

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

HAITI UPDATE

U.N. CONTROL, COSTS OF OCCUPATION, PROBLEMS IN HAITI PRESENT CONCERNS

President Clinton is in Haiti today as part of the transition from American control to United Nations control. All Americans are proud of the performance of the men and women of our armed forces in Haiti. As always they have served where ordered with skill and courage. And all Americans are pleased that the occupation of Haiti has gone as smoothly as it has.

We all support democracy in Haiti. That does not mean, however, that we should have occupied Haiti in the first place. And the transition to U.N. command serves as a reminder that all concerns about the Haiti operation are not over.

U.N. Control & "Mission Creep"

First, we would do well to remember that the problems in Somalia did not occur under U.S. command -- they occurred after the operation was transferred to United Nations control. We learned the hard way that the agenda of Boutros Boutros Ghali and the United Nations is not the American agenda. It is true the U.N. Commander is an American -- General Joseph Kinzer -- but the U.N. bureaucrats will be in the loop. The problem of "mission creep" has already been raised -- in requests to disarm the Haitian population, for example. In my view, U.N. command of American soldiers should be avoided.

Mounting Costs of Occupation

Second, the costs of Haiti are mounting daily. One and one-half billion dollars have already been spent on the occupation and nation-building in Haiti. The tab is only going to go up -- up to \$2 billion or more. In a time of severe budget cuts, and in a time when foreign aid is being reduced, we must ask whether we can afford \$2 billion for Haiti.

Real Problems Remain in Haiti

Third, Haiti still has a long way to go. Elections called for in the Haitian constitution have been postponed. Political assassination appears to be on the rise. Serious reports of involvement by the Aristide government in this week's murder have been made, and they deserve full examination. Little effort to reach out to parliamentary opponents has occurred. There are disturbing indications that President Aristide or his supporters are subverting the democratic process. Despite the ceremony today, we realize there are real problems in Haiti -- and there will continue to be problems, no matter how long the U.S. or the U.N. stays in Haiti.

We all support genuine efforts at reconciliation and democracy in Haiti. We hope the long-delayed elections move forward in Haiti -- that they are free and fair, that the results are respected by all Haitians, and that President Aristide keeps his promise to step down. As a recent article by President Clinton's former envoy to Haiti points out, the hard work of restoring democracy in Haiti was not returning President Aristide from exile -- it is in building truly democratic institutions in a country that has never known them.

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