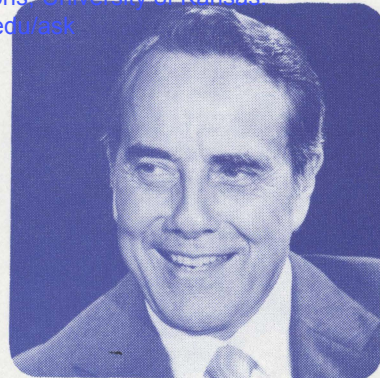


News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 1986

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STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE

BROAD SUPPORT FOR CONTRA AID

A SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, I HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE WHITE HOUSE, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, THE MINORITY LEADER AND WITH OTHER SENATORS ON HIS SIDE, IN AN EFFORT TO DETERMINE IF WE COULD FIND COMMON GROUND ON A PROGRAM OF SUPPORT FOR THE CONTRAS, AS PART OF OUR BROADER STRATEGY IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

I'M PLEASED TO ADVISE THE SENATE THAT WE ARE VERY NEAR AGREEMENT ON LANGUAGE OF AN AMENDMENT ACCEPTABLE TO THE PRESIDENT AND WHICH SHOULD DRAW WIDE SUPPORT ON BOTH SIDES OF THE AISLE AND ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. IF WE CAN IRON OUT ONE OR TWO DETAILS, WE SHOULD HAVE THE TEXT AVAILABLE SHORTLY.

I DID WANT TO TAKE A MOMENT NOW, THOUGH, TO EXPLAIN -- ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN PREPARED ALL ALONG TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST -- WHY WE HAVE WORKED SO HARD TO FIND THIS COMMON GROUND.

POLICY MUST BE LONG-TERM AND SUSTAINABLE

THE PROBLEM WE CONFRONT IN CENTRAL AMERICA IS NOT A SHORT TERM PROBLEM. IT'S NOT GOING TO BE RESOLVED THIS MONTH OR THIS YEAR. ALTHOUGH PASSAGE OF THE BILL WE ARE WORKING ON IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM, THIS BILL ALONE IS NOT GOING TO DO THE JOB.

FOR THIS LONG-TERM PROBLEM, WE NEED A POLICY WHICH IS CREDIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE -- AND WHICH IS SEEN BY EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE BOTH THE SANDINISTAS AND THE CONTRAS, AS SUSTAINABLE -- OVER THE LONG TERM. BY FAR THE BEST CHANCE WE HAVE OF FASHIONING SUCH A POLICY IS BY FINDING COMMON GROUND ON WHICH THE LARGE MAJORITY OF US -- PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS ALIKE -- CAN STAND TOGETHER.

(MORE)

MUCH ON WHICH WE AGREE

IN FACT, THERE IS A GREAT DEAL ON WHICH MOST OF US AGREE. MOST IMPORTANT, ALMOST ALL OF US -- REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS ALIKE -- AGREE THAT THE SANDINISTA REGIME IS BAD NEWS. THE NORMAL STANDARDS OF DECORUM IN THE SENATE PREVENT ME FROM QUOTING FULLY THE COMMENTS OF SPEAKER O'NEILL YESTERDAY ABOUT SANDINISTA PRESIDENT ORTEGA, BUT I TRUST MOST OF YOU READ TIP'S REMARKS. ON THIS OCCASION, HE WAS THE SPEAKER FOR US ALL.

THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS, ESPECIALLY THE SANDINISTA INVASION INTO HONDURAS, HAVE GIVEN US A REAL OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE A GIANT STEP TOWARD BROADENING THE BASE OF SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING FOR OUR POLICY TOWARD NICARAGUA. IF WE CAN GET A LARGE VOTE HERE, AND IN THE HOUSE, FOR THIS PACKAGE, WE CAN SEND A CLEAR, STRONG MESSAGE TO MANAGUA. WE CAN LET THE SANDINISTAS KNOW THAT ALL AMERICANS -- PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS, REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS, LEADERS OF GOVERNMENT AND THE POPULATION AT LARGE -- WE'RE MOVING TOGETHER ON THIS ISSUE, WE'RE IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL AND WE'RE GOING TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS. THAT WOULD REPRESENT A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO A SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

NOT A "LEAST COMMON DENOMINATOR" COMPROMISE

AND LET ME ADD ONE FINAL WORD. WHAT WE ARE FASHIONING IS NOT A "LEAST COMMON DENOMINATOR" COMPROMISE. IT ENCOMPASSES THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST. IT WILL BE FULLY ACCEPTABLE TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE ADMINISTRATION. IT WILL NOT HAMSTRING THE PRESIDENT OR LIMIT OUR FUTURE OPTIONS. IT WILL PROVIDE THE WHEREWITHAL THE CONTRAS NEED, WHEN THEY NEED IT, SO THAT THEY CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE PRESSURE POINT IN PURSUIT OF OUR BROADER OBJECTIVES. IT IS A SOLID, STRONG PROGRAM, THAT CAN DO THE JOB.

THIS IS OUR CHANCE. LET'S ALL JOIN TOGETHER TO PASS THIS LEGISLATION AND PURSUE OUR NATIONAL GOALS IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

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