

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

2213 Dirksen Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1983

CONTACT:WALT RIKER
202-224-6521

DOLE SEEKS END OF TRUCKERS' STRIKE VIOLENCE-- CALLS FOR GAO STUDY AND RESPONSIBLE DISCUSSION

WASHINGTON--Following a week of scattered terror on the Nation's highways, Senator Bob Dole (R., Kans.) suggested action to end independent truckers strike violence and to promote rational discussion of the concerns some truckers have with the recently enacted Surface Transportation Assistance Act. Dole serves as Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts.

DOLE REQUESTS GAO REPORT

Senator Dole announced that he sent a letter today to the Comptroller General of the United States requesting the General Accounting Office (GAO) to conduct a study of the economic impact, if any, of increased taxes on independent truckers.

"I have heard concerns and complaints that the industry cannot absorb the increased user fees. The GAO study will provide an independent analysis from which Congress can determine if any changes in the law should be made," Dole said.

"The fact is, the tax that most concerns the trucking industry is the heavy vehicle use tax and it does not increase until July 1, 1984. Additionally, owners of five or fewer trucks will not even have an increase in heavy vehicle use taxes until July 1, 1985."

Dole noted the GAO Report should be completed within 6 months, well in advance of the scheduled July 1, 1984 effective date of the heavy vehicle use tax increase.

COWARDLY COMMIT VIOLENCE

According to Labor Department reports, the average price of motor fuel--including diesel fuel--fell 5.2 percent in 1982, while maintenance costs rose more slowly than in the previous two years. Also, financing costs declined last year. The prime rate of interest stood at 16 1/2 percent a year ago, but now is 11 percent. There have been similar declines in other short-term interest rates that have benefitted the trucking industry, and the emerging economic recovery will also help the industry.

"The cowardly few who commit senseless acts of violence only discredit the many responsible representatives of the trucking

(over)

industry," Dole said. "During the past month, the Finance Committee staff has met with numerous truckers' groups, and from these discussions it seems clear that there is widespread misunderstanding about the facts and subsequent impact of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act. The face-to-face meetings have been helpful in identifying the concerns of the trucking industry and I am hopeful they can continue. But in the face of increasing incidents of lawlessness, rational discussion and analysis are becoming much more difficult. I know the majority of truckers are law-abiding citizens and deplore the reign of terror that has visited their workplace--the highways of America."

THE STRIKE VIOLENCE
PREVENTION ACT

Dole also announced that he will introduce the "Strike Violence Prevention Act." The bill would empower the President to seek Federal court orders restraining any party involved in a strike from encouraging, inciting, or committing acts of violence or unlawful acts which would interfere with commerce.

"The mouthings of irrational, self-appointed leaders and the senseless acts of a few--including shootings, firebombings, blockades, and even murder--are discouraging other truckers. This terrorism invites, and demands, a response--a response which will help protect the safety of those who want to work, and the public interest," Dole said. "Congress will simply not be intimidated."

Dole noted the law is presently unclear with regard to the President's authority to act against violence of this type. "The only remedy now available is criminal prosecution against the individuals involved. That process is slow and cumbersome and does not provide the kind of speedy deterrence that is needed to deal with these situations. Civil injunctive actions, on the other hand, could provide the Government with the leverage needed to stop individuals who threaten violence or unlawfully obstruct the flow of commerce," Dole stated.

SENATOR BOB DOLE (R.-Kan.)

CONTACT: WALT RIKER

Saturday, February 5, 1983

202/224-6521

STRIKE VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACT

A. The Problem:

- Under present laws, there is very little that the federal government can do to stop groups that threaten to employ violence or engage in unlawful acts obstructing commerce, except prosecute them under the criminal laws. That process takes time, and does not provide the kind of quick leverage that is needed to discourage those who are inclined to use such tactics in situations such as the trucker's strike.

B. Our Proposal

- If the President, or the Justice Department, had the authority to seek restraining orders in federal courts against leaders of "wildcat" strikes such as these, enjoining them from encouraging the commission of unlawful acts obstructing commerce -- such as "blockades"-- this could be a powerful deterrent to their followers. Action could be taken against the rabblers if they defied court orders, and the courts could use contempt powers to put a brake on such behaviour.
- Alternative proposals we are studying would approach the problem through a strengthening of the "restraint of trade" laws, and amendments to the criminal code.

C. No effect on legitimate labor activities

- Our proposal is still in the drafting stage. One of our principal concerns is that we do not in any way infringe on the legitimate rights of wage-earners to engage in lawful collective action in a labor dispute. What we want to do is draft legislation that will help us deal with the renegades who encourage unlawful acts.
- We will work with the administration in developing this legislation. We have already been in contact with officials at the Departments of Transportation and Labor, and will continue to consult with those agencies as we go along.