

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, September 21, 1995

Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

STATE DEPARTMENT REORGANIZATION

DOLE-HELMS AMENDMENT STREAMLINES BLOATED BUREAUCRACY; ADMINISTRATION AFRAID OF REORGANIZATION - FOSTERS FOREIGN AFFAIRS GRIDLOCK

I want to make a few comments about the Dole-Helms amendment offered yesterday. Our amendment will save money, make government more efficient, and better protect American interests overseas. The Foreign Affairs Reinvention Act of 1995 streamlines and consolidates U.S. foreign affairs agencies. Our amendment builds on the hard work by Senator Helms and his staff in their months of effort to reduce bureaucracy, and reinvent the international agencies for the U.S. government.

In July, the Senate considered S. 908, the Foreign Relations Revitalization Act of 1995. At administration prodding, Democrats filibustered the bill. The Senate fell five votes short of invoking cloture on two successive votes on August 1. Because of the lack of Democratic willingness to allow consideration of reorganization legislation, I was forced to return S. 908 to the Senate calendar.

During debate on S. 908, Democrats conceded the need for reorganization. Senator Lieberman, for example, said "Senator Helms and his Committee, I say, have acted on sound impulse, which is that we do need to do a searching reappraisal of the way we conduct our foreign policy in the post cold war era. The Committee has produced a coherent new architecture for our foreign affairs agencies."

Amendment Provides President Flexibility

Democrats supported reorganization, but they expressed concern over Congress mandating the details of reorganization. Give the President flexibility they said. Senator Kerry of Massachusetts, for example, said "All we are suggesting is give the President a mandate from the Congress to make the cuts, but allow the President to determine exactly how they are going to be made." That is exactly what the Dole-Helms amendment does.

The amendment requires the President to submit a plan in six months with the following guidelines:

- Achieve cost savings of \$3 billion over four years
- Abolish at least two of three major foreign affairs agencies
- Specify how the consolidation of all personnel and functions will occur.

The plan is enacted automatically within 60 calendar days unless Congress passes a resolution of disapproval. If the President does not submit a plan which meets these guidelines, the three agencies are abolished. Finally, transition funds are authorized to allow an orderly transfer.

The Dole-Helms amendment streamlines bloated bureaucracies and eliminates duplication. It increases the control of the Secretary of State over the conduct of American foreign policy. That is why five former Secretaries of State from Henry Kissinger to Jim Baker endorsed Senator Helms' original effort. The Dole-Helms amendment also meets the stated concerns of Senate Democrats about presidential flexibility in reorganizing foreign affairs agencies.

Better Way to Support American Global Engagement

The scaremongers in the administration claim reorganization is a ploy by isolationists -- some kind of veiled effort to help America withdraw from the world. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our plan is a way to better support American engagement in the world. Five Secretaries of State are not isolationists and would not endorse a plan that diminished America's ability to protect its global interests. After sitting on the budget sidelines all year, the administration now says funding cuts will imperil American diplomacy. Yet the best way

(more)

to avoid deep cuts in programs is to save money by reducing duplication and by streamlining bureaucracy.

I do not want to complicate action on Senator McConnell's legislation. Much of this plan is consistent with legislation proposed by Senator McConnell earlier this year.

To Date - Good Faith Effort Fails

We have tried to reach agreement with other senators. I believe the Senate should know what offers have been made and rejected. Senator Kerry yesterday suggested he would support an agreement along the following lines:

- Pull the amendment from this bill
- Bring up free standing legislation which requires the President to submit a plan abolishing only one agency
- Vote after four hours of debate
- Release all 15 State Department nominees currently on the Executive Calendar
- Resume the normal business of the Foreign Relations Committee on nominations and treaties

That is a very fair deal. No one guarantees the outcome of a vote, or the outcome of conference, or the eventual fate of any conference report. Nominees would be confirmed immediately, and more would be reported to the Senate. Unfortunately, after Chairman Helms indicated his willingness to accept the terms proposed by Senator Kerry, the White House said no. One State Department official said, "There's nothing in that deal for us."

The partisanship out of the White House and State Department does not serve our country well and will only jeopardize important issues -- from ambassadors to China, Indonesia, Panama and other critical countries to ratification of the Start II Treaty. I don't know if President Clinton knows what his advisers turned down. I don't know if the 15 nominees and their families know what the White House turned down. I don't know why the Clinton administration would want to keep gridlock going on foreign affairs. I do not know why they are now afraid of the reorganization proposed by Secretary Christopher earlier this year. I hope they quit saying "no, no, no" and begin to engage honestly in the legislative process. If they have a counter-offer, let's hear it.

###

* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 1:25 pm.