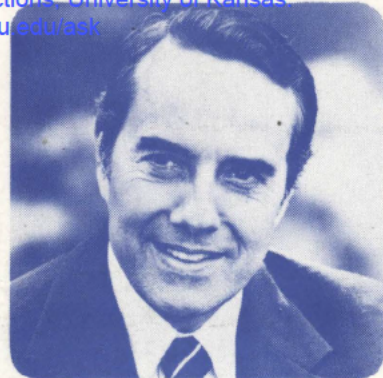


BOB DOLE



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DOLE CALLS FOR RE-EVALUATION OF CUBAN REFUGEE POLICY IN WAKE OF SKYJACKINGS

WASHINGTON -- Spurred by last week's skyjackings by Cubans of U.S. airliners, Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today called on the Carter Administration to devise and implement a repatriation plan for those Cuban refugees "who are causing disruption or disturbances in the United States," and for those who wish to return to Cuba for their own reasons."

The Dole recommendation comes in the form of a sense of the Senate resolution. The resolution also calls on the Administration to submit a report to the Senate detailing progress on the repatriation plan and suggesting legislation needed to carry it out, to be submitted within 30 days of enactment of the resolution.

"Last week's wave of skyjacking by Cuban refugees trying to force their way back to Cuba dramatizes the failure of the United States to come up with a workable national refugee policy," Dole said. "From the very beginning of this vast outpouring from Cuba, the United States has failed to adequately respond to the crisis, seemingly allowing Fidel Castro's propaganda statements to dictate our official reaction, while the demands of refugee groups themselves determine our immigration policies.

"We must devise a comprehensive policy to deal with the refugees, and to remove the skyjacking danger to American citizens. This should be a matter of the highest priority to those designated officials charged with responsibility for immigration and refugee policy, and to the President and the secretary of state.

"President Carter's decision to let over 100,000 Cubans enter the country -- not as individual refugees but en masse as applicants for asylum -- has had unfortunate consequences which would probably have been avoided if normal immigration procedures had been adhered to. An unknown number of undesirables entered the country, including criminals and the severely mentally ill. As Arturo Cobo, coordinator for volunteers at the Key West Cuban refugee center, said, 'Fidel has made a fool of us once again by sending prisoners and not families (of Cubans already settled here).' According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric Fisher, 'Castro is not even trying to disguise these prisoners. They get off the boats with the same pants and shoes and the obvious haircuts that they had in prison.'

"It is this Administration's lack of foresight and planning, having made the decision to let the Cubans enter as a huge group with only perfunctory screening, and the subsequent failure to come forward with a consistent refugee policy, that has brought us to the present dilemma.

"It should be this Administration's first priority to immediately devise a plan to weed out the criminal element from the recent flood from Cuba, and to send them, and all others who decide to go, back to their homeland. For over five months, such a plan has been necessary but not forthcoming. The United States and Cuba maintain interest sections in each other's capitals. The avenues for diplomatic negotiation are present and open. Rather than the worthy but stopgap measures of putting sky marshalls back on airplanes and having airline personnel doing personality profiles of all their customers, we should be addressing the root of the problem."