

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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FBI/IRS INDEPENDENCE AMENDMENT

Washington -- Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole today made the following remarks on the Senate floor upon offering an amendment reaffirming the independence of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service.

As "travelgate" crash lands on the White House lawn, the American people are sifting through the wreckage looking for serious answers to some troubling questions.

Let's face it, it's serious business when we hear reports about cronyism, and unusual access to the White House by special interests who may be looking for special consideration.

It's serious business when reputations are smeared on national television, without notice of the charges, without any opportunity to respond, and without any conclusive proof that the charges are in fact true...And they may be true. I don't know. But I do know that five of the seven travel office employees have now been "un-fired."

And, it is very serious indeed when powerful figures in the White House believe they can manipulate the FBI. The FBI is not the Democratic National Committee. It is not a political consulting firm. Yet its integrity was compromised when it was ordered to assist in political damage control.

As more information comes out in the press, more questions are raised.

For example:

On May 13, who authorized White House associate general counsel William Kennedy to contact Frederick Verinder, the Deputy Assistant Director of the FBI?

Who at the FBI then authorized Verinder to attend a White House meeting with Kennedy? What role did the FBI play in the so-called Peat Marwick "audit," which turned out not to be an audit after all?

Who authorized John Collingwood, the FBI's public affairs officer, to attend a White House "political strategy" session on May 21?

Who at the White House summoned Collingwood to the political strategy session? And what was said at the meeting? Who drafted the FBI press statement that the White House later released to back up its claim of wrongdoing at the travel office?

And who within the Justice Department knew about the FBI's involvement? Did Webster Hubbell know? Did the Attorney General know? Should she have known?

Unfortunately, the questions don't end here.

Now, we are told that the White House Chief of Staff has been put in charge of sorting out the very mess that occurred under his watch. And there are press reports stating that three IRS agents appeared last Friday--unannounced and with summonses in hand--at the offices of one of the airline charter companies that did business with the travel office.

Who authorized the IRS agents to seize the records of the charter company? Is there a connection between the White House political strategy session and the IRS's actions?

Can anyone please tell us, what's going on here?

This past Tuesday, I sent a letter to the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee requesting an impartial, bipartisan hearing to get to the bottom of travelgate. Senator Hatch, the ranking member on the Committee, and seven other Republican senators have also written to Senator Biden making the same request.

Although I have not yet heard back from Senator Biden, I am pleased he has taken our request seriously and will advise us of his decision in short order.

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