

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE SUPPORTS FIRM RESPONSE TO IRAN; CALLS ON ALLIES TO BACK U.S.

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today supported President Carter's "belated response" to the Ayatollah Khomeini's threat to put U.S. hostages on trial as spies, and suggested that, due to the attack on the U.S. embassy in Pakistan, "future firm actions may be necessary."

"The situation has been unresolved for too long in the hope of a peaceful solution, but now the perception of American impotence is spreading," Dole said. "The attack on the U.S. embassy in Pakistan is a direct result of Khomeini's success in Teheran, building on the image of American retreat and indecision throughout the world for the past several years."

Dole said he supported President Carter's announcement yesterday that raised the possibility of taking military action against Iran. "If the President decides military action is required, then the American people, and certainly this senator, will back him 100 percent. The Ayatollah is pushing the United States to the limit. It may be that we need some sort of bargaining chip they will understand, that will force them to rational negotiation and the immediate release of the hostages. Time is increasingly working against us. The senseless attack on the U.S. embassy in Pakistan that led to the tragic death of one of our Marines may soon be repeated elsewhere.

"Saving the hostages is our sole objective. We have no recourse if they are murdered, except senseless and counterproductive punitive action. No matter how emotionally satisfying, it would not bring back the hostages and would probably result in further American lives lost."

CALLS ON ALLIED SUPPORT

Dole called for "the active support of U.S. allies and all other nations in the world" to press for the release of the hostages. "Iran has acted with a flagrant disregard for international law," he said. "When this law breaks down, every embassy everywhere will be subject to blackmail at gunpoint."

Noting that 13 of the 14 members of the U.N. Security Council refused to go on record against spy trials for the 49 remaining American hostages, Dole said the time for restrained official statements was over. "This crisis has ramifications far beyond, and much more dangerous than, the potential loss of Iranian oil to the world," he said. "We want to know who is going to back international law and order now; we want to know which friends we can count on when the chips are down."

Dole previously introduced a Senate resolution calling on the President to enlist the support of all nations by urging them to close their embassies in Iran, withdraw their diplomats, and suspend diplomatic relations until the hostages are freed. He further urged a voluntary, international embargo on the purchase of Iranian oil, with U.S. aid in distributing remaining supplies so that the burden falls equitably on all former purchasers.