completed. The passage of the Brady bill in 1994 brought new computerized national and local criminal arrest records. The criminal background of a potential gun purchaser can now be verified in a matter of minutes through the National Instant Check System, the NICS. I believe the background investigation as initiated through the NICS is a reasonable check on gun ownership rights.

I support some new proposals brought to this floor over the past two days, as well. For instance, I do not believe juveniles convicted of serious violent crimes should be allowed to acquire guns even after they turn 21 years of age. I support the imposition of harsh penalties for adults who provide guns to juveniles with the knowledge those guns will be used in a crime of violence.

I support programs which trace the source of firearms used in the commission of a crime. Convicted felons found in the possession of any gun should be punished severely, with mandatory minimum sentences that cannot be plea-bargained away.

Further, I welcome positive changes to current law that allow current and former police officers to carry weapons to protect themselves and our communities, prohibit guns pawned for more than a year from being returned until the owner passes an instant check, and allow D.C. residents the right to protect and defend themselves and their families in their own homes.

National crime statistics reflect an 18 percent decrease in violent crime and a 28 percent decrease in the murder rate from 1993 through 1997. The downward trend continued through June of 1998. I attribute a significant percentage of this improvement to the increased use of mandatory sentencing for violent offenders. Accordingly, I will continue to insist on harsh penalties for violent criminals, particularly those who misuse weapons during the commission of a crime.

Further, I call upon prosecutors everywhere to refrain from pleading away gun-related charges and criminal indictments. Sensible gun laws do work, but not when rendered meaningless by overburdened prosecutors more interested in moving their docket than in enforcing gun statutes.

Mr. Speaker, in my view the primary causes of gun violence in our society are rather obvious. The breakdown of families and family values, failure to hold individuals accountable for their actions, the romanticizing and glorifying of drug abuse, and violent behavior and guns on television, at the movies, and in video arcade are all relevant in assigning blame for recent events pertaining to youth violence.

Youth access to guns plays a part in the total picture, as well. Accordingly, I will continue to support measures restricting youth access to guns, criminal access to guns, and the mentally impaired and their access to guns.

I will not punish responsible. Law-abiding gun owners who are often made scapegoats by special interests and some segments of the popular press, and Members are going to see a heck of a lot of that over the coming days.

If gun control was the sole answer to the problem of violence in our country, my home State of Maryland, which has some of the strongest gun control laws in the country, would not have experienced an increased murder rate in 1998 while the national murder rate continued to fall.

The thoughts expressed herein do not make for an easy sound bite. Neither do they fall neatly under one political or philosophical label. They state, however, the views of one Member from Maryland who seeks to find positive solutions to one of our society's major ills, our fascination with violence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE DISASTROUS WAR IN YUGOSLAVIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, fairly early on during the war in Yugoslavia I spoke on this floor and said it was obvious that Milosevic would cave and that President Clinton and his spin doctors would then try to declare a great victory. It was obvious that a country no bigger than Kentucky, with less than 4 percent of our population and an already weakened economy, and without any real ability even to fight back, could not hold out for long against the massive bombings and megabillions of the U.S. Defense Department.

The only reason this stupid, one-sided cruel joke of a war lasted as long as it did was because it became, as one columnist said, and allied farce instead of an allied force, as the military called it.

Jeffrey Gedmin, writing in the just published June 28 issue of the liberal New Republic Magazine, said this:

> If the deal between Yugoslavia and NATO over Kosovo sticks, expect the Clinton administration to claim vindication and to speak of a victory for American leadership via NATO. But Europe's own early post-mortem suggests that our allies might be drawing rather different conclusions.
>
> Privately, politically influential Europeans generally consider the U.S.-led operation in Kosovo to have been a fiasco. Calculations of an early victory proved disastrously wrong. The Kosovars, whom we started the fighting to protect, have been decimated. There were 90,000 refugees before the bombing began. Estimates of the homeless now exceed 1 million.

Mr. Gedmin ended his article by calling it a pyrrhic victory, meaning really no victory at all. Columnist Robert Novak said the same thing. He wrote,

> But the truly pyrrhic nature of NATO's victory lies in longer-term implications. Serious students of foreign policy, far from eager to join in a champagne bash, were melancholy. U.S. relations with China have been undermined. The most dangerous elements in the Russian military have been emboldened. Most worrisome, the world now sees America with different eyes.

Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said, ''We looked like the big bully to a lot of people around the world.''

Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHINSON said that we are in danger of losing prestige and good will around the world. Under this administration, we have bombed people in Afghanistan, the Sudan, Iraq, and Yugoslavia, all apparently in an attempt to show that the President and the Secretary of State are great world leaders, and to make their mark in history.

Paul Harvey called this war Monica's war, and many people believe all these bombings in Afghanistan, the Sudan, Iraq, and Yugoslavia, timed as they were, were at least in part done to try to make people forget things like the sordid Lewinsky affair and the President's sale of missile technology to the Chinese.

Columnist Tony Snow said that this was the first war we have ever entered into in which we were the unambiguous aggressor and in which there was no vital U.S. interests at stake. In the process, the President turned NATO from a purely defensive force into an offensive one for the very first time, illegally many think, because it was against the NATO charter. He turned our Defense Department into a war department, as it was once called. He violated both our constitutional law and our statutory law, the War Powers Act. But then, some people do not care as long as the stock market remains high.

Former Democratic Senator Sam Nunn said, however, ''I think we have to be more mature in handling these civil wars around the globe. We have got to develop other tools beyond military force to deal with what are nonvital interests, and I consider this,'' Senator Nunn said, ''to be a nonvital interest.''

These bombings have turned people who want to be our friends into enemies. These actions have increased anti-Americanism all over the world. We will have problems years from now because of all of this when the problems will be blamed on whomever is president at the time.

In addition, this has cost us many, many billions, which could have been spent on so many better things. Our military would have plenty of money and no shortages if this administration had not so totally misused our military in so many ridiculously costly ways.

Columnist Carol THOMAS wrote,

> Only a president who knows more about making love than war would declare the puny and ineffective one-sided assault on the former Yugoslavia to be a victory.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members to refrain from personal references towards the President.

□ 1500

Mr. DUNCAN. By any objective standard, the goals of Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic, not of NATO and the United States, have been achieved. We have not defeated evil or hatred in the Balkans. It will come back, as it always has.

William Ratliff and David Openheimer, writing in the Washington Times, said,

NATO's bombing precipitated floods of refugees and other disasters that have destabilized the region in political, economic and other terms far beyond what Mr. Milosevic could have ever done on his own.

They added,

Since for most people NATO is America, this war has reignited anti-Americanism and suspicion of U.S. intentions from Argentina to China. Most people do not believe this war was to defend human rights, particularly since we harmed so many innocent people in and far beyond the central Balkans. Now people are already telling us we will have to spend $30 billion to $50 billion over the next few years to rebuild what we have destroyed.

This stupid, one-sided, cruel joke of a war was a foreign policy disaster that American taxpayers will be paying for in both military and economic terms for many years to come. It certainly cannot be called a victory in any shape, form or fashion.

[From the Washington Times, June 14, 1999]

PERILOUS PRECEDENT IN KOSOVO

(By William Ratliff and David Oppenheimer)

The resolution that passed United Nations Security Council Thursday is a welcome if short-term escape from a catastrophe NATO created in unintended cooperation with Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. Some of the settlement can never be implemented and much of the collateral damage the war has caused will be difficult or impossible to reverse.

Mr. Milosevic undoubtedly is a war criminal whose crimes have been widely reported. But NATO is seriously guilty as well. Indeed, NATO's conduct precipitated or committed far greater moral—not to mention political, economic, international relations—damage than it prevented.

But already there are smug intimations of victory from the White House and nonsense like The Washington Post's editorial saying the Kosovo war proves the West ''would not stand for crimes against humanity.'' The hypocrisy of fighting a ''moral'' war that causes so many civilian casualties and global problems has not yet sunk in for Americans.

Now NATO is dictating a political correct ''settlement''—what Mr. Clinton calls ''multi-ethnic democracy'' and Kosovo autonomy within Yugoslavia—that is even more utopian than three months ago and guarantees more bitter warfare in the future.

War critics are not ''isolationists'' or critical of the American military; they simply say NATO could not achieve its objective of stopping Mr. Milosevic at an acceptable cost to ourselves and others. The proof:

NATO's stated objective was to protect the Kosovar Albanians, but it betrayed them. It gave Mr. Milosevic a cover to exponentially accelerate his repression and then in the June ''settlement'' fuzzed over the independence option that was given in the Rambouillet ultimatum. It is silly to suppose the Kosovo Liberation Army will agree to become a police force in a province of Yugoslavia. The Serb and NATO destruction of Kosovo left most of 1.5 million Kosovar Albanian refugees nothing to return to. Those most eager to return despite a terrible winter coming on are radicalized youngsters who now far more than before want to join the KLA to slaughter Serbs and seize the independence NATO now refuses to offer them.

If war had been the only option, it should not have been led by yuppie politicians who understood nothing about history, politics and warfare. There is a long list of lessons on the fatally flawed military conduct of the war, beginning with gradual escalation.

NATO's will or even capability to rebuild Kosovo and restore Kosovars to their destroyed homes will flag as Americans and Europeans are overwhelmed by problems of enforcement and as the billions of dollars add up at the expense of Social Security and other domestic projects.

For months NATO regularly (if apologetically) inflicted casualties on all sorts of innocents, from Serbs and Kosovar Albanians to Chinese, in part because it attacked from 15,000 feet in the air. While no military seeks casualties, to refuse to risk even one person in order to drop flood to hundreds of thousands of refugees in the mountains is to undermine one's seriousness and moral credibility.

Then there is the question, why Yugoslavia and not somewhere else where the crimes are equal or greater, as in Rwanda? Or the less remembered example of Cyprus, which next month ''celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Turkish invasion. Almost 200,000 Greek Cypriots were ''cleansed'' out of their homes in Northern Cyprus in 1974 by the Turkish army, but ''principled'' Washington for strategic reasons still in effect winks at Turkish occupation of more than a third of the island.

Serbia has been devastated and will cost tens of billions to rebuild, and Mr. Milosevic is still there.

NATO's bombing precipitated floods of refugees and other disasters that have destabilized the region in political, economic and other terms far beyond what Mr. Milosevic could ever have done on his own.

The war has buttressed reactionaries from Russia and China to the United States.

Since for most people NATO is America, this war has re-ignited anti-Americanism and suspicion of U.S. intentions from Argentina to China. Most people do not believe this war was to defend human rights, particularly since we harmed so many innocent people in and far beyond the Central Balkans.

NATO's war will encourage arms (including nuclear) proliferation around the world among nations who fear NATO may invade them next. The Kosovo war may even encourage development of defensive alliances to guard against NATO attacks on those it considers ''moral deviants.''

americans must see that long before its end this war was no longer simply a campaign to eliminate the ''evil'' Mr. Milosevic. It became a tragic fiasco with all kinds of casualties from Pristina to Beijing.

If Kosovo is seen as a ''victory,'' it will become a model for what British Prime Minister Tony Blair calls ''moral crusades'' to ''right wrongs'' around the world. The non-Western world—and many in the West as well—regard this as a dangerous and unworkable arrogance that like the Crusades centuries ago may have been at least partly moral in inspiration but in practice became fanatical, intolerant and massively destructive. If the moral crusades spread, the 21st century may have an even uglier human face than the 20th.

[From the New York Times]

WHAT DID NATO WIN IN BALKANS WAR?

(By A.M. Rosenthal)

But—why aren't we celebrating?

After all, we won, didn't we? The Kosovars will get to home, won't they?

Well, yes, we did encourage Slobodan Milosevic to drive them from those homes by giving him advance notice of when we would attack and assuring him not to worry about our sending in ground troops.

All right, all right, those were mistakes; shut up about them. At least now the million or so Kosovars we were supposed to be helping can pick up lives in their broken homes in smashed villages. Can't they?

Somebody will put up the money to fix up the homes. Isn't that so, perhaps?

Then there will be real peace, won't there? Naturally, to keep the Kosovars and Serbs from killing each other, we will have to maintain enough troops there for—oh, for about a generation.

But we are already doing that in Bosnia, so what is the big deal about sending off 7,000 or so more Americans—to start with—to Yugoslavia? Let's not be pretty about that; we are into the Balkan wars far too deep to quibble.

Maybe it won't be dangerous duty. The Kosovar army of Yugoslav citizens who count themselves Albanians won't take advantage of the departure of Serbian forces to take revenge on civilian Serbs. Will it?

And the Serbs in Serbia—they won't harbor a grudge against us, will they, for bombing their power plants, their factories, homes, hospitals, bridges and of course relatives with a destructiveness only the Germans had achieved against the Serbs in World War II?

Maybe they will forgive what the Germans did to them. About that time, they and their children will forgive us too, isn't that possible?

And the upside! Look at what we win. We saved NATO's face and President Clinton's and Madeleine Albright's. Her mouth foretold a quickie war. Maybe actually not saved their faces—but at least wiped them off a bit.

So we will be able to walk tall in the world for bombing Serbia into slivers. I mean, when the fear of America dies down in some countries that one day we will fly over their lands to bomb them into submission for not carrying out our orders.

You know, countries like India that are not about to surrender Kashmir without all-out war or Israel, whose mind it has crossed that, if NATO could bomb a neighbor that had not attacked its members first, why shouldn't the Arab League exercise the same privilege against Israel and eventually ask the United Nations for approval?

Remember—we have indicted Milosevic for war crimes. Yes, the fact that we never indicted Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, our own private dictators for driving 300,000 Serbs out is embarrassing. But at least the Serbian killer will have to spend his vacations at home or maybe someplace in Russia.

Maybe all that is why we are not celebrating the great victory. People like myself, who have spent years struggling to get our country to use its political and economic power for human rights, saw its leaders bumble into another Balkan war using bombs instead of the brains God should have given them.

The Bosian frightfulness has wound up in the partition that without foreign interference Muslims, Croates and Serbs could have had a decade ago, without war.

We have seen our country launch a war, first by futile ultimatum, then by a slovenly planned war that from the beginning brought more suffering to Kosovars and Serbian civilian than to Milosevic and his troops. Far too

many Americans wrote and talked of Serbs, our allies in battles we should remember, as if they were bugs.

To those Kosovars who will return or seek safe lives elsewhere, for Serbs who will one day eliminate Milosevic, go our embraces. To Clinton and his fellow leaders—our contempts for their human and security values.

While Clinton and his NATO comrades were busy bombing Serbia and Kosovo, they were permitting the destruction of the U.N. arms inspection of Iraq—the one barrier against Saddam Hussein's path to nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

That is a disaster for all nations, for all human rights struggles. If America remembers the Clinton-Albright bungling in Iraq, China and Yugoslavia and demands that any presidential or senatorial candidate separate from them, there may be reason for some satisfaction—for for champagne and parades, none.

CHARITABLE CHOICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, this really has been an exhausting week, and it will be interesting to see how people address this. Earlier one of our Members who said that we did not actually do anything this week, we did in fact pass a juvenile justice prevention bill, and I thought that that was our goal here which was to reduce juvenile crime and to reach those who have gotten in trouble and try to help them straighten out their lives.

If one is obsessed only with guns, and particularly if one is obsessed only with their solution to the gun problem, perhaps we had a difficult week because their bill did not pass, but let us not confuse that with the fact that we did accomplish some advancement in an effort to try to reach youth.

Furthermore, some of us were disappointed that we did not do more to address the question of violence in the media, and hopefully over the next few months we will be able to address that.

One amendment that I had that passed, the charitable choice amendment, gets lost. Charitable choice and many other things like this are not as glamorous or as media driven, and the general public does not focus on them like the Ten Commandments or like the one video game called Postal, where actually someone goes crazy and it shows how many of the people are remaining to be killed and a person gets more points if they hit them in the chest or at a main artery as opposed to other places in their body. This type of disgusting type of thing will get a lot of media attention, but when we do charitable choice where we are allowing juvenile prevention funds to be used by religious-based organizations, where people are actually trying to help the kids who are being impacted by this, it does not get as much media coverage.

We had hoped this afternoon to be able to move under unanimous consent a sense of the House of Representatives in regard to community renewal through community and faith-based organizations. Out of respect to the minority who did not have adequate time to look at this and has some objections, this will probably be addressed on Tuesday, but I wanted to speak a little bit about this resolution and the renewal alliance efforts of this past week.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KASICH), the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. TALENT), the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS), the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH), the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) and many others, as well as former Democratic colleagues Fred Flake of New York and Denny Davis of Chicago, have worked together in trying to put together both legislative packages, as well as in our renewal alliance efforts this past week, to have a number of meetings, to highlight local groups, to visit local charities and we were hoping that this resolution would have been a capping to that week.

The resolution, which we hope to have come up on Tuesday, states that while steady economic growth and low inflation has yielded unprecedented prosperity, many American citizens have not in fact benefited from this prosperity and continue to be socioeconomically disadvantaged. Many of these live in inner cities and rural communities where they continue to be plagued by social breakdown, economic disadvantage and educational failure that fosters hopelessness and despair.

Many of the groups that are by far the most effective are community and faith-based organizations. Many of us believe through the American Community Renewal Act and other pieces of legislation that we need to figure out how to get more dollars to the groups that are the most effective. We need to know how to capitalize on their vision of compassion, of volunteerism, of caring for the poor and the vulnerable; that when we see our national leaders, our current Republican leader candidate for president, Governor Bush has been a leader in the area of prisons where he has worked with Prison Fellowship. He has worked with a number of other local groups in Texas and has actually put this into practice.

A little bit newer to this is Vice President GORE but he has been outspoken in the past few weeks on the importance of including charitable, particularly religious and community-based organizations, in this effort.

In fact, on his election campaign home page he specifically says that he believes charitable choice should be promoted, and that was reflected in a vote this week on my amendment, where we not only had 346 votes but we had, I believe it was 130 Democrats for it and only 79 Democrats against it.

We are in an unusual period right now in America, and that is both parties are coming to realize that the Federal Government, for that matter the State and local governments alone, cannot accomplish and solve all the problems related to poverty. Not that anybody can, but they need the help; in particular are seeking the help. Many of us in government now realize we have to work, we must work, with the churches and volunteers in our local community. We must give tax incentives.

I have one tax bill, the charitable tax bill, that would increase the value of the charitable deduction to 120 percent; that would let nonitemizers take the charitable deduction; that would lift the caps on higher income and delay the effective date to April 15.

We need to be looking at creative tax solutions, at creative solutions as we now have, in welfare reform where we have done charitable choice, in social services block grant where we did charitable choice last year, and now in juvenile justice where we have put charitable choice in.

So whatever else we may or may not have accomplished, we did move some prevention programs. We have once again advanced the charitable choice and next hopefully we will have another resolution that will put the House on record in this exciting and really substantive, if not the most sexy concept, that we are proceeding with.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. PASCRELL (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for Friday, June 18, after 12:15 p.m., on account of family emergency.

Mr. LEWIS of California (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of attending a funeral.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Member (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. SOUDER) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EHRLICH, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SOUDER, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and insert extraneous material:)

Mr. EHRLICH, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REFERRED

A Concurrent resolution of the Senate of the following title was taken