

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE: NO SAFE HAVEN FOR THOSE WHO MURDER AMERICANS
CALLS FOR U.S. RESPONSE IF HIGGINS REPORTS ARE TRUE

WASHINGTON -- THE FOLLOWING ARE THE COMMENTS OF SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE, MADE ON THE FLOOR OF THE SENATE THIS MORNING, IN REACTION TO REPORTS THAT U.S. MARINE LT. COL. WILLIAM R. HIGGINS WAS HANGED BY PRO-IRANIAN SHIITE MOSLEM CAPTORS:

...THERE ARE REPORTS FROM LEBANON THIS MORNING THAT COLONEL RICHARD HIGGINS HAS BEEN MURDERED BY HIS CAPTORS, A RADICAL MUSLIM GROUP THAT KIDNAPPED HIM IN FEBRUARY 1988.

OUR FIRST THOUGHTS AND OUR PRAYERS THIS MORNING ARE OF COLONEL HIGGINS FAMILY, ESPECIALLY HIS WIFE ROBIN, WHO IS ALSO AN ACTIVE DUTY MEMBER OF THE U.S. MARINES. THEY HAVE SUFFERED SO MUCH, FOR SO LONG. AND NOW THEY FACE THIS TERRIBLE MOMENT OF ANGUISH.

IN RECENT MONTHS MY OFFICE, IN COORDINATION WITH THE OFFICE OF THE DISTINGUISHED MAJORITY LEADER, SENATOR MITCHELL, HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH ROBIN HIGGINS AND HER REPRESENTATIVES, QUIETLY TRYING TO FIND WAYS TO WIN COLONEL HIGGINS' RELEASE. WE HAD SOME REASON TO HOPE THAT WE MIGHT AT LEAST CONFIRM THAT COL. HIGGINS WAS ALIVE, AND OBTAIN SOME INFORMATION ON HIS CONDITION AND WHEREABOUTS IN THE COURSE OF THIS WEEK. AS I'VE INDICATED, EVENTS BEYOND OUR CONTROL INTERVEANED.

MR. PRESIDENT, AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED, THERE CAN BE NO SAFE HAVEN FOR THOSE WHO MURDER INNOCENT AMERICANS. THERE CAN BE NO SAFE HAVEN FOR THOSE WHO RESPOND TO WHAT THEY SEE AS THE OFFENSE OF OTHERS BY KILLING AMERICANS SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY SEE US AS THE MOST ATTRACTIVE TARGET, OR THE TARGET THAT CAN WIN THEM THE MOST POLITICAL ATTENTION, OR MEDIA ATTENTION, OR LEVERAGE.

MR. PRESIDENT, IF WE CAN FIND OUT WHO DID THIS, AND LOCATE AND ISOLATE THEM, WE OUGHT TO MAKE THEM PAY. WE OUGHT TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE NEVER AGAIN IN A POSITION TO HARM ANOTHER AMERICAN.

I AM CERTAIN WE ALL HOPE AND PRAY THAT IT IS NOT AN ACCURATE REPORT. BUT IF IT IS AN ACCURATE REPORT, THEN I HOPE THE ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.

(MORE)

THEY INDICATED YESTERDAY, THROUGH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, THERE WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE. I AM NOT CERTAIN WHAT AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE WOULD BE. BUT I AM CERTAIN THERE SHOULD BE A RESPONSE. IF IN FACT THIS DASTARDLY DEED HAS BEEN DONE, IT IS ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE FANATICISM OF THE HEZBOLLAH AND OTHERS WHO MAY HOLD OTHER AMERICANS CAPTIVE.

COL. HIGGINS WAS PART OF A U.N. PEACEKEEPING GROUP, NOT A SPY. HE WAS A 44-YEAR-OLD COLONEL FROM DANVILLE, KENTUCKY.

AND IF THE REUTERS REPORT IS TRUE...THEN I WOULD HOPE THE ISRAELIES WOULD TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT SOME OF THEIR ACTIONS, WHICH THEY MUST KNOW IN ADVANCE, WILL ENDANGER AMERICAN LIVES. WE CAN'T CONTINUALLY APOLOGIZE FOR ISRAELI ACTIONS IN THIS COUNTRY WHEN IT ENDANGERS THE LIVES OF AMERICANS IN SOME FAR-OFF COUNTRY. PERHAPS A LITTLE MORE RESPONSIBILITY ON THE PART OF THE ISRAELIES WOULD BE REFRESHING

IF THE FACTS TURN OUT TO BE FACTUAL, I BELIEVE THIS ADMINISTRATION, PRESIDENT BUSH, AND OTHERS RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR POLICY, IN ADDITION TO THE RESPONSE, BETTER HAVE SOME UNDERSTANDING WITH THE ISRAELIES ABOUT FUTURE CONDUCT...THAT WOULD ENDANGER THE LIVES OF AMERICANS.

I KNOW THE ISRAELIES HAVE, PERHAPS, GOOD MOTIVES. THEY WERE TRYING TO FREE THREE ISRAELI SOLDIERS. BUT CERTAINLY THEY KNOW WHERE THE LEVERAGE IS. THE LEVERAGE IS WITH THE UNITED STATES. AND WHEN THESE FANATICS WANT A RESPONSE, THEY'RE GOING TO ATTACK AN AMERICAN, OR THREATEN AN AMERICAN, OR KILL AN AMERICAN.

SO I GUESS WE DO WAIT AND SEE WHAT THE FINAL OFFICIAL REPORT WILL BE. BUT I BELIEVE THAT ALL MY COLLEAGUES WILL SHARE THEIR REVULSION IF THE REUTERS REPORT IS ACCURATE.

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