

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CAPTAIN SCOTT O'GRADY

STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE

This is a time for celebration -- a brave American pilot, Captain Scott O'Grady, has been rescued from Bosnian Serb-held territory. He is back at Aviano Air Base in Italy and will soon be on his way home to see his family.

I am pleased to introduce this resolution commending Captain O'Grady, and the U.S. Marines who rescued him, for their courage and professionalism.

In the interests of getting this resolution passed today, I agreed to modify several provisions. I have a hard time understanding Democratic objections to these provisions. First, Democrats objected to stating the obvious -- that many missions prior to Captain O'Grady's were not accompanied by adequate action against hostile air defenses. Second, Democrats objected to urging appropriate responses to the attack on Captain O'Grady. The term "appropriate" covers a lot, but apparently some Democrats want no response at all to the attack on Captain O'Grady or the attack on the rescue aircraft.

I doubt if many Democrats really object. For example, Senator Kerry of Massachusetts, one of the Senate's combat veterans, said yesterday, that it would be "appropriate" to respond to this incident by bombing Serb missile sites.

Americans Proud of O'Grady & U.S. Military

Events like this should make all Americans proud and appreciative of the sacrifices made by men and women in the U.S. military. They should also make us realize that courageous soldiers like Captain O'Grady are the reason why our armed forces are second to none.

Captain O'Grady was shot down by Bosnian Serb forces and remarkably survived for six days in the forest -- in hostile territory -- by eating grass, leaves, and bugs and drinking rainwater, and evaded capture by Bosnian Serb troops.

It was not only superb military training that enabled Scott O'Grady to survive, but his own personal intelligence and dogged determination.

This same combination of fine training and individual strength also characterizes the U.S. Marines and the other personnel aboard the USS Kearsarge who were involved in this dramatic rescue operation.

No doubt about it, these men and women are American heroes. In addition to giving them the respect and commendation they are due, we have a responsibility -- a responsibility to ensure that they are not exposed to unnecessary risk.

Every man and woman in the military has signed up knowing that there are risks involved and that one day their lives may be on the line. However, this does not mean that we take steps that unnecessarily increase risks or fail to take steps to address risks.

U.N. Prevented Action Against SAM Sites

Last fall, NATO commanders noted an increase in the deployment of surface to air missiles by Bosnian Serb forces. Under the dual-key procedure, NATO sought to take out these SAM sites, but the plans were vetoed by the UNPROFOR command. It is likely that had NATO gone ahead six months ago, Captain O'Grady never would have been shot down.

So in addition to retaliating for this hostile action -- and we don't need the permission of the U.N. or NATO to retaliate -- we must take action to suppress the threat posed by the remaining SAM sites. We cannot in good conscience continue to send our pilots to patrol the no-fly zone without taking such measures.

Furthermore, as this incident and recent developments underline, we must start a new approach in Bosnia. The bigger

(more)

picture is that the United States and our armed forces are participating in a failure.

It is high time to end this U.N. farce -- to withdraw the U.N. forces and lift the arms embargo on Bosnia. Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic reiterated yesterday in his meetings with members of Congress that the Bosnians do not want our troops on the ground, they have their own. They only want weapons to defend themselves. That is their fundamental right.

I am encouraged by the overwhelming vote in the House to lift the arms embargo. Clearly the tide has turned. The White House needs to move with this tide rather than try to swim against it.

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* Remarks delivered on Senate floor approximately 1:30 p.m.

S. Res. 132

Whereas on June 2, 1995, Bosnian Serb forces using sophisticated surface to air missiles shot down a United States Air Force F-16 aircraft piloted by Captain Scott F. O'Grady while on combat patrol as part of NATO-commanded Operation Deny Flight;

Whereas in late 1994, reports indicate the United Nations vetoed NATO proposed operations to attack Bosnian Serb surface to air missile sites;

Whereas effective measures to defend against Bosnian Serb air defenses did not occur during Captain O'Grady's mission on June 2, 1995;

Whereas thousands of United States Armed Forces and armed forces of NATO allies were involved in search operations to recover Captain O'Grady;

Whereas Captain O'Grady, in the finest tradition of American military service, survived for six days and nights through courage, ingenuity and skill in territory occupied by hostile Bosnian Serb forces;

Whereas on June 8, 1995 Captain O'Grady was rescued in a daring operation by United States Marines;

Whereas aircraft involved in the rescue operation were attacked by Serb forces but no casualties occurred;

Therefore be it resolved by the Senate that it is the sense of the Senate that--

- 1) Captain O'Grady deserves the respect and admiration of all Americans for his heroic conduct under life-threatening circumstances;
- 2) the relief and happiness felt by the family of Captain O'Grady is shared by the United States Senate;
- 3) all members of the United States and NATO armed forces involved in the search and rescue operations, in particular the members of the United States Marine Corps involved in the extraction of Captain O'Grady, are to be commended for their brave efforts and devotion to duty;
- 4) U.S. and NATO air crews should not be put at risk in future operations over Bosnia unless all necessary actions to address the threat posed by hostile Serbian air defenses are taken.