

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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CONGRESS FUMBLES THE BALL ON NICARAGUA

WASHINGTON --- Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole today said Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's trip to Moscow was proof positive that Congress made a major misjudgement when it rejected aid to the anti-government Contras.

"Congress really fumbled the ball on this one," Dole said. "Now there is little doubt about President Ortega's political leanings. And when we, in Congress, had the opportunity to take constructive action to help the Contras and preserve democracy in Nicaragua, we turned our backs."

"President Ortega told the world he would make a grand gesture if the United States Congress rejected aid to the Contras," Dole noted. "But his grand gesture amounted to the release of a few political prisoners, who should never have been jailed in the first place, and a trip to Moscow to receive more money for his Marxist regime. Democrats wasted no time in criticizing President Reagan's itinerary in Europe, Dole added, but there has't been much of an outcry over Ortega's."

"Now is the time Congress and President Reagan should seriously consider imposing a trade embargo on Nicaragua," Dole said. The United States purchases a major portion of Nicaragua's banana and coffee production.

"And, after a reasonable time has lapsed," Dole added, "if President Ortega continues to reject President Reagan's peace initiatives, I believe we should seriously rethink whether there is any real value in maintaining diplomatic relations with what amounts to an outlaw regime bent on exporting revolution," Dole said.