

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

PRESIDENTIAL CERTIFICATION ON CONTRA AID

LATE YESTERDAY, THE PRESIDENT SENT TO THE CONGRESS THE CERTIFICATION REQUIRED TO PERMIT RELEASE OF THE LAST \$40 MILLION IN CONTRA AID VOTED BY THE 99TH CONGRESS. THAT STARTS THE CLOCK TICKING ON THE 15 DAY PERIOD IN WHICH THE CONGRESS CAN BLOCK EXPENDITURE OF THESE FUNDS.

I ASSUME WE WILL HAVE RATHER EXTENSIVE DEBATE OVER THIS ISSUE OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS. THIS MORNING, I WANT TO MAKE ONLY THREE BRIEF COMMENTS.

FIRST, I HOPE ALL OF US WILL KEEP IN MIND THAT -- DESPITE ALL THE BOMBSHELLS; ALL THE REVELATIONS THAT WE'VE SEEN GROWING OUT OF THE IRAN ARMS SALE SITUATION -- THERE HAS BEEN NO EVIDENCE THAT ANYONE IN THE CONTRA LEADERSHIP OR ORGANIZATION HAS DONE ANYTHING WRONG. IT WOULD BE UNFAIR, PURE AND SIMPLE, TO PUNISH THE CONTRAS FOR THE MISTAKES OF ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS.

SECOND, THIS IS NOT ONE OF THOSE "INSIDE-THE-BELTWAY" ISSUES WE HEAR SO MUCH ABOUT. AND IT SHOULDN'T BE A PARTISAN ISSUE. THERE ARE REPUBLICANS ON BOTH SIDES; DEMOCRATS ON BOTH SIDES. ULTIMATELY, IT'S A QUESTION OF WHETHER THE UNITED STATES -- AND, SPECIFICALLY, THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES -- WILL KEEP ITS WORD AND LIVE UP TO ITS COMMITMENTS TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE CAST THEIR LOT WITH AMERICA. WE SAID WE WOULD PROVIDE THIS MONEY TO THE CONTRAS. WE VOTED TO DO SO, FAIR AND SQUARE. WE SHOULD DO SO.

(MORE)

LET'S NOT KID OURSELVES: IF WE TURN OUR BACKS ON THE CONTRAS NOW, THERE WILL BE TWO VICTIMS -- NOT ONLY THE CONTRAS, WHO WE'VE LEFT HIGH AND DRY; BUT ALSO THE CREDIBILITY OF THE UNITED STATES.

FINALLY, I KNOW THAT MANY IN THE SENATE OPPOSE THIS AID. I DON'T QUESTION THE SINCERITY OF THEIR VIEWS. I ONLY HOPE THAT -- IF THEY DECIDE TO MAKE THIS FIGHT, TO BLOCK THE AID -- THEY WILL FOLLOW BOTH THE LETTER AND SPIRIT OF THE LAW WE PASSED, AND THE COMMITMENT WE MADE, LAST YEAR.

IF OPPONENTS OF THIS AID WANT TO TRY TO BLOCK IT, FAIR ENOUGH. THE LAW PROVIDES A SIMPLE, WIDE-OPEN PROCEDURE, WITH A BINDING UP-DOWN VOTE. WE CAN FACE THE ISSUE SQUARELY, PUT THE POLICY ON THE TABLE, AND STAND UP AND BE COUNTED. THAT'S WHAT THE LAW PROVIDES; THAT'S WHAT A COMMON SENSE APPROACH TO LEGISLATING AND POLICY-MAKING DICTATES.

SO LET'S NOT MUDDY THIS ISSUE UP WITH PHONY "MORATORIUMS" ON AID, WHICH ARE REALLY AIMED AT KILLING THE AID. LET'S NOT TURN THIS ISSUE INTO A PARLIAMENTARY CIRCUS, SO THE REAL POLICY ISSUE DISAPPEARS IN A SERIES OF PROCEDURAL MANEUVERS.

THE ISSUE IS CLEAR. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW WHERE WE STAND ON THIS ISSUE. I'M PREPARED -- PROUD -- TO VOTE FOR CONTINUATION OF THIS AID. THOSE WHO FEEL THE OPPOSITE WAY -- FAIR ENOUGH. LET THEM PUT IN THEIR RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL; LET'S GET IT ON THE FLOOR; AND LET'S VOTE ON IT.

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