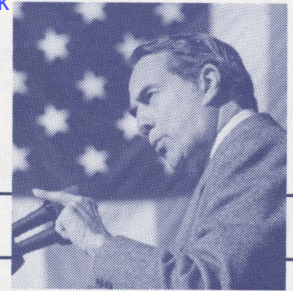


Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, February 28, 1996

Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

HAITI & U.S. AID

DOLE CHALLENGES CLINTON HAITI AID POLICY, SEEKS ANSWERS IN LIGHT OF HAITI'S TOLERANCE OF GOVERNMENT DEATH SQUADS

WASHINGTON -- Saying "the time for excuses is over," Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole today challenged President Clinton to explain his decision to continue providing foreign aid to Haiti, even though Haiti has refused to investigate government death squads. Under a law authored by Senator Dole, the President is required to report to Congress that Haiti has conducted investigations of political killings and has cooperated with U.S. authorities in investigating such killings before providing aid to the Haitian government. Instead, President Clinton used his authority to waive this requirement, and continued providing aid.

The text of a letter sent today by Senator Dole to President Clinton follows:

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing with deep concern about your decision to continue to provide assistance to the government of Haiti despite the fact that the government of Haiti has not met the human rights standard required by law. As you know, section 583(a) of Public Law 104-107 prohibits assistance to the government of Haiti unless you reported to Congress that "the Government is conducting thorough investigations of extrajudicial and political killings" and that "the Government is cooperating with U.S. authorities in the investigations of political and extrajudicial killings."

Mr. President, after spending billions of dollars and deploying thousands of American troops to Haiti, Haiti has not even conducted investigations into political murders and government-affiliated death squads. Evidence available to you from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of State and other U.S. government agencies indicates that members of the Haitian government -- both the previous Aristide government and the current Preval government -- were involved in the planning, execution and subsequent cover-up of murders of Haitian citizens. And evidence available to you from the same sources indicates that the government of Haiti is unwilling or unable to conduct investigations of political murders or to cooperate with the United States in such investigations.

(more)

Despite credible reports of Haitian government officials' involvement in political and extrajudicial murders, and despite the government's consistent unwillingness to investigate such killings, you chose to exercise your waiver authority to continue to provide assistance to the Government of Haiti. On your behalf, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott signed a document which asserted continued assistance to the Government of Haiti was "necessary to assure the safe and timely withdrawal of U.S. forces from Haiti."

In order for Congress to evaluate your decision to continue assistance to a government which refuses to investigate political killings, I would appreciate your answers to the following questions. First, what threats to American forces have been identified or received which led you to conclude that providing additional assistance to Haiti was necessary for the safe withdrawal of U.S. forces? Second, if the Haitian government continues in its refusal to investigate political murders, do you plan to continue any governmental assistance after U.S. forces are withdrawn? Finally, will you speak out forthrightly and unequivocally and condemn the refusal of the Haitian government to investigate political murders?

Mr. President, the time for excuses is over. Haiti has been occupied by U.S. military forces for fifteen months. The Haitian armed forces have been disbanded. Haiti is not at war. Haiti faces no real external or internal security threat. American taxpayers have paid billions to support your policies toward Haiti. Yet your Administration has been mute in condemning Haitian government death squads.

After all that America has done for Haiti under your policies, continued Haitian inaction on political killings is unacceptable. It is time to assure the American people that not one more American dollar will flow to a government which refuses to investigate political murders by its own officials. The American people deserve an unqualified statement that the Haitian government's refusal to investigate government-affiliated death squads will no longer be tolerated.

Sincerely,

BOB DOLE