

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE HELPING THE CONTRAS

I WANT TO ADD TWO BRIEF POINTS TO MY COMMENTS YESTERDAY ON THE SITUATION OF THE AMERICAN CITIZEN NOW BEING HELD CAPTIVE BY THE SANDINISTAS.

FIRST, IN ALL THE HULLABALOO ABOUT THAT INCIDENT -- WHEN THE PHONY SANDINISTA CHARGES OF CIA INVOLVEMENT CONTINUE TO DOMINATE THE HEADLINES -- THE PRESS HAS GIVEN SCANT MENTION TO ONE IMPORTANT FACT. IF THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP HAD NOT STONEWALLED AND STALLED FOR MONTHS AND MONTHS ON THE CONTRA AID PACKAGE BOTH BODIES PASSED IN IDENTICAL FORM LONG AGO, THEN OFFICIAL AMERICAN AID WOULD LONG SINCE HAVE BEEN GOING TO THE CONTRAS. AND PRIVATE EFFORTS, LIKE THOSE IN WHICH MR. HASENFUS WAS APPARENTLY INVOLVED, WOULD NOT BE GOING ON AT ALL.

I THOUGHT OUR SYSTEM WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ONE WHERE THE MAJORITY RULES. AND IN THIS CASE, THE MAJORITY IN BOTH HOUSES HAS SPOKEN -- AND SPOKEN IN FAVOR OF GIVING THE CONTRAS AID. I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME THAT A SMALL, WILLFUL MINORITY -- WHO HAPPEN TO BE THE ONES WHO CONTROL THE FLOW OF WORK OVER IN THE HOUSE -- STAND ASIDE AND LET THE MAJORITY PREVAIL.

THE OTHER POINT I WANT TO MAKE IS THIS. THE HEADLINES ARE SCREAMING ABOUT THIS PRIVATE AMERICAN TRYING TO HELP THE CONTRAS. BUT I DON'T SEE A WORD IN THE PAPERS, OR HEAR ANYTHING AT ALL ON TV, ABOUT WHAT I UNDERSTAND IS HUNDREDS OF PRIVATE AMERICANS DOWN IN NICARAGUA RIGHT NOW, HELPING THE SANDINISTAS.

NOW I DON'T WANT TO QUESTION THE RIGHT OF THESE PRIVATE CITIZENS TO DO WHAT THEY'RE DOING, AND I'M NOT CHALLENGING THEIR MOTIVATION. IT'S UP TO THEM. BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE SO MUCH HUE AND CRY ABOUT MR. HASENFUS -- PEOPLE RAISING THE NEUTRALITY ACT AND WHO KNOWS WHAT ELSE -- THAT MAYBE IT'S TIME THAT WE FOCUSED SOME ATTENTION ON THE BROADER QUESTION OF AMERICANS -- PRIVATE AMERICANS -- INVOLVED DOWN THERE ON BOTH SIDES OF THAT CONFLICT.

I ASKED THAT THIS QUESTION BE RAISED THIS MORNING IN THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE BRIEFING ON THE HASENFUS CASE, AND I INTEND TO PURSUE IT DIRECTLY WITH THE ADMINISTRATION IN THE DAYS AHEAD.

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