

STATEMENT BY DOBROSLAV PARAGA, PRESIDENT OF THE CROATIAN PARTY OF RIGHTS -- RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF DOBROSLAV PARAGA TO BRING ABOUT INCREASED RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN YUGOSLAVIA (Extension of Remarks - November 15, 1991)

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HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.
in the House of Representatives
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1991

- Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, major cities in Croatia are being destroyed by the Yugoslav Federal Army and thousands of people are dying daily despite 12 cease-fires. Today, I would like to enter into the **Congressional Record** a statement by Dobroslav Paraga , president of the Croatian Party of Rights and human rights advocate. This statement speaks of the present crisis situation in Croatia and is a reaffirmation of Croatia's desire for independence and commitment to democracy. Please print the enclosed statement here.

Croatian Party of Rights,
November 12, 1991.

Mr. President,

Members of the House,

Members of the Senate,
Washington, DC.

My dream is for Croatia to become for its citizens the America of Europe guaranteeing all its peoples, whatever their ethnic background, 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' It was because of my belief in the United States and what it stands for that I came to Congress for help in realizing these goals. I was deeply honored when on August 4, 1989, the Senate of the United States in the 101st Congress adopted the following resolution:

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RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF DOBROSLAV PARAGA TO BRING ABOUT INCREASED RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN YUGOSLAVIA

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; and

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

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;

(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.

Although an identical bill was introduced in the House of Congress, House Resolution 240, with the following 36 cosponsors, Broomfield, Pursell, Gilman, Smith (NJ), Traficant, Lipinski, Courter, Yatron, Hayes (IL), James, Kolter, Scheuer, Gallegly, Porter, Schuette, Mrazek, Henry, Bilirakis, Dellums, Miller (WA), Lantos, Hefley, Hubbard, Levin (MI), de Lugo,

Bates, Kleczka, Frost, Fawell, Fazio, Hyde, Feighan, Burton (IN), Hall (OH), Lancaster, Machtley, and Brown (CA), two years have passed since Senate Resolution 169 was adopted and not one step has been taken by either the `democratic' government of Yugoslavia or the new `democratic' government of Croatia to attempt to fulfill any aspect of this resolution. Even worse, the very same people that were responsible for the arrest of Ernest Brajder and myself in 1980, and the subsequent death after three days of interrogation of Ernest Brajder, have now received promotions in Mr. Tudjman's government. Although neither the communist government of Yugoslavia nor the leftovers of communism who are in power in Croatia will fulfill their duties and conduct an investigation into the death of Ernest Brajder much of what I have accomplished since his death has been done in his name and memory because I know that had he lived he would have continued to fight at my side for a better life for his fellow Croatians. In my continuing investigation of Mr. Brajder's death I have confirmed that he was in fact thrown to his death at the investigative detention center in Zagreb. In the meantime Mr. Zdravko Mustac who was at that time Chief of the Secret Police for Zagreb is now Special Adviser to President Tudjman's Cabinet for National Security.

On September 21, 1991 Ante Paradzik, the vice-president of the Croatian Party of Rights, and I were supposed to speak at a political rally in the town of Krizevci. At the last moment I was detained in Zagreb and Ante Paradzik left to attend the rally with a driver and a passenger. Besides being the vice-president of the Croatian Party of Rights Ante Paradzik was also the vice-president of the Association of Croatian Political Prisoners as well as also having been the president of the Croatian Student's Union in 1971 during the events of `Croatian Spring'. He had been in prison for his political activities and he was well known as an outspoken critic against corruption and communism. On his way back to Zagreb Ante Paradzik's car stopped at five road blocks. Upon stopping at the fifth road block the MUP (Ministry of the Interior police) officer came to within one yard of the car as if he were going to step up to it to ask for identification. Instead he stopped, took three steps backwards, assumed a battle stance and started firing at Ante Paradzik with an automatic AK-47 rifle. Two other MUP officers also started firing at the car which was at a complete standstill and from which not one shot was fired. There were over fifty bullets fired at the car. The car was rifled from all sides, even the roof. Ante Paradzik was killed. Branko Perkovic, the driver, was wounded. Ivan OrsöAE5anic, the passenger, miraculously escaped injury.

The official statement issued by MUP within hours of the death of Ante Paradzik stated that Paradzik's vehicle did not stop at the last two check points, that shots were fired from Paradzik's car at the MUP officers and that the MUP officers returned fire to defend themselves. Not one official from MUP nor the Minister himself will admit responsibility for issuing that statement. Investigation has shown that Paradzik's car was fully stopped and that not one shot was fired from Paradzik's car. MUP also possesses tape of police radio conversations. Transcripts of the tape show that an order was issued to `kill', `shoot', MUP shot and killed him. Ante Paradzik was assassinated. Who was responsible?

My life's work has been dedicated to helping achieve equal liberties for everyone be they Croatian, Albanian, Lithuanian or any other people. When Iraq occupied Kuwait, and while Yugoslavia was repairing Iraqi jets, the Croatian Party of Rights was the only political organization in Croatia or former Yugoslavia to formerly express our position in support of the United States with the following letter of January 15, 1991 offering volunteers and recorded in the Congressional Record of January 18, 1991:

Mr. President,
Members of Congress.

Dear Honorable Representatives of the People of the United States of America: While dramatic changes are still occurring daily in Eastern Europe and an unavoidable confrontation has developed in the Middle East I wish to personally thank you on behalf of the people of Croatia on your courageous assumption of world leadership to ensure that fundamental human rights and liberties are available to all.

As President Havel stated to me when I met with him in Prague on October 29, 1990-- 'if there are human rights violations going on anywhere, then human rights are threatened everywhere.'

Your support of the freedom seeking peoples of the world, from Lithuania to Kuwait and beyond, is instrumental in the achievement of this goal and nowhere do we understand this more than in Croatia.

While we Croatians have not yet completed our transition to democracy and independence I can personally testify that had it not been for the U.S. Senate passing Senate Resolution 169 on August 4, 1989, supporting my efforts to bring about increased respect for human rights in Yugoslavia that I would now not be writing to you as the President of the Croatian Party of Rights from our offices in Zagreb but rather from one of the jail or prison cells where I had previously been incarcerated and tortured for circulating a petition asking for amnesty for all political prisoners in Yugoslavia in 1980.

Although we in Croatia have democratic political parties we do not yet have 'government of the people, by the people, for the people.' While we are patiently changing this we will not allow ourselves to be identified by the actions of those who still rule us but do not represent us.

On September 18, 1990, Associated Press ran a report on Iraqi jets being serviced by Yugoslavia in Croatia which Senator Dole noted with a request for an investigation in the Congressional Record of October 24, 1990, entitled 'What are Iraqi Military Aircraft Doing in Yugoslavia?' And then on January 11, 1991, Reuters reported that Iraqi agents or terrorists may already be in place in Europe having infiltrated through Yugoslavia.

We have all watched these terrifying experiences unfold into dramatic statements of man's inhumanity to man and we've all wondered why and when will it end. The people of Croatia know how difficult it is, if not impossible, to end armed aggression and oppression without help and we feel that it is our duty to express ourselves to the people of the United States and the world community by volunteering our services to actively participate with the following declaration:

' We, the people of Croatia, join in this opportunity to stand, and side, with our friends, the United States of America and other governments of the world who in this time of world crises have courageously assumed the burden of leadership in full implementation of the United Nations Resolutions; and whereas the Federal Government of Yugoslavia, and its offspring Governments in the Republics of Yugoslavia, have chosen a position of non-commitment; we feel that this international effort to stop the brutal aggression of Saddam Hussein demands the active support of all who care about preserving freedom and the rights of human beings to live peacefully within their own country.

' We, the undersigned, in our desire to actively participate, shoulder to shoulder, with other nations of the world, hereby, volunteer our services to the multinational forces united in resolve to secure the justice which will alone result in lasting peace, as well as extending our commitment to a multinational peace keeping force to preserve this new world order.'

Presently the people of Croatia are expressing themselves by individually signing this declaration just as over 500,000 Croatians have signed a petition for independence from Yugoslavia over the course of the last six months. Maybe someday soon the nation of Croatia will once again be able to express itself as a country in such an honorable commitment as is this participation in achieving the unalienable rights of all people--life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Because I believe in a Croatia that looks towards a democratic future in the world community, the repeated linking of my party, the Croatian Party of Rights, with 'Nazi' or 'Fascist' sympathies are particularly distressing to me personally. Such charges coming from Milosevic, Tudjman and Delich-Bentley are completely baseless. They go against everything I have dedicated my life in working for--the rights for all citizens of Croatia no matter what their ethnic background to live under a democratic government responsible to the people. In 1989, upon returning to the United States after being a guest of honor of Milosevic, Ms. Delich-Bentley reported her findings on Yugoslavia, recorded in the Congressional Record, where she stated that there was no repression in Kosovo, and that there were no political prisoners in Yugoslavia--only five or six terrorists in prison. I have spent over ten years dispelling lies such as those and I have every intent in dispelling lies linking fascism with myself or the Croatian Party of Rights.

The Croatian Party of Rights has led the fight to save Croatia from an aggressor, Serbia, which attacked us on our own soil and the world has been agonizingly slow in recognizing this aggression. If we had just stood by as Tudjman ordered us to do, Croatia would no longer exist. I could not advise my party members to not put

up a fight while our fellow Croatians were being murdered by the thousands and one third of our land was being stolen. I do not agree with the Tudjman-Milosevic-EC solution for Ilok--that is the evacuation of Croatian people and giving the city to Serbia. This same solution of evacuation and handing over territory is proposed for Vukovar and Dubrovnik. We refuse to accept this solution. If it is within our power Vukovar and Dubrovnik will not fall.

I am proud of the members of the Croatian Party of Rights and what we have been able to accomplish in the face of overwhelming odds in this war in which any rational person can instantly see through the manipulations of Tudjman-Milosevic and the EC. A quick analysis shows that Tudjman and Mesic are the two top men in the Croatian Democratic Union party (HDZ). Tudjman is the president of the HDZ and therefore Mesic is subordinate to him in their party. On the other hand Mesic is the president of Yugoslavia and therefore Tudjman as the president of Croatia is subordinate to him. In the meantime Tudjman is Commander in Chief of the Croatian army which is at war with the Yugoslav army whose Commander in Chief is Mesic. Milosevic though controls the Yugoslav army. Or is it the Yugoslav army that controls Milosevic?

How can the world community even consider giving credibility to any of the above mentioned parties by actually endorsing negotiations, conferences and agreements with them? I am not at all surprised that none of the twelve agreements by and between them has held. Is anybody? Is it not time to address the demise of Yugoslavia realistically?

If it had been in my power to peacefully assure Croatia's independence, it would have been, in every case, my first choice. What is currently happening in Croatia is a tragedy for all its citizens, in particular, and for humankind, in general, Serbia is at war to preserve its position of privilege and Croatia is at war fighting for its existence. The Yugoslav experiment is dead and all the former republics need to progress into democracy and rid themselves of the leftover of communism. Serbian claims of Croatia's plans for genocide against Serbs may turn out to be bitterly ironic if the reports of heavy losses among their own troops are true. The only reason Serbs are being killed in Croatia is because they have attacked Croatians on their own soil. Serbian leaders will have a lot to answer to their people for when the true cost of its war of aggression and occupation against Croatia is made clear. All those lives lost, on both sides, and for what--to keep pawns in office who do not have the best interest of their people at heart.

The people of Croatia have expressed their desire to be independent and democratic. I have dedicated my life to human rights which by definition are non-discriminatory. The Croatian Party of Rights is committed to serving the people of Croatia to enable them to achieve this dream of independence with democracy based on fundamental human rights. We welcome the input and help of everyone who is interested in bringing independence, peace, democracy and human dignity to Croatia.

DOBROSLAV PARAGA , President,

Croatian Party of Rights. [Page: E3868]