

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, August 11, 1994

Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

BOSNIA UPDATE

CONDITIONS IN BOSNIA CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE; BI-PARTISAN DOLE/LIEBERMAN AMENDMENT SETS NOVEMBER DEADLINE FOR LIFTING U.S. ARMS EMBARGO ON BOSNIA

Today the Sarajevo airlift was again suspended, after two planes delivering humanitarian aid were hit by small arms fire. There had been no flights into Sarajevo for 18 days prior to Tuesday's resumption of the airlift, and relief officials say that the city's food stocks are dangerously low -- at only 30% of the city's food needs for the two weeks. This rapid deterioration of conditions in Sarajevo and throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina is the reality and the context in which we need to consider the amendments before us today.

Dole/Lieberman Amendment Sets November Deadline

Almost everyone in this body will say that they support lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina -- not just the supporters of the Dole/Lieberman amendment, but the supporters of the Nunn/Mitchell amendment, as well. Those who oppose the Dole/Lieberman amendment, but support the Nunn/Mitchell amendment, will probably say that the difference is on how the embargo is lifted. But, the difference is more likely to be whether it is lifted.

The Dole/Lieberman amendment is very simple: it sets a firm and definite deadline for terminating the U.S. arms embargo on Bosnia. The government of Bosnia-Herzegovina will no longer be denied its inherent right to self-defense on November 15, 1994 -- no ifs, ands, or buts. The reason we chose a mid-November date is that some of our allies with troops in Bosnia have told U.S. officials they need up to 90 days to redeploy or withdraw. Moreover, this date gives the administration plenty of time to seek the multilateral lifting of the arms embargo. But, aside from the date, there are no conditions. The objective, like the language of our amendment, is straightforward: to allow the Bosnians to defend themselves against aggression come November 15, at the latest.

Message to Bosnian Serbs: Time Is Running Out

The message this amendment sends to the Bosnian Serbs is that time is running out. This message is not being sent by the United States and the so-called Contact Group. The message being sent to the Bosnian Serbs by the Contact Group is: take more time to accept our July 6 proposal because we are not ready to do anything more than talk.

Where is the pressure the administration claims is being brought to bear on the Bosnian Serbs? Where is the tough action that the Contact Group promised at its meeting two weeks ago?

Nunn/Mitchell Amendment Does Not Go Far Enough

I would like to commend the distinguished Chairman of the Armed Services Committee for recognizing the weaknesses of the administration's approach and for his efforts to move the administration toward setting a timeline for real action. Unfortunately, in my view, his amendment does not go far enough. Although it urges the President to go to the U.N. Security Council to lift the arms embargo multilaterally -- which I support -- there are no guarantees that the arms embargo will be lifted because the amendment does not set a mandatory deadline.

According to the Nunn/Mitchell amendment, if the Bosnian Serbs do not accept the Contact Group proposal by October 15, the President "should" -- and I emphasize "should" -- go to the U.N. Security Council to seek the termination of the arms embargo on Bosnia. It is my understanding that the President has sent a letter to the distinguished Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee stating that it is his "intention" to propose a

(more)

This press release is from the collections of the Robert J. Dole Archive and Special Collections, University of Kansas. Please contact us with any questions or comments: <http://dolearchive.ku.edu/ask>

resolution in the U.N. Security Council by the end of October, if the Bosnian Serbs have not accepted the July 6 peace plan. We should ask ourselves, why give the Bosnian Serbs two more months? They have already rejected the contact group proposal four times. They have ambushed and stopped U.N. convoys. They continue violating the NATO exclusion zones. They continue the reprehensible practice of "ethnic cleansing." Why doesn't President Clinton go to the U.N. Security Council right now? Hasn't the Congress time and time again urged the President to move to lift the arms embargo?

Nonenforcement: No Substitute for Lifting Embargo

According to the Nunn/Mitchell amendment, if such a Security Council Resolution fails, or no later than November 15, a prohibition on Department of Defense funding for enforcing the U.N. arms embargo will go into effect. I want to emphasize that this prohibition is limited to the Department of Defense. It does not include customs personnel overseas, or cover intelligence that is outside the Defense Department. The Nunn/Mitchell amendment also includes a presidential waiver for U.S. personnel serving at NATO headquarters.

At present, the U.N. embargo is being enforced by NATO forces -- not by the United States independently. Therefore, this waiver, if invoked, could undermine the intended effect of this provision, which is already weakened as a result of the funding restriction being limited to the Pentagon. Let me give you an example. Theoretically, if the C.I.A. picks up some intelligence on an arms shipment to the Bosnians, it could share it with NATO, and other NATO allies -- such as the British and French who support the U.N. arms embargo on Bosnia -- who could then respond by enforcing the embargo -- without violating this provision. In short, this provision looks far more significant on paper, than it will likely be in practice and thus, is no substitute for lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnians.

The Nunn/Mitchell amendment also requires -- in the event a U.S. resolution to lift the arms embargo fails in the U.N. Security Council -- that the President submit a plan to Congress and consult with Congress on providing training to the Bosnians and on lifting the embargo unilaterally.

The fact is that by the time October 15 rolls around, the Congress will probably be out of session and the plans the President sends up will sit around until January -- two years after the President assumed office with calls for lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia.

No More Plans -- Time For Action

We don't need any more plans, we don't need more consultation -- we need action. The Congress has been urging action for some time now. In January of this year, the Congress passed a non-binding amendment urging the President to lift the arms embargo unilaterally. In May, the Senate passed S. 2042, which terminated the U.S. arms embargo. In June, the House passed the McCloskey-Gilman amendment to the Defense Authorization bill which would have immediately ended the U.S. arms embargo. And although the Dole/Lieberman amendment failed in July -- it was on a tie vote. We need to ask why the administration has not responded to the views of the Congress, why the administration to date has not gone to the U.N. Security Council to seek a termination of the arms embargo? The bottom line is that the majority of the Congress supports ending this illegal and unjust arms embargo on the Bosnians -- though it seems we have preferred to listen to the British, the French, and the Russians and certainly they're allies -- we should listen to them. But in this case it seems to me that we ought to have the moral high ground, we ought to be protecting our leadership role, and we still have one more opportunity to do it.

The Nunn/Mitchell amendment does not terminate the arms embargo unilaterally or multilaterally -- not now, not in November, not next year. I firmly believe that setting a definite date for ending the arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina is the best leverage the United States can have to persuade the British, French, and Russians that we are serious about allowing the Bosnians to defend themselves. A real deadline would inject certainty into the diplomatic equation. Right now, the only thing that is certain is that there will be more meetings of the contact group.

Commitment to What's Morally, Legally Right

Contrary to the views set forth by the President in his letter, I believe that decisiveness on the part of the United States benefits NATO. Historically, U.S. leadership has been the source of NATO's strength. It is a lack of U.S. leadership and a

(more)

Two presidential press releases from the Clinton administration. Article 901 Special Collections, University of Kansas.
willingness by this administration to go along with failed policies in the name of consensus, that has damaged NATO's credibility.

The Senate has debated this issue a number of times. The House has voted to terminate the U.S. embargo -- by a significant vote. I hope that the Senate will do the same today. The war against Bosnia-Herzegovina has gone on for nearly two and a half years. The time for debating is over. What counts now is not speeches, but how we vote.

So let us be clear. A vote in support of the Dole/Lieberman amendment means that the U.S. arms embargo on Bosnia will end by mid-November. It means that the Clinton administration has time to go to the United Nations, but that ultimately, America is committed to doing what is morally and legally right. If the Nunn/Mitchell amendment is adopted, and the Dole/Lieberman amendment is not adopted, there is a real chance that we will be here next year, debating this issue once again -- the only difference being that the war will be in its third year, thousands of more Bosnians will have died, and U.S. credibility and global leadership will have further eroded.

###

* Remarks delivered on the Senate floor, approximately 4:10 PM.