

News from Senator

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE REGARDING THE FAILURE OF THE RESCUE ATTEMPT IN IRAN

This is a sad morning for all Americans. It is not a time for partisan advantage or carping criticism. It is important that we join together in extending our deepest sympathy to the families of eight heroic men who lost their lives in attempting to rescue the hostages who have been illegally and wantonly imprisoned by Iranian militants for over six months.

In the last few weeks, I have not hesitated to raise questions about what I perceived to be a confused and often contradictory approach followed by the Carter White House in dealing with the Iranian crisis. In days to come, there will undoubtedly be new questions raised about the nature of the aborted mission, its genesis and development, and our failure to consult with European allies or the Congress itself.

But this morning, any American who shares my concern about the lives of our hostages, or worries with me about the effect of the prolonged crisis on American prestige and self-respect must yield to the President's honest and understandable desire to bring the crisis to a successful close. He has manfully accepted responsibility for the mission's failure, and he has access to information not yet available to the rest of us.

Until we know more, I for one will not attack a President whose frustration and disappointment are no less than my own. I do hope that we will get back on track in applying sustained economic and political pressure on Iran, and that all Americans can emerge from this terrible morning with a renewed determination to persevere and, if the need arises, to support military force if it can in the future secure the release of our fellow citizens.

Our hostages are more important than domestic politics. They should take precedence over anything else. If we hope to welcome them back to American soil, we must stand together as one people. We are unified in our grief for those who have died. We must be equally unified in our determination to prevent further loss of life. Those who died in the Iranian desert, as to those who continue to languish in the Iranian Embassy, we owe nothing less.