



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 1978

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FIGHTING RAISES QUESTIONS OF CANAL SAFETY, DOLE WARNS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Fighting among students Wednesday in Panama City, in which one person was killed and nine others wounded, raises important questions about the future safety of the Panama Canal and the Canal treaties' effectiveness, Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) said today.

Shooting broke out between pro-government students and students holding a meeting in protest of the Canal treaties and President Carter's visit to Panama this weekend.

"The violent opposition in Panama to President Carter's visit tomorrow reflects widespread dissatisfaction with treaty terms," Dole said.

Following is the text of Dole's statement:

"The outburst of violence in Panama City last night may be just a sample of what the future holds. Clearly, the Panama Canal Treaty confrontation is not over. This raises a number of questions about the safety of the Canal, about the effectiveness of the treaties and about the stability of the political situation in Panama.

"The violent opposition in Panama to President Carter's visit tomorrow reflects widespread dissatisfaction with treaty terms. During the treaty debate, the American people were constantly warned by the administration that failure to ratify these treaties would lead to rioting and bloodshed in Panama. The irrelevance of that forecast, as a reason for ratifying the treaties, has now been demonstrated.

"As the President goes to Panama to formally ratify the treaties, he commits his administration to their success. Together with the Panamanian regime, the administration must work just as hard for treaty compliance as it did for treaty passage. Treaty terms must be fully observed, including the 22-year transition period. That is a solemn trust to the American people, who were asked to accept these treaties in good faith.

"President Carter must make these points absolutely clear to the Panamanian government as he embarks upon his ceremonious visit to Panama this weekend."