



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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THIS WEEK'S SENATE ACTIVITIES A "VICTORY FOR FREEDOM": DOLE SAYS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Following is a statement made today on the Senate floor by Senator Bob Dole:

THE SENATE PROMOTES PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM

Mr. President, I want to take just a moment to comment on a very historic week here in the United States Senate, when the members of this body went firmly on record in support of human rights and the cause of freedom throughout the world. Despite a variety of proposals and counter-proposals that sometimes obscured the central issues, a prevailing consensus of the Senate becomes obvious in retrospect: this nation is not about to buckle under to intimidations by the Communist regimes in Asia, Europe, or even in our own hemisphere. The American people are not ready to concede defeat to Communist aggression, or to agree to finance it with their tax dollars. With few exceptions, the members of the Senate have, I believe, accurately gauged the attitude of the American public on this vital issue, and reflected it on the Senate floor.

Major victories for freedom were scored early in the week, when the Senate concurred with a resolution condemning harassment of an American journalist in Moscow, and a resolution endorsing a firm U.S. stand on human rights at the Helsinki Conference, which opened in Belgrade on Wednesday. I offered these resolutions so that we might coalesce our variable perspectives around one policy position, and so that Soviet officials would make no mistake about our resolve on the human rights issue.

NO AID TO VIETNAM

Even more significant were clear expressions of Congressional intent on the questions of aid to Vietnam, recognition of Cuba, and withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea. On Tuesday, the Senate -- by a vote of 55 to 38 -- approved my amendment directing U.S. representatives to the World Bank and Asian Development Bank to vote against any loans to Communist Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. That amendment also provided for a reduction in U.S. contributions to those international monetary organizations if they proceed with approval of aid to any of these Communist governments.

On Thursday, the Senate roundly denounced language in the State Department Authorization Bill which had earlier been reported from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. That language would have endorsed the Administration's proposed withdrawal of 40,000 American troops from South Korea within 5 years, and would have permitted the partial lifting of the U.S. trade embargo against Communist Cuba. Parliamentary maneuverings, and substitute language may have fuzzed up the central message for some members of the press and the public, but the basic thrust of the majority was this: the President must formulate his future Korean policies in close consultation with Congress, and the President must give due consideration to Cuban transgressions before agreeing to "normalize" relations.

A SENSE OF THE SENATE ON CUBA

The Senator from Kansas proposed a sense of the Congress amendment which would have specified four conditions for normalizing relations with Cuba, including the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Africa and compensation for confiscated American property in Cuba. An effort to table my amendment -- in effect, to kill it -- was soundly defeated by a vote of 53 to 39. Thus, the concept of demanding certain concessions from Cuba prior to resuming diplomatic relations was generally endorsed, and I hope that message reaches the White House.

It is easier, however, to fight Castro than it is to contravene the Senate Majority Leader on the Senate floor. The distinguished Majority Leader offered substitute language which would not so offend the sensitivities of the Administration or the Cuban regime. It is always disappointing to see the will of Congress thwarted by parliamentary maneuverings which confuse more than they clarify. When the Senate finally approved my amendment with the Majority Leader's substitute language, it was so modified as to be hardly recognizable. But the essence of the day's deliberations was clear: the Senate rejected outright resumption of trade and relations with Cuba without preconditions. The Committee voluntarily withdrew language it had earlier approved allowing partial lifting of the 1962 U.S. trade embargo, and the sense of the Senate, as a whole, on this issue became clear.

VICTORY FOR FREEDOM

In this Senator's opinion, these were victories for the cause of freedom, and not for any political party or platform. We saw an encouraging display of bipartisan agreement on central issues concerning the future of United States relations with Vietnam, Cuba and Korea. The Senator from Kansas was pleased to have participated in clarifying these points for the executive branch and for the rest of the world, and he is proud of the sentiment which the Senate expressed. It can be hoped that more specific policy guidelines will yet be laid down regarding future relations with adversary nations, so that we can proceed with bold and deliberate efforts to advance the cause of liberty throughout the world.