

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, August 10, 1995

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BOSNIA UPDATE

DOLE SUPPORTS BIPARTISAN "MULTILATERAL BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA SELF-DEFENSE FUND"; PLACES FUTURE OF BOSNIA BACK IN BOSNIAN HANDS

I am pleased to cosponsor the "Multilateral Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Fund." In the aftermath of the overwhelming votes to lift the arms embargo in the Senate and the House, this legislation is the logical next step in a policy designed to put the future of Bosnia back in Bosnian hands. This legislation will create an international fund for the defense of Bosnia, and will provide for a leadership role for the United States, not only in establishing the fund, but in chairing it.

I would like to commend the distinguished Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee in taking the lead and forging legislation to address the critical issue of supporting the Bosnian government militarily once the arms embargo is lifted -- and it will be lifted. I would also add that the Chairman has brought together a bipartisan group of distinguished senators, including Senator Lieberman, in this important effort.

Congressional Support For Military Assistance to Bosnia

During our debates on lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia administration officials have snidely criticized our legislation as "lift and pray" -- alleging to the press and even to the Bosnians that there is no support in the Congress for providing military assistance to them. This bill makes it absolutely clear that we are serious -- that we are ready to follow-through.

The reality is that the administration's approach is "don't lift and pray" -- pray that the American people will be fooled into thinking that there is a U.S. policy and pray that the Croatian government will get the international community off the hook.

Well, the American people are not fooled. They know that the administration does not have a policy.

Arms Embargo & U.N. Prolong War

As for the recent Croatian military action -- Croatia's ability to retake its territory has demonstrated that with arms, the victims of aggression can successfully take matters into their own hands. In four days, Croatian forces accomplished what the U.N. could not do in four years. And, they had no help -- the NATO no-fly zone was not enforced as Serb jets bombed Croatian towns.

The undeniable lesson of the past week is that the arms embargo and the U.N. presence has prolonged the war in the former Yugoslavia by keeping areas of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina under occupation.

Another allegation made by administration officials is that lifting the embargo would "Americanize" the war. We know from the large votes in support of Bosnia's right to self-defense in the U.N. General Assembly and from discussions with international leaders that this assertion is simply not true.

This rhetoric is part of the scare tactics employed by the Pentagon and State Department in order to try to persuade members of Congress that somehow, if the arms embargo is lifted, we alone would be providing aid to the Bosnians.

Cost-Effective Mechanism for Multilateral Assistance

This fund will provide a mechanism for countries, other than just the United States, to provide the Bosnians with military assistance -- and to do so before the arms embargo is lifted. I would add, however, that the actual delivery of weapons will not occur until the U.S. arms embargo is lifted which would occur after U.N. forces withdraw.

I want to talk for a moment about cost. This bill provides for a \$50 million payment to the fund and authorization for \$50 million in Department of Defense draw down authority for defense

(more)

articles and services -- for a total package of \$100 million, far less than we are currently spending on a failed approach. This year, we are being billed around a half a billion dollars for our share of the U.N. peacekeeping operation. Our share for UNPROFOR next year will probably be closer to \$600 million. We are also providing indirect support to this operation -- for example, through NATO -- which amounts to about \$250 million annually. And, we don't get any discount when UNPROFOR is unable to do its job.

The bottom line is that keeping the U.N. in Bosnia is not cost-free. Indeed it is far more expensive than helping the Bosnians help themselves. Furthermore, we have to look at the costs of this failure to our credibility and our principles.

As we introduce this legislation today, President Clinton is poised to veto S.21, the Dole-Lieberman legislation to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia.

Administration officials are reportedly in Europe devising new ways to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina and to bribe Serbian President Milosevic, while Ambassador Albright is briefing the Security Council on evidence that more than 2,000 people were buried in mass graves in the wake of the Bosnian Serb take over of Srebrenica.

No doubt about it, the international community is partially responsible for these war crimes. It has refused to protect the Bosnians and denied the Bosnians the means to protect themselves.

U.S. to End Immoral Embargo & Lead Way to Rational Policy

How can America, the leader of the free world, continue to be a part of this immoral embargo? Administration officials even publicly acknowledge that it is immoral. As for the embargo's practical effect, it has been a total failure at achieving its goal of limiting violence and ending the war.

America should be leading the way toward a moral and rational policy that has some chance of resulting in a just and stable settlement. Instead, America is following an ineffective, failed approach based on appeasement.

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* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 4:30 p.m.