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WASHINGTON, D.C., NOV. 23, 1971 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole said today in a statement to the Senate that "Now is not the time to leave Europe." Dole said he believed:

"Such a move would be detrimental to our relations with Western Europe at a time when the economic climate between the two continents is already strained. It would be ominous in a military sense, and it would be politically injurious to the United States. This action, if accepted by the Senate, would undermine the President's ability to effectively discuss troop levels when he visits Moscow next year. It would also reduce the potential for negotiated efforts toward mutual and balanced troop reductions in Eastern and Western Europe. It would lower the threshold for possible nuclear war by reducing conventional conflict capabilities, and in reality, it would create a greater strain on our finances than would our present deployment in Europe.

If passed by the Senate, the troop cut proposed by the appropriations committee would seriously undermine America's present strategy for sustaining peace in Europe. The greatest danger arising from this proposal is its timing which would have it implemented at the same time that the President will be visiting Moscow. This would make it most difficult for the President to discuss mutual balanced troop withdrawals from Europe with the Russians. It would also undermine the President's credibility for bargaining or negotiating on other matters, for the Russian leadership could become increasingly prone to thinking of the United States Senate as 'Santa Claus.'

The Kansas Senator said that our strategic objective in Europe was to sustain a military and political balance calculated to insure the security and stability of Western Europe in a coherent manner, and this required military flexibility. "Reliance on tactical nuclear weapons is dangerous," Dole said, "under today's conditions great nuclear power capability is no longer a guarantee of military stalemate due to the unacceptable risks inherent in its use at any level." Dole continued:

"Therefore, if we initiated the use of nuclear weapons at an early stage of a conflict in order to avoid being militarily overwhelmed, we would face the real risk of retaliation in kind with the grim likelihood of escalation up to full strategic exchange. Therefore, a strategy of greater reliance on tactical nuclear weapons would confront us with the monumental dilemma of either risking military defeat or resorting almost at one to nuclear combat...To reduce our NATO based forces now, without a corresponding reduction in Soviet forces, would clearly increase the military risks and decrease the political security of Western Europe."

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Senator Dole maintained that, "Our present strategy of flexible response is the best and safest means of sustaining the security of Europe. The presence of our 310,000 men in the European Theater constitute a force which has been carefully calculated to satisfy such a need." He cautioned, "With a manpower deployment as thin as this, an arbitrary force reduction of 60,000 men -- 1/5 of our force -- would leave dangerous gaps."

Dole said that a troop cut would remove Soviet incentive to negotiate:

"We are now at a point when negotiations are underway or planned which could lead to far-reaching changes in Europe. We have been engaged in Berlin negotiations and Salt Talks with the Russians. The possibility now exists for a conference on European security and negotiations with the USSR and Eastern Europe on mutual and balanced force reductions between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. A cut in our own forces before these various negotiations were concluded or even begun would undercut, if not defeat our overall diplomatic objectives in Europe...The simple fact is that a unilateral reduction of our forces at this time would be interpreted by the Russians as well as our European allies as a reduction of our political commitment to defend Europe."

Dole warned that a troop cut now would seriously undermine the President at Moscow:

"Next spring, President Nixon will journey to Moscow and his agenda will be certain to include a discussion of troop reductions in Europe as well as possible moves to lower tensions in other areas of the world. If the Senate gratuitously offers the Soviets a unilateral reduction of our forces in Europe how can the American people expect their President to persuade the Russian leadership to do likewise? What can he offer in exchange? The major reduction called for in this bill would seriously diminish the negotiation position and even the leadership credibility of the President. For who in Moscow could deny the possibility of other unilateral cuts at American strength elsewhere on the globe by the United States Senate?"

The Kansas Senator said:

"History clearly shows us how the Nations of Europe react to perceptible shifts in political and military commitments. One need look back no further than Soviet-Nazi non-aggression pact or the course of Finland in recent years to appreciate the fact that nations react to preserve their own interests. The Interests of Western Europe following diminished American commitment to NATO would flow in the direction of political and economic accommodations with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Such a shift by Europe could only accrue to the immense benefit of the Soviet Union."

Dole added, "If we diminish our credibility in Europe, how can Israel and the other Nations of the Mid East watch unmoved? The friendly and moderate Arab states will be weakened and will turn more toward the Soviet Union and the radical states in the Mid East will be emboldened."