

**Bob Dole**



**NEWS**

**U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS**

**FROM:**

**SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER**

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## **VIETNAM EMBARGO**

### **WRONG DECISION, WRONG TIME, WRONG REASONS**

Washington -- Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole today made the following statement regarding President Clinton's decision to lift the trade embargo on Vietnam:

While many of my colleagues think lifting the trade embargo on Vietnam is the right course, I believe it is the wrong decision at the wrong time for the wrong reasons.

If the concern is about American exports to Asia, President Clinton should extend Most-Favored-Nation status to China.

President-elect Clinton said -- ironically on Veterans Day, 1992 -- "there will be no normalization of relations with any nation that is at all suspected of withholding any information." Those suspicions remain among many Americans. It is difficult to square a decision to lift the embargo with the earlier commitment.

Numerous objective observers believe Vietnam is withholding information and remains that could readily be turned over -- if Vietnam had the political will and if the U.S. had decided to use political leverage. Many believe Vietnam is not being fully forthcoming -- but why should they? While going through the motions on POW/MIAS, Vietnam guessed accurately that the Administration would give them what they wanted and lift the embargo.

The National League of Families asked the President to wait until they traveled to Vietnam to assess POW/MIA cooperation firsthand. We do not know what they would have found. We do not know what impact it may have had on the President. We do not know because President Clinton couldn't wait a week or two to end a three decade old embargo. What was the hurry?

Veterans groups -- representing millions of Americans who served their country -- are united in their opposition to this decision. And according to a December poll, the American people -- some 85% of them -- are not satisfied with Vietnam's cooperation on POW/MIAs.

Earlier this week, the Senate approved my amendment to require the President to report on the POW/MIA issue within 30 days after a decision to ease or end the embargo. It's not much, but at least we will get a report from the President. Maybe he will put some of the families' concerns to rest.

After stonewalling for years, Vietnam impressed the Administration enough to get the embargo lifted. I expect Vietnam will provide more remains and information very soon. And then, the argument will be over Most-Favored-Nation status, and full diplomatic relations. But unless Vietnamese cooperation changes, there will be widespread opposition to any further steps.

There may be a "right time" to lift the embargo against Vietnam, but we have not reached that time yet.

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