

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF H. RES. 451 CALLING FOR PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STABILITY IN KOSOVA

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OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a distinguished group of co-sponsors, I am today introducing a Resolution of the House calling for a review of our policies in Kosova so that we can consider changes in order to fulfill the goal of our government and of the international community in bringing about conditions for a lasting, just, and stable peace for its beleaguered people.

Recent reports from Kosova indicate that our effort there is not progressing well. We are introducing this resolution to suggest areas of this effort that need to be immediately addressed to improve our prospects for success.

The continued detention in Serbia of thousands of Kosovar Albanians, many of whom are doctors, lawyers and teachers, has dismayed the Kosovar people who believed that, when NATO ended its operation against Serbia and declared victory, the abuses of their human rights by the brutal regime of Slobodan Milosevic would also end. Now, more than nine months later, the families and friends of those illegally imprisoned still suffer the anguish of separation and uncertainty as to the fate of their loved ones. The continuation of this outrageous situation has undermined the faith of the Kosovar people in the international community's commitment to human rights and is a major source of the unrest that continues to frustrate our objective of establishing full peace in Kosova.

Similarly, the situation in the divided city of Mitrovica, has also undermined the effort to bring peace to Kosova. Thousands of Kosovar ethnic Albanians have been unable to return to their homes in the northern part of Mitrovica since the beginning of the NATO peacekeeping mission last June. Hundreds more have been driven from their homes by Serb residents assisted by Serbian paramilitaries since NATO established its presence. The injustice of this situation calls into question our credibility when the international community speaks of respect for human rights, ending ethnic cleansing, and adhering to UN Resolution 1244, which if enforced, would have prevented this.

Efforts to re-start the economy of Kosova have not borne fruit. We believe that this is mostly the product of a flawed approach on the part of the United Nations Administration in Kosova and the European Union which has taken on the responsibility for economic reconstruction there. The people of Kosova have demonstrated their business acumen and their entrepreneurial abilities despite a decade of apartheid-like conditions under Serbian misrule. What they need is economic empowerment, not charity through well-intentioned, but misguided conventional assistance projects.

The UN should not allow the question of the ultimate political status of Kosova, impede Kosova's economy. The people of Kosova should be given access to all of Kosova's economic assets—electric grids, agricultural properties, and, most important, to the Trepca mines—the single most valuable economic asset in Kosova.

As support for the international effort in Kosova is being undermined by the slow pace of change, this resolution is being introduced to point to a different course for the international community. Withdrawal is not an option. We believe that consideration of an alternative approach, hopefully one that can genuinely achieve our espoused objectives—lasting peace, justice, and stability for Kosova, and therefore for the Balkans—is the correct policy. As Senator JOHN MCCAIN eloquently stated on March 21, 2000, "Despite the unacceptable circumstances of the weak and endangered peace in Kosovo, it is infinitely preferable to the widespread atrocities committed during the course of Serbian aggression, atrocities that would surely reoccur were NATO to fail in our current mission."

I invite my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join in supporting this critical resolution.

H. RES. 451

Whereas on June 10, 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military air operation in the former Yugoslavia victoriously concluded with the withdrawal of all Serbian police, paramilitary, and military forces from Kosova;

Whereas, shortly following the NATO victory, nearly 1,000,000 refugees and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons attempted to return to their homes in Kosova in the belief that a peaceful, stable, and just society would be created through their diligent efforts, supported by the international community;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (June 10, 1999) established the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) as the sole administration of the province until such time as its political status is decided;

Whereas some 2,000 citizens were illegally detained and kidnapped to Serbia by Serbian forces as they withdrew from Kosova in violation of the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law;

Whereas a provision requiring the return of these illegally detained citizens of Kosova was dropped from the Military Technical Agreement negotiated between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in order to end the conflict more expeditiously;

Whereas an additional 5,000 Kosova citizens are believed to be detained in Serbian prisons;

Whereas hundreds of Kosova Albanian citizens have been prevented from returning to their homes in the divided city of Mitrovica by Serb Kosova citizens who are believed to be assisted by Serb paramilitaries who have illegally re-entered Kosova;

Whereas the present international peacekeeping force in Mitrovica has proven inadequate to perform the task of maintaining peace and eliminating wide scale human rights violations in that town, and there

have been allegations of partiality to Serb residents by elements of the peacekeeping force;

Whereas recent violence in Mitrovica led to the expulsion of hundreds more Albanians from their homes who have been unable to return;

Whereas more than nine months following the establishment of UNMIK, adequate services such as police, sanitation, telecommunications, electricity, and water supply for the citizens of Kosova still are not reliably available throughout the province;

Whereas Albanian citizens of Kosova have been prevented by the United Nations from utilizing major economic assets in Kosova such as the Trepca mine that could provide needed stimulus to the economy of Kosova;

Whereas persistent deprivation and the creation of an aid economy that is contradictory to development of a flourishing free market economy is fostering criminality;

Whereas, in view of the disproportionate share of the military costs borne by the United States during the NATO operation, the European Union has agreed that it will undertake the major share of the costs for economic reconstruction in Kosova;

Whereas the European Commission and the World Bank have estimated the costs for the reconstruction of Kosova over the next 4 to 5 years at 2,300,000,000, with nearly half that amount available to be spent by the end of 2001;

Whereas the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2000 (as enacted by section 1000(a)(2) of Public Law 106-113) capped United States contributions for economic reconstruction in Kosova at 15 percent of the total; and

Whereas despite its generous pledges, the European Union has been dilatory in actually disbursing urgently required funds for Kosova: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the European Union should disburse its pledged funds for Kosova more rapidly;

(2) pledged funds by the European Union required to provide baseline services for Kosova such as police, sanitation, water, telecommunications, and electrical supply should be made available immediately, and the administration of these services should be put in the hands of the people of Kosova at the earliest possible date;

(3) the strategy for economic reconstruction in Kosova should be focused on utilizing private investment and empowerment of the people of Kosova to take charge of their livelihoods instead of fostering their reliance on donated assistance;

(4) the United States Government should make it a priority to promote noncorrupt government and business practices in Kosova by providing judicial training and technical advice and assistance to police, border police, and customs officers;

(5) the United Nations Security Council should demand the immediate and unconditional return of all Kosova citizens from Serbia; and

(6) a more capable international peacekeeping force should be established in Mitrovica so that all residents are able to return in security to their homes.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.