

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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HUMANITARIAN AID CORRIDOR ACT

DOLE/SIMON LEGISLATION TO ENSURE PROMPT DELIVERY OF U.S. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE; DETER INTERFERENCE BY OTHER COUNTRIES

I rise today to reintroduce the "Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act"; I am joined again by the distinguished Senator from Illinois, Senator Simon, in addition to the following cosponsors: Senator Helms, Senator McCain, Senator D'Amato, Senator Kennedy, Senator Gramm, Senator Hatfield, and Senator Robb. In my view, our legislation will further an important American foreign policy objective: to facilitate the prompt delivery of humanitarian aid. This would be achieved by establishing the principle that if a government obstructs humanitarian aid to other countries, it should not receive U.S. assistance. It seems to me that this is a principle that could be readily accepted by everyone. Very simply, our legislation would prohibit U.S. foreign assistance to countries which prohibit or impede the delivery or transport of U.S. humanitarian assistance to other countries.

The intended effect of this legislation is to ensure the efficient and timely delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance to people in need. It will help deter interference with humanitarian relief, as well as provide for the appropriate response in the event of interference or obstructionism.

Applies to All Relief Situations

Our legislation would be universally applicable -- the "humanitarian aid corridor act" does not single out any one country. It would apply to all relief situations. Currently, however, there is one country that would clearly be affected. Turkey continues to receive large amounts of assistance in the form of grants and concessional loans financed by the American taxpayer while at the same time, it is enforcing an immoral blockade of Armenia. As a result, outside relief supplies must travel circuitous routes, thereby greatly increasing the cost of delivery. Moreover, many supplies never make it at all. This same blockade prevents care packages from the American Red Cross from entering Armenia.

In sum, U.S. aid to Armenia is far less effective and much more expensive because of Turkey's blockade. More importantly, Armenians freeze and go hungry as a result of actions taken by the Turkish government. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to aid those in need -- like the Armenians -- is consistent with the fundamental values of our nation. This legislation will strengthen our ability to deliver such assistance which is an important component of our foreign policy.

Let me repeat, this bill does not name names. The legislation could apply to many other relief operations. Indeed the United States conducts relief operations around the world -- operations that depend on the cooperation of other countries. I recognize that Turkey has been a valuable ally in NATO and recently in Operation Desert Storm.

This legislation recognizes that there may be a compelling U.S. national security interest which would override the principle of non-interference with humanitarian aid. For this reason, U.S. foreign aid to nations in violation of this act may be continued if the President determines that such assistance is in the national security interest of the United States.

Conserve Taxpayer Dollars

It does not make sense to me to offer U.S. taxpayer dollars unconditionally to countries that hinder our humanitarian relief efforts. In light of budgetary constraints, it is imperative that U.S. relief efforts be timely and efficient. The bottom line is that countries that prevent the delivery of such

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assistance, or intentionally increase the cost of delivering such assistance, do not deserve unrestricted American assistance.

This legislation will be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations where I hope it will get rapid and positive consideration. Similar legislation will be introduced in the House. I hope that Congress will quickly enact this legislation and send it to the White House for approval.

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