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NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA WAR - THIRD ANNIVERSARY

DOLE AGAIN URGES LEGAL, MORAL POLICY: **WITHDRAW UNPROFOR & LIFT EMBARGO**

This week marks the third anniversary of the war against Bosnia and Herzegovina. It also marks the third anniversary of the international community's failure in Bosnia -- a failure the United States, under both the Bush and Clinton administrations, has participated in.

Big Policy Mistake: Illegal Embargo on Bosnia

The biggest mistake made by world leaders was extending, in practice, the arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia to the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina -- which is an internationally recognized state and member of the United Nations. In addition to violating Bosnia's fundamental right of self-defense -- a right which is recognized in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter -- this policy has had the effect of prolonging the war. It has prolonged the war by ensuring that the Serbs maintain such a superiority in weapons that they are not compelled to sign any deal -- even one which rewards them with half of Bosnia as envisioned by the so-called Contact Group.

Now, the administration says that this European-designed policy has managed to "contain the war" and prevented further humanitarian disasters. Let's not rush to pat ourselves on the back for our great humanitarianism until we look at the facts.

Look At The Facts

The facts are that over 200,000 people have been killed over the past three years, 17,000 of them children. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been expelled from their homes because of their ethnicity and religion. Concentration camps, rape, and mass graves have become the tools of "ethnic cleansing" -- which is just another word for genocide. Homes, churches, and monuments have been reduced to rubble. Putting aside the human factor, from an international legal perspective, the world has watched as a U.N. member state has been attacked and occupied. And, now international leaders want to reward those attackers and occupiers, ostensibly in the pursuit of peace.

Yes, we must give credit to those brave aid workers and U.N. soldiers who have sacrificed and risked their lives to bring food and medicine to those in need. The policy is not their fault; they do not make policy -- policy makers in Washington and European capitals do. Nevertheless, let's not fool ourselves, feeding people who are trapped in U.N. "safe" havens that are anything but safe, while denying them the means to defend themselves is bad policy.

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Yesterday, the Bosnian Prime Minister said in an interview that the Bosnians should prepare for a decade of war. It may sound pessimistic to some, but in my view it's pretty realistic if the present policy continues. Why should Bosnian Serb leaders agree to a settlement? Why should Bosnian Serb forces give up any of the 70% of the territory they occupy? -- Because U.N. forces on the ground? --Because of NATO planes that fly overhead but don't bomb?

Three Years of Monitored Genocide is Enough

It is clear that the international community does not have the will to live up to its commitment to protect the Bosnians, so why can't we allow them to protect themselves? The present policy of keeping the U.N. forces in Bosnia indefinitely amounts to occupation. UNPROFOR should be withdrawn and the arms embargo should be lifted. That is the only policy that makes legal, political, and moral sense. And, it is the only policy that offers any hope of bringing this war to an end by creating a military balance on the ground.

If the ceasefire due to expire on May 1 is not extended and a peace settlement has not been agreed to by the Serbs, I intend to take up the Dole/Lieberman legislation on the Senate floor shortly after the April recess. Three years of monitored genocide is enough.

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