

**HUMAN RIGHTS IN YUGOSLAVIA (Senate - August 04, 1989)**

[Page: S10163]

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Senate Resolution 169.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 169) supporting the efforts of Dobroslav Paraga to bring about increased respect for human rights in Yugoslavia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. RIEGLE. Mr. President, I am pleased to join the Senator **Dixon**, Senator **Helms**, Senator **Levin**, Senator **Simon**, and Senator **Kennedy** in introducing this important resolution on behalf of the Yugoslav/Croatian human rights activist, Dobroslav Paraga and urging respect for human rights in Yugoslavia.

Mr. Paraga, 28 years old, has spent the past decade advocating human rights in his country. His concern over the dismal state of human rights in Yugoslavia has prompted him, at great personal risk to himself and his family, to come to the West to expose those abuses by the Yugoslav Government, despite a 1987 Yugoslav court sentence which forbids him from speaking, appearing in public or writing about the conditions in Yugoslavia for 5 years.

During his visit to the United States, Canada, and West Germany, Mr. Paraga has met with government officials as well as with religious and human rights organizations. Twice adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience in recognition of the suffering he has endured at the hands of the state for his political activism, Mr. Paraga's credibility and courage are beyond repute.

Mr. Paraga speaks not only of his own plight, but of that of Yugoslavia's 2,500 political prisoners, many of whom are being held in psychiatric hospitals. According to Mr. Paraga, Yugoslavia has the largest number of political prisoners of any other Eastern European country. In May 1989, the American Psychiatric Association gave its support to the Anatolij Koriagin Committee, founded by Paraga to fight against the use of psychiatric and psychological terror for political ends.

The Yugoslav Government's persecution of its citizens extends to the issuance of passports. Mr. Paraga maintains that more than 10,000 Yugoslav citizens have been denied passports because of political reasons.

Dobroslav Paraga's political activism has resulted in his being tried three times by Yugoslav courts. Initially charged when he was a 19-year-old student, along with his friend Ernest Brajder, for gathering signatures on a petition seeking amnesty for political prisoners. That Zagreb petition was directed to the Yugoslav Parliament and the followup meeting to the Helsinki Conference in Madrid.

For that action, both men were tried and convicted, and given 4-year jail terms. Brajder died 3 days after being arrested under what our State Department calls mysterious circumstances. Mr. Paraga, believes Brajder died from the brutality he suffered at the hands of Yugoslav prison authorities, and has spent the past 9 years trying to determine the truth about his friend's death.

Mr. Paraga did survive his 4-year sentence, 2 years of which were spent in the concentration camp on Naked Island. A description of the torture inflicted on him during his imprisonment was recounted in a July 12, 1989, article appearing in the West German Newspaper Die Welt:

[During his imprisonment, Paraga was] handcuffed and tied to a chair; his leg was broken; at one time he was locked in a cage--nothing more than a hole in the ground--for 10 days, without clothes, during the icy cold weather. Daily he had to strip naked. With the aid of a rubber tube, they poured some liquid into his stomach, nearly choking him\* \* \*'

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the full text of the Die Welt article be printed in the **Record** at the end of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. RIEGLE. Mr. President, through his brave disclosure of evidence about the Yugoslav Government's human rights abuses, Dobroslav Paraga has brought a clearer understanding of the situation in Yugoslavia. We, who enjoy the freedoms sought by the citizens of Yugoslavia, must take his testimony seriously, and urge the Yugoslav Government to honor its commitments under the Helsinki Accords and end the persecution of its citizens. Finally, our Government must do all it can to ensure that the Yugoslav Government not take action against Mr. Paraga for exercising his rights recognized under international law.

I am pleased that the ranking minority member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative **Broomfield**, along with Representative **Yatron** and Representative **Bereuter**, the chairman and ranking minority member of the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations in the House have written to Secretary of State Baker urging him to encourage the Yugoslav Government to respect the human rights of its citizens, not to take action against Mr. Paraga and urging that the United States Embassy in Belgrade monitor the regime's treatment of Mr. Paraga once he returns home. I ask unanimous consent that the full text of that letter be printed at the end of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 2.)

[Page: S10164]

Mr. RIEGLE. Mr. President, the resolution now before the Senate is an important demonstration of this body's concern for the welfare not only of Mr. Paraga, who has suffered needlessly at the hands of the regime, and risks imprisonment again upon his return to Yugoslavia, but for the thousands of other Yugoslav citizens who are being denied their basic rights. As Mr. Paraga states in his testimony:

The United States generously assists Yugoslavia. Surely the American people deserve to spend their monies in countries where human rights are respected and international rules of conduct are implemented.

Mr. President, I believe Mr. Paraga is right. I urge my colleagues to join in unanimously adopting this important measure to make it clear that the Senate stands with Mr. Paraga in urging respect for the human rights of all the citizens of Yugoslavia.

## **Exhibit 1**

### **From Die Welt, July 12, 1989**

[FROM DIE WELT, JULY 12, 1989]

## **Croatian Fighter for Human Rights Accused the State**

(BY MARTA WEIDENHILLER)

He accused the Yugoslav state of human rights' abuses, and he seeks the freedom of all political prisoners in his homeland. This public declaration may, upon his return home, cause him to be jailed again: Dobroslav Paraga (28) Yugoslav, Croat, human rights activist.

'That I am able to be in Bonn, that one of my basic human rights was restored to me, that I received a passport, for this I am grateful to Richard von Weizsacker,' he said in a conversation with *Die Welt*. He appealed to the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, who received him in Bonn, to intercede in securing amnesty for all political prisoners in his homeland, in seeking adherence to the Helsinki Accords agreed to by Yugoslavia, and in seeking equality for all citizens of a multi-national state.

Von Weizsacker had invited Paraga already in December of 1988 on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Because he was denied a passport, Paraga staged a 17 day hunger strike. Von Weizsacker intervened with the Yugoslav government; the Croatian Cardinal Kuharic openly condemned the incident. Finally, the government gave him a passport, which now had enabled him to travel to the U.S., Canada, and the Federal Republic of Germany.

What do you hope for from the West? 'The public must know how things stand in Yugoslavia,' responded Paraga, who, even after years of prison and brutality, continues bravely to strive for respect of human rights. He established two committees (the Misuse of Psychiatry and the Croatian Committee for Human Rights). He cites an example that intervention and pressure from foreign countries will not go unheeded. He claims that in Yugoslavia there are some 2,500 political prisoners, in fact, the largest number of any Eastern European country; some 1,000 are rounded up every year. More than 10,000 Yugoslav citizens are unable to get passports because of political reasons.

Paraga's anguish began when he was 19 years old. Along with his friend, Ernest Brajder, he gathered signatures for a petition seeking amnesty for political prisoners. That 'Zagreb Petition' was directed to the Yugoslav Parliament and the follow-up meeting to the Helsinki Conference in Madrid.

Both were tried and convicted, given 4 year jail terms. Brajder died because of the brutality he suffered. Paraga survived those 4 years, (two years) in the concentration camp on Naked island. This young man, who appears serious, too serious for his age, remains calm and speaks softly even when he recollects the humiliating treatment he received. He was handcuffed and tied to a chair; his leg was broken; at one time he was locked in a 'cage' (nothing more than a hole in the ground) for 10 days, without clothes, during the icy cold weather. Daily he had to strip naked. With the aid of a rubber tube, they poured some liquid into his stomach, nearly choking him. But not even that caused him to lose courage.

In jail he wrote a book about the abuses of human rights, about his very own suffering.

When, after his release from jail, it was established that his health was permanently damaged as a result of his imprisonment and the brutality he endured, he dared--as the first Yugoslav citizen ever--to file a suit against the state, accusing it of violating human rights and maltreatment. Once again, he was sentenced, a suspended sentence, which also declared a prohibition against speaking openly until 1991.

This Croat is banished from Croatia; thus he lives today, as he himself says, 'in exile, in more liberal Solvenia.' The 'good will' of the government there will be seen if, after his return, he remains 'free', that freedom confined by constant surveillance. Paraga, who, meanwhile, resumed his study of law, is not able to

obtain permanent employment because he lacks approval of his `moral-political character.' When the Social-Democratic Union of Slovenia was established in Ljubljana a few months ago, Paraga was among the founders.

--

--

## Exhibit 2

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
*Washington, DC, August 1, 1989.*

Hon. James A. Baker III,  
*Secretary of State, Washington, DC.*

**Dear Mr. Secretary:** We are writing to you on behalf of Mr. Dobroslav Paraga. Mr. Paraga is a Croatian dissident and a human rights activist. He served 4 years as a prisoner of conscience in Yugoslavia. Enclosed is some additional information on this important case.

After he received his passport, Mr. Paraga travelled to several Western countries and discussed continuing human rights violations in Yugoslavia. He provided specific information to Members of Congress, and staff, regarding the overall situation in Yugoslavia, but particularly the oppression which surrounded events in Kosovo earlier this year.

Mr. Paraga fears he will be subject to persecution upon his return to Yugoslavia. We, therefore, are appealing to you, to communicate to the Foreign Minister and appropriate authorities in Yugoslavia, to respect their international commitments under the Helsinki Final Act, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other International Covenants, and not take action against Mr. Paraga for exercising his rights recognized under international law. We also hope that you will inform our Embassy in Belgrade of Mr. Paraga's situation so the U.S. government can monitor developments in this case.

We deeply appreciate your cooperation in this matter and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM S. BROOMFIELD,

Ranking Minority Member, Foreign Affairs Committee;

DOUG BEREUTER,

Ranking Minority Member,

GUS YATRON,

Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 169) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

Whereas Dobroslav Paraga, who has twice been adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International, has endured hardship for openly calling on the Yugoslav government to honor its commitments under the Helsinki Accords to respect the fundamental human rights of all the citizens of Yugoslavia;

Whereas Dobroslav Paraga has been tried on three occasions by Yugoslav courts, the initial charge being that, in 1980, he, along with a Jewish Croatian student, Ernest Brajder, authored a petition opposing torture in Yugoslavia and calling for the release of political prisoners;

Whereas, as a result, both men were arrested and, three days later, Ernest Brajder died under what the Department of State calls 'mysterious circumstances';

Whereas, in 1986, Mr. Paraga sued the government of Yugoslavia for injuries, both physical and psychological, inflicted on him by prison authorities during his imprisonment;

Whereas the regime and court in Zagreb denied him a fair and just trial, an account of which was set forth in the Department of State's annual Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1987;

Whereas the Yugoslav Government forbade Mr. Paraga in 1987 to speak out publicly in any way about his experiences as a political prisoner;

Whereas, in violation of that order of silence, Dobroslav Paraga has come to the West to speak out about human rights abuses in Yugoslavia;

Whereas, upon his return to Yugoslavia, Dobroslav Paraga risks imprisonment again because of his open criticism of the Yugoslav Government's human rights abuses;

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that--

(1) the Government of Yugoslavia, in recognition of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should guarantee its citizens fundamental human rights and freedoms;

(2) the Yugoslav Government should grant unconditional amnesty to all political prisoners;

(3) the Government of Yugoslavia should dismiss the charges currently pending against human rights activist Dobroslav Paraga, allow him and his family to return to their home in Croatia, and end all forms of harassment against him and his family; and

(4) the Government of Yugoslavia should conduct an investigation into the death of Ernest Brajder, who, according to the Department of State, died under 'mysterious circumstances', and should make its findings public.

[Page: S10165]

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be laid on the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

*END*

Stay Connected with the Library [All ways to connect »](#)

Find us on



Subscribe & Comment

[RSS & E-Mail](#)

[Blogs](#)

Download & Play

[Podcasts](#)

[Webcasts](#)

[iTunes U](#)

[About](#) | [Press](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Contact](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Legal](#) | [External Link Disclaimer](#) | [USA.gov](#)

[Enabled](#)

[Speech](#)