dole said an additional \$450 million will be pumped into the Export Enhancement Program this year. Much of that money will go for wheat export subsidies while some also will be used to make dairy exports more competitive.

Dole said EEP proponents, such as himself, had a philosophical battle with other congressmen who favored making direct payments to farmers to counter low commodity prices.

"In order to move the wheat we have, primarily, which will get most of it, we have to subsidize pretty heavily in order to be competitive in the world market," Dole said.

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Dole says McDonnell Douglas eyeing 2 Kansas sites

By HARRIS NEWS SERVICE

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Topeka also is connected to the coasts via Interstate 70 and the north-south borders of the nation by the Kansas Turnpike and Interstate 35.

Siemens said that a four-lane highway was "one of those things we don't have to work with," adding that a majority of Kansas towns are not linked to Wichita or another community by a four-lane road.

Siemens said the Pratt community has much to offer beyond the airport. The area has a reputation of having a good work ethic, the community has a good water supply, three two-lane highways link the city to the outside, the community has railroad service, and it has a community college.