

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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BOSNIA EMBARGO UPDATE

BIPARTISAN SENATE EFFORT TO LIFT U.S. ARMS EMBARGO
"ENTIRELY SUPPORTIVE OF PEACE EFFORTS,"
BOSNIAN PRESIDENT TELLS DOLE

Two days ago I introduced legislation together with the distinguished Senator from Connecticut, Senator Lieberman, to terminate the U.S. arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina as of May 1, 1995.

As I mentioned in my remarks at that time, I believed that this legislation was not only consistent with international law in upholding Bosnia's inherent right to self-defense, but that it would also serve to provide some badly needed leverage for the Bosnians on the diplomatic side.

I understand that today Admiral Leighton Smith, Commander of NATO forces in southern Europe, told reporters that he opposed this legislation. Well, I am not surprised that a four star admiral would not oppose his Commander in Chief, nor that a NATO commander would not choose to contradict the NATO-Secretary General.

I would note, however, that in addition to candidate Bill Clinton, the following former high level U.S. government officials, including cabinet members, have publicly supported lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia: Zbigniew Brzezinski; Frank Carlucci; George Shultz; Jeane Kirkpatrick; Paul Wolfowitz; Richard Perle; and Max Kampelman -- quite an impressive list. Moreover, I would emphasize that the late Manfred Woerner, the previous Secretary General, advocated helping the victims of aggression, especially when the international community does not have the resolve to take action on behalf of that victim. That is surely the case in Bosnia.

It seems to me however, that the views that should be given the most weight, are those of the Bosnians. It is their country and their future we are talking about.

And so, I would like to share two letters with my colleagues which I received this week from the President of Bosnia, Alija Izetbegovic, and from the Bosnian Ambassador to the United Nations, Muhamed Sacirbey. Both letters strongly support the Dole/Lieberman bill.

First I would like to quote from President Izetbegovic's letter to me:

"The leadership of the United States of America is essential in the search for peace in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The legislation that you and Senator Lieberman have offered is entirely supportive of peace efforts and the continuing leadership of your country in this matter.

"We wholeheartedly concur that the arms embargo should be terminated 'de facto' no later than May 1, 1995. By such date the preliminary agreement on the cessation of hostilities would have expired and by then the Serbians would have opted to accept the Contact Group peace plan or to continue the war. We believe that this legislation would be most pivotal not only in confronting international aggression and acts of genocide against our Republic, but also in encouraging the Serbians to opt for peace."

The letter from Ambassador Sacirbey states the following, and I quote,

"We wish to reiterate our full support for Congressional efforts, in particular S.21, to terminate the application of the U.S. arms embargo on the government of
(more)

the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina....The elements of your proposed legislation are in complete convergence with our views. We are also of the opinion that this legislation is entirely consistent with the search for peace in our country...."

We need to keep things in perspective. The strains within NATO have not been caused by Congressional efforts to lift the embargo, but the present policy itself. The credibility of the Alliance has been damaged because NATO has allowed itself to become a subcontractor to the United Nations. The only way to reverse this situation is for the United States to reassert its leadership in support of a better policy. The Clinton Administration was on the right track in May of 1993. It is now time to get back on that track.

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