

*Bob Dole*



**NEWS**

**U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS**

**FROM:**

**SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*  
*Thursday, March 21, 1996*

*Contact: Clarkson Hine*  
*(202)224-5358*

## **HAITI POLICY**

### **AS HAITIAN AND U.S. PRESIDENTS MEET, DOLE REVIEWS CLINTON ADMINISTRATION HAITI POLICY FAILURES; CLINTON FOREIGN POLICY TEST CASE TYPIFIED BY VACILLATION, INCONSISTENCY, REVERSAL**

Haiti's President Rene Preval arrived in Washington this week and meets with President Clinton today. The Clinton administration continues its effort to portray the American occupation of Haiti as a foreign policy success story. In my view, U.S. policy has not been a success.

A brief review of President Clinton's various policies toward Haiti shows the administration is correct when it cites Haiti as a test case of their approach to foreign policy.

In 1992 candidate Clinton said, "I am appalled by the decision of the Bush administration to pick up fleeing Haitians on the high seas and forcibly return them to Haiti." This criticism of President Bush's sensible response to the threat of unrestrained Haitian immigration continued throughout the campaign from candidate Clinton.

After the 1992 election, it became clear that candidate Clinton's ill-considered statements led thousands of Haitians to prepare to travel to America and reap the benefits of a new immigration policy. Facing a threat of mass Haitian migration his statements created, President-elect Clinton changed 180 degrees. In a statement broadcast to Haiti, President elect Clinton said, "the practice of returning those who flee Haiti by boat will continue...after I become President." What had been appalling on the campaign trail became policy in the White House.

Only ten months later, a second flip-flop in U.S. Haiti policy occurred. President Clinton decided to send in a small number of U.S. troops as part of a United Nations mission in Haiti. On October 11, 1993, the *U.S.S Harlan County* was prepared to dock in Port au-Prince to off load American troops. A demonstration by a group of Haitian thugs convinced President Clinton that the world's strongest military power should retreat from Haiti. President Clinton ordered the *Harlan County* to turn around. The promised U.S troops did not land, Haitian thugs learned an important lesson about President Clinton's foreign policy, and U.S. credibility suffered.

In 1994, the Clinton administration spent months toughening the economic pressure on the poorest country in the hemisphere while President Aristide lived in comfortable exile and spent millions on high-priced lobbyists. Numerous promising openings to work with Haitian democrats were torpedoed by Aristide and his advisers. The Clinton administration's repeated refusal to pursue a political solution led to the resignation of their senior Haiti adviser. In the face of increasing domestic criticism of the White House by Democrats, plans were made for a military invasion. As the invasion loomed, Congress was ignored while U.N. approval was sought and received.

On September 18, 1994, outside intervention saved the Clinton administration from itself. Former President Carter -- with General Colin Powell and Senator Sam Nunn -- reached a last minute accord which averted Haitian and American bloodshed and began the second U.S. occupation of Haiti since 1915.

American armed forces conducted themselves with bravery, sacrifice and devotion. They had a difficult job in even more difficult conditions. Fortunately, casualties were light. But after 17 months of occupation and more than \$2 billion, has democracy been restored? Has the rule of law taken root? Are free market economic principles supported by the government? In my view, the answer to all three questions is no.

#### **Democratic Process Deeply Flawed**

The democratic process in Haiti resulted in deeply-flawed elections which U.S. Officials were quick to endorse before the facts were known. One of President Clinton's own election observers, D. Jeffrey Hirschberg, wrote "there is credible evidence to suggest the election outcomes were managed and that President Aristide did not remain neutral throughout the process." Robert Pastor of the Carter Center characterized the Haitian elections in the following terms: "of the 13 elections that I have observed, the June 25th Haitian elections were the most disastrous technically with the most insecure count...I personally witnessed the tainting of about one third of all ballots in Port-au-Prince." These are not statements by Republicans, but by Democrats - Democrats who had the courage to challenge the official orthodoxy propounded by the U.S. delegation head, A.I.D. Administrator Atwood, and other officials.

(more)

### **Doubtful Commitment to Economic Reform**

Haiti's progress toward free market economics has also been deeply flawed. The Haitian Prime Minister resigned last year because of his frustration over the lack of progress on key economic issues. Haitian governments have stalled on privatization, spent irresponsibly, and are filled with corruption. U.S. companies have been frozen out of Haitian government contracts. International financial institutions halted more than \$100 million of assistance because President Aristide, and now President Preval, have refused to act on real economic reform. Last fall, even the Clinton administration was forced to acknowledge Haiti's dismal economic record. More than \$4 million in U.S. Economic aid was withheld because of Haitian inaction on key economic issues. This money is not withheld because of Republican actions, but because Haiti refuses to honor its commitments to economic reform.

### **Haitian Government Death Squads**

As poor as the Haitian record on democratic and economic reform is, the government's record on promoting the rule of law is even worse. Promoting the rule of law was a major U.S. goal in occupying Haiti. The most fundamental test of the rule of law is whether citizens are protected from violence by their government. Seventeen months later, the record in Haiti is clear: the government of Haiti has failed the tests. Credible evidence from many sources point to Haitian government death squads which assassinate Haitian civilians. This is the result of the American occupation of Haiti: Haitian security forces -- chosen, equipped and trained with U.S. support -- killing their own people. No one has been tried, no one has been held accountable, no serious investigation has been concluded.

### **Dole Amendment Waived: Administration Ignores Leverage**

Because of Haitian inaction on investigating government murders, I sponsored an amendment which required the President certify Haitian action on political killings before providing more assistance to the government. My amendment, now section 583 of public law 104 107, set a minimum standard before more U.S. aid flowed to the government of Haiti. My amendment specifically exempted assistance for electoral or humanitarian assistance. On February 8, 1996, the administration conceded it was unable to report that investigations were being conducted, writing "we cannot document adequate progress in these investigations..." This point should be very clear: the Clinton administration could not even report that Haiti was investigating government murders, or that Haiti was cooperating with U.S. efforts to investigate government murders. This failure is due solely to the Haitian government stonewalling on this critical human rights issue.

A few of the worst abusers have "retired" from the police, but the abuses continue. Earlier this month, at least seven Haitians were murdered by what witnesses described as Haitian police. That's not a formula for success: eight early retirements and seven more murders.

Instead of using my amendment as leverage to pressure for investigations into government killings in Haiti, the administration has searched for ways to funnel more aid -- more aid to a government which refuses to hold killers accountable. And instead of devoting its efforts to promoting the rule of law in Haiti, administration officials have sought election year refuge by blaming Republicans for their own failed policies. Earlier this week, A.I.D. Administrator Atwood blamed Congress for administration inability to foster even a semblance of respect for the rule of law in Haiti. Instead of talking to reporters and blaming Republicans for administration failures in Haiti, maybe Administrator Atwood should talk to Chairman Gilman and Chairman Helms, who have objections to certain Haiti aid programs.

Administrator Atwood even asserted "it is clear that some very important members of Congress don't want us to succeed in Haiti." I don't know what members of Congress the foreign aid director was thinking about, but it is clear he is dead wrong. I want democracy to take root in Haiti. I want economic growth to take place in Haiti. And I want respect for the rule of law to take hold in Haiti. Unfortunately, President Clinton's Haiti policy has not laid the foundation for success in any of these areas. And President Clinton's Haiti policymakers have compounded their failure by ignoring real problems in democracy, economic reform and justice in Haiti. Covering up for the flaws in Haiti will not make the flaws disappear -- it only makes it less likely the United States can foster real, lasting change in Haiti.

Haiti is a test case of President Clinton's foreign policy vacillation. Inconsistency. Reversal. Diplomacy without force with the *Harlan County* in 1993. Force without diplomacy in 1994, until the intervention of President Carter, Colin Powell and Sam Nunn.

America cannot afford a foreign policy which alienates our allies, befriends our enemies and squanders our resources on international social work. And Haiti cannot afford more Clinton administration indifference to government sponsored death squads.

###