

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, October 6, 1994

Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

HAITI RESOLUTION

**BIPARTISAN SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION CALLS FOR WITHDRAWAL
OF AMERICAN TROOPS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE;
PRESIDENT TAKES HIGH RISK COURSE WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL**

This is a bipartisan resolution but I don't think the White House can take any comfort in the measure we are about to pass. There is no date in this resolution. I do not support setting an arbitrary date for withdrawal -- because it may increase the risk to the brave men and women of the American armed forces, and because any date implies support for the occupation until that date. I want American troops out of Haiti as soon as possible. Aristide is scheduled to return to Haiti next week. That's when American troops should get out -- not stay as bodyguards or police.

"Mission Leap": Changing U.S. Policy

We have heard senior administration officials in the last few days say the mission in Haiti has not changed. I guess it's no surprise people are confused about U.S. policy toward Haiti when the administration denies the obvious. Everyone with access to a television knows the U.S. policy in Haiti changes as fast as you can change the channel. First, the policy was that police and army are our allies in keeping order. Then we arrest and gag Haitian police. We were told that U.S. policy would be to stay neutral in Haitian violence. Then we were told American soldiers will intervene in certain cases of Haitian violence in certain circumstances. We were told the U.S. armed forces would not be Haiti's police force, and then we see Americans patrolling streets, detaining Haitians and stopping looters. This week, American forces added disarming Haitians to their mission this week. If this isn't a mission change, I don't know what is. As I said earlier this week, this is not just "mission creep" it's "mission leap."

The only exit strategy in Haiti is for U.S. troops to change helmets from American green to United Nations blue. That sounds more like a shell game than an exit strategy. I have serious doubts that the United Nations peacekeepers will be able to perform any better in Haiti than they have in Somalia or Bosnia.

Support for American Armed Forces

I stand second to no one in supporting American armed forces. The young men ordered to occupy Haiti have a difficult task. Some have called it "mission impossible:" bringing stability and democracy to a country that has had little of either. American troops should not be used on missions that cannot be achieved in places where America has not vital interests.

It is ironic to hear some of the opponents of U.S. policy in Central America defend the occupation of Haiti. They are the ones that used to complain about 55 American advisers in El Salvador. They used to say that "El Salvador is Spanish for Vietnam." Fortunately, they did not have their way, and El Salvador is peaceful and democratic today.

Lessons of Somalia Ignored

Unfortunately, the occupation of Haiti shows the lessons of Somalia have not been learned. Like Somalia, our objective are vague, and our mission is constantly changing. Like Somalia, we have embarked on nation-building and we are relying on the United Nations to call the shots down the road. It is hard to avoid the observation that "Haiti is Creole for Somalia."

The president chose not to come to Congress before sending American troops to occupy Haiti. The president chose to send American troops to Haiti without the support of American people. It is a high risk course to jump into military adventure without the parachute of public and congressional support.

###

* Remarks delivered on the Senate floor, approximately 7:05 PM.