



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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DOLE HEARS PANAMA CANAL EMPLOYEES ATTACK TREATY

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole met late Monday with five U.S. residents of the Panama Canal Zone, who say that the State Department has been misrepresenting the extent of support for the proposed Panama Canal treaties, and its impact on Canal Zone employees.

The five residents, both employees and dependents, met with Senator Dole for almost an hour to provide insight on some lesser known aspects of the Canal treaty negotiations and treaty provisions. Despite State Department comments to the contrary, the residents said that a clear majority of both U.S. citizens and Panamanians in Panama are opposed to the treaties proposed by the Carter Administration. "There will be violence in Panama whether or not these treaties are ratified by the U.S. Senate," one Canal employee pointed out. "Most Panamanians either feel the treaties go too far, or don't go far enough."

The employees said there will be a mass exodus of American residents from the Canal Zone "just as soon as this treaty is ratified." Most of those meeting with Dole said they planned to leave immediately if the Senate approves the treaties. They also pointed out that rival political parties within Panama concur that any successor government to that of Torrijos' will repudiate the present treaties if they go into effect.

Dole said he appreciated the opportunity "to hear the frank views of those who are in contact with the Canal Zone employees and Panamanians on a day-to-day basis," and said their comments before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee should be carefully considered by all members of the Senate.

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