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NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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BOSNIA UPDATE

**TIME FOR "MAKE-BELIEVE" OVER: REALITY SHOULD DRIVE U.S. POLICY;
DOLE RENEWS CALL TO WITHDRAW UNPROFOR & LIFT ARMS EMBARGO**

As the Serbian advance on Srebrenica continues, the administration, the U.N. bureaucracy and some of our allies are busy defending their failed approach in Bosnia. They argue that the Bosnians are better off if the U.N. forces stay in Bosnia, that lifting sanctions on Serbia is the key to peace, that the Serb air defenses do not pose a threat to NATO air crews -- the news from Bosnia notwithstanding.

In his response to a letter from Speaker Gingrich and me, the President stated that he believed that the United States must support the U.N. Protection Forces' continued presence in Bosnia. He said that UNPROFOR had played and was playing a "critical role" in diminishing the conflict and was assisting the U.N. High Commission on Refugees in providing aid to the Bosnian population.

To Believe Current Approach Is Working: Play "Let's Pretend"

In order to believe that the U.S. and European approach in Bosnia is working, one simply has to play a game I call "Let's pretend." The rules are simple. It goes like this:

- Let's pretend that the U.N. forces are delivering humanitarian aid to those in need;
- Let's pretend that the U.N. forces control Sarajevo airport;
- Let's pretend that the U.N. forces are protecting safe havens such as Sarajevo and Srebrenica and that no Bosnians are dying from artillery assaults and shelling;
- Let's pretend that there is a credible threat of serious NATO air strikes;
- Let's pretend that the no-fly zone is being enforced;
- Let's pretend that Serbian President Milosevic is not supporting Bosnian Serb forces;
- Let's pretend that Bosnian Serb air defenses are not deployed against NATO aircraft and are not integrated into Serbia's air defense system.
- Let's pretend that the Rapid Reaction Force will react forcefully and rapidly under the same U.N. rules of engagement which have made UNPROFOR impotent;
- Let's pretend that U.N. forces can stay in Bosnia forever and that we will never have to contemplate U.N. withdrawal.

A Look At Reality in Bosnia

If you can pretend all of the above, you can easily accept the administration's defense. On the other hand, if you react to reality and don't engage in multilateral make-believe then you will not be persuaded by the administration's case. Without taking the time to review the last year or two or three in Bosnia, let's just look at the reports from the last week or so:

- In Srebrenica, a so-called U.N. designated safe area, Serb forces overran U.N. observation posts and Serb tanks are within a mile of the town center;
- In Sarajevo, the hospital was shelled and more children were slaughtered;
- Information surfaced that Bosnian Serb air defenses are tied into Belgrade's air defense system;
- The no-fly zone was violated and NATO did not respond;
- U.N. Envoy Akashi "assured" the Bosnian Serbs that the U.N. would continue business as usual in the wake of the downing of U.S. Pilot O'Grady and the taking of U.N. hostages.

These are only a few examples of the reality in Bosnia.

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It is this reality that should drive U.S. policy. It is this reality that has moved the Bosnian government to "reassess" the U.N. presence in Bosnia. It is this reality that should prompt us to do the same.

U.N.: One of the Means to Secure Serb Gains

The fact is that despite the presence of over 25,000 U.N. peacekeepers and despite the impending arrival of the Rapid Reaction Force, the Bosnians are still being slaughtered, safe areas are under siege, and the U.N. continues to accommodate Serb demands and veto even limited military action designed to protect U.S. air crews. The fact is that the U.N. has become one of the means of securing Serb gains made through brutal aggression and genocide.

As Jim Hoagland aptly pointed out yesterday in the Washington Post, and I quote, "The war has now reached a point where the U.N.'s value free equation of Serbs who are willing to kill with Bosnians who are willing to die cannot be sustained and cannot be allowed to spread deeper into the Clinton administration which too docilely accepted Akashi's veto on retaliation. Americans will no long support humanitarianism based on self-serving bureaucratic cynicism and fear."

The time for make-believe is over. The U.N. mission in Bosnia is a failure. The Bosnians deserve and are entitled to defend themselves. The U.N. must begin to withdraw and the arms embargo must be lifted. Therefore, I intend to take up a modified version of the Dole/Lieberman arms embargo bill following disposition of the regulatory reform bill.

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* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 3:50 p.m.