

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE CALLS FOR NORTH AMERICAN SUMMIT TO DISCUSS ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN

WASHINGTON-- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) today told members of three House subcommittees that he believes the United States, Canada and Mexico should participate in a summit meeting to discuss problems "of mutual concern."

Senator Dole and Congressman Arlan Stangeland (R.-Minnesota) proposed last spring that the United States initiate such a summit. The proposal is contained in a House resolution.

"What we seek to accomplish in this resolution should be made clear at the start of these hearings," Dole testified before the House Subcommittees on Inter-American Affairs, International Organizations, and International Economic Policy and Trade. "We are not calling for a North American 'Common Market', nor do we seek to dictate the type or number of issues to be discussed. Simply, we are calling for a time to talk-- an opportunity for these three great nations, whose policies at times in the past have conflicted, to sit down and discuss pressing issues and hopefully form a consensus for their ultimate solution."

Speaking of America's relationship with its neighbors, Dole said, "Both our self-interest and our well-earned reputation for fairness and generosity demand that we inaugurate a new and different association with both our North American neighbors. To our national credit, despite the provocations of our critics, we have always approached our relationships with an eye towards the realities and a bias towards generosity. In this legislation, we merely attempt to correct an historic lack of proportion in our dealings with Mexico and Canada. Our resolution is aimed at giving all three nations an intensive opportunity for mutual assistance based on the reality of our shared geography: Our shared goals for our citizens and our shared problems. It is a matter of some irony that such an initiative should be so late in coming," said Dole, "But, late or not, it is time for us to adjust to the new reality of our neighbors coming of age."

Dole said "some may say that our interest in a new relationship is based on the new position of our neighbors with regard to energy. And there is no doubt that that plays a role. To ignore that would be foolish, just as it would be foolish of other nations to ignore the giant capacity of American agricultural and industrial strength. It is this very aura of suspicion which our legislation is aimed at dispelling," said Dole.