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Below is the text of Howard Dean's letter to President Clinton on the conflict in Bosnia, dated July 19, 1995.

The Honorable William J. Clinton, President of the United States, The White House, Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

After long and careful thought, and after several years of watching the gross atrocities committed by the Bosnian Serbs, I have reluctantly concluded that the efforts of the United Nations and NATO in Bosnia are a complete failure.

I think your policy up to this date has been absolutely correct. We must give, and have given, this policy with our allies and with the United Nations every opportunity to work. It is evident, however, that the cost in human lives in allowing this policy to continue is too great. In addition, and perhaps more importantly for the United States, we are now in a position of ignoring, as many did in the 1940s, one of the worst crimes committed in history. If we ignore these behaviors, no matter where they occur, our moral fiber as a people becomes weakened. As the Catholic Church and others lost credibility during the Holocaust for not speaking out, so will the United States lose credibility and our people lose confidence in themselves as moral beings if the United States does not take action.

Since it is clearly no longer possible to take action in conjunction with NATO and the United Nations, I have reluctantly concluded that we must take unilateral action. While I completely agree with you that no ground troops should be committed for other than humanitarian purposes in Bosnia, I would ask that you take the following steps in Bosnia. First, lift the arms embargo as it applies to the Bosnian government. Second, enforce a full embargo of the sort that is now in effect in Iraq on the Bosnian Serbs and upon Yugoslavia. Third, break off diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia. Fourth, commit American air power to support the Bosnian government until the situation is stabilized and the civilian murders and atrocities by the Bosnian Serbs have been stopped.

I understand the risks of this policy and their implications for the NATO Alliance and the future success of the United Nations. Surely, however, as you watch and read about the huge amount of unwarranted human suffering, particularly of children, you would agree that our current course must now be changed.

I urge you to make these changes as soon as possible, and I look forward to supporting your policy fully to the best of my ability.

Sincerely,
Howard Dean, M.D.
Governor