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NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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SOVIET FOOD CREDITS

AID PLAN ANNOUNCEMENT EXPECTED TODAY;
CONGRESS SHOULD BE WILLING TO GO ON RECORD

WE HAVE ALL SEEN THE REPORTS THE PAST COUPLE OF DAYS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL FOOD CREDITS FOR THE SOVIET REPUBLICS.

THE WHITE HOUSE IS CONSULTING WITH VARIOUS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS RIGHT NOW, AND I UNDERSTAND AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON THIS MAY BE COMING FROM THE WHITE HOUSE TODAY.

IT SEEMS TO ME WE OUGHT TO PROVIDE SOME ADDITIONAL CREDIT GUARANTEES TO THE REPUBLICS OF THE "FORMER SOVIET UNION," FOR TWO VERY GOOD REASONS.

HUMANITARIAN NEED

ONE, THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE OVER THERE WHO ARE GOING TO HAVE A VERY TOUGH WINTER, WHO ARE GOING TO BE HUNGRY, AND WHO DO NEED OUR HELP.

FOR ALL THE PARTISAN POSTURING AND RHETORIC WE'VE HEARD IN RECENT WEEKS, AND THE KNEE JERK, "TALKING HEADS" INTERPRETATION OF THIS OR THAT ELECTION -- THE FACT IS THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DO STILL WANT TO HELP TRULY NEEDY PEOPLE -- PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK, OR HUNGRY, OR HOMELESS -- WHETHER THEY HAPPEN TO BE HERE OR LIVE SOMEWHERE ELSE. THAT'S PART OF THE AMERICAN TRADITION, AND IT HASN'T CHANGED. WE ARE DECENT AND CARING PEOPLE, AND NO POLL OR ELECTION RESULT IS GOING TO CONVINCE ME OTHERWISE.

SO THAT IS REASON NUMBER ONE.

IN AMERICA'S INTEREST

BUT THERE IS A SECOND REASON, TOO -- EVEN MORE COMPELLING. WE OUGHT TO PROVIDE SOME ADDITIONAL CREDIT GUARANTEES BECAUSE IT IS IN THE AMERICAN INTEREST -- OUR OWN INTEREST.

WE HAVE BENEFITTED, ENORMOUSLY, BY THE DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE SOVIET UNION. OUR NATION IS SAFER. THE PROSPECTS FOR EVEN FURTHER ARMS REDUCTIONS ARE BETTER. THE THREAT FROM WHAT USED TO BE, IN EFFECT, "FORWARD SOVIET BASES" IN PLACES SUCH AS CUBA ARE REDUCED. THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF VERY DANGEROUS INTERNATIONAL CRISES ARE ENHANCED. AND THE LONG TERM PROSPECTS FOR MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL INVESTMENT AND TRADE RELATIONS ARE VASTLY IMPROVED.

SO IT IS IN OUR CONCRETE, MATERIAL INTEREST, THE INTEREST OF ALL AMERICANS, TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO KEEP THE SOVIETS ON THE RIGHT TRACK. IT'S AN INVESTMENT IN AMERICA'S NATIONAL INTEREST. AND, IN THE SHORT RUN, PROVIDING FOOD CREDIT GUARANTEES IS THE BEST, LEAST COSTLY WAY WE CAN MAKE THAT INVESTMENT.

NOT A GIVEAWAY

AND LET'S NOT FORGET: FOOD CREDIT GUARANTEES ARE NOT GIVEAWAYS. THE LOANS WE ARE GUARANTEEING HAVE TO BE REPAYED. AND, CONSIDERING HOW MUCH THE SOVIETS NEED US OVER THE LONG TERM, I THINK THE LOGIC IS THE SOVIETS WILL REPAY THESE LOANS. NOT ONLY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, BUT THE REPUBLICS -- WHERE THE ACTION NOW IS -- HAVE COMMONLY COMMITTED TO THAT REPAYMENT.

MOREOVER, WHAT WILL RESULT FROM THE LOANS IS COMMERCIAL PURCHASE OF OUR FOOD EXPORTS -- SOMETHING THAT BENEFITS NOT ONLY OUR FARMERS, BUT A WIDE RANGE OF INTERMEDIARY BUSINESSES, AND OUR OVERALL BALANCE OF TRADE.

SO PROVIDING ADDITIONAL CREDITS MAKES SENSE BOTH BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT, AND BECAUSE IT IS IN OUR OWN CONCRETE, MATERIAL INTEREST.

BUT LET'S FACE IT: NO MATTER HOW RIGHT IT IS, NO MATTER HOW MUCH SENSE IT MAKES FOR AMERICA -- SOME POLITICIANS, SOME POLITICAL AND MEDIA CONSULTANTS, ARE GOING TO "DROOL" AT THE PROSPECT OF EXPLOITING ANY SUCH PROPOSALS OR PROGRAMS FOR PARTISAN PURPOSES. THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR "CHEAP SHOT" 30 SECOND SPOTS ARE OBVIOUS TO ANY OF US WHO ARE IN THIS BUSINESS.

I HAPPEN TO THINK PRESIDENT BUSH IS GOING TO GO AHEAD AND DO THE RIGHT THING REGARDLESS OF ANY TEMPORARY POLITICAL JEOPARDY HE MIGHT FACE. IF IT COMES TO THAT, HE CAN STAND A "BLIP" IN THE POLLS, AND HE WILL STAND IT -- IF THE NATIONAL INTEREST DEMANDS IT.

CONGRESS SHOULD GET ON BOARD

BUT I THINK WE OUGHT TO JUST BE FAIR ABOUT THIS. AND IF THERE IS SOME "POLITICAL HEAT" ON THIS ISSUE -- WELL, THERE IS PLENTY OF ROOM IN THE "KITCHEN" FOR ALL OF US.

SOMETIMES WE ON CAPITOL HILL COMPLAIN ABOUT BEING PULLED INTO CRASH LANDINGS WHEN WE WEREN'T INVOLVED IN THE TAKE-OFFS. LET'S GET ON BOARD THIS PLANE -- WHICH I HAPPEN TO THINK IS GOING TO COME IN FOR A SUCCESSFUL LANDING, IN ANY CASE -- BEFORE THE TAKE-OFF.

SO I HOPE THAT THE CONGRESS CAN BE BROUGHT INTO THE "ACTION" ON THIS ISSUE AT AN EARLY STAGE. THAT'S ALREADY HAPPENING, TO A DEGREE, WITH THE CONTACTS AND CONSULTATIONS GOING ON NOW. BUT I HOPE THAT CONGRESS WILL MEET ITS RESPONSIBILITY IN A MORE DIRECT WAY -- PERHAPS THROUGH DIRECT LEADERSHIP CONSULTATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT; PERHAPS THROUGH A RESOLUTION OF CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE A CREDIT GUARANTEE PROGRAM.

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR OUR NATIONAL SECURITY, AND OUR ECONOMIC WELL-BEING. IT IS A POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ISSUE. IT IS AN ISSUE ON WHICH CONGRESS AS AN INSTITUTION, AND EVERY ONE OF US AS MEMBERS, OUGHT TO BE WILLING TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED.

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