News from Senator

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DEFENSE PROGRAMS MUST TAKE SHARE OF SPENDING CUTS, DOLE SAYS

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kan.) made the following statement today on the floor of the senate concerning defense appropriations for the B-1 and MX programs:

"I have been arguing for a considerable time that in a period of very severe budgetary restraint, defense programs must take their fair share of the cuts that have to be made in spending programs this year. After seeing so many difficult cutbacks we have had to make on the domestic side, and after thinking about more cuts we may have to consider in just a few weeks in these same domestic programs, I believe that we have to look very closely at any opportunities for savings on defense.

"Because of my concern about defense costs, I have already opposed a number of proposed additions to the defense appropriations bill, even though some of these items-- like the reactivation of the USS Iowa-- might have been extremely cost-effective. It has also seemed to me that the very expensive, major programs-- like the B-1 and the MX, especially the B-1-- are programs where we should ask seriously whether we can possibly afford the enormous costs. Those costs could be over $20 billion for the B-1 (some estimates have said as much as $40 billion) and over $20 billion to deploy just the first 36 or 40 of the MX missiles. Together with the advanced technology bomber the Administration has also requested, these programs might add up to over $100 billion.

"It seems to me that even though we have a responsibility to do everything necessary to insure an adequate defense for this country, we also have a responsibility to try to contain such huge costs if it is at all possible. After all, if our economy is damaged by the very programs that should give us greater security, it is hard to be sure that we have really come out ahead.

"But two weeks ago the President announced a comprehensive arms control program, including proposals for negotiations on strategic weapons as well as the talks in progress now at Geneva on intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe and efforts to cut back convention forces there and find ways to reduce the risks of miscalculation or surprise attack in the use of cataclysmic nuclear weapons.

"These proposals, I believe, offer the first real hope we have had for a long time to make progress on arms control with the Soviet Union. The importance of this undertaking is so great that I think we must do everything we possibly can to ensure that these negotiations come to a successful conclusion, so that we need never use in war the weapons that are in our arsenal.

"To back this Administration as fully as we can in such a crucial arms control effort, we must send the signal that we are prepared to do whatever is necessary to maintain our military strength however negotiations may proceed. Only with such a clear sign of determination on our part I believe, do we have a chance to persuade the Soviets to deal seriously--in other words, to achieve an outcome on our own terms and not just on Soviet terms.

"So, in spite of the very great costs, I support going ahead with the B-1 and MX programs today--and I am opposing amendments to the defense appropriations bill that would cut funds for these programs--in the hope that with serious progress in arms control, our military expenditures over the longer term can be reduced far more substantially than by abandoning these weapons now."

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