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DOLE REQUESTS PANAMA CANAL INFORMATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole today requested "all pertinent details" regarding the proposed Panama Canal treaties and the diplomatic climate in Panama. In a letter to Richard Wyrrough, Senior Treaty Advisor in the Office of Panamanian Affairs at the State Department, Dole outlined a series of questions he called "central to the treaty issue."

Following is the text of Dole's letter to Wyrrough:

In view of increasing pressures on Congress by this Administration to support its new treaties ceding control over the Panama Canal, I feel it is extremely important to have all pertinent details at our disposal regarding the treaties themselves and the diplomatic climate in Panama. To date, the White House has provided only the barest outline of what are said to be the "basic elements" of the "agreement in principle" on the Canal.

Still unanswered are many of the questions central to the treaty issue, including the following:

What extent of responsibility for Canal operations will the United States exercise during the period of the basic treaty, and what will be the rate of transfer to Panamanian control over the next 23 years?

Who will determine what land and water areas and facilities remain accessible to the United States for operation and maintenance during the basic treaty period?

Who will determine whether the neutrality of the Canal has been threatened to the extent that U.S. intervention is justified under the provisions of the treaties?

In addition, I feel that a better understanding of the political and diplomatic climate is essential to the entire issue. In particular:

To what extent are fears about potential sabotage and/or guerilla warfare justified according to the best available professional judgement of current conditions in Panama?

What extent of popular acceptance are the new treaties likely to face among Panamanians themselves? Is there reason to believe that treaty terms may be unacceptable to the majority of Panamanian citizens, as they may well be to the majority of Americans?

Your cooperation in providing detailed information relating to these questions and to the specific provisions of the proposed treaties will be appreciated.

Please advise as well, when the full texts of the two Panama Canal Treaties will be available for inspection.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this inquiry.