

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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HAITI RESOLUTION

WASHINGTON -- Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole delivered the following statement today on the floor of the U.S. Senate regarding the Mitchell-Dole resolution:

All Americans join in praising former President Jimmy Carter, retired General Colin Powell, and the senior Senator from Georgia, Sam Nunn. Their diplomatic mission averted a potentially tragic military confrontation to place American troops into Haiti. The Carter delegation obviously found General Cedras willing to negotiate. I am pleased the President accepted suggestions to send an independent commission to Haiti. And I think the whole country breathed a sigh of relief that an unnecessary invasion did not occur.

Real Problem Remains Exit Strategy

The result of the Carter mission, however, was simply a new entrance strategy -- the real problem remains the exit strategy. I do not see how anyone can oppose an invasion and then support a military occupation. The problem was never getting in to Haiti, it is getting out.

Events yesterday show the dangers of occupying Haiti. Graphic Haitian on Haitian violence has led to calls for greater U.S. involvement. But before we decide to disarm the Haitian military and police, we would do well to remember the lessons of Somalia. And we should also remember that today's oppressed can quickly become tomorrow's oppressor.

Confusing Policy Change

I can understand if the American people are a little confused by the recent changes in U.S. policy. President Clinton last Thursday told Haiti's leaders: "Your time is up. Leave now or we will force you from power." Now, they learn that General Cedras may be in power until October 15. Last week, the Haitian military was described as rapists and killers. This week, they are our partners in occupation.

Last week President Clinton said diplomacy had been exhausted. But over the weekend, a diplomatic mission rapidly reached an agreement. The newspaper headlines said a deal had been made, and an invasion averted. Yet thousands of heavily armed U.S. soldiers have landed in Haiti. And the U.S. is still enforcing an economic embargo against the country we just occupied.

The American people heard a lot about a multinational force, but the only foreign troops in Haiti are American. The American people heard about the importance of restoring Aristide to power and we are about to thank the Carter delegation for their efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution. Strangely, it took Aristide longer to say thank you than it took the Carter team to negotiate the accord. According to some news reports, Aristide was reluctant to even support the latest U.S. policy conducted on his behalf.

The Carter/Powell/Nunn View

In the midst of all this confusion, the only clarity came from President Carter, General Powell and Senator Nunn. They took open minds and went to Haiti. I listened to them earlier this week. They spoke about what they learned in Haiti: about how respected the provisional president is, and how he was central to the deal. They spoke about General Cedras' honor and dignity. They spoke about the depth of anti-Aristide feeling. And they spoke about the folly of having a U.S. economic embargo on a country under U.S. military occupation. Right or wrong, all of these views challenge the foundations of the Clinton administration's Haiti policy.

Averting American Casualties

The efforts of the Carter delegation are commended in the resolution before the Senate. Their fresh look averted immediate

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discussed. The task now is to avert bloodshed over the long term. I am not certain the American people realize U.S. forces either under U.S. or United Nations command -- will be in Haiti until at least 1996. The potential for the occupation to generate American casualties is great. The last American occupation of Haiti lasted almost two decades. Because the President and his advisers have avoided coming to Congress, the first sign of trouble is likely to result in pressure for an immediate and embarrassing withdrawal.

Not A Matter of U.S. Prestige

The Carter mission prevented bloodshed in the first few days of the U.S. occupation of Haiti. For that, all Americans are grateful. But what is needed now is a U.S. policy that does not react to the image of the moment, or to the emotional appeal of the week. The ousted special envoy for Haiti, Lawrence Pezzullo, laid out the one principle for a sound policy in the New York Times this morning. In sum, he argued the U.S. should push Haitians to resolve their differences on their own -- not make every issue a matter of U.S. prestige.

Ambassador Pezzullo concluded by writing, "Only a very carefully calibrated policy will guard against Haiti's slipping from military dictatorship under General Cedras to populist authoritarianism under Father Aristide, presided over by a U.S. praetorian guard." Unfortunately, 19 months of this administration's failed Haiti policy does not leave much hope for future improvement.

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*Remarks delivered on the Senate floor, approximately 3:15 PM.