



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, JUNE 6, 1977

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DOLE RESOLUTION WOULD ESTABLISH CONDITIONS FOR RESTORING RELATIONS WITH CUBA

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Following is a statement made by Senator Bob Dole today upon introduction of his resolution establishing conditions for restoring relations between the United States and Cuba:

Mr. Dole: Mr. President, I am today introducing a Senate resolution to express opposition to normalization of U. S. relations with the Cuban government until certain preconditions are met. On Friday, the Administration announced that a mutual agreement had been concluded to permit the exchange of mid-level diplomatic personnel between our two governments. Negotiations leading to this agreement were conducted in private, outside the realm of public scrutiny and comment. It now appears likely that the Administration will proceed with efforts to fully restore diplomatic relations with the Castro regime, and to lift the sixteen year old trade embargo against Cuba. Because I believe that the Cuban government must demonstrate preliminary good faith on its part, and because I feel strongly that Congress and the American people should provide input into this major policy development, I have offered a resolution to provide guidance in resuming normal relations with Cuba.

My resolution would express the sense of the United States Senate that there should be no formal U. S. recognition of the government of Cuba and no partial or complete lifting of the 1962 U. S. trade embargo against Cuba, until Fidel Castro's regime has met certain conditions. Those conditions are: (1) compensation for U.S. property confiscated by Cuba in 1959; (2) release and repatriation of American citizens currently imprisoned in Cuba on political charges, along with progress towards observance of the human rights of Cuban citizens; (3) withdrawal of Cuban military troops and military advisers from Africa; and (4) renewal of an anti-hijacking agreement with the U.S. and guarantees for the future security of the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay.

These four conditions reflect the major conflicts between the U.S. and Cuba for the past seventeen years and, in my opinion, should constitute the minimum concessions we expect from Castro before we restore diplomatic recognition and trade.

We Hold the Bargaining Chips

It is important that one fundamental factor be clearly understood at the outset: the communist government in Cuba has as much and more to gain from improved relations with United States, as we have to gain from the arrangement. Consequently, it would be a serious mistake for us to forge ahead with unilateral concessions until all outstanding differences between our governments have been fully explored and at least partially resolved. We, as a nation, have much to offer and much to expect in return. Concessions on our part must be fully matched by substantive, reciprocal concessions on the part of the Cuban government. And I believe there should be no formal reinstatement of diplomatic relations, nor resumption of normal trade patterns, until agreements have been reached and genuine progress made towards resolving major disagreements as we see them.

It is also important that American policy makers realistically distinguish between Castro's initiatives which are dictated by economic necessity, and those which might reflect genuine moderation in his policies of terror and repression. Our policy makers must recognize that the Communist regime's ideological foundations remain unchanged, and they must insist on certain preconditions before any further consideration of normalized relations takes place.

Present Conditions Unacceptable

American interests and concerns with regard to Cuban policies remain largely unchanged, and a number of present Cuban policies are clearly unacceptable from our national point of view. In the first place, Cuba has made no effort to compensate American citizens for property and assets expropriated by the Cuban government following Castro's takeover in 1959. The U.S. Foreign Claims Settlement Commission has certified the value of that loss at \$1.8 billion dollars, and has also ruled that American claimants are entitled to interest on their certified claims at the rate of 6% per annum from the date of seizure. It was in response to the confiscation of American property that our own government imposed a partial trade embargo against Cuba in October of 1960, which was followed by imposition of the total trade embargo in February of 1962.

In the context of current international concern about the appropriate observance of human rights by governing institutions, the Carter Administration should insist upon significant progress in this area by the Castro regime. Credible reports indicate that as many as 15,000 to 20,000 Cuban citizens are imprisoned in Cuba because of their opposition to the Communist government. In addition, I understand that at least 18 American citizens remain imprisoned in Cuban jails, and at least 7 of these are incarcerated on charges of espionage or similar allegations of a political nature. Others are held on charges relating to drug use or hijacking activity. In line with a perfectly natural sense of concern by the United States about repressive actions against our own citizens, as well as Cuban citizens, we must insist that tangible steps be taken by the Cuban regime to resolve that concern. It is vital that U.S. policy makers apply the same human rights criteria to Cuba which has been applied to other nations with whom we maintain friendly relations. It is nothing short of ironic that the Carter Administration proposes to improve relations with Cuba at the same time that it suggests that we redouble or eliminate interaction with traditional allies in Latin America and other parts of the globe.

It should be made absolutely clear to Castro that there can be no meaningful improvement in American-Cuban relations until he agrees to terminate his active promotion of Communist aggression in Latin America and Africa. It is an insult to the principle of self-determination that Castro still maintains a force of some 10,000 Cuban troops in Angola, two years after their strong arm activities won that country over to the Communists. In addition- Cuban military advisers are being deployed throughout the African continent--in Ethiopia, Mozambique, and elsewhere--to instigate political turmoil and bloodshed. The Cuban's dictator's revolutionary activism has not diminished, despite his earlier promises. It must be halted before we agree to normalize diplomatic relations.

The Cuban government announced in October of 1976 that it would allow its anti-hijacking agreement with United States to terminate in April of this year. They have indicated no willingness to formally renew the agreement, and I fear that this removes a major psychological force to discourage the hijacking of American planes to Cuba. The Administration, and Congress, should insist upon a formal renewal of the hijacking accord, along with Cuban guarantees on the future security of the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay. There have been indications that the Cuban leadership refuses to provide these assurances until the U.S. trade embargo is lifted. If these reports are accurate, and the Cuban government attempts to "blackmail" the United States into political and economic ties, it should be clearly understood that the U.S. does not submit to such techniques. Those who insist that the time is at hand for the United States to demonstrate "good faith" by lifting the trade embargo have not, I suspect, fully considered the lack of good faith by the Cuban government on these and other issues of importance to the American people. I would urge this Administration, and my colleagues in Congress, to insist that all these matters be properly addressed before binding agreements with the Cuban government are consummated.

Little Trade Value

To those in our own country who advocate resumption of diplomatic relations for the purposes of bilateral trade, I would point out that future trade relations are likely to benefit Cuba far more than they will the United States. The precipitous plunge of world sugar prices has been among the major factors which has brought Castro to the point of expressing interest in improved relations with our government. The return of the U.S. sugar market to Cuba would mean reduced imports of sugar from friendly sugar-producing nations, as well as an additional burden upon our domestic sugar-producing industry.

Castro sees the United States as a prime market for the island's principal export crop as well as other Cuban products like nickel, seafood, rum, and cigars. While trade always has two-way benefits, the Cuban market does not have as much importance for the U.S. Cuba will not be a vast market for American businessmen, as a commerce department study estimates only about a three-hundred million dollar potential from the Cuban market. In relation to our annual trade level of about one-hundred billion dollars, the prospects are indeed insignificant. At present, about 60% of Cuban trade is with other Communist countries, and it worth noting that Cuba currently owes the Soviet Union about five-billion dollars. By most standards, the Cuban government clearly has a poor credit rating.

NO UNILATERAL CONCESSIONS

The Cuban Communist regime likes to imply that it is up to the United States to demonstrate "good faith" and to take the first step in improving political and economic relations. At the same time, some of my colleagues in Congress, and those formulating policy in the Administration, are likewise suggesting that it is our responsibility alone to heal old wounds and initiate reconciliation with the island. My point is simply this: improved relations between the United States and Cuba do not depend upon a unilateral decision by the United States. Instead, Castro is going to have to make some tough decisions of his own based on the intensity of his desire to improve relations with the U.S. There is absolutely no reason why policy makers in this country should feel obliged to bend over backwards to curry favor with the Communist regime.

I say this -- if there must be concessions made, let them be made bilaterally. And if Cuba is unwilling to restrain subversive activity in Africa; if it is unwilling to compensate American citizens for stolen property; if it is unwilling to release American prisoners and become more conscious of the human rights of its own citizens' and if it is unwilling to provide simple assurances on the safety of Americans who are hijacked to Cuba, then I say Cuba does not warrant U.S. recognition or trade considerations.

The announcement on Friday that 10 American prisoners will be released from Cuban prisons was a welcome sign, but only a minor initial step on Castro's part. We should not overreact to that token gesture, but insist on further substantive progress in resolving American concerns. The release of some U.S. prisoners demonstrates that Castro is capable of making concessions. We must, therefore, maintain our commitment to acquiring full cooperation on all outstanding issues before relations are "normalized."

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to join with me in supporting this resolution, and I sincerely hope that the President will heed our advice in the matter.

Congressman William Broomfield, ranking Minority member on the House International Affairs Committee, is introducing a companion resolution this afternoon in the House of Representatives. I trust there will be early attention to this cooperative effort by both Houses of Congress.

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