ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, we are still involved in a Republican conference, and we are still trying to determine whether or not we may be able to bring up the rescissions bill under certain strict limitations and certain agreements on voting against any amendments. We have not reached that agreement yet.

We still hope to get a vote on Bosnia. But I think in view of the fact that we are still tied up in conference, I will suggest that we stand in recess subject to the call of the chair. But I indicate it will probably be before 6 o'clock. If necessary, we are going to have to postpone the conference until tomorrow because I think we have important business to do here, hopefully, this evening.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. DOLE. I move that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

The motion was agreed to, and at 5:19 p.m., the Senate recessed subject to the call of the Chair whereupon, the Senate, at 6:27 p.m., reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ASHCROFT).

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, the Senate Republicans are still in conference, but I think in view of the fact that we have some who wish to speak on the Bosnia resolution, and we are still trying to work out some agreement on the rescissions package, I think it is better if we do business, if the Presiding Officer does not mind missing part of the conference.

If it becomes critical, we can always recess.

Mr. COATS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA SELF-DEFENSE ACT OF 1995

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, thank you for the recognition.

We are back on the Bosnia debate. In one sense, this debate should not be necessary. In the normal course of events, the President is the one who holds the duty to provide direction in these matters. I have long believed that our foreign policy ought to be directed by the chief executive officer and ratified by the Congress—the Senate—but not formulated. But the situation is far from normal in this instance.

Our action today on this Bosnia resolution is required by a somewhat unusual, maybe unprecedented failure of leadership on a very important issue. The credibility of our Nation and the existence of NATO are at risk. But it seems that the administration moves from crisis to crisis in Bosnia without a clear definition of what our policy is or ought to be. We have alternated between indifference and almost panic, operating without purpose and often seemingly without principle.

Over 2 years ago, as the policy of ''safe havens'' was being defined, I came to this floor expressing a concern and a question. ''A police action,'' I said, ''protecting safe havens, will probably stop some short-term suffering, but it will answer few long-term questions. After we purchase a temporary peace for fleeing refugees, what is our eventual goal?'' I asked. ''On this question,'' I then said, ''this administration is silent.''

Now it is 2 years later and that eventual goal is still unclear, and that silence has become a source of considerable embarrassment. For, 2 years later, little has changed. The situation is worse.

We have maintained, during that period of time, a one-sided arms embargo against Bosnia which has only served to reinforce the advantages enjoyed by the Serb aggressors.

We have placed critical command decisions in the hands of international bureaucrats who have not brought any military experience, political insight, or even moral courage to their position.

We have made a series of threats against Serbian forces that proved hollow, empty, undermining our credibility with both friends and foes alike around the world.

And we have repeatedly misled Bosnian leaders, first opposing and then supporting various initiatives, leaving the Bosnian Vice President to conclude ''We are going to die of these initiatives.''

Mistake has followed failure in an unending downward spiral as each safe area became progressively unsafe.

''I don't remember a time,'' says one expert, ''when there was so much scorn for American foreign policy.'' Former British Secretary David Owen comments, ''To the day I go to my grave, I will not understand the policy.''

The result has been an American retreat into a purely reactive mode. Our only role, it seems, is to respond to European proposals and initiatives. The only clear objectives of this administration seem to be to appease our allies and avoid political blame.

Now the administration is reduced to floating another French proposal, which repeats every error of the past. It calls on us to place more troops into indefensible positions. It demands that we risk American lives to prove our loyalty to a failed NATO policy. And once again, it has no diplomatic or military end game. It continues an aimless and endless commitment.

The President of France says the use of American helicopters and airmen is necessary ''to place the Americans squarely in front of their responsibilities.'' The effect would be to place our troops squarely in front of bullets as a symbolic commitment to a strategy which no one expects to succeed. It is hard to imagine a policy more destructive to American interests or more likely to lead to pointless loss of life.

The central problem here is pretty clear. The ''safe haven'' approach has not worked. But even more than that, it could not have worked, even with less United Nations interference, even with more military commitment, because the safe havens were chosen for a humanitarian, not a military mission. Thus, the deployment of forces on the ground and the equipment they were given was matched for this humanitarian purpose, not for a military purpose. The troops were lightly armed and they were heavily restricted.

But now we are being asked to expand that mission to a combat role from militarily indefensible and irrational positions. Each of these areas is a Moslem outpost in a sea of Serbian hostility. We are being asked to man and defend six exposed and vulnerable enclaves, apparently for an indefinite future.

If all this sounds somewhat familiar, it should, because it is a policy that acts as though our experience in Somalia never happened; as though the deaths of those Rangers never took place. We attempted to expand that humanitarian effort into a military operation without holding military positions, without adopting military strategies, and without setting military goals. And under these circumstances, peacekeeping became bloodletting and nothing lasting was accomplished.

Mr. President, we are accustomed to saying all options in Bosnia are bad, which has been used as an excuse for choosing those options which are worse. It is increasingly clear to me that only one approach is justified.

Our goal should be the creation of a viable Bosnian state with defensible borders and the military equipment to uphold them. This goal will never be reached while the embargo remains in force.

I believe we are led to this goal by two very direct American interests.

First is our strategic interest in the containment of this crisis. The worst possible result here would be for the fighting to extend beyond Bosnia, to spread to Macedonia, Kosovo, and beyond. That would bring in other NATO allies and could result in a situation that would be far more difficult in the future than even what we face today. It seems to me the best way to make that result difficult and hopefully impossible is to have a viable Bosnian state in the region to provide a check against Serb aggression.

Second, I suggest we have a moral interest and that moral interest is an eventual peace agreement between the parties in Bosnia. History offers no example of fruitful diplomacy or lasting peace between warring nations where the stronger power has a continued interest in conflict. Therefore, trying to