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NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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BOSNIA UPDATE

SREBRENICA CATASTROPHE UNDERSCORES U.N. FAILURE; DOLE CITES NEED FOR U.S. LEADERSHIP & CONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR U.S. PARTICIPATION IN U.N. WITHDRAWAL

I had hoped that the profound disaster in Srebrenica would have provoked a greater response from this administration than what we have seen in the last forty-eight hours. Tens of thousands of Bosnians have fled, Dutch peacekeepers are being held hostage, young girls are being taken away by Bosnian Serb forces, and the two other eastern enclaves -- also U.N. designated safe havens -- are under continued attack. Yet, instead of leadership, all the administration has to offer is press spokesmen to defend this catastrophe. The best defense would be a change in the present approach. However, that is unlikely from what the cadre of administration spokesmen have said.

Despite the obviousness of this colossal failure, western leaders cling stubbornly to the myth that no other options exist.

There are reports that the administration is working with the allies to withdraw U.N. forces from the eastern enclaves and redeploy them in central Bosnia and Sarajevo. In my view, this would be redefining failure.

I would remind my colleagues that in the Spring of 1993, Secretary Christopher went to Europe with the "lift and strike plan" and returned with the "Joint Action Plan." This plan was sold as the humanitarian option. The option that put the Bosnians' interests first. The Joint Action Plan committed the United States, Britain, France, Russia and the European Union to the protection of six U.N. designated safe havens and closing the borders between Serbia and Bosnia.

There are those of us who urged the administration not to go along with this so-called "plan", who warned that creating giant refugee camps with minimal defense would support Serbian war aims. We were ignored.

The administration went ahead, and what a trade. Two years later Milosevic is still sending supplies and troops across the border and, the Bosnians are not only defenseless, but undefended.

Now we are faced with a widening catastrophe, but there is no longer any attempt to save the Bosnians -- only to save face. The Rapid Reaction Force is intended to save face.

I believe that the U.N. must begin preparations for withdrawal immediately. I am prepared to support the use of U.S. forces, if they are necessary, but under strict conditions:

- (1) Unified NATO command -- no dual key.
- (2) Robust rules of engagement which provide for massive retaliation if any U.S. forces are attacked.
- (3) All necessary measures are taken to protect U.S. and NATO personnel from likely threats -- from any source, to include Serbia -- to include the suppression of Serbian air defenses.
- (4) No risking U.S. lives to save equipment.
- (5) Agreement from our allies to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia.

The administration must know that it will be held responsible and that if these conditions are not met, the risk to U.S. forces will be far greater than necessary.

The U.N. forces must withdraw and the arms embargo must be lifted. The United States cannot continue to subsidize and support a U.N. mission that serves largely to supervise ethnic

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cleansing and aggression. The United States must exercise leadership and support the fundamental right of self-defense.

I listened last night to a White House press spokesman talking about Bosnia and he said well we can't afford to lift the arms embargo -- that would cost us money. What does he think we are spending now? Right now we are spending a great deal of money. We are picking up thirty-one percent of the tab right now in Bosnia. Hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent by U.S. taxpayers. If they are going to trot out a White House press spokesperson, at least they could get the facts correct and give them an accurate report of what has happened.

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* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 11:00 a.m.