

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

2213 Dirksen Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

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CONTACT: BOB WAITE, BILL KATS
(202) 224-8953, -8947

DOLE DOUBTS SOVIETS, ROMANIANS HAVE REALLY CHANGED

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas), in a letter to President Carter, expressed strong reservations concerning "most favored nation" status for Romania and the Soviet Union.

Dole, a Helsinki Commissioner, told the President that he should undertake "a careful examination of the facts" before submitting proposals to waive the restrictive provisions of the Jackson-Vanik amendment.

The text of the letter is as follows:

Dear Mr. President:

As the issue of Most Favored Nation status is soon to be re-examined, I should like to share with you my concerns on this matter.

The Soviets' increase of emigration rates for Jews is an encouraging sign. However, on the eve of the signing and ratification of the SALT agreement, one cannot help but question whether the present situation will continue in the future. Has the situation really changed to justify a change in U.S. policy? Opinions expressed by two of the recently released activists, Aleksandr Ginzburg and Kuznetsov, concur with my feelings that there has been no fundamental change in Soviet policy.

In Romania, where the Jewish population is unofficially estimated to be between 40,000 and 50,000, the situation is dismal. Emigration figures have been steadily declining from 4,000 in 1973 to 1,139 in 1978. Of those who remain in Romania, nearly half are estimated to wish an opportunity to leave. Visa applications have been denied or thwarted through an increasingly intricate labyrinth of red tape that denies Jews the chance to even obtain application forms.

There is no doubt in my mind that the restrictive provisions of the Jackson-Vanik amendment function as an insurance policy to guarantee that emigration figures may be expected to be maintained. We must require strict adherence to the principles expressed in the law before granting waivers, or the human rights provisions will become meaningless.

I strongly suggest that a careful examination of the facts be undertaken, prior to the submission of proposals to waive the restrictive provisions of the Jackson-Vanik amendment.

Thank you for your attention to the contents of this letter.

Sincerely yours,

BOB DOLE
United States Senate