□ 2032

Mr. HILLEARY and Mr. WEINER changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. OLVER changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the conference report was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, during recent votes on H.R. 1141, the FY 99 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act Conference report, I was unavoidably detained in an extended meeting. As a result, I am not recorded as voting on rollcall 131, 132, and 133. Had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall No. 131, the vote on the rule for the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill, no on rollcall No. 132, the motion to recommit the conference report, and yes on rollcall No. 133, the vote on adoption of the conference report.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING THE CONDITION AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OF REFUGEES WITHIN KOSOVO

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on International Relations be discharged from further consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 161) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the condition and humanitarian needs of refugees within Kosovo, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), the sponsor of this resolution, for an explanation of it.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman from California yielding to me. As a member of the Committee on International Relations, I have appreciated her hard work on these and other issues affecting the globe.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important, bipartisan, and timely measure that supports the humanitarian mission into Kosovo to assess the humanitarian and emergency needs of the more than 600,000 ethnic Albanians trapped within the embattled Yugoslavian province.

While hundreds of thousands of families have fled Kosovo, an equal number remain, fighting disease and starvation while lacking water and medical care. They need hope, and the world needs to know now their true condition so we stand a chance of saving their lives.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the last food delivery to the displaced and at-risk Kosovo population occurred 8 weeks ago. Hiding in the hills without food, water, medical care for nearly 2 months, these families and their children are fighting to survive. Every day counts for them.

It is timely because the 13-member U.N. humanitarian delegation, which includes the International Red Cross and U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, is in Belgrade today. It is headed by Sergio Vierira de Mello, the United Nations Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs. It is expected to head to Kosovo in the morning.

They are attempting to provide the first very important independent confirmation of conditions within Kosovo and Montenegro. They will also provide great help to the international community as we prepare for the potentially massive emergency needs of the estimated 600,000 to 800,000 ethnic Albanians remaining in Kosovo.

This measure urges the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to provide this delegation a safe and secure passage, as well as freedom of access to do their job. It also encourages NATO and its member nations to consider reasonable measures to enhance the safety of this international delegation during its brief humanitarian mission.

I would simply say that this measure offers hope to people who need it desperately.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. LEE. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) for bringing this matter before our committee and before the entire House.

This measure addresses a critical situation concerning the tens of thousands of displaced persons within Kosovo that have been cut off from the rest of the world by the brutal military offensive of Mr. Milosevic's military forces. The gentleman is very timely in bringing this measure at this time as we try to be of help to those hundreds of thousands of Kosovars still within the borders of Kosovo.

While the world's attention has been fixed upon the hundreds of thousands of Kosovars driven from their homes into the neighboring countries of Macedonia and Albania, we need to be mindful that many other Kosovars, perhaps exceeding the numbers who have become refugees outside of Yugoslavia, are internally displaced in Kosovo.

Since the exit of the international private aid organizations that have been providing assistance to the internally displaced persons, IDPs, as they have become known, in Kosovo, they have had to fend for themselves, and very little has been able to be determined as to their welfare and their situation. From reports of those of their friends and relatives who have arrived outside of Kosovo's border, however, we know that their situation is dire.

It has become critical for the U.N. and the International Committee of the Red Cross to try to gain entry into Kosovo and all of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to assess the humanitarian situation there. This resolution simply calls upon the FRY authorities to permit these organizations entry, which has now occurred over the last weekend, to have complete access, and to take measures to ensure their safety.

This is not a political issue. It is one simply of human decency. While it may be too much to expect such decency from the perpetrators of the outrages that we are witnessing in Kosovo, we do have a moral obligation in our Nation to demand it from them.

Accordingly, I urge the Members of the House to support this measure, to support the Brady measure, a humanitarian measure.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, under my reservation of objection, I would say that we can only guess what the conditions are like for the civilians remaining in Kosovo. Many of the civilians who remain in the province have likely left their homes and are camped in fields and on mountainsides to find shelter.

Amid this terror, unconfirmed accounts suggest that the situation inside of Kosovo points to a severe lack of food and medicine. We are hopeful that an international humanitarian mission in Yugoslavia this week can give us a better sense of what conditions are like inside of Kosovo and what the international community can do to meet the needs of the people who remain.

As we continue to see media coverage of the plight of the Albanians who have left Kosovo, this resolution draws our attention to the Kosovar Albanians who we cannot see, and those are those inside of Kosovo. I urge adoption of this resolution.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, I want to thank the gentlewoman from California for her support, as well as the gentleman from New York (Chairman GILMAN) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON) for permitting this timely bill to come to the floor.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 161

Whereas international humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provide a vital role in assessing and responding to the humanitarian needs of refugees around the world and, most recently, of the hundreds of thousands who have fled Kosovo;