

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE BILL WILL CLOSE PLO OFFICES IN U.S.

WASHINGTON -- Calling the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) a terrorist group whose credo is "hate and violence", Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole announced today that he is introducing legislation to close down the PLO's two offices in the United States.

Dole was joined at a Capitol Hill press conference by key cosponsors Charles Grassley, Rudy Boschwitz, Frank Lautenberg, and Howard Metzenbaum. The Dole bill will close the PLO's offices in Washington and New York.

Following is the text of Dole's statement:

LATER TODAY, I WILL JOIN WITH A NUMBER OF SENATORS FROM BOTH PARTIES TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO CLOSE DOWN THE TWO OFFICES OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION HERE IN THE U.S.

THE SENATORS HERE WITH ME TODAY -- SENATOR GRASSLEY -- WHO REALLY STARTED THE BALL ROLLING ON THIS ISSUE LAST YEAR -- AND SENATORS LAUTENBERG, BOSCHWITZ AND METZENBAUM ARE AMONG THE KEY COSPONSORS.

OUR BILL WILL CLOSE DOWN BOTH PLO OFFICES IN THE UNITED STATES: THE ONE HERE IN WASHINGTON -- A SO-CALLED "INFORMATION OFFICE"; THE OTHER IN NEW YORK -- THE OFFICE OF THE PLO OBSERVER MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS.

PLO IS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

THE PLO IS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION. IT'S LEADERS ARE TERRORISTS. I DON'T NEED TO CITE THE RECORD -- FROM THE ACHILLE LAURO INCIDENT ON.

A PLO MEMBER -- WHO HAPPENS TO BE A U.S. CITIZEN -- WAS ARRESTED IN NEW YORK JUST LAST WEEK, FOR ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN THE BOMBING OF A BUS IN ISRAEL IN WHICH AN INNOCENT CIVILIAN WAS KILLED. FROM YESTERDAY'S PRESS, I ALSO READ THAT THE NOTORIOUS ABU NIDAL -- A MEMBER OF THE PLO -- IS THREATENING RETALIATION, THAT IS, TERRORIST ATTACK, AGAINST THE U.S., IF WE COOPERATE IN THE EXTRADITION OF THE PERSON ARRESTED. SO THE PLO HAS NOT CHANGED ITS STRIPES.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS CONFIRMED THE PLO'S TERRORIST PAST AND PRESENT. THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HAS CONFIRMED IT. THE RECORD IS WRITTEN IN THE BLOOD OF AMERICANS, ISRAELIS AND PEOPLE OF MANY NATIONALITIES AROUND THE GLOBE.

THIS ORGANIZATION, ITS IDEOLOGY OF HATE AND VIOLENCE, AND ITS PERSONNEL -- THEY HAVE NO PLACE IN AMERICA. THEY HAVE NO PLACE IN CIVILIZED SOCIETY. IT'S TIME THEY WERE BANISHED.

ADMINISTRATION HAS NOT MOVED

I HAD HOPED THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN THIS EFFORT. I PERSONALLY ASKED THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO DO SO. PERHAPS SOME ACTION IS BEING CONSIDERED. BUT NONE HAS BEEN TAKEN SO FAR.

SO WE ARE INTRODUCING THIS LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE A CLEAR LEGAL BASE -- AND A CLEAR CONGRESSIONAL DIRECTION AND MANDATE -- TO CLOSE THESE TWO OFFICES.

CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE INVALID

TO ANY WHO ARE INCLINED TO TRY TO RAISE A CONSTITUTIONAL OR HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGE TO THIS BILL, LET ME SAY: WE'VE LOOKED AT THAT CAREFULLY, AND HAD MANY LAWYERS LOOK OVER THE ISSUE, TOO. WE ARE CONFIDENT THERE IS NO VALID CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE TO THIS BILL.

WE ARE NOT SEEKING TO UNDERMINE ANYONE'S RIGHTS; BUT WE ARE TRYING TO PROTECT THE RIGHT OF THE CITIZENS OF THIS COUNTRY TO BE FREE FROM THE THREAT OF TERRORISM.

WE ARE NOT WEAKENING THE FIRST AMENDMENT. IN FACT, WE ARE NOT CHALLENGING THE FIRST AMENDMENT AT ALL. IT IS SIMPLY NOT AT ISSUE. WE ARE SEEKING TO STRENGTHEN THE DEFENSES OF THIS COUNTRY AGAINST THE REAL, PHYSICAL THREAT THAT THE PLO REPRESENTS.

THIS IS NOT AN ANTI-PALESTINIAN BILL. IT IS AN ANTI-TERRORIST BILL.

PROVISIONS OF BILL

THE BILL DECLARES THE PLO IS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION, AND LAYS OUT SOME OF THE EVIDENCE WHY. ON THE BASIS OF THAT FINDING, THE BILL PROHIBITS THE RECEIPT OR EXPENDITURE OF ANY FUNDS FROM THE PLO IN THIS COUNTRY; AND PROHIBITS THE ESTABLISHMENT OR MAINTENANCE OF ANY PLO OFFICE IN THE U.S.

AND, TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THESE PROHIBITIONS ARE IN PLACE BECAUSE -- AND ONLY BECAUSE -- THE PLO IS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION: THE BILL WOULD LIFT THE PROHIBITIONS ONCE THE PRESIDENT CERTIFIES THAT THE PLO IS NO LONGER PRACTICING OR SUPPORTING TERRORISM.

TERRORISM IS THE ISSUE

TERRORISM IS THE ISSUE. THE RIGHT OF THIS COUNTRY TO DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST TERRORISM IS THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH WE SEEK LEGISLATIVE ACTION -- AND THE REASON WE INTRODUCE THIS LEGISLATION TODAY.

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