

**Bob Dole**



**NEWS**

**U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS**

**FROM:**

**SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER**

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## **HAITI POLICY UPDATE**

### **BICAMERAL DELEGATION REPORT DETAILS SERIOUS FAILURES OF AMERICAN HAITI POLICY; ADMINISTRATION'S POLITICAL APPROACH STANDS IN THE WAY OF WORKABLE SOLUTIONS**

This week marks the final withdrawal of U.S. armed forces from Haiti. It is an appropriate time to ask, "what did our second intervention of the century in Haiti achieve?" Congress and the American people were deeply divided over the wisdom of operation Uphold Democracy. Many of us were concerned that the American intervention to restore President Aristide would not lead to lasting and durable change in Haiti.

Unfortunately, it is now clear that U.S. policy has not achieved its stated goals of establishing a rule of law, fostering genuine democratic change, and creating sustainable economic development. A bicameral staff delegation visited Haiti over the April recess and has completed a report which details serious failures of American policy -- failures in each of the three critical areas of politics, security and the economy.

#### **Human Rights**

The report concludes that the Clinton administration and the U.S. embassy have not taken human rights seriously in Haiti. A particularly disturbing incident involves the event leading up to the assassination of Mrs. Bertin on March 28, 1995 -- three days before President Clinton visited Haiti. The U.S. government had concrete information about a plot to kill Mrs. Bertin which implicated Aristide government officials, including the Minister of Interior. Inexplicably, no one in the U.S. government warned Bertin of the plot. Instead, U.S. officials decided to rely on the same government planning Bertin's murder to provide her with warning of the plot. This incident deserves, as the report recommends, full investigation by the executive branch and by the Congress to examine why U.S. officials neglected to act effectively on information that they possessed.

#### **No Progress on Dole Amendment**

The report details lack of progress in meeting the conditions of the so-called "Dole amendment" on investigating political murders. The report also details the lack of action by the U.S. embassy in examining and reporting on a wide range of human rights and police issues. The compromise of police investigations by Aristide loyalists was not reported. Basic information about murders involving the U.S.-trained police forces was not even gathered. It seems clear that the attitude of the U.S. government was they did not want to know about government death squads which would prove embarrassing to the claim of Haiti as a foreign policy success.

#### **Administration's Conflicting Stories**

The report also details the sustained campaign by the administration, chiefly the Agency for International Development (AID), to blame Congress by providing intentionally misleading information about U.S. assistance programs. The Clinton administration cannot even get its own story straight. For example, while AID criticizes Congress for delaying aid to the Haitian police because of human rights concerns, the State Department takes credit for suspending aid to the Haitian police for the same human rights concerns. And while AID was holding up health programs because of their concerns about the competence of the Haitian Minister of Health, AID officials in Washington regularly criticized Congress for holding up health projects in Haiti.

#### **A Foreign Policy Success?**

There has been much in the media about the "success" of President Clinton's Haiti policy. There has been little about the fundamental flaws detailed in this report. It is clear, however, that the administration knows it is on thin ice: changes in their Haiti policy have already been announced in recent days. Earlier this year, congressional pressure led to the

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dismissal of some of the worst human rights violators in the Haitian security forces. This week, the administration announced it was suspending aid because the Dole amendment conditions could not be met. The administration is reportedly considering reopening a fund for the victims of human rights violations. Most notably, the administration now points to the importance of thwarting former President Aristide's effort to undermine important policy goals. Long the defender of Aristide, even the Clinton administration now admits he refused to allow progress on police reform or free market economics. What a difference congressional pressure can make.

**Playing Politics with Haiti Policy**

Mr. President, there is no difference between congressional Republicans and the stated goals of the Clinton administration in Haiti -- democracy, economic recovery and the rule of law. Our differences are about the very real problems which have been swept under the rug -- in the name of defending policy failures. Our differences are over the administration's effort to make Haiti a political football by blaming Congress for their own shortcomings.

Mr. President, the U.S. military did its job. There is no security threat to the government of Haiti. The dictatorship is destroyed and the Haitian army no longer exists. It is on the civilian side where our policy has fallen short.

What have we achieved in our Haiti intervention after 18 months and more than \$2 billion? The answer is disappointment and missed opportunities. The answer is not nearly as much as could have been achieved if the administration had been more honest and more able. For the sake of the long suffering people of Haiti, I hope the administration will jettison its political approach, and begin working with Congress to fashion a workable Haiti policy. I hope they begin soon.

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