



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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DOLE SAYS SALT TREATY SHOULD BE APPROACHED POSITIVELY

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) said today,

"I would like to congratulate President Carter and the American negotiating team for completing a second and more comprehensive strategic arms limitation treaty.

"Let there be no mistake: The Senate of the United States and, indeed, the people of the United States, wish to reduce world tension and slow the arms race. I welcome the news that an agreement has been reached. With this accomplished, public debate can begin in earnest on the merits of the treaty itself. In my opinion, no more important treaty has been placed before the Senate since Woodrow Wilson returned from Europe with the Versailles Pact in 1919," Dole said.

"We would do well to recall that it was inflexibility--indeed, intransigence--on both sides, on the part of President Wilson and some members of the U.S. Senate, that led to disaster over the Versailles treaty. Today I would like to call for a spirit of cooperation and flexibility as we begin these discussions. The temptation to let partisan politics seep into this debate will be great, both for the Administration and for members of the Senate. I hope that will not be the case. We cannot, as a nation, afford a partisan fight, with one side portrayed as war mongers, the other as sell-out artists.

"I believe, as is stated in the Constitution, that it is the responsibility of the Senate to provide our advice and consent as a full partner towards this and all treaties. The Panama Canal treaty took seven months to complete. The SALT II agreements are far more complex, more detailed, and it will probably be many months before a final vote is taken. The SALT II treaty must be an opportunity for the Senate to express a new bipartisanship in foreign policy. The SALT II debate and final vote, be it for ratification or against, will provide a statement of the future foreign policies and defense policies that will guide this country for decades to come, and we must reach a consensus on this if at all possible," stated Dole.

STRATEGIC POLITICAL CONCERNS

"In the past seven years since the signing of SALT I, the position of the U.S. in the world has become more and more precarious, from a position of strategic superiority to rough equivalence. With such a background, SALT II must be viewed on its merits as it affects today's strategic balance as well as tomorrow's; hence, SALT II cannot be sold on promises of future weapons initiatives. In the same vein ratification of SALT II must not provide a perception of U.S. strategic inferiority and to such end, it must not prohibit necessary force modernizations. We must remember--and the American public must realize--that the U.S. is not equal in conventional or theatre forces, and therefore to maintain our credibility in geopolitical diplomacy we must have at the very least parity in strategic terms. SALT and the arms control process is an integral part of our national security, and not the opposite.

TRUST AND LINKAGE

"As the Senate studies the SALT II agreement the events in the world, as they relate to the U.S. and the Soviet Union, will, of course, be of some consequence when marginal aspects of the treaty are debated. It cannot go unnoticed that the Soviets have been an unstable influence in Africa, Afghanistan and other areas of the world. Most recently they have been receptive to human rights overtures, such as the spy-dissident exchange. However, at the same time, a new Soviet submarine has emerged in Cuba again, raising questions of violations of the 1962 offensive arms agreement. The Senator from Kansas would like to trust the Russians in an arms control pact, but history has taught this Senator that the Soviets will take advantage of all ambiguities in any treaty. Nor is this an unreasonable assumption. The New Republic--a publication which is not known to be particu-

larly 'hard line'--says this week that they believe the Soviets will cheat, given half a chance. One thing we must do is ensure that they don't get that half chance,"said Dole.

VERIFICATION

"We must not delude ourselves that compliance with the treaty provisions will follow automatically under the "spirit" of arms control. Only in matters that are explicitly and legally covered in the treaty can we expect Soviet compliance. The past has shown that the Soviets have exploited every loophole of SALT I, and with that in mind, we must review SALT II. To this end, all provisions must be satisfactorily verifiable so that no cheating that might endanger our national security or alter the strategic balance can go undetected.

"As we have sustained a significant setback our intelligence capabilities because of the turmoil in Iran, our "national technical means" of verification have been put into question. All efforts to compensate for this loss must provide us with the ability to determine if the Soviets are testing or deploying the SS-18 with more than 10 warheads per missile. We must have the ability to determine if the Backfire Bomber is equipped with cruise missiles and if it is being deployed such that it is capable of strategic strikes against the United States. And we must not tolerate Soviet practices having the effect of impairing national means of verification or otherwise interfering with our ability to monitor every aspect of Soviet compliance. Recent incidents prove we must approach SALT II carefully, with verification and our national defense requirements firmly in mind," Dole continued.

"As I have said before, I hope we can approve this treaty. We will, if it can be demonstrated that it is a good treaty. The American people want arms reduction. But they also want security. I pledge to work to see they get both," Dole concluded.