

**CROATIAN OPPOSITION LEADERS SUPPORTING LIFTING OF ARMS
EMBARGO ON BOSNIA AND DEMOCRATIC REFORMS WITHIN
CROATIA -- HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR. (Extension of Remarks -
June 14, 1994)**

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HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.
in the House of Representatives
TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 1994

- Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to take this opportunity to share with my colleagues two informative letters written by members of the opposition within the Croatian Parliament. The first letter was written by Messrs. Mesic and Manolic at the time they were the Presidents of the House and Senate chambers. Their exact status at this moment is the subject of much debate within the Parliament. What is not debatable, however, is that they have split with President Tudjman's ruling party--of which they were cofounders--and formed a new opposition party called the Croatian Independent Democrats. They have expressed strong disagreement with President Tudjman's authoritarian style in domestic policy and opposition to his war of expansion against Moslems in Bosnia. The second letter is from Dobroslav Paraga, who is well-known to Members of the U.S. Congress as a fighter for democratic rights within Croatia.
- At this point, I wish to include the text of these two letters which follow:

SABOR REPUBLIKE

Hrvatske--Predsjednik,
Zagreb, Republic of Croatia, June 4, 1994.

Members,
U.S. Congress, House of Representatives.

Starting from general democratic principles and in view of the current political situation facing the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the circumstances of continued Serbian aggression against these two sovereign States, we, as presidents of the Croatian Parliament Sabor, of its two chambers, hereby join in the initiative launched by the U. S. Congress and Senate, concerning the lifting of the embargo on arms imports imposed on the sovereign and internationally

recognized Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is the most effective way for stopping the Serbian aggression and bringing war in that country to an end. Lifting the embargo on arms imports in the Republic of Croatia, which is also a victim, still threatened by the Serbian aggression and occupation, should be considered in the same context, too.

After the Washington accord was signed, a conclusive polarization has taken place on the Croatian political scene: included in the division are those preventing its implementation, and those ardently supporting its consistent implementation. A consequence of the process is the final split in the Croatian Democratic Union, the Republic of Croatia's ruling party, and the emergency of the party of Croatian Independent Democrats.

- As presidents of the parliamentary chambers of the Croatian Sabor, we believe no real democratization can be effected in Croatia until the Washington accord has been brought to life, whereby the demands of the Croatian people and citizens of Croatia would be realized, in actual fact. As far as this question is concerned, our position is the same as the one held by the legal authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is, undoubtedly, supported by most of the citizens of that State. Since we are assured that the ruling party in the Republic of Croatia-- President Tudjman's party and its exponents in Bosnia and Herzegovina will sabotage the implementation of the Washington accord, for reasons including also internal political developments in Croatia, where President Tudjman's ruling party has blocked the country's democratization, we have established the new party-- Croatian Independent Democrats, which has parted from the ruling party. We have immediately been subjected to attacks by the authoritarian and undemocratic mechanisms of the authorities. The Croatian Independent Democrats has already become the second strongest party of the opposition.
- By the same token, in a situation when the international community is incapable of containing Serbian aggression, even where exclusion zones, 'safe havens' (so-called enclaves, e.g. Gorade) are concerned, on the eve of democratic elections in the Republic of B&H, an effective step is called for, one needed for stabilizing the two neighbor States, which would simultaneously shut out prospects concerning a continuation of Tudjman's regime's negotiations with the Serbian one, as well as a cooperation in disagreement with the democratic will of the population and contrary to the very spirit and provisions of the Accord. We, therefore, believe that the lifting of the embargo on arms imports in the Republic of B&H would yield several positive effects in seeking lasting solutions for settling the crisis in the areas concerned.

- In the first place, it would be an expression of determination vis-a-vis the implementation of the Washington accord, a meaningful contribution to its realization in face of attempts at thwarting it being equally made by the Belgrade regime and the authorities in the Republic of Croatia. The former was the first to start an aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the latter, by accepting that the sovereign Republic of B&H be divided, have brought the Republic of Croatia from the position of being a victim of the aggression into that of being a co-aggressor.
- The lifting of the embargo may also come as a solution in the present situation of the United Nations and all relevant international actors being stalemated while seeking more permanent and peaceful solutions to the crisis in our territories. In the act of the embargo being lifted we do not see a threat of a further escalation of the war, but we see it as a precondition for crushing the aggression on the Republic of B&H, leading--indirectly and in practical terms--to the crushing of the occupation of parts of Croatia and to a peaceful integration of the areas concerned in the state and legal system of the Republic of Croatia. Orientations such as these are the constant of our political action.
- We have found ourselves before the possibility of the Washington accord being brought to life by solving a question that is crucial for the survival of a sovereign and integral Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. After it has carried out free elections, it could enter into a confederation-type relationship with the Republic of Croatia. It would, in turn make an impact on democratization in the Republic of Croatia and the establishment of a rule-of-law State and a full-fledged constitutional system. For the above reasons, our initiative is hereby submitted to the U.S. Congress for serious consideration.
- STJEPAN MESIC

President of the Sabor of the Republic of Croatia

- JOSIP MANOLIC

President of House of Zupanijski Dom of the Sabor of the Republic of Croatia.

Hrvatska Stranka Prava,

Zagreb, Republic of Croatia,
June 7, 1994.

Members,
U.S. Congress,
House of Representatives.

More than a year ago, 13th May 1993, twelve members of the U.S. Congress addressed a letter to the President of the USA, the respected Mr. Bill Clinton. They briefly presented the trouble that was facing the Republic of Croatia at that time, they simply stated their comments towards the 'autocratic aims of Franjo Tudjman, the president of Croatia'.

Since that time Croatia has been faced with an escalation of those autocratic aims, so much so that at the present time Croatia finds itself in a parliamentary crisis and a crisis within the government itself, to further illustrate the force of the previously mentioned tendencies. That is the reason why once again I am compelled to contact the Congress, at that time the when at the order of the day at the House of Representatives we are faced with the question of lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the time when the parliamentary crisis in the Republic of Croatia has reached a climax, at that time the two presidents of both houses of the Croatian parliament wrote to the U.S. Congress, as adjudicators of law to plead for the lifting of the arms embargo. Due to these letters Franjo Tudjman's regime used this to discredit these two presidents of parliament, charging them with treason and dishonor, bar their democratic rights to write and consul the parliament of a friendly Nation. Furthermore, this was used to remove and relieve them of their duties in such a way that does not conform to the rules of a parliamentary democracy. Not only was criticism not accepted as a democratic gesture, but was used to banish political nonconformists.

Governmental crisis, not only exists but is covered up, mainly due to non existence of freedom of the media, the facts stand that certain ministers during the parliamentary crisis overstepped their powers and roles that they are supposed to be limited with and openly rallied in the name of the ruling party in a way to favour the ruling party during the parliamentary crisis. This new demonstration in itself shows that shared and responsible government does not exist in Croatia, that ruling party influences regularly emerge over the law making bodies.

All of this is no wonder when it is revealed that the president misuses his power and has practically installed his own family as an oligarchy in all matters of every day life. Tendencies of embedding the ruling party in the governmental apparatus, which is directly contradicting the Conference of European Security and Co-operation and democratic principles, proceeded in a process of establishing an oligarchy, and not only has the ruling party categorically halted the opposition parties by non democratic means, but has started a 'witch hunt' on the critics and non conformists amongst it's own ranks.

The way that then oligarchy plans to resolve the parliamentary crisis is by a one party 'parliamentary' rule, namely, without democratic legitimacy is in direct contravention of the constitution of the Republic of Croatia and the rules of the parliament. The president of the Republic of Croatia himself is already in contravention of the constitution clause 103, which states that at least once annually the president of the Republic must himself personally address the parliament, inform the parliament of the political situation in the Republic of Croatia and state his activities; that he has failed to comply with. In itself this is a proof that at least for a period of two years he has persisted in weakening parliamentarianism in Croatia and is hijacking the powers of parliament.

What's more, during the parliamentary crisis, speaking to the members of croatian parliament of his own party, he bluntly acknowledged insurging in the internal affair of the neighbouring Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, pointing out that through his minister of defence as the person that he carried out his political aims into the Republic of B&H, meaning that his policy was war against the Muslims and division of the recognised Republic of B&H, including the physical liquidation of political non conformists and persecution of all that refused to be pushed into a war of non survival against a natural ally. I initiated personally and in the name of my party--Croatian Party of Rights--an initiative for a parliamentary investigation into the conduct of the president of the Republic of Croatia. My criticism and wishes that the disregard of constitutional powers and limitation be dealt with democratically means were misinterpreted as 'against national interests and subversive', but the escalation of the parliamentary crisis has in effect halted further insistence of the before mentioned initiative.

The letter of the twelve congressmen marked to the attention of the respected Bill Clinton, the contents refer to the physical liquidation on leaders of the opposition, that is the continuing political practice of the Tudjman's regime. These days, the leader of the opposition Drazen Budisa faces threats and physical liquidation, due to this he has asked for special protection, the same applies to other respected members of opposition

parties such as Stjepan Mesic, Vladimir Bebic and others, and certainly I am still exposed to the same threats.

The assassins of Ante Paradzik were tried, but the investigation did not allow the unravelling of who(m) was behind the scene, that is, the person(s) that ordered the assassination. Murders of Marina Nuid, Blaz Kraljevio, Reichl Kir and others as yet are unsolved, nor are any investigations being conducted in these matters. The regimes campaign against the freedom of the press and media in general have long been completed, the situation is far worse than when the congressmen last sent their letter in 1993.

All of these mentioned results are due to the fact of absence of multi party control on result counting and observation during the last 1992 and 1993 elections, as in the wishes of the regime to non democratically halt emergency elections brought about due to the crisis, which is consistent with the conclusions of the congressmen's letter the previous year. In today's situation emergency elections, parliamentary and presidential, in the Republic of Croatia would even be condition sine qua non for the lifting of the arms embargo, so as to prevent misuse of the lifting of the mentioned embargo.

At this moment as you consider the lifting of the arms embargo for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I draw your attention to the situation in the Republic of Croatia. Lifting of the arms embargo would seriously rock Tudjman's plans to establish an oligarchy strong enough to keep a hold over Croatia, it would strengthen the prospect of realisation of the Washington Accord, with that to once again awaken the process of democratisation in Croatia. Finally, lifting of the arms embargo on the two neighbouring countries--Republic of B&H and Republic of Croatia--USA, UN, NATO and other factors would not grant these two countries anything that they are not entitled to: their fundamental right is to self defense from the existing aggression and occupation, and when that is associated with the right for democratic development there should not at all be any dilemma in the decision, in which no doubt you will agree to same.

Dobroslav Paraga,
Member of Croatian Parliament and President, Croatian Party of Rights.

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