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DOLE REJECTS ANY CARTER-TORRIJOS "CLARIFICATION" OF TREATY TERMS

Senator Bob Dole said today that no joint statement or verbal "understanding" between President Carter and General Torrijos of Panama can fully resolve concern about U.S. rights under the proposed Panama Canal Treaties. "It's not that simple," Dole said. "A friendly verbal agreement today does not guarantee our security tomorrow. To clarify a treaty, the treaty itself needs to be specific. The Canal Treaties are in many ways unspecific, and they must be directly modified."

Senator Dole said he was pleased with statements earlier today by former Secretaries of State Dean Rusk and Henry Kissinger that the Senate itself should attach interpretations to the Canal Treaties to clarify ambiguous provisions. "Although there may be disagreements about the best way to modify the Treaties, some of our most experienced foreign policy statesmen have agreed that Senate interpretations are necessary," Dole pointed out. "I fully agree, and think it is essential that these Treaties be directly amended." Both Rusk and Kissinger testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this morning.

Dole is the first member of the Senate to introduce formal amendments and reservations to the Panama Canal Treaties. Two of the amendments specifically guarantee the U.S. right to militarily intervene to protect the Canal's neutrality, and the right to "priority passage" for U.S. ships during wartime. Amendment of the Treaties would not amount to rejection, but could require renegotiation on specific points at issue.