

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

BISHOP KOMARICA—A VOICE FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN BOSNIA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 18, 1996

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, recently the Helsinki Commission, which I chair, held a briefing on political and human rights developments in Banja Luka, the second largest city in Bosnia. Among the participants was the Most Reverend Franjo Komarica, Roman Catholic Bishop of Banja Luka. Bishop Komarica has steadfastly pursued peace and justice throughout the 4-year-long war of armed aggression and genocide in Bosnia which has left his church in ruins despite the fact that no large-scale fighting occurred in the diocese.

Catholics from the region, predominately ethnic Croats, have been, and continue to be subjected to various forms of harassment and violence. An estimated 90 percent of Catholics have fled the diocese, many the victims of ethnic cleansing. Scores of churches have been destroyed while virtually all of those left standing sustained at least some damage. Several members of the clergy and religious were murdered during the course of the war. Meanwhile, Father Tomislav Matanovic, the former director of Caritas Banja Luka, is missing and believed to be held by Bosnian Serb forces of the 43d Brigade. Bishop Komarica, who was under house arrest for much of 1995, has demonstrated his firm commitment to peace and justice for all people of Banja Luka, regardless of their ethnic or religious background. Strengthened by his faith, Bishop Komarica is a leading advocate of reconciliation in a country rent by violence and war.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the text of Bishop Komarica's opening statement be placed in the RECORD.

THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE—BANJA LUKA—ETHNIC CLEANSING PARADIGM, OR COUNTERPOINT TO A RADICAL FUTURE

OPENING STATEMENT BY MOST REVEREND FRANJO KOMARICA ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF BANJA LUKA—JUNE 11, 1996

Bishop Komarica: (through interpreter). Honorable friends, I greet you today as friends of peace and God-loving people. I thank you for your interest specifically regarding Banja Luka, my home town. I thank you for this opportunity given to me to express my concerns and my hopes for my country. I thank you on behalf of all the citizens of my city, regardless of their national or state orientation.

You know that I'm a Catholic bishop and not a political representative of any specific group. I'm not assuming the representation neither of Croatian people specifically, nor Bosnian Muslims or Serb people in this territory. Regretfully, there is no politician available or existing right now to represent the views of my country, of my city, especially to represent the views of the people, of tens of thousands of voiceless people who have no voice.

As a leader and a Christian, I have an obligation to help all the people in their effort to be human and to be God-loving people. I would like to help every human being to affirm their human rights and their freedom and to establish their right to existence. It is now six years that hundreds of thousands of people whose basic human rights have been taken away and denied.

That is the right to life, the right to professions, the right to possess homes and live, the right to have a country, the right to work and to secure a living, the right to have a social and security support, the right of movement, the right to freedom of religion, the right to raise your own children in your own convictions, the right of freedom of conscience, the right of equality of being free to belong to a political or a different faith group.

We cannot talk at all about these rights for thousands of our citizens. The denial of basic human rights has taken place without the presence of any media or any voice to publicly declare this. We had the impression that we are forgotten in our corner of the world. We were strengthened only by our faith in our God, whom we trust that he has the potential to redeem us.

And this thing that I once again mention is really the basis, that we try to respect all our neighbors and not do any harm to any one of them. As in other parts of Bosnia there were confrontations, armed confrontations and clashes, in this part of Bosnia there was no war and no open conflict between different groups of different nationalities or faiths.

We opted for a different option here. We rather accepted denial of our basic human rights than to hurt our neighbors and to establish conflict. We are talking here about people who have been peaceful and made every single effort to remain people who respect others and try to live together. The only blame that they receive is that they did not belong to a side or a group of people who by all means and by all forces and by brutal approach has tried to establish ethnically cleansed territory.

The biggest number, the highest percentage, of the people in this region, be they Serbs or Bosnian Muslims or Croatians, have a desire to remain in peaceful coexistence in this region. The Catholic Croatians in this region have shown by their behavior that they are capable and ready to live together, capable to live together in peace with the other two peoples, which are namely Serbs and Bosnian Muslims.

This desire to live in peace is denied by the members of the existing political structure, and despite all our efforts to live the commandment of respect and love for others, to love those who did so much evil to us, we are brutally hurt again and again and punished for no reason, and not just from the side of extreme nationalists, but those by international democrats.

We ask all those who still crush our human rights: "Why are you doing this to us? Are we people for you? Are we human beings for you? We ask for the basic human rights that you enjoy. If we are guilty, we would ask you to provide it to us, and if we are not guilty, then you are doing great injustice to us when you are denying to us basic human rights."

I am taking this opportunity to tell you and to express to all American peace-loving

people, God has given you in this country a generosity of the heart. Your land is almost like a garden, that there are many wonderful plants and beautiful flowers. You are a garden of different people, different cultures, different groups and religions.

The common characteristic of all of you is the freedom and love for peace and respect. In this country, it's especially appreciated especially important human rights and human honor and human dignity. These are the precious gifts to our civilization, the gifts emphasizing diverse cultures and multi-faceted religion.

You are an ideal and an example for us, and you are a leader for so many other people in the world. When we would affirm similar in Banja Luka, we are punished for that. You know that. Will you with clear conscience allow, continue to allow, that the basic human rights are still denied in my city and in my country? And they are being punished just because they would like to be like you—free, human and democratic people.

I expect an answer from you, which you have to give unto your conscience first and then to your people and then to the world and then hopefully to us as well.

Regardless of how you look at us and for what you think of us, we in Banja Luka are definitely fighting. With enormous efforts, we try to protect and restore civilization. I hope that we will not remain alone in this effort. We hope that we'll find friends who will support us in this effort. We hope to find these supporters in Europe and especially here in the United States. I am quite sure that I will not be disappointed in this expectation.

Thank you for listening.

TIP TAX TRIBULATIONS

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 18, 1996

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce legislation to exclude tip income from the administrative and tax burdens of the Federal income tax. I have long objected to the taxation of tips and it was the recent tribulations of a constituent of mine which prompted me to once again introduce this legislation.

Charlene Beyer from Round Lake Park, IL, recently sent to me copies of the forms and regulations covering the tax reporting requirements for tip income she receives as a restaurant employee. It is my understanding that hard working restaurant employees even take time out to attend classes to learn all the rules concerning tip reporting. While serving customers, they must keep track of their gratuities, then report them to the restaurant and the Internal Revenue Service [IRS]. The restaurant is also held liable for tip income of their employees. Of course, tip income is received by cab drivers, bartenders, and individuals of other professions. The IRS is given the difficult task of policing all these activities. The whole process creates a bureaucratic mess for both the taxpayer and the Government.

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