

Bob Dole



NEWS

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CHINA & WHEAT

DOLE TO CHINA ON WHEAT THREAT: "KNOCK IT OFF!"

SENATOR CONFIDENT BEIJING UNDERSTANDS "INAPPROPRIATENESS" OF
TRADE RETALIATION; DOLE VOTES TO SUSTAIN BUSH VETO OF CONDITIONS
ON MFN FOR CHINA -- 300,000 U.S. JOBS ON LINE IF MFN REJECTED

WASHINGTON -- Telling Chinese officials to "Knock it off!", Kansas Senator Bob Dole said today he was confident Beijing would drop its threat to cut off wheat purchases from the U.S. in retaliation for the Administration's decision to sell F-16 jet fighters to Taiwan.

Dole made those comments on the Senate floor today as he voted to support President Bush's veto of efforts to add conditions to Most Favored Nation status for China. The Kansas Senator said the only reason the issue was even put to a vote again this year was pure politics, an opportunity for Democrats "to bash George Bush 33 days before the Presidential election." Dole also said as many as 300,000 American jobs could be lost if MFN denial started a costly trade war with China.

DOLE ON CHINESE WHEAT THREATS

"I also want to say a few words about one matter that has been especially troubling to me -- a recent threat reportedly made by some unnamed Chinese agriculture ministry official that the P.R.C. might retaliate for our sale of F-16's to Taiwan by cutting off wheat purchases from the U.S.

"I have spent a lot of time these past couple of weeks working to make sure that the Chinese do not follow through on that reckless threat.

"I've met the Chinese Ambassador in my office. I've spoken to him several times on the phone. I've joined eight other Senators in signing a letter to him, putting him and his government on clear notice that those kinds of threats are intolerable. I and my staff have had countless conversations with administration officials and others in touch with the Chinese government, to urge that the message be sent to Beijing in the strongest possible terms: Knock it off!

"And, while I can't say categorically that I have unequivocal and precise commitments from the Chinese government that it has backed off, I can inform the Senate that the totality of the communications I have had make me very confident that the Chinese now understand the inappropriateness of even considering retaliation through wheat purchases, for something that has nothing whatsoever to do with wheat or any other trade issue.

"If I didn't feel that way, I wouldn't vote the way I am about to vote.

"And if any further communication to China be necessary, let me make clear: I and many other senators are watching very closely future Chinese activities in this area."

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, TROUBLING ARMS SALES

Admonishing China for its human rights abuses and irresponsible arms sales, Dole said MFN can't be "an all-purpose club to beat the Chinese over the head with on every issue under the sun. That is not what MFN is for." As the world's only superpower, Dole said the U.S. has far more effective diplomatic and economic tools to battle the Chinese on these troubling issues.

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