

AMENDMENT TO THE PREAMBLE OFFERED BY
MR. GILMAN

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment to the preamble.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment to the preamble offered by Mr. GILMAN:

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas United States Army Staff Sgt. Andrew A. Ramirez, 24, of Los Angeles; Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Stone, 25, of Smiths Creek, Michigan and San Antonio Texas, and Spc. Steven M. Gonzales, 21, of Huntsville, Texas were captured on March 31, 1999, while patrolling the Kumanovo area;

Whereas these 3 honorable United States soldiers are now in the custody of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its President Slobodan Milosevic;

Whereas the Geneva Conventions, the 1949 treaties setting forth international requirements for the treatment of both civilians and military personnel during armed conflicts, stipulates that prisoners of war must at all times be humanely treated, provided any necessary medical assistance, protected against acts of violence or intimidation and against insults and public curiosity and evacuated from any area of danger;

Whereas the Third Geneva Convention also prohibits putting prisoners of war on trial for engaging in ordinary acts of warfare for which the capturing country's own soldiers would not be charged;

Whereas under the Geneva Conventions, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has the right to non-supervised visits of prisoners to ensure they are being treated well;

Whereas the Yugoslav Government has as yet not responded to the ICRC's requests; and

Whereas sanctions can be applied to parties to the Geneva Conventions for failing to abide by the conventions: Now, therefore, be it:

Mr. GILMAN (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the amendment to the preamble offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

The amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

TITLE AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GILMAN

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment to the title.

The Clerk read as follows:

Title amendment offered by Mr. GILMAN:

Amend the title so as to read: "Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its President Slobodan Milosevic release the three detained United States servicemen and abide by the Geneva Conventions regarding the treatment of both prisoners of war and civilians."

The title amendment was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY,
APRIL 19, 1999

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the

House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY,
APRIL 20, 1999

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Monday, April 19, 1999, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 20, for morning hour debates.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, it is tax day in America. On April 15 each year, each of us has dutifully fulfilled our duty. We have filled out forms, written checks, and stood or are standing in long lines at the post office. We do this because it is our obligation and because it is the law.

Well, many parents have another obligation under the law, and that is to pay support for their children. But four out of five noncustodial parents simply do not pay, and they are getting away scot-free.

Mr. Speaker, such irresponsibility not only hurts their own children but drains the Federal budget and causes the deficit that we fill with our tax dol-

lars, a deficit that increases with increased demand on welfare and other Federal programs that our children need for those of us living up to our responsibilities.

This is simply unfair. And most of all, it is unfair and outright cruel for the children involved. When a parent fails to pay child support, children hear a clear message. The message is that they do not matter.

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and I believe that it is time to show these children that they do matter, it is time for us as a Nation to care as much about our children as we do about the IRS. That is why today we unveiled legislation to put the Federal Government in charge of collecting child support.

As many people know, I have a very special interest in reforming child support collection. I know firsthand about the difficulty of not receiving child support because 30 years ago I was left to fend for my three children, 1, 3, and 5 years old, when their father did not pay 1 cent of child support.

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With no means to collect child support, even though I was employed, I went on welfare to make ends meet. Had we received the child support that was due us, we would not have been on welfare.

The legislation that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and I are introducing today, the Compassion for Children and Child Support Enforcement Act, makes paying child support as important as paying taxes, and it makes sure that deadbeat parents know it. Simply put, our bill will federalize child support collection and disbursement. Court-ordered support payments would simply be withheld from an employee's pay, just like other payroll deductions. It is easy, it is efficient, and it will work better than the fragmented State-by-State system now in place. After billions of dollars of Federal assistance, States still collect only 22 percent of what children are owed.

Now, to be fair, that is an increase, because 2 years ago child support collection rates were only 20 percent. But if we wait for collection to go up 2 percent each year, custodial parents will be collecting Social Security before they collect child support. Our kids cannot afford to wait that long.

In my home State of California, our children will have an even longer wait under the current system. California is one of nine States without a State-wide tracking system up and running. California has wasted \$200 million to build a system which has never gotten off the ground. Without a system in place, our State could face \$400 million in fines by the year 2002 for failing to meet Federal deadlines.

This failure is a shame. It is a disaster for California's children. But beyond that, it demonstrates the most fundamental flaw in the current system. A chain is only as strong as its

weakest link. One county, one State not quite up to par, and a deadbeat parent has an instant safe haven to avoid child support collection.

With our legislation, deadbeat parents will have nowhere to hide. Cross a county line or a State border, and we still have a hold on the paycheck. I know it will surprise our fellow citizens who are standing in line at the post office to send their tax returns in as we speak, but the IRS has an 84 percent success rate. We can and must harness that success for our children.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the 5 minute special order of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

PEACE HAWKS—WITH EYES ON THE GROUND

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

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I came down to take this 5-minute special order because I read in the Washington Times this morning an excellent article by Elaine Donnelly that so aptly puts where we are today and puts things in perspective as it relates to Kosovo, that I wanted to come down to the floor and read it on the floor because it puts so well what I had been thinking. It goes like this, and I quote:

"As President Clinton continues the bombing campaign over Kosovo, confusion abounds. Former 'doves' are cheering but traditional 'hawks' appalled by Mr. Clinton's command blunders, don't know what to say. Concerned Americans want to support the troops, but they are flummoxed by a President who is misusing authority over them.

"To make sense of what is happening, it helps to recognize Mr. Clinton is not conducting a serious, traditional war. If he were, the first wave of NATO planes would have reduced the palace of Slobodan Milosevic, Rembrandt painting and all, to smoking smithereens.

"The Kosovo operation is different and oxymoronic. It is a 'peace war' waged by 'peace hawks' pursuing a dovish social agenda. Peace hawks are global idealists and former anti-war activists, including the youthful Bill Clinton, who used to 'loathe' the military because it uses lethal force. Now that he is commander in chief, Mr. Clinton can use the troops for more virtuous purposes.

"Doing good' on a worldwide scale appeals to peace hawks, who are motivated by altruism, not patriotism. The sight of uniformed peacekeepers distributing food in faraway places makes their hearts sing. As columnist Paul

Gigot wrote: 'It's as if liberals feel better waging war when U.S. interests aren't at stake.'

"The Kosovo peace war is all about good intentions and grand social objectives. President Clinton said so in a speech before a public employees' union on March 23, rambling on about a vision of 'diversity, community, belonging, and wanting our neighbors to do well,' the President rhapsodized, 'This is why I devoted so much time,' quoting the President, 'to that initiative on race and why I keep fighting for passage of the Hate Crimes legislation, the Employment Nondiscrimination, gay rights legislation, all these things, because I am telling you look all over the world—that's what Kosovo is about. People are still killing each other out of primitive urges because they think what is different about them is more important than what they have in common,'" close quote.

"Mr. Clinton conceded that the people of Yugoslavia had been battling off and on for hundreds of years, but exulting in his own enlightened insight, Mr. Clinton said, 'It is an insult to them to say that somehow they were intrinsically made to murder one another.'

"Deriding those who would say, 'They're just that way' to excuse violence in Northern Ireland or misbehavior among children, the President added, 'Well, if every parent said that, the jails would be five times as big as they are. That's not true. I just don't believe that. And I know what happened in Bosnia, where we found the unity and the will to stand up against the aggression, and we helped to end the war. And later, to make sure the peace would last, we agreed to send troops in with our allies. And I think it was a good investment.'

"So there you have it—victory, as defined by Bill Clinton. Like a parent disciplining an unruly child, our peace-war commander in chief is saying to Kosovo, 'Can't you just get along?' NATO is supposed to continue the bombing, in order to pacify warring factions in Serbia and Kosovo. The ultimate goal is to duplicate the edgy silence of Bosnia, and enforce it with NATO peacekeepers for years, perhaps for decades. This is the 'it' we are 'in', and there is no way Americans can win.

"The entire operation was conceived and launched by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who once said to General Colin Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 'What's the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about if we can't use it?' General Powell wrote in his autobiography that Mrs. Albright's outburst, made during a briefing on Bosnia, almost gave him an aneurysm. The general tried to explain that 'American GIs are not toy soldiers to be moved around on some sort of global gameboard.'

"But Mrs. Albright is finally getting her way, despite reported warnings from the current Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Once again uniformed leaders are being ordered to make war and peace simultaneously."

As the late Army Gen. Creighton Abrams, Vietnam-era Chief of Staff used to say, "Fighting in the name of peace is like seeking virtue in a bordello."

It is time to start over, before a bad situation gets worse. The deployment of land troops for combat—daintily described by Mrs. Albright as a "nonpermissive environment"—will not bring peace to a Kosovo that no longer exists. Why not follow the president's lead, and do something to make everyone feel better about the situation?

There are lots of creative ways to achieve the president's stated goals—diversity, community and belonging—without passing bad legislation or needlessly putting combat soldiers at risk. For starters, Mr. Clinton's Hollywood friends could stage a remake of that memorable soft-drink commercial—the one featuring a hillside of children folk-singing about apple trees, honey bees, and buying the world a Coke.

With help, Balkan refugees could participate in the production. Perhaps the International Monetary Fund could take the \$5 billion loan that Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov recently passed up, and divert it to Albania and other neighboring countries that are willing to provide clean clothes, food, and safe, temporary housing.

Forget the usual presidential photo-ops with deployed soldiers in fatigues. Let Bill Clinton risk his own neck for a change. To burnish his legacy, he could fly into Belgrade on an Apache helicopter, and play the saxophone at one of those rock concerts. Even with bullet-proof glass, it would make a great picture for the history books—just like the ones of John F. Kennedy in Berlin and Ronald Reagan at the Wall.

Then the belligerent Balkan leaders could be flown back to the White House for some friendly attitude adjustment. They could even shake hands in front of a beaming president, arms outstretched in a striking freeze frame that would make everyone feel good. So all together now . . . let's join hands, light a candle, and sing "Kumbaya." We can win the peace war in Kosovo. Just keep our soldiers out of it.

TAX DEDUCTION FAIRNESS ACT OF 1999

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

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that will help restore tax fairness to millions of people in my home State of Washington and in other States throughout this great Nation. The problem, Mr. Speaker, is the lack of a deduction for sales taxes in the current tax code. Although the government allows tax deductions for a number of things, State and local income taxes, property taxes, self-employment taxes and others, one category is noticeably missing and that is sales tax. Today and every year at this time, taxpayers send their tax returns to the IRS. It is a ritual that all Americans have become accustomed to. It is