



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE PROPOSAL INDICATES NEED FOR U.S. INVOLVEMENT

The following is the text of a floor statement by Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.):

ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN PEACE PROPOSAL

Mr. President, yesterday the Israeli Cabinet approved the American sponsored compromise on the final two issues which remained obstacles to a mid-East peace treaty. With the signing of such a document next week, a great opportunity for peace, in a land mostly associated in the past 30 years with war and terrorism, will again be in reach to the peoples of Israel and Egypt. After so many false starts in this long negotiation process, it seems that at last a treaty has resulted; but Mr. President, does this mean peace? Have we reached the basis for an enduring workable agreement? All indications are hopeful and it is the opinion of this Senator that we can look, with cautious optimism, toward a permanent settlement between Egypt and Israel. It might be unwise to make a hasty judgment on the substance of a treaty proposal for which we have very few details yet—we don't want to fall into a repetition of the premature euphoria following the Camp David meetings. However, it is the understanding of this Senator that the right mix of ingredients has finally been found from which a true peace may emerge.

The key ingredient has been the willingness of the United States to get strongly involved and fully committed in the settlement process. The world has just witnessed what the power of the presidency of the United States can accomplish when applied with forcefulness and dedication. President Carter deserves the praise not just of all Americans, but from the peoples of every nation, for the faith and effort he personally pledged for the great cause of peace.

Certainly, the compromises made between two men of genuine good will, Prime Minister Begin of Israel and President Sadat of Egypt, were essential. But events have proved that there can be no settlement without the participation of the United States. For two years efforts to bring all parties together in Geneva failed. Only when President Carter put himself on the line, with direct U.S. intervention and promise of support and aid, were the peoples of the mid-East able to feel confident enough to compromise. The mid-East has long been a tinderbox, filled with volatile passions, and it has taken the steadying hand of a strong American presence and involvement to keep the chance for peace alive.

The United States is capable of such action only when it presents the image of a strong and capable nation, confidently and wisely dealing with the crises in world events. The people of the Middle East need to feel they can depend on us. They were severely shaken by the loss of Iran and our failure to take any steps to prevent the Shah's overthrow.

In the past the obstacles to peace have often seemed insurmountable. Our course in the future will not be easy. The present agreement postpones many difficulties that we must be prepared to face in the coming months. The Palestinian question, in particular, has troubled all sides. The Israelis, with good reason, fear the establishment of an autonomous Palestinian state, flanking them on both the East and the West, in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank. Yet to solve this complex problem in a way that will not leave Sadat out in the cold from his Arab neighbors must be a major concern to us. We have seen in Iran how the loss of one strong man can quickly turn around the entire complexion of a government. If Sadat is ostracized and left increasingly vulnerable, the attempt to hold the peace agreement together will become more difficult than the achievement of a treaty has proved to be.

The United States must continue to show willingness to dedicate itself to peace by projecting a strong commitment, a definite involvement, in the affairs of the Middle East. And the Senator from Kansas believes he is speaking with the view of the entire Congress when he says that we will support all such efforts to bring this painful process to a successful conclusion. But only by maintaining a strong America will we maintain the credibility to act forcefully abroad. There is no partisan feeling on this vital issue, only a unanimous desire for peace and success.