

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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SPEECH TEXT
AMERICAN TASK FORCE FOR LEBANON AWARDS DINNER
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

I AM TRULY HONORED TO RECEIVE THE PHILIP C. HABIB AWARD.

I'M ALSO HONORED TO BE FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF LAST YEAR'S RECIPIENT, SENATE MAJORITY LEADER GEORGE MITCHELL. HE'S A GREAT DEMOCRAT -- I HAPPEN TO BE A REPUBLICAN. EACH OF US IS PROUD OF OUR PARTY -- AND I ADMIT IT: I WANT HIS JOB -- MAJORITY LEADER.

BUT ANY PARTISANSHIP WE HAVE IS TEMPERED BY A REAL FRIENDSHIP, AND BY MUTUAL RESPECT.

AND WHEN IT COMES TO THE ISSUE OF LEBANON, GEORGE MITCHELL AND BOB DOLE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE, OF ONE MIND.

I CARE ABOUT LEBANON

LIKE MANY OF YOU, I'VE COME A LONG WAY TO ATTEND TONIGHT'S DINNER. I'VE MADE THE JOURNEY FOR ONE REASON ABOVE ALL OTHERS -- I CARE DEEPLY ABOUT LEBANON.

WE LIVE IN A REMARKABLE TIME. EVERY DAY, OUR HEADLINES TELL ANEW OF PEOPLE LONG OPPRESSED, SEIZING THEIR OWN FREEDOM; TAKING CONTROL OF THEIR OWN FUTURE.

FOR MOST OF US, IT IS THE MOST HOPEFUL TIME IN THIS CENTURY. A TIME WHEN TYRANNY, FOREIGN DOMINATION AND DEPRIVATION SEEM TO BE MELTING AWAY IN PLACES FROM PANAMA TO POLAND.

YET LEBANON'S LONG NIGHT OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION CONTINUES.

FOREIGN FORCES OCCUPY THE COUNTRY, WITH A CHOKE HOLD ON NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY.

RADICAL FORCES TERRORIZE THE POPULATION, LEBANESE AND FOREIGN.

INNOCENT COMMERCE HAS BEEN NEARLY SNUFFED OUT -- WHILE ILLICIT MARKETS IN HUMAN LIVES, LETHAL ARMS, AND DEADLY DRUGS FLOURISH.

AS IT HAS FOR MONTHS, LEBANON TEETERS ON A CRITICAL EDGE -- AND ANY NEW MISSTEPS CAN BRING THE FINAL DESTRUCTION OF THAT GREAT NATION.

SPEAK OUT!

BY CONTRAST, ONLY THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS -- BY LEBANESE, BY THE LEADERS OF THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD, BY US -- ONLY THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS CAN SAVE LEBANON. YOUR PRESENCE HERE DEMONSTRATES THAT YOU ARE NOT PREPARED TO STAND BY AND WATCH THAT NATION -- THE NATION OF YOUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS -- DISAPPEAR FROM HISTORY.

BUT WHAT CAN YOU -- WHAT CAN WE -- DO?

THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS IS TO SPEAK OUT. CLEARLY, PERSISTENTLY.

I SPOKE A MOMENT AGO ABOUT HEADLINES. LIKE IT OR NOT, OURS IS A POLITICAL SYSTEM TOO OFTEN DRIVEN BY HEADLINES.

TODAY'S CRISIS IS TOMORROW A VAGUE MEMORY. TODAY'S TOP PRIORITY IS TOMORROW LOST IN THE SHUFFLE OF MORE PRESSING BUSINESS.

WE HAVE TO FACE THE FACTS: FOR TOO MANY IN WASHINGTON, LEBANON HAS FALLEN OFF THE SCREEN. THE ONLY "ISSUES LIST" THAT IT TOPS -- IS THE LIST OF THOSE ISSUES TO AVOID LIKE THE PLAGUE.

TO MANY POLITICIANS, IT IS TOO COMPLEX, TOO SENSITIVE. TO NATIONAL SECURITY PLANNERS, IT IS TOO DANGEROUS.

SADDEST OF ALL, FOR MANY PEOPLE -- IT IS SIMPLY SEEN AS TOO LATE; LEBANON, MANY SAY, IS ALREADY LOST.

THOSE ARE THE FACTS OF LIFE IN WASHINGTON IN 1990. IF WE ALLOW THOSE ATTITUDES TO PERSIST AND PREVAIL; IF WE BECOME TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH OUR OWN PROBLEMS -- THEN WE WILL SHARE THE BLAME FOR LEBANON'S DEMISE.

WE CANNOT LET THAT HAPPEN.

YOU IN THE TASK FORCE ARE PLEDGED TO SEE THAT IT WON'T HAPPEN. TONIGHT, I RENEW TO YOU MY PLEDGE -- I WON'T LET IT HAPPEN, EITHER.

(MORE)

SPECIAL U.S. ENVOY

AND LET ME BE SPECIFIC: ONE WAY TO INSURE THAT THE ISSUE OF LEBANON ENJOYS THE PRIORITY IT MUST HAVE -- IS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSAL OF THE TASK FORCE, THAT WE HAVE A SPECIAL AMERICAN ENVOY FOR LEBANON; SOMEONE WHO WILL DEVOTE FULL TIME AND ATTENTION TO LEBANON; SOMEONE WHO WILL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE UNITED STATES IS SERIOUS ABOUT LEBANON.

BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO JUST SPEAK OUT. WE MUST TALK SENSE. TALKING SENSE ABOUT LEBANON STARTS WITH PUTTING FIRST THINGS FIRST. THE FIRST PRIORITY MUST BE AN END FOREIGN INTERVENTION. UNTIL THAT IS ACCOMPLISHED, NO OTHER PERMANENT PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE.

ALL FOREIGN FORCES OUT

THERE IS NO NEED TO EQUIVOCATE.

ALL FOREIGN FORCES MUST LEAVE LEBANON -- STARTING RIGHT NOW.

SOME REPORTS SAY SYRIA HAS AGREED TO A "SECRET TIMETABLE" FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ITS FORCES, AT LEAST TO THE BEKKA VALLEY. I HOPE THOSE REPORTS ARE TRUE, AND THAT THE "SECRET TIMETABLE" WILL LEAD TO A RAPID, TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIA'S FORCES.

WHEN I VISITED MOROCCO LAST AUGUST, I SPOKE TO KING HASSAN ABOUT THE ISSUE OF LEBANON. I STRONGLY URGED HIM TO PERSIST IN HIS EFFORTS, AS PART OF THE TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE, WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND ALGERIA. THE LEADERS OF THOSE NATIONS HAVE WORKED HARD. THEY DESERVE OUR ADMIRATION AND THANKS.

BUT THEY MUST DO MORE.

THEIR AGENDA IS NOT COMPLETE, AND WON'T BE, UNTIL THEY HAVE SECURED BINDING COMMITMENTS FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL SYRIAN FORCES.

TONIGHT, I CALL ON THE ARAB LEAGUE TO RENEW ITS EFFORTS TO PIN DOWN THAT TIMETABLE WITH ASSAD; AND TO LET THE WORLD -- AND, MORE IMPORTANT, THE PEOPLE OF LEBANON -- KNOW THAT IT IS REAL AND BINDING ON DAMASCUS.

KEEP THE HEAT ON SYRIA

NOW LET ME SAY CANDIDLY: I'M NOT HOLDING MY BREATH.

I BELIEVE THERE IS NO PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO GIVING THE ARAB LEAGUE THE LEAD, AND I HOPE IT WILL KEEP PUSHING. BUT IT CANNOT DO THE JOB WITHOUT THE STRONG, SUPPORTING PRESSURE OF AN ACTIVE AMERICAN DIPLOMACY.

WE CAN'T CONTINUE TO "SIT THIS ONE OUT." WE MUST STEP UP OUR DIRECT DIPLOMACY -- YES, OUR PRESSURE -- ON SYRIA.

WE CANNOT PULL OUR PUNCHES IN DAMASCUS, IN THE HOPE THAT IT WILL SOMEHOW MAKE ASSAD MORE WILLING TO JOIN IN A BROADER PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. LEBANON CANNOT BE THAT KIND OF "SIDESHOW" TO A "CENTER STAGE" EFFORT TO BRING OTHERS TO THE BARGAINING TABLE.

THE FACT IS, WE'RE NOT GOING TO HAVE THAT BROADER MIDDLE EAST PEACE AS LONG AS LEBANON LIES BLEEDING TO DEATH. WITH ASSAD, LEBANON SHOULD BE OUR FIRST THOUGHT -- NOT AN AFTERTHOUGHT.

BAKER/SHEVARDNADZE

AND I WANT TO MAKE A RELATED POINT. NEXT WEEK, SECRETARY BAKER WILL SIT DOWN WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SHEVARDNADZE -- TO DISCUSS, AMONG OTHER KEY TOPICS, SO-CALLED "REGIONAL CONFLICTS."

I HAVE A CANDIDATE ITEM FOR THE VERY TOP OF THE AGENDA: SOVIET POLICY TOWARD SYRIA.

YESTERDAY, MY SENATE COLLEAGUE FROM CALIFORNIA, PETE WILSON, AND I SENT A LETTER TO SECRETARY BAKER. WE URGED THAT BAKER DELIVER THIS CLEAR MESSAGE TO SHEVARDNADZE: AS LONG AS MOSCOW GIVES ASSAD THE "GREEN LIGHT" FOR AGGRESSION IN LEBANON, THE UNITED STATES WILL KEEP OUT THE "YELLOW CAUTION LIGHT" ON THE PATH OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS.

THE RECENT RUMORS OF GORBACHEV'S POLITICAL DEMISE NOW APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN PREMATURE. BUT ONE THING IS CLEAR TO ME: WITH HIS PARTY IN SHAMBLES, HIS COUNTRY FALLING APART, AND HIS ECONOMY FLAT ON ITS BACK -- GORBACHEV DOESN'T HAVE MANY CARDS TO PLAY. HE NEEDS US -- DESPERATELY.

IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO SEE GORBACHEV SUCCEED. BUT WE CAN, AND SHOULD, EXTRACT A PRICE FOR ANY "HELPING HAND" WE EXTEND. AND A PART OF THAT PRICE OUGHT TO BE MORE RESPONSIBLE SOVIET POLICIES TOWARD SYRIA.

(MORE)

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LEBANON BELONGS TO THE LEBANESE

LET ME BE CLEAR ABOUT THIS, TOO: WHEN I SAY "ALL FOREIGN FORCES" -
- I MEAN ALL FOREIGN FORCES.

LEBANON BELONGS TO THE LEBANESE: NOT TO THE SYRIANS, NOT TO THE
IRANIANS -- AND NOT TO THE ISRAELIS, EITHER.

THE ONLY LASTING SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF LEBANON IS A UNIFIED
LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, IN CONTROL OF ALL OF THE TERRITORY OF A DEMOCRATIC
LEBANON.

I HAVE SPOKEN, TO THIS POINT, ABOUT WHAT WE SHOULD DO, AND WHAT
OTHERS -- THE SOVIETS, THE SYRIANS, THE IRANIANS AND THE ISRAELIS -- WHAT
THEY SHOULD DO.

BUT, FINALLY, WHAT WILL BE REALLY DECISIVE IS WHAT THE LEBANESE,
THEMSELVES, DO. LEBANON BELONGS TO THE LEBANESE -- AND IT IS BOTH THE
RIGHT, AND THE RESPONSIBILITY, OF THE LEBANESE TO CARVE OUT THEIR OWN
FUTURE.

BOTH SIDES: END THE BLOODSHED

LET ME SPEAK FRANKLY: THE SYRIANS, THE SOVIETS, AND THE NEGLECT OF
SOME IN WASHINGTON -- ALL THESE ARE BARRIERS TO A SOLUTION TO LEBANON'S
PROBLEMS.

BUT THE FACT IS -- THE BIGGEST BARRIER TO THE CREATION OF A PEACEFUL,
UNITED, DEMOCRATIC LEBANON -- IS THE UNWILLINGNESS OF SOME LEBANESE TO
PUT THE NEEDS OF THE NATION OF LEBANON ABOVE NARROWER INTEREST.

THERE IS PLENTY OF BLAME TO GO AROUND. IT IS NEITHER MY PLACE, NOR
MY INTENTION, TO POINT THE FINGER AT ANYONE, OR ANY FACTION, OR ANY
RELIGION.

I DO BELIEVE IT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY, AS SOMEONE WHO CARES DEEPLY
ABOUT LEBANON, TO PLEAD WITH EVERY FACTION AND EVERY LEBANESE LEADER --

END THE SENSELESS KILLING; JOIN TOGETHER WITH A UNIFIED DEMAND FOR THE
WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES; AND GO ON, IN A SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM
AND NOT FACTIONALISM, TO A SERIOUS DIALOGUE ABOUT THE POLITICAL FUTURE
OF LEBANON.

SPECIFICALLY, NOW -- I CALL ON BOTH SIDES IN CHRISTIAN EAST BEIRUT
TO HALT THEIR BLOODY TEST OF MIGHT AND WILL. MANY OF THE CAUSES THAT THE
CHRISTIANS OF LEBANON ESPOUSE ARE JUST AND URGENT CAUSES -- BUT NONE OF
THOSE CAUSES ARE SERVED WHEN CHRISTIAN KILLS CHRISTIAN.

STAND UP FOR LEBANON

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: WE ARE HERE TONIGHT BECAUSE WE CARE ABOUT
LEBANON; AND BECAUSE THE CRISIS IN LEBANON DEMANDS OUR PERSISTENT,
PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT.

IF WE DON'T STAND UP FOR LEBANON NOW -- WHO WILL?

IT IS OUR JOB. WE CAN'T DUCK IT. LET US JOIN TOGETHER, AND GET THE
JOB DONE.

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