

Senate Backs Aid for Bosnia, Contingent on Cutting Iran Ties

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The Republican-controlled Senate yesterday approved a Clinton administration request for a \$200 million contribution to an international aid fund for Bosnia but stipulated that the money must not be disbursed until the Muslim-led government in Sarajevo cuts military and intelligence ties with Iran.

The Senate vote follows weeks of uncertainty about American support for the international aid effort for Bosnia and clears the way for an international donors' conference to be held April 12-13. It coincided with a decision by the World Bank to accept Bosnia as a member and approve a \$450 million assistance package over the next four years.

Delays in mobilizing financial resources for Bosnia have raised concern about the implementation of the civilian aspects of last November's Dayton peace agreement, including the funding of an inter-

national police force. U.S. and NATO officials complain that the economic reconstruction efforts are lagging far behind the relatively successful military operation to enforce a zone of separation between the warring Muslim-Croat and Serb factions.

The Senate action came in the form of a voice vote on amendments to a temporary spending bill offered by Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.) and [the chairman of the Senate Appropriations foreign operations subcommittee, Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.)].

The Clinton administration was relieved that the money was approved, as World Bank officials and others had earlier warned that the donors conference would probably not go ahead without a U.S. commitment. But the administration was unhappy over the provision blocking the U.S. aid until the Bosnian Muslims cut links to Iran.

"We don't believe this is the best approach," said State Department spokesman Glyn Davies. He said

the administration would "work with Congress" in an attempt to eliminate the linkage.

The Clinton administration has sought to pressure Bosnia over its Iranian ties in a different way, saying it would not begin a program to equip and train the Bosnian Army until Iranian fighters are withdrawn from Bosnia. McConnell criticized this position yesterday, saying that the United States should use all necessary "diplomatic, economic and security tools" to push for full compliance with every aspect of the Dayton accords.

If the Senate approves the temporary funding bill as expected later this week, the measure will go to a House-Senate conference. The House already has voted on a temporary funding bill that sets less stringent conditions for the Bosnia disbursement.

Congressional enthusiasm for Bosnia has waned as a result of revelations about links between some Muslim politicians and Iran and the increasingly sectarian nature of the Bosnian government.

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