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NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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LIFT BOSNIA ARMS EMBARGO

**DOLE & LIEBERMAN INTRODUCE BIPARTISAN EFFORT
TO LIFT U.S. ARMS EMBARGO ON BOSNIA**

I rise today together with the distinguished Senator from Connecticut, Senator Lieberman, to introduce the Bosnia-Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995 which would terminate the U.S. arms embargo on Bosnia. We are pleased to be joined by the following bipartisan cosponsors: Helms, McConnell, Thurmond, Feingold, D'Amato, Biden, Lott, McCain, Mack, Hatch, Kyl, Gorton, Specter, Packwood and Craig.

I was hoping that we would not have to offer this legislation again this year. I was hoping that after more than a thousand days of Sarajevo's siege, after more than a thousand excuses from the leaders of the international community, that finally some action would be taken. Tragically, despite countless promises of tough action against brutal Serb aggression, the international community has chosen to confront this egregious violation of international law and affront to principles of humanity, with what amounts to appeasement. Ironically, the only promise this administration, the Europeans, and the United Nations have kept is their promise to continue to deny the Bosnian people the right to defend themselves against genocidal aggression.

What is so disappointing about this situation, is that the last time the Senate debated this matter, the Clinton administration made the following predictions and commitments: (1) the Contact Group countries were serious about living up to the commitments they made in the July 30 communique, which included stricter enforcement and expansion of the exclusion zones in Bosnia.

(2) The Clinton administration would seek a multilateral lifting of the arms embargo in the U.N. Security Council.

(3) No further concessions would be made to the Bosnian Serbs, the Contact Group plan being a "peaceful ultimatum."

Nearly six months later, what do we see?

-- In Bihac we saw that there is no will to fulfill current NATO and U.N. commitments to protect the safe havens in Bosnia, let alone take on greater responsibilities;

-- a U.S.- sponsored resolution to lift the embargo lies dormant in the U.N. Security Council for more than two months now;

-- representatives from Contact Group countries are rushing to Belgrade and to Pale to further sweeten the pot for the Bosnian Serbs and their mentor, Slobodan Milosevic. They have tacitly agreed to a confederation between Serb-controlled areas of Bosnia and Serbia, and are moving toward extending sanctions relief for Serbia even though Milosevic's announced embargo of the Bosnian Serbs has proven to be a sham.

Nevertheless, there are those who claim that peace is around the corner. No question, I would like to believe that, but I have heard it too many times before to accept these recent pronouncements at face value. Another ceasefire has been reached -- and maybe it will hold -- but by their own admission, the Bosnian Serbs have only agreed to the Contact Group plan as a "basis for further negotiations." Can we really call that progress?

And so, we are offering legislation to lift the arms embargo once more. This bill does allow for the possibility that the ceasefire may hold for four months; it would not lift the arms embargo until May 1 of this year unless there is a formal request from the Bosnian government prior to that time.

There are those who will say that this bill undermines the ceasefire and the peace process. I strongly disagree. Since when does leverage undermine diplomacy? So far, the only

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leverage is on the Bosnian Serb side -- because they control 70% of Bosnia, they hold U.N. troops hostage with impunity, they shut down the Sarajevo airlift by threatening NATO planes, because they do these things and all they have to fear is another visit by Yasushi Akashi. On the other side are the Bosnians, who are nominally protected in their safe havens, and can only see evidence of their rights as a sovereign nation on paper -- in the U.N. Charter or some U.N. resolution.

The bottom line is that if this legislation is passed and no peace settlement is reached, Radovan Karadzic and his thugs will have to face greater consequences than another meeting of the Contact Group. That would be a great improvement on the empty threats of the last 33 months.

I would like to quote from the late Secretary General of NATO, Manfred Woerner, who gave a speech in the fall of 1993 about NATO and foreign policy in the 21st century. He said, and I quote:

"First, political solutions and diplomatic efforts will only work if backed by the necessary military power and the credible resolve to use it against an aggressor. Second, if you cannot or do not want to help the victim of aggression, enable him to help himself."

The United States and the members of the Alliance would do well to consider the wise words of Manfred Woerner -- one of the strongest Secretary Generals in NATO's history. The Contact Group's diplomacy is not backed by the necessary military power or credible resolve -- and that is why its diplomatic efforts have failed, causing considerable damage to the credibility of the Alliance. Furthermore, since after these long months it is apparent that the international community is unwilling to confront Serbian aggression, we should help the victim of this aggression, Bosnia.

I would also like to address some of the arguments made against "unilaterally" lifting the arms embargo. First, if the United States acts first, that does not mean we will not be joined by other countries. I believe that despite British and French objections, even some of our NATO allies would join us. Moreover, there are other countries, including the Gulf states and moderate Islamic governments that would participate in financing and providing military assistance. As for the argument that leading the way would lead to the demise of other embargoes against aggressors states, such as Iraq, this argument assumes that our allies cannot tell the difference between a legal and illegal embargo.

Second, the provision of training and arms would not require the deployment of U.S. ground troops. The Bosnians have an advantage in manpower -- what they need are weapons. Indeed, it is the administration's policy of committing the United States to assist in the enforcement of the Contact Group settlement that would lead to the potential deployment of tens of thousands of U.S. ground troops -- and for a considerable length of time because the Bosnians would still be unable to protect their territory.

Third, contrary to those who point to reports of arms shipments from Iran to Bosnia, a decision to arm the Bosnians would reduce the potential influence and role of radical extremists states like Iran. The Muslims in Bosnia are secular Muslims, not fundamentalists, who have lived with Christians and Jews in peace for centuries. Ironically, our policy toward Bosnia has fueled anti-western extremism in the Middle East.

Some say it is too late, the Bosnians have lost and it would take too long for them to achieve the capability to defend themselves against the powerful Serb forces. In my view, that judgment should be left to the Bosnians -- it is their country and their future. Furthermore, the fact is that Serb forces have not paid a price for their aggression and we do not know what the impact of leveling the military playing field will have on the effectiveness of Serb forces. Let us recall that some in our government greatly overestimated the cohesiveness and morale of the Iraqi forces, and underestimated the military and political impact that Stingers had on the mighty Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan. Serb forces are not the Red Army, they are not the Iraqi army.

As for the extent of military assistance required, the Bosnians do not need to duplicate the inventory of Serb forces,

only acquire the means to counter them. Earlier Pentagon estimates that \$5 billion in military assistance is required to assist the Bosnians amount to a scare tactic. The Bosnians need Soviet-style weapons -- which are readily available and less expensive than top of the line U.S. systems -- in addition to training in strategy and tactics.

Finally, I would like to address the argument I heard in London, that the withdrawal of U.N. protection forces would result in the serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Bosnia. This would likely be true in the short term, particularly in the eastern enclaves. However, we must recognize that the circumstances have worsened in recent months despite the presence of U.N. Protection Forces. Should the Bosnian Serbs choose to target their forces on the eastern enclaves, as they did in Bihac, U.N. protection would probably amount to very little. The bottom line is that over the long term, the Bosnians are better off putting their future into their own hands, than in the hands of international bureaucrats -- even if in the short term, the situation worsens.

We are rapidly approaching the third anniversary of this tragic war. We have an opportunity to take real action, to take meaningful action, by terminating this illegal and unjust arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina. I urge my colleagues to sign up as cosponsors and take a firm stand in support of democracy, international law and humanity.

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