

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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JERUSALEM EMBASSY

DOLE INTRODUCES BIPARTISAN "JERUSALEM EMBASSY RELOCATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT" OF 1995; "IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME" TO MOVE U.S. EMBASSY FROM TEL AVIV TO JERUSALEM BY 1999

Today I am introducing legislation to move the United States Embassy in Israel to the capital of Jerusalem. I am pleased to be joined by Senators Kyl, Inouye, D'Amato, Helms, Brown, Mack, Specter, Bond, Pressler, and Thurmond. Because I know the interest level in this legislation is high, I ask consent that the bill be held at the desk through tomorrow so that senators have an opportunity to be original co-sponsors. I also ask that a summary of the legislation be included at the conclusion of my remarks.

The issue of Jerusalem has many elements -- emotional, religious, cultural, spiritual, historical and political. Jerusalem may be the most remarkable city in the world. Three of the world's great religions have roots in Jerusalem. No other city has been the capital of the same country, inhabited by the same people speaking the same language worshipping the same God today as it was 3000 years ago. And yet the United States does not maintain its embassy in Jerusalem.

This issue of where to place the American Embassy in Israel has a long history in the U.S. Congress. Successive Congresses and successive administrations have been on opposite sides.

At the outset, I want to commend the leadership of some of my colleagues on this issue, in particular Senator Moynihan and Senator D'Amato. They have led congressional efforts to relocate the U.S. Embassy for many years.

Unchallengeable U.S. Commitment to Middle East Peace Process

Years ago, I was one of those who expressed concerns about the timing of proposals to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. I felt that doing so could have undermined our efforts and ability to act as a peacemaker. However, much has changed since those earlier efforts. The Soviet Union is gone. We successfully waged war -- with Arab allies -- to liberate Kuwait. Jordan and the P.L.O. have joined Egypt in beginning a formal peace process with Israel. The peace process has made great strides and our commitment to that process is unchallengeable. Delaying the process of moving the Embassy now only sends a signal of false hopes.

I was proud to join with 92 of my colleagues -- Republican and Democratic -- in signing the D'Amato-Moynihan letter last March urging the administration to move our Embassy no later than May 1999. As the letter pointed out to Secretary Christopher, the United States enjoys diplomatic relations with 184 countries -- but Israel is the only country in which our Embassy is not located in the functioning capital.

Yesterday, I met with Prime Minister Rabin, and we discussed this legislation. As Prime Minister Rabin said after our meeting, the people of Israel "would welcome recognition of the fact that Jerusalem is the capital" of Israel, and "we will welcome embassies that will come."

The time has come to move beyond letters, expressions of support and Sense of the Congress resolutions. The time has come to enact legislation that will get the job done -- to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem by May 1999. The Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Act of 1995 is that legislation.

Bipartisan Support for Initiative

This is not a partisan effort, and this is not an effort to undermine the peace process. Democrats have historically supported efforts to move the Embassy. In fact, as the

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Democratic Leader Tom Daschle pointed out in a speech last night, support for moving the Embassy to Jerusalem has been in the Democratic Party's platform since 1968. It has been in the Republican platform for many years as well.

Placing the American Embassy in Jerusalem is an idea whose time has come. Construction will take time, but we should begin soon. The fact is that Jerusalem has been and should remain the undivided capital of Israel. Let me close by quoting from a speech I gave 18 years ago in Jerusalem: "In the search for a solution to the dilemma which Israel's first president called 'a conflict of right with right,' whatever else may be negotiable, the capital of Israel clearly is not."

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Remarks delivered on the Senate floor at approximately 3:10 p.m.

THE JERUSALEM EMBASSY RELOCATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT OF 1995

Provides that construction begin on a new United States Embassy in Jerusalem in 1996, and the new Embassy open by May 31, 1999.

Section 1 states the short title of the legislation is the Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Implementation Act of 1995.

Section 2 states Congressional findings on the history and status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Section 3 establishes a timetable for the relocation of the United States Embassy including groundbreaking by December 31, 1996, and official opening no later than May 31, 1999. Section 3(b) withholds 50% (approximately \$200-250 million) of fiscal year 1997 State Department foreign construction funds until the Secretary of State determines and reports to Congress that construction has begun. Section 3(c) withholds 50% of fiscal year 1999 foreign construction funds until the Secretary of State determines and reports to Congress that the embassy has opened.

Section 4 earmarks \$5 million of already appropriated fiscal year 1995 funds for immediate costs associated with relocating the Embassy.

Section 5 authorizes \$25 million for fiscal year 1996 and \$75 million for fiscal year 1997. Estimates are based on new embassy construction in a high-threat area.

Section 6 requires a report within 30 days by the Secretary of State detailing the Department's plan to implement the Act, including estimated dates of completion and costs.

Section 7 requires semiannual reports to Congress on implementation of the Act.

Section 8 defines "United States Embassy" to include both the offices of the diplomatic mission and the residence of the chief of mission.