

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 135

Calling for the immediate release of the three humanitarian workers in
Yugoslavia.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 1, 1999

Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. LEAHY) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Calling for the immediate release of the three humanitarian
workers in Yugoslavia.

Whereas Branko Jelen, Steve Pratt, and Peter Wallace are
three humanitarian workers employed in Yugoslavia by
CARE International, the relief and development organi-
zation, providing food, medicines and fuel to more than
50,000 Serbian refugees in Serbia and to displaced ethnic
Albanians in Kosovo;

Whereas Steve Pratt and Peter Wallace, two Australian na-
tionals, were detained on March 31, 1999, and later ac-
cused of operating and managing a spy ring and being
employed by a spy ring, and Branko Jelen, a Yugoslav,
was arrested one week later on the same charges;

Whereas on March 30, the organization CARE International
had received a letter of commendation from the Yugo-

slavian government about CARE International's humanitarian work in Yugoslavia;

Whereas one of the three humanitarian workers, Steve Pratt, appeared on Serbian television on April 11, and he was coerced into saying that he had performed covert intelligence activities;

Whereas the three humanitarian workers were held without access to outsiders for 20 days;

Whereas on May 29, a military court dismissed every element of the original indictment, but then proceeded to convict the three CARE International workers on an entirely new charge of passing on information to a foreign organization, namely CARE International, and sentenced Pratt to 12 years, Jelen to 6, and Wallace to 4;

Whereas this last charge was introduced at the reading of the verdict, denying lawyers for the three any opportunity to mount an appropriate defense;

Whereas it appears the humanitarian workers were convicted of providing "situation reports" to their head office and other CARE International offices around the world, based on legitimately gathered information, necessary to enable CARE International management to plan their humanitarian assistance in a rapidly changing context and to inform CARE International management of the security situation in which their staff were working;

Whereas the convictions of these three humanitarian workers raise serious questions regarding the ability of humanitarian aid organizations to operate in Yugoslavia, with implications for their operations in other areas of conflict around the world;

Whereas the three humanitarian workers are innocent, committed no crime, and are being held prisoner unjustly;

Whereas Yugoslavia needs humanitarian workers who feel secure enough to do their work and who are not at risk of going to prison on false charges; and

Whereas many leaders around the world have raised the issue and sought to free the captives, including Kofi Annan, Nelson Mandela, Marti Ahtisaari, Mary Robinson, and Jesse Jackson: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) urges the Government of the United States
3 and the United Nations to undertake urgent and
4 strenuous efforts to secure the release of the three
5 CARE International humanitarian workers; and

6 (2) calls upon the Government of the Federal
7 Republic of Yugoslavia to send a positive signal to
8 the international humanitarian community and to
9 give these workers their freedom without further
10 delay.

○