

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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DOLE TO CLINTON: ISSUE MILITARY ULTIMATUM TO SERBIAN DICTATOR;  
PULL BACK IN 24 HOURS, OR FEEL STING OF NATO AIR STRIKES.

WASHINGTON -- As Serbian forces continue their brutal slaughter in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole yesterday urged President Clinton to issue an ultimatum to Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic, calling for NATO air strikes if the Serbs do not pull back their forces within 24 hours.

Dole's call for action came in a letter to the President:

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to urge you to lead our allies in taking strong action in response to the Serbian assault on Srebrenica, which appears to be only hours away from falling into Serb hands. It is clear that the imminent move by the United Nations to tighten sanctions has not slowed down the Serbian offensive in eastern Bosnia or elsewhere. Only the threat of military action holds hope of preventing the further slaughter of the Bosnian people.

Specifically, I would urge that the United States issue an ultimatum to Serbia and its proxies in Bosnia to pull back Serbian forces within 24 hours or face NATO air strikes against Serbian military positions in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nothing short of the credible threat of military action will be sufficient to stop the Belgrade war machine.

In view of the fact that the fall of Srebrenica would be a humanitarian disaster of tremendous proportions, it seems that the U.N. resolutions passed to date provide sufficient authority for such action without further delay. However, even if such a determination is not made, the fact that this is a humanitarian emergency dictates an urgent response; there is not enough time for a prolonged and formal diplomatic process. Moreover, it appears the right of the Bosnians to collective self-defense under Article 51 would more than justify such action.

Mr. President, I am not advocating U.S. or NATO involvement on the ground in Bosnia-Herzegovina -- it is not in the U.S. interest to fight for the Bosnians; instead, I believe that the arms embargo against the Bosnian government should be immediately lifted. What I am urging is that limited air strikes be ordered if Serb forces do not immediately halt their takeover of Srebrenica. In addition to saving tens of thousands of lives, such measures may finally bring the Serbs to the negotiating table to sign the peace plan signed by the Bosnian government over three weeks ago.

BOB DOLE  
United States Senate