

sight. The pending business was the amendment of the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON], which would have singled out India for special criticism.

What was extraordinary was that there was literally a line of Members—on both sides of the aisle—waiting to speak against the amendment. Not only was the overwhelming majority opposed to the Burton amendment, but the depth of their feeling was so strong that they felt the need to speak out publicly.

I was one of those who came to the floor last night expecting to speak. However, in the interests of maintaining the schedule, I deferred until now.

Let's look at what is happening in India. We recently had free and fair elections, which has led to the peaceful transfer of power. We have seen steady progress by India in improving its human rights record. We have seen steady progress in the opening up of Indian markets to American products. Now that there is a new government in India, we should ask ourselves what sort of message should we send to them about recent events there.

How did the Burton amendment propose to respond to this progress? By singling out aid to India for special treatment and doing so in a way that would reverse the trend that has got us to where we are today. This is a nation with a population of over a billion people—a nation forced to deal with a multitude of ethnic groups and miles of disputed borders. Despite all these hurdles, India has maintained its democratic tradition, and has continued the difficult challenge of implementing broad economic reforms.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the House has acted so decisively in expressing support for the continued evolution of Indian society.

A SERIOUS CASE OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ETHNIC ALBANIANS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 6, 1996

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the attention of my colleagues to the serious case of ethnic discrimination and violation of human rights involving the effort to establish the University of Tetova in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Almost 2 years ago Professor Dr. Fadil Sulejmani filed formal documents with government officials in order to establish the University of Tetova in the city of Tetova in western Macedonia. Albanian intellectuals sought permission to establish the University because

ethnic Albanians in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia face severe limitations in their efforts to receive a higher education. Ethnic Albanians comprise as much as 40 percent of the population of the country. The 1991 Yugoslav census reported that ethnic Albanians made up 20 percent of the population of the Republic of Macedonia, but Albanians and other specialists, including the United States Helsinki Commission, suggest that the proportion is considerably higher.

Only two universities exist currently in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—the Universities of Skopje and Bitola—and only 2 percent of Albanian young people are admitted to study at these two institutions. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, in the past Albanian young people had the opportunity to study at universities elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia—Pristina, Zagreb, Ljubljana, and other universities. With the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, these opportunities are no longer available to ethnic Albanians from Macedonia. Clearly, finding additional opportunities for higher education for ethnic Albanian students is vitally important, and the establishment of the University of Tetova was intended to fill this important gap.

What was the response when Professor Sulejmani attempted to establish a university for ethnic Albanians? The government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia failed to respond to the filing of formal documents for the establishment of the university. Government officials refused to discuss the issue with Professor Sulejmani—despite repeated requests for dialogue. Because the government refused to consider the establishment of a university or even to discuss the matter with Albanian academic leaders, the university opened on December 14, 1994. The government responded by sending several hundred police officers, bulldozing one university building, jailing the faculty for 24 hours, and conducting a campaign of harassment and intimidation against the students.

Mr. Speaker, just a few months later in February 1995, a delegation of Americans, including former Congressman Joseph DioGuardi of New York and Ms. Shirley Cloyes, visited the University of Tetova. They were joined by Mihajlo Mihajlov, a prominent anti-Communist dissident in the former Yugoslavia and now living in the United States. Just hours after the American delegation departed from Tetova, Albanian police authorities arrived at the buildings where the university was seeking to function. In the violence which they provoked, one individual was killed and twenty-eight others were wounded. Some twenty-five leading professors and students were arrested and imprisoned. Those who were imprisoned in this unnecessary show of force were subsequently

released, but their travel documents were seized by police, and authorities refused permission to the Albanian academic leaders to travel and the professors and students remain subject to intimidation.

Mr. Speaker, the action of the government in these cases is a cause of serious concern to me. The ethnic Albanian population of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia needs to have access to higher education, and Albanian academicians have sought to follow proper procedures in creating educational opportunities through establishing the University of Tetova. The government is using force and intimidation in an effort to repress the ethnic Albanian population of that country.

Mr. Speaker, I can speak with some authority about the intransigence of the government officials on this issue. Three months ago, I invited Dr. Sulejmani, the Rector, and Professor Melaim Fejziu, the Vice Rector, of the University of Tetova to meet the Members of Congress to discuss this issue in Washington. Since the passports of both of these individuals were confiscated by government authorities, I also wrote to Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov requesting that the travel documents of these two Albanian academicians be returned to them so they could travel to the United States for meetings with me and other Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, 3 weeks after my invitation was received, I had a response from Dr. Sulejmani and Professor Fejziu expressing their interest in meeting with me and my colleagues in the Congress here in Washington. They expressed regret, however, that their passports had not been returned and said that they have been given no information about when they might be returned.

I have not even had the courtesy of a response from the President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. I know he has been recovering from an accident, but his staff presumably still functions, the Foreign Ministry presumably is still in operation. I am appalled and outraged that the government has failed to respond to my request and has even failed to give me the courtesy of a reply.

Mr. Speaker, the United States is firmly and unequivocally committed to human rights, to the full exercise of civil rights by all peoples, and we are equally committed to opposing discrimination on the basis of ethnic, religious, racial or other grounds. I sincerely urge the government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to moderate its policies and permit the University of Tetova to go forward. I commend the outstanding effort by Dr. Sulejmani and his colleagues, and I invite my colleagues to join in applauding this endeavor.