

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 7, 1996

Contact: Clarkson Hine
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INDICT CUBAN MURDERERS

DOLE & MACK URGE PRESIDENT TO SEEK MURDER INDICTMENTS **IN CUBAN ASSAULT ON AMERICAN PILOTS**

MIAMI, FL -- Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and Senator Connie Mack (R-FL) today urged President Clinton to immediately direct the Attorney General to seek federal indictments of all Cuban government officials responsible for the brutal murder of four American civilians on February 24th. In a letter to the President, Dole and Mack said "U.S. indictments would mean the murderers would be subject to seizure and return to the United States or extradition to the United States any time they travel outside the territory of Cuba... U.S. indictment would ensure that, ultimately, justice would be served after this tragedy."

The text of the Senators' letter follows:

Dear Mr. President:

All Americans share the shock and outrage we have expressed over the brutal murder of unarmed Americans by Fidel Castro's Air Force. All long-time supporters of the LIBERTAD legislation tightening the economic noose on Castro's dictatorship welcome your endorsement of the legislation. Enactment of this legislation is critical to send the right signal to Havana and to the world.

While the LIBERTAD bill is vital and necessary, America must do more to ensure the brutal murder of innocent American citizens does not go unpunished. If America does not take action, the murderers of Armando Alejandro, Carlos Costa, Mario de la Pena and Pablo Morales will not be held accountable for their crimes. We urge you to immediately direct the Attorney General to seek the indictment of all those responsible for the heinous crime of February 24, 1996.

There are numerous statutes in the United States Code which apply to the brutal murders last month. For example, the willful destruction of U.S. civil aircraft employed in overseas or foreign airspace carries the penalty of 20 years in prison (18 U.S.C. §32(a)). The act of murder of American citizens as part of an activity which appears to be intended to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion carries a penalty of death or life imprisonment (18 U.S.C. §2331 and §2332)).

(MORE)

The transcripts of Cuban Air Force pilots and ground personnel cited by the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations during U.N. Security Council debate on February 27, 1996 make it amply, and obscenely, clear that the brutal actions over the Straits of Florida were the willful destruction of U.S. civil aircraft. Statements justifying the Cuban action by government officials, including President Fidel Castro, Foreign Minister Robaina, and Assembly President Alarcon, make it crystal clear that the murders of February 24, 1996 were designed to change U.S. government policy toward the activities of Brothers to the Rescue. Clearly, this action falls within the statutory definition of an act of international terrorism.

Mr. President, the indictment of all those responsible for this vicious crime is essential. Specifically, we urge you to seek indictment for capital murder in an act of international terrorism to ensure there is no statute of limitation for this ruthless crime. U.S. indictments would mean the murderers would be subject to seizure and return to the United States or extradition to the United States any time they travel outside the territory of Cuba -- in international airspace, in international waters, or in any country in the world. U.S. indictment would ensure that, ultimately, justice would be served after this tragedy. Pursuing justice in federal court is the least we can do to honor the brave, young Americans killed by Castro's regime. Directing the U.S. Attorney General to seek the indictment of those responsible would be the best way to fulfill your pledge that "the United States will not tolerate further loss of American life."

Sincerely,

BOB DOLE

CONNIE MACK