

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, April 20, 1994

Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

BOSNIA POLICY

PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP NEEDED TO RESTORE CREDIBILITY, MOBILIZE TOUGH INTERNATIONAL ACTION, & LIFT ARMS EMBARGO: NOT TOO LATE TO HELP GORAZDE

The brutal assault on the 65,000 citizens of the Bosnian city of Gorazde continues today. The hospital was hit once again, as well as an apartment and buildings which house humanitarian workers and refugees. In addition, thousands of Bosnians remain without shelter vulnerable to Serb snipers and artillery shells. Meanwhile the Bosnian Serbs, in blatant violation of the February NATO ultimatum, stormed an arms depot in Sarajevo and seized anti-aircraft guns from U.N. peacekeepers who were guarding the site. The weapons were reportedly returned this morning.

US, UN, & NATO Credibility Are Casualties

Among the casualties of continued Serbian defiance and aggression in Bosnia, are the credibility of the United Nations, NATO, and finally, the United States. The Bosnian Serbs are challenging the resolve of the international community, as well as that of the United States. And so far, they have been successful.

The Bosnian Serbs' defiant confrontation should come as no surprise. The pinprick strikes executed by NATO in response to a U.N. request for close air support in Gorazde on the 10th and 11th, did not demonstrate toughness, rather timidity -- timidity in the face of a third-rate military led by thugs. The extremely limited nature of the air operation in Gorazde -- which reflects the U.N.'s militarily minimalist approach -- was, in effect, an invitation to the Bosnian Serbs to test the U.N. and NATO further.

And so, last weekend, while pledging peace in pale, Bosnian Serbs began their thrust into Gorazde. But, the U.N. bluffed and waited to respond until it was too late. When, in the course of carrying out a request from the U.N. Commander for Close Air Support, a NATO plane was shot down -- NATO failed to retaliate or respond in any way. Meanwhile, amidst the confusion and hesitation of last weekend, U.S. leadership could not be found.

It is not too late to take measures to halt the slaughter of Gorazde's citizens; it is not too late to take measures protect the other U.N. declared "safe havens"; it is not too late to allow the Bosnians to defend themselves by lifting the unjust, illegal arms embargo -- unilaterally, if our allies are unwilling to go along.

President's Leadership Essential

Although I am discouraged by reports of the desperate situation in Gorazde, I am encouraged by the news that the President has forwarded various options to NATO for a decision. I hope that the President will resume the leadership role he assumed in February and then subsequently abandoned. Yesterday's Washington Post editorial was right on the mark when it stated that the President had positioned himself as, "the pawn of a self-driven international machine." Sending proposals to NATO is not enough. Since the war in Bosnia began there have been plenty of options, but little will to pursue those that involved the use of force. The President's leadership is essential to persuading our allies that tough action must be taken to protect U.N. declared safe havens -- in which hundreds of thousands of Bosnians are essentially trapped -- and to restore NATO's credibility, which has been seriously damaged.

(more)