

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 375

Supporting the efforts of Dobroslav Paraga to bring about increased respect for democratic and human rights in Croatia.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 2, 1998

Mr. TOWNS submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Supporting the efforts of Dobroslav Paraga to bring about increased respect for democratic and human rights in Croatia.

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

Whereas Dobroslav Paraga had been tried on three occasions by the courts of the former Government of Yugoslavia, 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 Government of Yugoslavia forbade Mr. Paraga in 1987 to speak out publicly in any way about his experiences as a political prisoner and the Government of Croatia has continued this prohibition against the fundamental political and human rights of Mr. Paraga;

Whereas the Government of Croatia persecuted Mr. Paraga for criticizing his country in the United States in 1993 and he was subsequently stripped of his post as Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Human Rights of the Croatian Parliament;

Whereas in August 1997 the Government of Croatia brought charges against Mr. Paraga within days of his meeting with investigators from the Hague War Crimes Tribunal to which he turned over documentation involving allegations against several high officials of the Government of Croatia;

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

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

Whereas in 1998 Dobroslav Paraga called on the Government of Croatia to take the following actions: (1) to establish independent television and radio stations in Croatia; (2) to allow full freedom of the media in Croatia; (3) to allow free and fair elections to take place in Croatia; (4) to establish a judiciary and lower court system that is independent from the ruling party or any other party in Croatia; (5) to re-establish the independence of the Croatian Party of Rights (CPR) that was illegally disbanded in 1993, including the reinstatement to the Croatian Parliament of the 5 seats of the Croatian Party of Rights; and (6) to end the terror and abuse of justice perpetrated by the Government of Croatia against Dobroslav Paraga and the Croatian Party of Rights: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that the Government of Croatia—

3 (1) in recognition of the provisions of the Uni-
4 versal Declaration of Human Rights, should guaran-
5 tee its citizens fundamental human rights and free-
6 doms;

7 (2)(A) should establish independent television
8 and radio stations in Croatia;

9 (B) should allow full freedom of the media in
10 Croatia;

11 (C) should allow free and fair elections to take
12 place in Croatia;

1 (D) should establish a judiciary and lower court
2 system that is independent from the ruling party or
3 any other party in Croatia;

4 (E) should re-establish the independence of the
5 Croatian Party of Rights (CPR) that was illegally
6 disbanded in 1993, including the reinstatement to
7 the Croatian Parliament of the 5 seats of the Cro-
8 atian Party of Rights; and

9 (F) should end the terror and abuse of justice
10 perpetrated by the Government of Croatia against
11 Dobroslav Paraga and the Croatian Party of Rights;

12 (3) should dismiss the charges currently pend-
13 ing against human rights activist Dobroslav Paraga
14 and end all forms of harassment against him and his
15 family; and

16 (4) should conduct an investigation into the
17 death of Ernest Brajder, who, according to the De-
18 partment of State, died under "mysterious cir-
19 cumstances", and should make its findings public.

○