

H. Res. 161

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

May 18, 1999.

Whereas international humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provide a vital role in assessing and responding to the humanitarian needs of refugees around the world and, most recently, of the hundreds of thousands who have fled Kosovo;

Whereas, according to unconfirmed reports, hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons remain in Kosovo at risk for their lives and requiring immediate food, shelter, and medicine;

Whereas it is the belief of the House of Representatives that the safety and lives of these undetermined legions of internally displaced persons within Kosovo are equal to the safety and lives of the many refugees who have fled the region;

Whereas the international community is committed to providing humanitarian assistance to current and future Kosovo refugees, while uncertain of how vast that need may be;

Whereas during an April 19, 1999, interview in Belgrade with Dr. Ron Hatchett of the University of St. Thomas,

Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic agreed to and subsequently permitted representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross to meet with and examine the condition of the three captured American prisoners of war;

Whereas in the same interview, President Milosevic agreed to permit representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees into Kosovo to provide aid and assess the humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons within Kosovo and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;

Whereas on May 4, 1999, with the assent of the United Nations Security Council, of which the United States is a member, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan initiated a United Nations interagency assessment mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to assess emergency relief and rehabilitation needs within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to identify the means for providing such critical relief and rehabilitation assistance;

Whereas this humanitarian mission seeks to objectively assess critical needs in the areas of human rights protection, food, security, nutrition, health, water and sanitation, and condition of the civilian population, and also seeks to accurately determine the number, location, and requirements of the people in Kosovo and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia needing immediate and future humanitarian aid;

Whereas on May 14, 1999, the United Nations Security Council adopted Security Council Resolution 1239 by a vote of 13–0, inviting the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and other international humanitarian relief organizations to extend relief assistance to the in-

ternally displaced persons in Kosovo, the Republic of Montenegro, and other parts of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; and

Whereas the brief United Nations humanitarian mission that was initiated on May 4, 1999, subsequently departed for Kosovo and other sectors of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on May 15, 1999: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic provide the necessary security assurances and freedom of access to the United Nations interagency mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia so the international community can be provided with an accurate, objective, first-hand assessment of the condition of the internally displaced persons inside of Kosovo and all sectors of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; and

(2) the House of Representatives encourages member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to weigh the value of this humanitarian mission toward ending human suffering in Kosovo, and to consider reasonable measures to enhance the safety of this

international delegation during its brief humanitarian mission within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Attest:

Clerk.