



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.-Kans.) New Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 224-6521
Friday, June 24, 1977

STATEMENT BY SENATOR DOLE INSIST ON FULL PAYMENT BY CUBA FOR AMERICAN LOSSES

Mr. President, This amendment would provide that none of the money in this Appropriations bill can be used for a settlement of U.S. claims against the Cuban government at less than the full value of those claims. This relates specifically to private property which was confiscated by the Cuban government following Castro's rise to power in 1959. This includes both claims by private individuals, corporations, and churches and charitable organizations.

On July 6, 1972, the U.S. foreign claims settlement commission certified that the principal value of all private U.S. claims for expropriated property totaled slightly more than \$1.8 billion dollars. This was the sum total of 979 individual corporate claims, 4896 individual claims, and 36 claims by religious or charitable groups. My amendment would protect the rights and interests of all these American claimants, and insure that they receive full compensation for their property.

AN ISSUE THAT MUST BE SETTLED

In my opinion, this is one issue that must be settled before we complete "normalization" efforts with the Cuban government. Just last week, when this body considered the State Department's Authorization bill, the Senate approved an amendment offered by the distinguished majority leader containing the following language: "That the vital concerns of the United States with respect to the basic rights and interests of U.S. citizens whose persons or property are the subject of such negotiations be protected."

At that time, the Senate clearly went on record with respect to the importance of this issue. What we are doing today would simply reiterate in more specific language that same concept.

My amendment does not require full payment of the \$1.8 billion dollars in one lump sum, nor does it rule out negotiation of a repayment schedule over a period of time. But it does insure that American citizens will receive full compensation from the Cuban government for their property after seventeen long years.

While my amendment does not rule out the establishment of diplomatic relations prior to an agreement on this issue, it should be clear in the legislative history that the Senate expects this matter to be resolved as expeditiously as possible. In my opinion, it would be inexcusable for this administration to institute formal relations or trade with Cuba before the claims by our own citizens are resolved. And when they are resolved, it should be at full value for their loss.

I might point out that this does not preclude negotiations on the issue itself. It also does not affect any claims for U.S. government property seized by Castro. Its sole purpose is to protect those Americans who will have no direct input into the negotiations but whose property is at stake. It protects the principal value of that property but does not necessarily insist upon payment of interest. I firmly believe that the Cuban government should pay interest on the property, but I realize that that factor could be subject to some negotiation.

Thus, I think my amendment is more than fair. It is an issue that must be resolved, and resolved in the interest of Americans, not Cubans. Mr. President, my amendment is fully endorsed by the Joint Corporate Committee on Cuban claims, which represents both individuals and businesses whose property was taken by Castro. I ask unanimous consent that, at the conclusion of my remarks, there be printed a copy of a communication I have received from the committee, along with a partial list of those whose property was expropriated.

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