

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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TRAVELGATE SPECIAL COUNSEL

DOLE CALLS ON RENO TO APPOINT SPECIAL COUNSEL TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF TRAVELGATE FIASCO: INDEPENDENT PROBE NEEDED; WHEN WILL TRAVELGATE FILIBUSTER END?

The White House's internal review of its Travelgate scandal only gives more credence to those of us who view the administration's scrambling on this one as little more than damage control.

At least, the White House finally admits that senior political appointees pressured the F.B.I. for political purposes.

At least, the White House admits to an "appearance of favoritism" and agrees that the Travel Office employees were treated without "sensitivity and decency."

White House officials can describe their efforts as "candid" and "thorough," and they can apologize for all the mistakes and misstatements.

But the American people aren't fooled for a minute.

Independent Probe: Dole Requests Special Counsel

They know that the travelgate antics demand far more than just an apology: they demand a no-holds-barred, independent investigation. Not by employees of the White House. Not by friends of President Clinton. And not by staff lawyers from the home team.

That's why the New York Times has called for a Congressional hearing.

That's why liberal columnist Mark Shields believes an independent probe is necessary.

And that's why I have written to Attorney General Reno requesting the appointment of a special counsel to get to the bottom of the Travelgate fiasco. Former Attorney General William Barr appointed special counsels to investigate the House bank scandal and the Inslaw case. So, there's plenty of precedent for the special counsel approach.

Unanswered Questions

There are still plenty of unanswered questions:

Did Harry Thomason, a friend of the President and an investor in an airline charter company, violate the federal conflicts-of-interest statute?

Were any ethical or legal standards broken when World Wide Travel, a company with close ties to high-level White House officials, was hired to run the Travel Office on an interim basis?

Did the White House staff or others in the Executive branch exert pressure on the I.R.S. to initiate an investigation of UltrAir, the airline charter company that formerly did business with the Travel Office?

Why did White House staff claim that the Travel Office investigation was a routine part of Vice President Gore's "national performance review," when this clearly wasn't true?

Did any action taken during the Travel Office affair violate the federal statute prohibiting the promise of future employment as a reward for past political activity?

And why did the F.B.I. respond so quickly to the initial White House request for a criminal investigation? Why did three high-level F.B.I. unit chiefs go to the White House to investigate a complaint that should have been handled by an F.B.I. agent in the Washington metropolitan field office?

These are just some of the questions that a special counsel should seek to answer.

(MORE)

So, while the Administration is slapping itself on the wrist with its "internal reviews" and "sanitized reports," the American people are slapping themselves on the forehead, wondering what's going on.

When will the Travelgate filibuster finally end?

And how long do the American people have to wait for an independent, impartial review of this sorry episode of mistakes, misstatements, and downright wrongdoing?

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Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 11:05 ~~A~~M EDT.