

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, July 11, 1995

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BOSNIA DISASTER

PRIME MINISTER SILAJDZIC UPDATES DOLE ON FALL OF SREBRENICA,
APPEALS ANEW FOR LIFT OF U.S. ARMS EMBARGO;
U.N. SAFE AREAS SAFE ONLY FOR SERB AGGRESSION

I've just been on the telephone with the Prime Minister of Bosnia, along with Senator Lieberman. Prime Minister Silajdzic is in Sarajevo, and he was giving us the latest account on the fall of Srebrenica, one of the safe havens, where 40,000 innocent women, children, civilians, are now fleeing Serb aggression.

The main argument made by the administration in opposition to withdrawing the U.N. forces and lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia was that such action would result in the enclaves falling and would lead to a humanitarian disaster. Well, that disaster has occurred today -- on the U.N.'s watch, with NATO planes overhead.

If it was not before, it should now be perfectly clear that the U.N. operation in Bosnia is a failure. Once again, because of U.N. hesitation and weakness we see too little NATO action, too late. Two Serb tanks were hit by NATO planes today -- hardly enough to stop an all-out assault that began days ago. As a result, in addition to thousands of refugees, the lives of brave Dutch peacekeepers are in serious danger.

There can be no doubt, the U.N. designated safe areas are safe only for Serb aggression. What will it take for the administration and others to declare this U.N. mission a failure? Will all six safe areas have to be overrun first?

It is time to end this farce. It is time to let the Bosnians do what the U.N. is unwilling to do for them. The Bosnians are willing to defend themselves -- it is up to us to make them able by lifting the arms embargo.

The text of a letter sent today by Prime Minister Silajdzic to Senator Dole follows:

Dear Senator Dole:

Today, the United Nations allowed the Serb terrorists to overrun the demilitarized "safe area" of Srebrenica. Helpless civilians in this area are exposed to massacre and genocide. Once and for all, these events demonstrate conclusively that the United Nations and the international community are participating in genocide against the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The strongest argument of the opponents of the lifting of the arms embargo toppled today in Srebrenica. They claimed that the lifting the arms embargo would endanger the safety of the safe areas. The people in Srebrenica are exposed to massacre precisely because they did not have weapons to defend themselves, and because the United Nations did not want to protect them. Attacks are also under way against the other safe areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

That is why we think it is extremely important that the American Senate votes to lift the arms embargo on the legitimate Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

If the Government of the United States of America claims that it has no vital interests in Bosnia, why then does it support the arms embargo and risk being associated with genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

It is essential that the elected representatives of the American people immediately pass the bill to lift the arms embargo. This will provide a clear message that the American people do not want to deprive the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the right to defend themselves against aggression and genocide.

Sincerely,

Dr. Haris Silajdzic