

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas) SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510-1601

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CONTACT: WALT RIKER, DALE TATE
(202) 224-3135

DOLE SPONSORS AMENDMENTS TO PROMOTE FREE PRESS IN NICARAGUA

THE SENATE ADOPTED TWO AMENDMENTS SPONSORED BY SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE (R-KS.) THAT WILL PROMOTE A FREE PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA IN NICARAGUA. THE AMENDMENTS WERE APPROVED AS PART OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZATION BILL.

The first amendment, co-sponsored by Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) would urge the lifting of one segment of the current U.S. embargo against Nicaragua so that equipment and supplies to be used by the independent press and other media could be sent to Nicaragua.

The second amendment, co-sponsored with Senator Lloyd Bentsen (D-Texas), would provide \$250,000 to support elements struggling to bring a free press, and democratic opposition parties, to Nicaragua.

Senator Dole recently visited Nicaragua with Republican members of the Senate's Central America Observer Group. He had the opportunity to meet with both Cardinal Obando -- who is responsible for Catholic Radio -- and Violetta Chamorro -- the editor of La Prensa.

Dole said, "It was clear to me that, despite years of repression and propaganda from the Sandinistas, the Nicaraguan people remain thirsty for freedom; and ready to implement it fully -- if the Sandinistas give them the chance."

"But both the Cardinal and Mrs. Chamorro indicated to us the great practical difficulties that they would face in revitalizing their media outlets. In both cases, there will be serious, potentially crippling shortages of equipment and supplies, which will be needed both initially, and over time, to insure continued operation."

"In order to give these important media outlets every chance to succeed -- and to deny the Sandinistas any leverage to keep them from succeeding -- it makes sense for us to make funds available and lift our embargo on such equipment and supplies which would be destined for the independent media."

Dole noted that the the amendment authorizing the \$250,000 would be provided above board, with no strings attached. Official U.S. government involvement will be very limited; the money will be provided through private channels. And it will be provided only in response to a specific request -- so every potential recipient will be able to make their own judgment on whether receipt of this money is in his own interest.