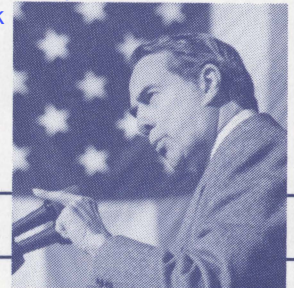


Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, May 13, 1996

Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

DRUG SMUGGLING PROSECUTIONS

DOLE CHALLENGES CLINTON ADMINISTRATION **IN WAKE OF DISTURBING NEWS REPORT THAT** **MANY ARRESTED DRUG SMUGGLERS GO FREE**

WASHINGTON -- Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole today wrote to Attorney General Janet Reno seeking answers to questions raised by a May 13th Los Angeles Times report that suggests that a Clinton Administration U.S. Attorney has adopted a policy that has allowed hundreds of drug smugglers to return to Mexico without prosecution. The text of Senator Dole's letter follows:

Dear Attorney General Reno:

I am writing to request your response to a disturbing Los Angeles Times story ("Drug Runners Arrested at Border Often Go Free," May 13, 1996) that suggests that U.S. Attorney Alan Bersin has adopted an official policy allowing some drug smugglers to return to Mexico without prosecution.

According to the Times article, officials at the U.S. Attorney's office "confirm that under a program quietly adopted two years ago, an increasing number of suspected traffickers have been sent back to Mexico without arrest or prosecution in either federal or state court" and "more than 1,000 smuggling suspects have been processed in this way since 1994." More specifically, the Times article reports that:

* Two suspects with 32 pounds of methamphetamine, and another with 37,000 Quaalude tablets, were simply "excluded" from the United States after their drugs and vehicles were confiscated.

* After a seizure of 158 pounds of cocaine, one defendant was cited and released because there was no room at the federal jail and the charges against her were dropped.

* US Customs Service records show that some drug smugglers have been apprehended two or more times--even in the same week--and have not been jailed or prosecuted.

* No prosecutorial action has been taken against a number of drug smugglers captured with more than 125 pounds of marijuana.

(more)

According to one Drug Enforcement Administration agent cited in the article, "there is virtually no risk [to smugglers] as long as they keep quantities down. First of all, the chances of getting caught are slim, and the chances of prosecution are almost zero if you get caught with a small quantity and if you're a Mexican national."

Attorney General Reno, my questions to you are simple ones: Is the Los Angeles Times story accurate? And if so, do the policies of the U.S. Attorney's office represent the policies of the Justice Department and the Clinton Administration?

With teenage drug use on the rise here in the United States and with the ascendancy of Mexico as a major U.S. supplier of cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamine, the American people would rightfully expect that we would be hard at work strengthening our fight against the Mexican drug trade, not weakening it, as the Los Angeles Times story suggests.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. I have attached a copy of the full Los Angeles Times article for your review.

Sincerely,

BOB DOLE
Senate Majority Leader

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