

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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Statement of Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole

WILL THE ALLIES SIT IT OUT, AGAIN?

RHETORIC FROM VENICE

YESTERDAY, THE ALLIED LEADERS IN VENICE ISSUED A FINE-SOUNDING STATEMENT CALLING FOR FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN THE PERSIAN GULF. IT'S GOOD RHETORIC. BUT RHETORIC IS EASY.

ACTION IS A LOT TOUGHER. AND IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO SEE PRECIOUS LITTLE ACTION ON THE PERSIAN GULF QUESTION OUT OF VENICE. IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO GET NO REAL COMMITMENT FROM OUR ALLIES TO MEET THEIR RESPONSIBILITY; TO ANTE UP -- IN MILITARY, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TERMS -- TO DEFEND THEIR OWN INTERESTS.

"LET UNCLE SAM DO IT"

WHAT WE ARE GETTING IS THE SAME OLD RESPONSE. "LET UNCLE SAM DO IT."

THE TALK FROM OUR ALLIES IS: "LET'S BE CALM." WELL, I'M ALL FOR CALMNESS. THE HOTTER THINGS GET, THE MORE IMPORTANT IT IS THAT WE BE CALM.

BUT I MUST SAY, IT'S EASY TO BE CALM, IN THE COZY CAPITALS OF EUROPE AND JAPAN, WHEN UNCLE SAM HAS HIS SHIPS AND PLANES PATROLLING THE GULF; AND HIS RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE FLAG PROTECTING THE TANKERS BRINGING THE OIL THAT LONDON, AND PARIS, AND TOKYO DESPERATELY NEED.

AND CALMNESS IS DIFFERENT FROM INERTIA. CALMNESS IS DIFFERENT FROM BURYING YOUR HEAD IN THE SAND AND HOPING A PROBLEM WILL JUST GO AWAY.

(more)

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IF OIL TANKERS START GETTING HIT WITH SILKWORM MISSILES; IF THE GULF IS TIED UP IN KNOTS; IF THE OIL RESERVES IN EUROPE AND JAPAN DISAPPEAR, AND THE RATIONING AND GAS LINES REAPPEAR -- WELL, I WONDER HOW CALM EVERYONE IS GOING TO BE THEN.

HIGH STAKES

THIS IS NOT A GAME. IT'S DEADLY SERIOUS.

THE STAKES ARE HIGH. OUR DETERMINATION -- OURS, IN THIS COUNTRY; AND OUR ALLIES' -- HAD BETTER BE JUST AS HIGH.

LET'S BE FRANK. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ALREADY WONDER ABOUT THE APPEARANCE OF AMERICAN SHIPS AND SAILORS GOING IT ALONE IN THE GULF. THEY UNDERSTAND WE HAVE TO BE THERE; THAT WE HAVE INTERESTS THERE. BUT THEY RIGHTLY ASK: WHAT ABOUT OUR ALLIES? THEY HAVE INTERESTS, TOO. WHY AREN'T THEY THERE, STANDING BESIDE US? WHY AREN'T THEY SHARING THE BURDEN? SHARING THE RISKS?

IF THE WORST HAPPENS; IF MISSILES START FLYING; THE GULF IS CLOSED; AND EUROPE AND JAPAN RUN OUT OF OIL -- YOU CAN BET THEN WE'LL REALLY START HEARING ABOUT ALLIED UNITY. WE'LL REALLY START HEARING ABOUT AMERICA'S RESPONSIBILITY TO BAIL OUT ITS FRIENDS.

BUT I WONDER, THEN, IF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL LISTEN. OR WHETHER, INSTEAD, THEY'LL JUST ASK: WHERE WERE OUR ALLIES WHEN WE NEEDED THEM? AND WHY SHOULD WE BE BAILING THEM OUT NOW?

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