



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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MID EAST ARMS SALE PROPOSAL NOT ACCEPTABLE TO SENATE AS PACKAGE, SAYS DOLE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole said today that there is little possibility that the President's arms sales proposal will be approved by the Senate if the President insists that it be accepted as a "package."

"In effect, Congress is being tossed a complex bundle of separate recommendations, and being told 'Here it is -- take it or leave it'," Dole said. "It seems particularly ironic that a President who rejects the concept of 'linkage' in so many foreign policy areas, now insists upon linking the arms sales to three separate countries of widely differing persuasions."

"The effort to tie these arms proposals together serves to obscure the critical military and political factors that should be examined in detail for each of these separate proposals. While none of the proposed sales can be examined without considering the likely impact on the other two nations, neither can we overlook the unique factors that relate to each situation, and which must form the basis for our judgement."

"It may be that the proposed sales for all three countries are beneficial to stability in the Middle East, but this is something Congress must decide for itself after full Committee hearings. There is a legal, political and strategic basis for insisting that each nation's arms requests be examined on its own merits."

"If the President, after reviewing the actual defense needs of all three nations, is still convinced that the sales are necessary, then I suggest that the entire matter be postponed to a more suitable time. The current sensitive stage of Middle East conditions is not receptive to a large influx of major weapons purchases. Even though the aircraft would not be deliverable until the early 1980's, the arms sales themselves could be a destabilizing factor. Our attention and energies should remain focused on achievement of a responsible Middle East settlement as the first priority, and arms sales might best be postponed until that goal has been reached."