

Pombo	Sessions	Visclosky
Poshard	Stark	Waters
Ramstad	Stupak	Watt (NC)
Redmond	Sununu	Watts (OK)
Rush	Taylor (MS)	Weller
Sabo	Thompson	Wicker
Schaffer, Bob	Velazquez	

NOT VOTING—6

Bass	Leach	Strickland
Cox	Schiff	Yates

□ 1559

The Clerk announced the following pairs:

So the Journal was approved.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Pursuant to House Resolution 169 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 1119.

□ 1600

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1119) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 1998 and 1999 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal years 1998 and 1999, and for other purposes, with Mr. YOUNG of Florida in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Monday, June 23, 1997, the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. SPENCE] had been disposed of.

It is now in order to debate the subject matter of United States forces in Bosnia.

The gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. SPENCE] and the gentleman from California [Mr. DELLUMS] each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. SPENCE].

(Mr. SPENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, today Congress will cast its first significant votes on our United States policy in Bosnia since the President extended deployment of our United States ground troops to that war-torn land last winter.

Today's votes will not be an expression of support for the mission, although our troops are doing well and we surely all support them. Nor will today's votes express the sense of the House or sense of the Congress. Rather, today's votes will call for the withdrawal of U.S. ground troops from a peacekeeping operation of growing expense and seemingly unending duration.

Our Armed Forces have done all that they can to help bring peace to Bosnia and in the Balkans. With consummate professionalism under trying circumstances, our troops and NATO troops have enforced the military provisions of the Dayton peace agreement. As a result of their efforts, the military tasks required by the Dayton accord, the separation of the warring parties, the collection and destruction of heavy weapons, and the transfer of territories have all been completed.

But the remaining tasks, the civilian, humanitarian and political reconstruction of Bosnia, are beyond the capabilities of our troops, unless we are prepared to remain in Bosnia for decades. In recent months, our military commanders have added tanks to the stabilization force in Bosnia and have made plans to postpone the transition to the smaller, lighter deterrent force that was supposed to take over when the United States ground mission ended in fiscal year 1998.

Just last month, a top NATO commander told the New York Times, and I quote: "It would be a mistake to say that there is peace in Bosnia. We have only the absence of war. We gave the civilian officials the time and the space it carry out the Dayton agreement, but they failed. Nothing has been accomplished."

This is a startling and frank admission. But we have not failed for want of effort. Since the United States military involvement in Bosnia and the Balkans began with the imposition of Operation Sharp Guard blockade back in 1992, more than 100,000 American soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines have seen duty in that theater of operations. That is the largest deployments of our forces since the Gulf War.

Not only have we deployed tens of thousands of troops, we have spent a lot of money in doing it. By the end of the year, fiscal year 1998, the Department of Defense will have spent at least \$7.3 billion on Bosnia and supporting operations. That is \$7.3 billion over and above normal operating and personnel budgets. And \$7.3 billion that has been and will continue to be diverted from already underfunded modernization, quality of life, readiness and training programs.

I suspect, of course, that the true costs of our Bosnian involvement have been much larger. And based upon the highly optimistic political and operational assumptions that underlie the President's budget request for fiscal year 1998 in Bosnia, the cost will continue to rise dramatically.

By any measure, Bosnia is too large an issue for our United States foreign policy to be decided exclusively by Presidential fiat. This would be true even if the administration's Bosnia policy were not marked with broken promises about the duration the mission, its scope, and its cost.

The administration has lost the confidence of the American people when it comes to Bosnia. Nearly 2 years ago

the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shalikashvili, said that he could not, and I quote, "imagine circumstances changing in such a way that we would remain in Bosnia."

More than 1 year. Just 2 months ago, Secretary of Defense Cohen stated, and I quote, "It is very clear that by June of 1998 we will be on our way out." I hope both of these gentlemen's statements have taken especially into account the administration's proclivity to say one thing one day and change its tune the next day.

And the President is at it again. When he announced extension of the Bosnia mission following last November's elections, he said that he would propose to our NATO allies that by June of 1998 the work would be done and the forces would be able to be withdrawn.

Yet last month, the President began to reverse himself again, as anticipated, when he said, and I quote: "We just can't sort of hang around and then disappear in a year. . . I want to stop talking about what date we're leaving on."

The time is long overdue for Congress to express its will on behalf of the American people. It is important that the Clinton administration be held accountable for the Nation's foreign policy and in this case for Bosnia policy, a policy initiated without the consent or even support of Congress and predicated on the early withdrawal of United States ground troops. In my opinion, the sooner our ground troops are withdrawn, the better.

But the withdrawal of our ground troops from Bosnia need not and should not mean the end of NATO operations in and around Bosnia. The United States has an obligation to support alliance operations. But I believe that our support should be focused on providing those capabilities which we alone possess or can best provide, things such as logistics support over large areas in long distances, intelligence, communication and a list of all kinds.

No one should characterize our U.S. contributions as undermining the alliance, for these contributions will continue to involve thousands of troops at a cost to our taxpayers of billions of dollars. I am not suggesting that the Nation revert to isolationism; rather, a more practical and proper sharing of responsibilities and burdens of what appears to be a long-term NATO peacekeeping operation.

I do not disagree with the approach that our allies call "in together, out together" when it comes to NATO operations in Bosnia. But unless we can take a more nuanced approach to that policy, one that allows the United States to participate without performing each and every task, our allies will simply continue to hold us hostage.

If the withdrawal of our ground troops from Bosnia is followed by the collapse of the NATO mission, as the administration asserts will occur, then