

Bosnia puts Dole in a risky spot

By Ronald Brownstein
Los Angeles Times
Washington Post Service

WASHINGTON — In the looming legislative battle over the U.S. role in Bosnia, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole is once again the man in the middle.

For the past three years, the Kansas Republican has been among the most prominent and persistent voices urging first George Bush and then Bill Clinton to intervene more aggressively on behalf of the besieged Bosnian government in the war that has ravaged its country. Now, Dole must decide whether to support President Clinton's pledge to send some 20,000 American

troops to police the peace agreement initiated in Dayton, Ohio, last week.

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Dole

soon as mid-December.

"Dole certainly is a pivot in this," said Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., who co-sponsored with Dole several bills to ship arms to the Bosnians.

In his initial remarks last week about Clinton's plan, Dole was conciliatory but noncommittal: He praised the president for securing the peace agreement but said Clinton had not proved the case for committing Americans as part of the 60,000 troops NATO is planning to deploy in Bosnia. "I want to support my president ... but he has to make a case, and he hasn't done that," Dole said.

Most Washington observers expect that Dole, in the end, will support the deployment — if only after demanding some changes in the plan. But Dole's

aides insist that it is premature to predict how he will come down on the issue, which is likely to come to a congressional vote before Dec. 15. "He needs to be convinced," said one adviser.

As during last year's debates over the North American Free Trade Agreement and the world trade treaty known as GATT, the dispute over Bosnia is forcing Dole to balance his own internationalist instincts against a rising isolationist current in his party.

"It is a tremendous risk (Dole) is taking by doing this if he supports it," said GOP presidential contender Patrick Buchanan, who has emerged as the leading voice of a new conservative

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nationalism hostile to free trade and military engagement abroad.

Though most opinion analysts say Americans are skeptical of committing troops to Bosnia, polls do not show overwhelming opposition. A recent Gallup survey, for instance, found Americans divided evenly when asked if they would support "contributing U.S. troops to an international peacekeeping force" in Bosnia.

But hostility appears to be much more intense among audiences of Republican partisans, such as the 3,500 activists who loudly applauded denunciations of Clinton's plan dur-

ing a recent straw poll and debate at a Republican Party convention in Florida. "With the folks that I speak to, at the grass roots, there is recoil to the idea of introduction of American forces into Bosnia," Buchanan said.

Most of Dole's leading rivals have already anchored themselves in opposition to the deployment. Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, belittled Clinton's plan almost as soon as the president's Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia initiative the deal last Tuesday. "Adding American names to the casualty lists cannot save Bosnia," Gramm said. Likewise, publishing magnate Malcolm S. "Steve" Forbes Jr. issued a statement praising the settlement but insisting it "would still be a murder-

ous mistake to send American ground forces as peacekeepers."

Former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander and Buchanan have taken similar stands. Last week Buchanan argued that the troops will have to stay longer than the roughly 12 months indicated by administration officials. "It's a truce, not a peace agreement," Buchanan said. "It is going to break down sooner or later. And the United States will have acquired a new dependency: the Republic of Bosnia."

In a race that has produced few sharp issue distinctions among the candidates, a Dole decision to support deployment would create a clear cleavage with most of his leading rivals. That prospect would

add an element of volatility to a contest that, so far, has proceeded relatively smoothly for the front-runner. "In terms of political advice, especially in New Hampshire, I think things would be a lot more predictable for Dole if he were working against sending troops," said one GOP political professional closely watching the race.

But other factors argue for Dole to ultimately support the deployment, close observers say. At the top of the list is Dole's long-standing and passionate insistence that the United States increase its efforts to end the bloodshed in Bosnia. "No one wants to be in a position to say we killed this peace," acknowledged one Dole adviser.

Dole blames Hollywood for booth fire

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — There were no arrests Monday and few leads in the torching of a subway token booth, but Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and police officials pointed the finger at one alleged culprit: Hollywood.

In a virtual replay of scenes from the new movie "Money

Train," two men squeezed a flammable liquid into a subway token booth Sunday and ignited it, critically burning the clerk.

"That just may be an eerie and frightening coincidence, but coming only a few days after the movie was released, it offers a powerful reminder of the influence Hollywood has over our soci-

ety and our culture," Dole said while campaigning in Iowa for the Republican nomination.

"Those who work in Hollywood's corporate suites must also be willing to accept their share of the blame," Dole said later on the Senate floor. "Is this how they want to make their livelihoods? Is this their contribution to society?"

Dole receives another endorsement

By Sharon Theimer
Associated Press Writer

MILWAUKEE — Gov. Tommy Thompson endorsed the presidential campaign of Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole Monday, strengthening the GOP front-runner's organization in the important

Midwest battleground.

Thompson is the 16th of the 31 Republican governors to publicly back Dole. No other GOP candidate has more than two governors in his camp.

Thompson said of Dole: "I consider him as sort of the third senator from Wisconsin

for all his support of agriculture, not only in Wisconsin but in the Midwest. He is an individual that cares deeply about America, about agriculture, the economy, getting people off welfare."

Dole called the endorsement another positive move for his

campaign. Thompson is chairman of the National Governors' Association.

"Gov. Thompson is recognized across the country as one of the leading governors of our time," Dole said. He said he had known Thompson more than for 15 years.

Once again, Dole lands in the middle

By Ronald Brownstein
Los Angeles Times

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Sending troops to Bosnia called the right thing

By Peter Slevin
Eagle Washington bureau

WASHINGTON — Pressing his case to send thousands of American soldiers to keep the peace in battered Bosnia, President Clinton told a national television audience Monday night that the mission is risky, but right.

European security and moral imperatives demand U.S. leadership in the Balkans, said Clinton on a day when some Republican leaders in Congress muted their earlier criticism of a Bosnia deployment.

Clinton, embarking on an ambitious effort to build support, said the year-long mission will be "limited, focused and under the command of an American general." He acknowledged the likelihood of casualties, but said he would take "full responsibility" as commander in chief.

"We cannot stop all war for all time, but we can stop some wars," Clinton said in his 21-minute Oval Office address. "We cannot save all women and all children, but we can save many of them. We cannot do everything, but we must do what we can."

Clinton left no doubt that U.S. forces — roughly 20,000 soldiers on the ground, plus thousands more in other roles — are ready to do battle with Bosnians who make trouble.

"Anyone — anyone who takes on our troops will suffer the consequences," Clinton said. "We will fight fire with fire, and then some."

Clinton's speech is one step in an effort to convince a skeptical Congress and public that U.S. soldiers should join a 60,000-member NATO force in a snowy, battle-torn country thousands of miles from American shores.

No date has been set for deploying the troops but Gen. John Shalikashvili said advance teams could arrive as early as this week.

Following the example of presidents in both parties, Clinton says he will send American troops whether or

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not Congress supports him. But he wants to make a dangerous mission a bipartisan one.

The Senate will open hearings today on the Bosnia operation. To win their support, Republican leaders on Capitol Hill said Monday, the president must show that the United States has vital interests in Bosnia and that the military can perform a clearly defined mission and go home.

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., said Clinton has not yet made his case, but credited the president with taking a "first step in the right direction."

Dole has long argued that presidents should have considerable leeway in foreign policy.

Indiana Sen. Richard Lugar, a senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee and a GOP presidential candidate, said after the speech that the United States has "an important interest" in stability in the Balkans.

"American security and trade depend on our strong relationship with a peaceful and stable Europe," Lugar said. "But before we commit troops to a NATO force in Bosnia, we must know the answers to several key questions."

The questions include NATO's role in the politics and rebuilding of Bosnia, its role in creating a military balance between the warring parties, and who will pay the estimated \$2 billion cost of the military and humanitarian operation.

"Congress must work with the Clinton administration to clearly define the NATO mission," Lugar said.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, signaled that Clinton still faces an uphill struggle in Congress.

"I think the president went a step too far when he made a commitment



Knight-Ridder Tribune

President Clinton delivers his speech to the public last night.

for U.S. troops on the ground," Hutchison said. "There are other options, such as continuing to provide air cover, lifting the arms embargo, and helping to rebuild Bosnia."

Monday night, Clinton talked of the horrors of war to make his case for peacekeeping. He recalled the ethnic cleansing that has left more than 200,000 people dead and more than 2 million homeless in 43 months of war.

He spoke of America's crucial military role in the two great European wars of the 20th century and argued that European security is again at stake. He said generations of Americans have understood that "Europe's freedom and Europe's stability is vital to our own national security."

Only the United States can lead the Bosnian peace, Clinton maintained.

"If we're not there," Clinton said, "NATO will not be there. The peace will collapse. The war will re-ignite."

The slaughter of innocents will begin again. A conflict that has already claimed so many victims could spread like poison throughout the region."

Clinton has added a visit to U.S. troops in Germany to a five-day European trip that starts today. Secretary of State Warren Christopher canceled his own European travel plans to stay behind and argue the case for deployment.

The peace accords signed last week concluded 4½ months of U.S.-led shuttle diplomacy and 21 days of haggling at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. In the end, faced with an agreement that makes no one a winner, the leaders signed through gritted teeth.

What they created, at least on paper, is an independent Bosnia in two parts, one dominated by Serbs, the other shared by Croats and Muslims. A weak federal government will oversee financial matters and a constitutional court, but each of the rival states will have its own army.

Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, will be unified. The peace settlement calls for NATO-led forces to patrol demilitarized zones separating the armies, as well as corridors that connect ethnic enclaves.

While the first NATO troops could arrive in Bosnia-Herzegovina within days, "The main force, of course, will not move until after the signing of the agreement in Paris," expected early next month, Shalikashvili said. "There clearly is some need for some advance elements to arrive."

The plan is to send about 1,500 advance troops to Bosnia and another 1,000 to Croatia to begin setting up headquarters, communications and logistics, he said. He did not offer other details.

NATO military chiefs, to be joined today by defense ministers from the 16 member nations, took a final look at the force's operation plan on Monday.

Troops will not be required to wait to be fired upon before they can fire, Shalikashvili said.

"It's very important that pilots in the air and soldiers on the ground have the right to defend themselves and take appropriate action against someone who is exhibiting hostile intent," he said.

The biggest dangers the multinational force will face are mines, snipers and rogue elements of the warring parties in Bosnia, he said.

Contributing: Associated Press