

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

RESTRICTING TRAVEL TO LEBANON GOOD FIRST STEP
"NOW IT'S TIME TO CLOSE THE EMBASSY THERE"

I WANT TO TAKE BRIEF NOTE OF THE DECISION BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT YESTERDAY TO IMPOSE NEW RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL TO LEBANON BY AMERICAN CITIZENS. IN BRIEF, THE NEW REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT ANY CITIZEN WISHING TO TRAVEL TO OR -- IF ALREADY THERE -- STAY IN LEBANON MUST OBTAIN A SPECIAL VALIDATION PERMIT. THE ONLY BLANKET EXCEPTION IS FOR THE IMMEDIATE FAMILIES OF THOSE NOW HELD HOSTAGE -- AN APPROPRIATE EXCEPTION, PERMITTING THEM THE CHANCE TO PURSUE THE RELEASE OF THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS. THE OPERATIVE EFFECT OF THIS NEW REGULATION OUGHT TO BE A LONG-OVERDUE, DRASTIC REDUCTION OF THE AMERICAN PRIVATE PRESENCE IN LEBANON.

I COMMEND THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR THIS NEW MEASURE. AS I INDICATED IN A STATEMENT ISSUED LAST WEEKEND, IT'S HIGH TIME THAT ALL AMERICANS LEAVE LEBANON, WHERE THEY HAVE INCREASINGLY BECOME SITTING DUCKS FOR THE MANY RADICAL AND IRRESPONSIBLE SPLINTER POLITICAL GROUPS ACTIVE THERE.

DIPLOMATIC MISSION SHOULD BE CLOSED

THE DEPARTMENT HAS NOT YET SEEN FIT TO CLOSE OUR DIPLOMATIC MISSION THERE. I HOPE THAT STEP WILL BE TAKEN SOON. THE SECURITY SITUATION IN LEBANON HAS DETERIORATED SO BADLY, AND OUR INFLUENCE ON EVENTS THERE IS SO MINIMAL, IT IS HARD TO SEE HOW THE EMBASSY CAN PLAY ANY USEFUL ROLE. CLOSING THE EMBASSY IS NOT ABANDONING ANYONE OR GIVING IN TO TERRORISTS. IT IS MERELY ACCEPTING THE TRAGIC REALITY THAT BEIRUT IS FAST BECOMING A NO-MAN'S LAND. AND BRINGING OUR DIPLOMATS HOME WILL IN FACT ENHANCE OUR CAPABILITY TO STRIKE BACK AGAINST TERRORISTS, BY SHUTTING DOWN ONE INVITING TARGET FOR THEIR RETALIATION.

WE'VE PARTLY CLEARED THE DECKS BY MOVING TO ELIMINATE THE PRIVATE AMERICAN PRESENCE. IT'S TIME, AS WELL, TO TAKE THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP AND WITHDRAW OUR DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE.

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