

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE CALLS FOR FIRMNESS IN SECURING SAFETY OF AMERICANS IN IRAN

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today called upon President Carter to take whatever appropriate actions are needed, not excluding the use of force, if deemed necessary, to free the 60 to 65 Americans now being held hostage in Iran.

In a sense of the Congress resolution introduced today, Dole called on his colleagues to condemn the failure of Iran to protect American citizens there, and urged the sense of the Congress "that the President of the United States should take whatever appropriate actions, not excluding the use of force, if deemed necessary, to secure the immediate and safe release of all American citizens held captive in Iran."

"I certainly hope that the Carter Administration's efforts to free those Americans being held in Iran are successful," he said, "but as time goes by it is becoming increasingly clear that conciliation and pleading with the Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters is producing no tangible results.

"It is obvious now that Iran is in a state of civil chaos. Until a civilized civil authority regains control of Iran, the United States ought to withdraw its interests. Until we have the power to protect American lives and interests, or can reasonably expect the government there to do so, we cannot continue to put our people in jeopardy.

"The American people are tired of seeing a country whose government cannot claim the allegiance of all its own people attempting the political blackmail of the United States. Some say we must be careful about what we do because of the oil weapon. We should not let ourselves be constrained in our actions simply for fear that this supply will be cut off. The Iranian oil is important, but it is not so vital to us that we can give in to blackmail.

"There are several things we can do today. Since Iran is dissolving as a political entity, let us declare all Iranian passports and visas no longer valid. Return the revolutionary students to Teheran, where they can put their beliefs to the test, by constructively working to rebuild the government they advocated tearing down. Those who are genuine students, properly enrolled and attending classes, can re-apply for special visas that will allow them to complete their education.

"The situation that we now face arises from an indecisive, nearsighted foreign policy that reacts to short-term events without a clear vision of future goals and needs. Once again American lives are in danger. Why is it that less than a year after the U.S. Embassy was captured by Iranian mobs, adequate measures were not taken to prevent the same thing from happening again? Why were we not better prepared, since one of the reasons the Administration did not allow the Shah to come here in the first place was because we were afraid it would endanger Americans in Iran and cause riots by Iranian students in this country? Why is it we had not taken any precautions when the Shah, a sick man, finally did enter our country over a week ago? These are questions that will all have to be answered.

"But now we must work to assure the safety of those Americans being held, and we must deal in a firm and direct manner."