

BOB DOLE



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AIR FORCE REPORT DOES NOT MINIMIZE NEED FOR TITAN HEARINGS, DOLE SAYS

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today re-iterated his call for hearings on the safety and effectiveness of the Titan II missile system, saying that a recent study by the Air Force had not dispelled his concerns about the system.

"Although the report says that the physical condition of the system is 'good,' it does outline several problem areas," Dole said. "I feel it is crucial that a non-military opinion be taken of the Titan II. This missile has become increasingly controversial over the past five years, as 125 major and minor leaks have been recorded during that time period.

"I am somewhat disappointed that the Air Force study offers only one recommendation, a recommendation that does not address the real safety and performance concerns about the Titan II. That is a request for congressional approval of incentive pay for the men who handle the highly toxic fuel used to power the rocket engines. The Pentagon has already stated its view that this incentive pay is unnecessary.

"But this, among other things, should be looked at thoroughly in Congress. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John Stennis (D-Miss.) has assured me that the committee will undertake a complete review of the Air Force study. But I maintain that the committee should proceed to arrange hearings on all safety and operational aspects of the Titan II as quickly as possible.

"Two recent accidents in Kansas have spelled out the necessity for these hearings. We cannot tolerate repeated evacuations and threats to the safety of the people of Kansas, nor can we tolerate hazardous working conditions to the crews who work on this system."