

News from Senator

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SALT TREATY MUST STAND ON ITS OWN MERITS, DOLE SAYS

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.), on the eve of the initialling of the U.S.-Soviet strategic arms limitation agreement, said that from the United States' point of view, the treaty should not "represent diplomatic weakness because we have failed to maintain sufficient military strength. If this treaty cannot stand on its own merits, then it should not be approved by the Senate -- it is not better for the United States to have a bad treaty than none at all."

"Future relations between the two superpowers will be measured from this new benchmark, just as they have in the past been measured against the genesis of detente with SALT I. I agree with those who believe the strategic arms limitation talks are an essential element in our broader and continuing attempts to bridge the gap between our two differing systems, with often opposing interests. It is my belief, however, that while the SALT process is vital to our future, it remains to be seen if this SALT II treaty is the standard against which our relations with Russia ought to be based in the coming decade.

PEACE BETWEEN EQUALS

"The United States refrained for 25 years from creating a world empire based on our nuclear superiority. We are a nation that desires peace, peace that has been tempered only by our love of freedom and self-determination, which saw us drawn into Asian conflicts in Korea and Vietnam. By devoting vast resources to military and strategic arms and by greatly outspending the United States, Russia reached a situation of nuclear parity and is striving to achieve strategic superiority. We must examine this treaty carefully in the coming months of Senate hearings and debates to make sure America does not fall into the same trap that befell England before World War II, such that Prime Minister Chamberlain was forced to confess after the Munich summit, 'Our past experience has shown us only too clearly that weakness in armed strength means weakness in diplomacy.'

"There are many in the Senate who have already decided to support this treaty, and there are many in the Senate who have decided to oppose it. But I have not yet had the opportunity to read the full text of the agreement. I have heard the argument that this treaty is better than no treaty at all. I want to make sure this treaty does not just represent diplomatic weakness because we have failed to maintain sufficient military strength. If this treaty cannot stand on its own merits, then it should not be approved by the Senate -- it is not better for the United States to have a bad treaty than none at all.

RESERVATIONS ABOUT SALT II

"After much study and discussion with strategic experts, including General Haig, NATO commander; Dr. Kissinger, former secretary of state; Dr. Fritz Kraemer, former Pentagon strategic affairs advisor; Dr. Fred Ikle, former head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; and Lord Chalfont, defense advisor to Prime Minister Thatcher; several colleagues and I joined in writing an open letter expressing our concerns over the drift the SALT negotiations had taken since President Brezhnev rejected President Carter's March 1977 proposals. From the indications I have received from Vienna so far, I believe our reservations about this treaty are still justified. Over the next several months, when the Senate holds hearings and begins debate, it is my hope that these issues we have raised will be properly addressed and evaluated in the context of the actual treaty language we will have at hand."