**Reporter:** Our guest is Senate Republican Leader Robert Dole who, with his wife Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole, recently returned from an official visit to Morocco, Soviet Armenia, Poland, and the Netherlands. Thank you, Senator Dole for granting this interview.

**Senator Dole:** Thank you.

**Reporter**: What was the main reason of your trip at this time and who were the members of the American delegation that you were heading?

**Senator Dole:** The trip, the purpose of the trip, was probably three or four-fold; first in Morocco to visit with King Hassan about his efforts to bring about peace in Lebanon and how we save that country, and we had a long visit with him, and we met with other Moroccan leaders and finance minister and others. The primary purpose was to talk to the king about what we can do in Lebanon. In Soviet Armenia, it was to take a look and see what progress has been made since the tragic earthquake that claimed between 25 and 50,000 lives and 500,000 homeless in a country of 3.3 million, and then you add 200,000 more who’ve been driven out of Azerbaijan that makes about 700,000 homeless in that country. In Poland of course, we arrived during a great deal of excitement with the newly elected non-communist Prime Minister, and we met with local officials there. In the Netherlands, we met with the Prime Minister and the foreign minister. The Netherlands are very important, they’re the second largest investor in the United States, and we’re the biggest investor in the Netherlands. So, all in all, this is a trip, we made in effect, at the request of the President; myself, my wife, who’s Secretory of Labor. There are no other members on this delegation, and we reported to the President when we returned, we went to Kennebunkport, Maine, and we made our report to the President this past Monday.

**Reporter**: On your arrival in Armenia, you led a great [unintelligible] at the Armenian market, and you met with the Armenian officials. May I ask what were the subjects of your discussions?

**Senator Dole:** Well, the primary topic was the earthquake and the homeless and what we might do both private and the Armenian people. We have raised an excess of $135,000,000 in private funds in America to help earthquake victims. We’ve only, I think, expended about $4,000,000 of government sources and those primarily transporting supplies and doing other things and of course there are certain restraints we have in dealing with a communist government. But in any event, the primary purpose was to take a look at the progress being made. We landed in Yerevan; we visited Leninakan and Spitak. We talked to a lot of real people; people who have been through the earthquake. We visited the school site in Spitak where 400 children lost their lives in a matter of seconds, as a result of the earthquake. We watched new construction in every place, but it’s slow. Winter’s coming and there are going to be a lot of people without homes in this part of the world.

**Reporter:** You just said that winter is coming. Do you think enough is being done to provide proper shelter for the homeless?

**Senator Dole:** Well, obviously as we talk with the Prime Minister and the foreign minister and Soviet Armenia, they acknowledge there are going to be people without homes this winter, so the answer is probably not. There is a lot being done. Many countries are making contributions. We visited the Austrian village where 100 new homes are going to be available in the next 30 days. There are Americans who are in Armenia preparing to build homes and a number of countries are building homes. In Leninakan for example, they are building sort of a whole new city. We visited a site which will ultimately be 50,000 new homes: that’s going to be several months away. So, the answer is that there are going to be a lot of people suffering because of no place to go when it’s cold.

**Reporter:** According to newspapers and other accounts, there are many workers from other soviet republics who are thousands of Armenians who have fled from neighboring Azerbaijan who are unemployed. Is that true?

**Senator Dole:** That’s true. In fact, we witnessed some of these. We didn’t talk to anybody who fled from Azerbaijan, but we know the number is estimated 200,000 and again, we are talking about 500,000 homeless in the earthquake, and 200,000 who fled. That is 700,000 people in a country of 3.3 million. And the economy is strained in any event, and it makes it almost unbearable. So, there is a lot of unemployment.

**Reporter:** I understand that the plane carrying you and Mrs. Dole carried also $50,000 worth of relief and rehabilitation supplies for Project Hope, which with AmeriCare and other American benevolent organizations has been very generous and kind to the victims of the earthquake.

**Senator Dole:** That’s true. In fact, we were very pleased to be able to deliver about $50,000 worth of needed supplies for Project Hope. They’re doing an outstanding job. They have nine people in Soviet Armenia. We also met with AmeriCares, they’ve been doing an outstanding job as a number of other individuals, not just me on a stage, but from Canada, from Lebanon, from all around the world. We met with physical therapists, occupational therapists, doctors, makers of prosthetic devices, and we’ve asked them to work with the prime minister’s office in setting forth what they believe to be the priorities. One thing that we learned in Armenia is there are a lot of freelancing, a lot of things that are being done that may not be of the highest priority. The first thing they need is a place -- a shelter, a home. And we would like to encourage people to direct their resources toward housing. But in any event, I met with the Americans and others who are working there on an individual bases in the Armenian assembly for example, had people present and we asked them to sit down at the earliest possible time and work out a list of priorities and send that list to me so we can start looking at ways we can help both in the private sector and the public sector.

**Reporter:** What was your impression? Is enough is being done, or…?

**Senator Dole:** Well, it is hard to judge; I mean, it’s easy to say ‘well, they haven’t completed everything.’ But if you understand the massive, the enormity of the tragedy: numbers, scores of villages were damaged. Some were devested, like Spitak, was leveled. We stopped at another little village, I don’t remember the name of it, but it was sort of the epicenter of the earthquake. There wasn’t anything left at all and there were 740 people living there prior to the earthquake. There were 8,000 new graves in Leninakan so everywhere you went to travel, you saw one tragic event after another. So, is enough being done? Well, I would guess- I’d have to say no, because people haven’t been taken care of, but a lot is being done and we didn’t go there to find fault with the Soviet Union, or the leaders in Soviet Armenia. We went there to see if more could be done and if it could be done by our government. We do believe it ought to be better coordination; I think everybody agrees that there’s too much freelancing going on, not enough coordinated effort.

**Reporter:** While you were in Armenia, you and Mrs. Dole were received by His Holiness Vazgen the first, Catholicos of all Armenians [unintelligible]

**Senator Dole:** Yes, that was a very, inspirational and impressive visit. We spent about 50 minutes there. We toured the Manukyan Museum, which was built as a result of a million-dollar gift from the Manukians of Detroit, Michigan. We had a very good visit. We visited the church, probably one of the oldest churches in the world, and of course, Armenia being one of the first Christian nations in the world, so it was very impressive to us. I must say, the Catholicos is in good health, at 82 and he feels that notwithstanding the devastation that Armenia will survive, that people will recover.

**Reporter:** Senator Dole, you have been involved in Armenian issues for many years and have credited your late Doctor Hamper Kelikian in saving your life. If I am not mistaken, you still keep in touch with his family?

**Senator Dole:** Oh, I talked with his wife, Mrs. Kelikian, as recently as yesterday, to tell her about the trip, to tell her I lighted a candle in the church for Dr. Kelikian and it has been a long-standing relationship, going way back to World War II. Dr. Kelikian I think performed seven or eight operations on me, would never let me pay him, so I felt for a number of reasons that I needed to go to Armenia as a Senator, but also as an individual, and as I said to many of the leaders, when I was in need of help, Dr. Kelikian helped me, now it was my turn.

**Reporter:** As you said, you have already reported to President Bush, and I understand he had asked you specially to report to him about Armenia and Poland. What was the overall reaction?

**Senator Dole:** I reported to President first of all, that everywhere I - everywhere we travelled in the South, me and my wife, the people we talked to were most appreciative of the fact that Jeb Bush, the President’s son, had been there almost immediately after the earthquake along with a grandson, and that was very much appreciated by the people of Armenia and by the leadership, and I indicated to him that I would be giving him a special report on Armenia. I felt there were additional things we might do as a government, although we do have restraints, we’d have to work maybe through private agencies. But he said he would look forward to receiving that report. He has a number of friends who’ve been very helpful. AmeriCares, Mr. McCauley is a personal friend of the president, and he’s been most helpful. We were greeted when we arrived by one of the Hovnanian brothers from New Jersey called Harry here, you would know his Armenian first name. They’re in the process of working on a number of- they may build two or three thousand homes before they are finished. So, I reported all of this to the President, and we told him we’d also gave him a report in writing. And let him know what we believe the priorities are.

**Reporter:** In Poland, Senator Dole, besides your meetings with Cardinal Glemp, the Prime Minister and other officials, you and your wife, U.S. Labor Secretary, met also with Solidarity leader Lech Walesa and brought a letter for President Bush. What are your impressions of the [unintelligible] that have unfolded there?

**Senator Dole:** Well, I would not say it is mind boggling to me that we arrived the day Mazowiecki was elected Prime Minister and that afternoon we attended a Solidarity caucus. We were special guests of the Solidarity caucus. I said a few words to the group, but you sort of had a feeling when you were sitting there observing this caucus: it must have been much like the early days of our government, because very few Solidarity members who are now in the parliament have had any legislative experience, I think only three. And here they were, openly and publicly talking about budget deficits and how to deal with some of the problems in Poland, so our impression was that the whole world is watching Poland. And even in Armenia, people were saying in fact, the Catholicos told us- I reminded him of how the church was so important in Poland, and he said ‘Well the church is important in Armenia, we may follow their footsteps’, so there’s all kinds of hope. People who want freedom are looking to Poland as sort of the model and the example. But I must say, in addition to all the reason for celebration, they’ve got some tough choices ahead on the economy, on food, on prices. It’s not going to be easy. And those who, like Walesa and new Prime Minister, and even the press, and Jaruzelski, I think, must work together. And I know they’ve got a tough road of hope.

**Reporter:** Was the letter ofLech Walesa asking for help? American help?

**Senator Dole:** I think I can’t reveal the contents because the President chose not to that, but I think I can say and characterize that yes, it was a request for help. And we’re willing to help. I don’t want to leave the impression that we’re not willing. The President’s already outlined a program of a 119 million dollars plus an additional 50 million dollars in food aid. I think as I have talked with different leaders again, in Solidarity, including the President, they want something quickly. They need to see some momentum; they need to see a change. I think that’s the message we brought back.

**Reporter:** You said you met with King Hassan in Morocco, and do you think the commission that the Arab League has established- and he is a member in that- Do you think they will be able to do something to bring peace in Lebanon?

**Senator Dole:** Well, they haven’t given up. They’ve been some talk about- I guess it is referred to as the higher committee, the king of Saudi Arabia, and King Hassan, and the leader- king of Algeria. But they haven’t given up- they indicated they had not done that. I think it’s fair to say that- it is a belief for some that until the United States gets involved, and Soviet Union becomes involved, that we’re not going to have a solution in Lebanon. And there’s some indication as we speak that that’s happening. The King approached… and others we met with- how do we save this country? How do we save Lebanon? And, he's still optimistic, though I must say it’s a very difficult and delicate situation.

**Reporter:** Are you and Mrs. Dole planning similar trips in the near future, and what are your future plans concerning Armenia and Armenians?

**Senator Dole:** My future plan I’ve already started in Armenia; I talked to State Representative Chuck Haytaian yesterday in New Jersey who’s very prominent in politics there and is also very prominent in Armenian activities. We hope to continue to be of help by attending various functions, fundraising functions by Armenians to raise money for those in Soviet Armenia. I’ve indicated to the President and to others that we want to pursue what else might be done on an individual basis, how we can be helpful. I’ve talked to the Governor Deukmejian of California, who hopes to visit Armenia soon. In addition, we’re going to be looking for ways- sort of government to government help, what we can do if we can find ways to help that aren’t costly because we have a budget problem, every time we turn around, we have to remind people that we have problems too. Although we have not done very much in Armenia as a government, we think we can do much more.

**Reporter:** Would you like to say a few words about any subject that we didn’t cover?

**Senator Dole:** Well, I think primarily, whether it’s either Armenia, or the Soviet or Poland, there’s a change taking place, no question about it. I mean, I think people, expectations are higher. Under Gorbachev, there is more freedom. People feel very comfortable with most of the Gorbachev policies. The Gorbachev policies tolerate a number of things the Soviets haven’t been able to do, but I also think there’s a growing nationalistic spirit, not just in Poland or Armenia, but in the Baltic states and that we were told about many of these things everywhere we stopped. So I’m hopeful that the Polish example and the Hungarian example and what’s happening in the Baltic states may be the trend of the future. More freedom for the people.

**Reporter:** May I ask you your future plans, Senator?

**Senator Dole:** My future plans are hopefully to continue the leadership in the United States Senate. And speaking I guess, politically, hopefully, pick up enough seats to become the Majority Leader in the United States Senate. But public service is something I enjoy, and I want to continue that.

**Reporter:** Thank you, Senator Dole for this interview and the time you allocated to the Voice of America.

**Senator Dole:** Thank you.

**Reporter:** We are talking to Senate Republican Leader Robert Dole. This is [unintelligible] of Voice of America.

**Producer:** I would keep on going, if you don’t mind. I have five minutes here, right? May I coalesce two questions into one, both of which are economic?

**Senator Dole:** Sure.

**Producer:** The first one has to do with, I thought perhaps, this might come up during your discussions with Armenian leaders. That is the idea of creating a free economic zone in Armenia in order to help out with the problems with the earthquake. [unintelligible] recently gave an interview in which she expressed some kind of hope that international cooperation would be possible. Did you discuss the plan?

**Senator Dole:** We didn’t discuss anything about a free economic zone. We talked about next year being the 75th anniversary of genocide and they were very hopeful that Congress would pass a resolution, in effect, condemning the Ottoman Empire, not the Turkish Republic, but the Ottoman Empire, for the genocide. We talked about other problems in Armenia, but we didn’t discuss what you mentioned.

**Producer:** Well, that might be an interesting-

**Senator Dole:** Might be a way to avoid some of the restraints we have.

**Producer:** Yes, we are talking about tax benefits of course, and perhaps even temporarily a different currency. A number of ideas have been batted around, but you will certainly hear about them, if they ever get moving with it, I’m sure. Also, with regard to Poland, several plans have been proposed among the George Soros plan, and there is this- what’s his name- Jeffery Sachs of Harvard.

**Senator Dole:** We listen to Jeffrey, Doctor Sachs. He spoke at length as I recall, about 50 minutes, and I must say that I think he made an excellent speech, but like everything else, it’s easy to give speeches, and hard to get things done sometimes. And he had a recipe for how they restructure their debt, he explained that they’ve got to stop inflation. They are getting near, what he called, hyperinflation. They’ve got to watch interest rates, they’ve got to deal with a deficit, and they got to be responsible, and they got to have help from outside. But it was a very good presentation by Dr. Sachs, and he has been consulting Solidarity for some time. But it’s like everything else, and he understands it’s not going to be easy, and I must say the Polish, the leadership we talked with in Poland understand it’s their responsibility, first. There’s not enough aid in the world. They don’t want to become an international welfare client, they want investment, Like Walesa will tell you, all we need are banks. We’ve got five billion dollars hidden under mattresses in Poland. People have put into banks five to ten billion dollars. And what they want are opportunities, they want American companies to invest. Well, American companies will invest as soon as we have stability in Poland, and as soon as they see stable government and opportunities, we’re not going to invest if you’re going to lose money. So, I think there are a number of plans on debt restructuring. They’re going to have to go to the international monetary fund, they’re going to have to make certain economic reform before they’re given any assistance. The big thing now is to get all the countries to sort of roll over the debts, so they won’t have to pay the interest and also get some of the private banks to do the same.

**Producer:** Well, Mr. Sachs’ plan is very drastic, I mean, I think he was quoted as saying, ‘If you are going to cut off a cat’s tail, you better cut it off whole.’

**Senator Dole:** That’s right! I have heard it. I was there.

 [laughter]

**Producer:** Do you think it’s practical, or…?

**Senator Dole:** I think he wanted to lay out what they needed to do. He talked about eliminating subsidies, well my comment was that we haven’t done that in United States. We talk about eliminating farm subsidies, for example. It’s not going to happen in one fell swoop. Politically, it can happen. I mean, you have to have some political base. You have to be realistic. So, I think many of the statements made in his address probably aren’t going to happen, but that doesn’t mean they shouldn’t be said. I think he made a good presentation, I guess he had mixed reviews, and those who were in attendance, but again, making a speech is much easier than putting the legislation together and getting enough votes and then trying to implement it without losing your constituency.

**Producer**: Where was this speech precisely?

**Senator Dole:**  It was - where Solidarity- the same place that President Bush spoke- I don’t remember name of the building- but it was given to a Solidarity caucus, and it was a packed room with about 300 people, and we were privileged, I think- myself and my wife, to be invited to attend and they asked me to say a few words to the caucus. And my advice was if you’re going to do something, do it early. Do it while you have the popular support of the people. Don’t wait six months, or a month or a year, because then it’s going to be more difficult to do. Right now, the Polish people expect things to happen, they know they need economic reform. And I’ll give you a good example; there were 21 of us, went to lunch in Gdańsk, and we had a four-course lunch, the bill was $42. I mean, that’s crazy. We asked Walesa about it and he said, ‘it’s scandalous,’ and he said, ‘I make $10 a month.’ Well, the inflation is going up, but almost reaching 300% a month, there was something in that, figures, what Sachs called ‘hyperinflation,’ so they need to act very quickly. First they got to put their government together. They don’t have a cabinet chosen, they’re trying to decide who gets how many posts, how many the peasant party gets, the Democratic party, the Communist party, and Solidarity. So, it’s exciting though, and interesting.

**Producer:** May I ask just one postscript; you had one stop on your itinerary, originally, which you subsequently removed-

**Senator Dole:** The queen?

**Producer:** Yes, Riga. Could you explain why this was necessary. And secondly, do you regret it?

**Senator Dole:** Oh yeah, we very much wanted to go, but we had the option of seeing President Bush and it seemed to me that if we were going to come back from particularly Armenia and Poland and relay to the President the action was urgent, then we better do it as quickly as possible. So, I checked with the White House Chief of Staff, John Sununu, on Sunday. I learned we could see the President Monday afternoon, so we said let’s go. We felt that was more important, we meant no disrespect to the queen, and hopefully she’ll understand. Although I must say she’s probably happy to not to have to meet everybody who rolls through the hay, but our view was it was more important to come back and see President Bush and try to point out the urgency in acting both in Poland and in Soviet Armenia.

**Producer:** Do you think that the Baltic situation right now is presenting a tough problem for U.S. policy? How do we act?

**Senator Dole:** Probably yes, but it’s a tougher policy for Gorbachev:how to react. Well, we want freedom to break out everywhere, our policy. And we understand that there has to be some restraint. We don’t want Gorbachev feeling that we’re pushing these people into action, but if action takes place, then I think we have to be honest about it and say we ride on, that’s we want. We want freedom for people around the world.

**Producer:** Well, thank you for answering that question, it took us four minutes over our deadline.

**Senator Dole:** Oh. We’re in great shape. Well, we started late.

**Producer:** Thank you so much.