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TIMING OF CARTER PEACE TALKS ANNOUNCEMENT 'CURIOUS,' DOLE SAYS

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) claimed today that President Carter's announcement yesterday of a so-called resumption in Egyptian-Israeli peace talks on the Palestinian question was done "to deflect the media spotlight away from Republican candidate Ronald Reagan's important speech to the B'nai B'rith."

Last night, Reagan spoke to the national convention of the B'nai B'rith, outlining his strong commitment to Israel's security.

"Even as Mr. Reagan's speech was interrupted 30 times by applause, President Carter was attempting to undercut those remarks with his puffed-up piece of demagogic statesmanship," Dole said. "Sitting on the sidelines, President Carter timed the announcement to deflect the media spotlight away from the Republican candidate in a tactic increasingly recognized as typical of the Carter-Mondale campaign -- using critical diplomatic issues for personal and political gain. President Carter is abusing his office and his authority in a desperate attempt to revive his standings in the polls and win re-election."

"President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin are unwilling accomplices dependent on an American goodwill vital to their security amid a sea of enemies. This goodwill is dispensed by the most political U.S. president in recent years, yet, realistically there is little the Egyptians and Israelis can do without undercutting their future support from President Carter."

"What was actually accomplished in this 'dramatic' bit of statesmanship? No timetable was indicated. The Egyptian foreign minister reported that the agreement referred only to 'preparatory talks' and 'cannot be considered the resumption of negotiations.' Prime Minister Begin, meanwhile, claimed he had not changed any of his positions on the key issues which caused the negotiations to originally break off. This 'dramatic' progress caused the President's special Middle East envoy, Sol Linowitz, to announce the results in Cairo yesterday claiming sanctimoniously, 'We're dealing with issues of war and peace. I'm not here on a political mission.' Shortly thereafter, half a world away, President Carter was announcing this piece of political fluff as a significant step forward."

"This kind of tactic may help President Carter politically in the short run, but it will undermine any attempts to build a lasting Middle East peace structure. The American public is a little more sophisticated than the President thinks. But, these political cheap shots are typical of President Carter's campaigns. This is just the beginning. We can expect sudden developments on the hostage crisis in Iran, although perhaps a little closer to November. We can look forward to a timely resumption of serious arms reduction talks with the Soviet Union, and perhaps new trade understandings with Japan limiting imports or increasing exports. Perhaps we may hear of new agreements with President Carter's chief supporter in China, Deng Xiaoping."

"Whatever these dramatic events are, we can be sure of one thing: like last night's revelation, six months from now they will signify little and few will remember them. What will be the new storm in a teacup, President Carter?"