

**THE EXPERIENCE OF DOBROSLAV PARAGA -- HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI
(Extension of Remarks - August 04, 1989)**

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HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI
in the House of Representatives

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3, 1989

- Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, every now and again I am reminded of how lucky we are to live in the democratic nation called Amercia.
- We do have problems, too many homeless, too many uninsured, and too much dope and crime.
- But our political system, with all its small flaws, remains the best one available. I am reminded of our good fortune by the experience of Dobroslav Paraga.
- Between June and November 1980, Mr. Paraga collected 17 signatures for a petition requesting amnesty for political prisoners in his home country of Yugoslavia. One week after collecting the signatures he was arrested and indicted for participation in hostile activity and hostile propaganda. At his trial the court rejected all defense proposals for the introduction of evidence and refused to call witnesses on his behalf.
- Not surprisingly, he was found guilty and sentenced to jail. While incarcerated he was frequently tortured. By his own account Mr. Paraga had his leg broken in five places, had a rubber hose shoved down his throat, and was subject to frequent beatings. The sincerity of this man with whom I spoke, and the apparent persecution of thousands of his countrymen, lead me to believe him.
- Mr. Paraga expressed his opposition to the governments treatment of political prisoners in the most peaceful means possible, he gathered signatures. For this he was sent to prison. Throughout his years in Yugoslav prisons and mental hospitals, Mr. Paraga witnessed countless abuses of human and religious rights, violence done to fellow political prisoners, as well as a total disregard for internationally established rules for treatment of political prisoners.
- What makes the oppression of this man and others like him so dangerous is that it is done in a country that is beginning to move toward more openness. Many in the international community may become passive in demanding human rights immediately from Yugoslavia because this will interfere with

reforms. I say that human rights can not wait. The cruel treatment of Mr. Paraga and those like him must stop now.

- What from afar may look like a nurturing embrace can, in reality, be an oppressive bear hug. In the case of Yugoslavia we must encourage reform without shying away from closely examining their attempts. In places like South Africa there is no pretense at justice for all. Thus, it is easy to condemn apartheid. Yugoslavia, however, masks their oppressions behind a cloak of reform. Mr. Paraga is living proof that his country has not yet fully accepted peaceful criticism,
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- political opposition, and international cooperation.
- Mr. Paraga is currently in the United States talking about the cruelties he has endured for speaking out. Because he filed a civil suit against the Government of Yugoslavia for the injuries he suffered in prison, he was given a suspended sentence and ordered to not publicly speak out until 1991. Despite this sentence he has come West and been very vocal about the suffering that currently exists in his country. Although he is well aware of what awaits him in Yugoslav prisons, he still plans to return to be with his family and to continue his fight for justice. I am proud to say that my home State of Illinois and home city of Chicago have both passed resolutions condemning the actions of Yugoslavia.
- Wherever he has gone, Mr. Paraga has become a magnet of international attention. He has come to this country and seen the political freedoms we enjoy. He is an eloquent spokesman and leader of his cause. Mr. Paraga is a true hero. He has risked his life so that others can enjoy just some of the freedoms we as Americans enjoy every day. And he will risk it again by returning to continue his fight. I personally wish that I could do more on his behalf. I am confident that Mr. Paraga's determination and bravery are more of a threat to the oppressive and totalitarian leaders than any military power could be. For Mr. Paraga is doing no more than focusing a light where the world has not looked before.
- In closing Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I am sure that big brother is keeping an eye on Mr. Paraga, and his words and actions are being recorded. But let me go on record as saying that his big friends are also watching Mr. Paraga and we will not forget his truthful words and brave actions.

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