

in the oil and gas industry in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of H.R. 1117.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FOSSELLA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

□ 1615

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the veterans in my district, Congressional District 1 in the State of Nevada. I represent Las Vegas, Nevada. Let me tell my colleagues a little bit about it. I have got the fastest growing district in the United States. I have the fastest growing veterans population in the United States. There are only three States that have an increasing veterans population in this country: Florida, Arizona and the State of Nevada. A preponderance of those veterans that are moving to those three States are coming to the State of Nevada. Let me tell my colleagues what the problems are.

First, I will tell my colleagues during my campaign the veterans took me under their wing and educated me about the problems that they are facing. We developed a relationship that transcends politics, and we become very close family, we become friends, and I have come here to be an advocate on their behalf.

In the State of Nevada, in southern Nevada, we have a wonderful new veterans' clinic, we have a wonderful new hospital, we have wonderful state-of-the-art equipment, and we have a brand new cemetery.

Let me tell my colleagues what we do not have. We do not have enough doctors, and there is not enough funding to hire doctors. I have got incidents after incidents of older veterans who come to the clinic because they have medical problems and they cannot get in to see a doctor. I have one incident of a veteran that has a lump, and when he went to the veterans' clinic to have a biopsy, he was told that he could not see a doctor, he could not get that biopsy for 5 months. Nobody, nobody,

should have to go through the pain and anguish of not knowing what their medical condition is, particularly a veteran who has given so much and sacrificed so much on behalf of this country.

We do not have enough nurses in Nevada. I do not have enough technicians to work that wonderful new equipment. So the medical equipment that would help these veterans sits idle because there is no one that knows how to work the equipment.

I have a wonderful new cemetery, as I stated, but let me tell my colleagues I do not have enough equipment and there is not enough personnel to bury those veterans that are dying in southern Nevada, and as our veterans population ages, as those veterans keep coming to retire in southern Nevada, what am I to tell those families that are suffering because they have just lost a loved one? Do I tell that family during their most horrible time of need that we cannot bury their loved one because we do not have enough personnel at the cemetery? We do not have enough equipment to do this last act of honor for this great veteran? I cannot in good conscience do that.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have enough money for counselors, so when I have veterans that are coming to southern Nevada that need counseling because they have got a drug abuse problem, because they are suffering from alcoholism or they are roaming the streets of southern Nevada, downtown Las Vegas, because they are homeless that we do not have enough caring in this country, we do not have enough concern for these veterans to make sure that we do not have adequate counseling and help in their time of need?

The President's flat line budget that he submitted to Congress was wholly inadequate to serve the needs of the veterans in this country. I am opposed to it, but I fear that the meager increase that we have proposed here in Congress is also inadequate to meet the needs of our veterans in this country. The \$1.9 billion that has been passed by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, a committee that I sit on and am honored to serve on, will not begin to make a dent in the problems that we are suffering and we are facing in southern Nevada.

I ask all of my colleagues to join with me to vote in favor of the alternative proposal, one that is supported by all of the veterans groups across our great country, to add \$3.2 billion to the President's budget so that we can finally provide the services that our veterans justly deserve, that we have a responsibility to provide and one that all Americans who owe these great veterans our lives, our liberties and our American way of life. Let us unite together and help our veterans in their hour of need.

KOSOVA KILLINGS CALLED A MASSACRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday the House very wisely passed a resolution giving the President the authority to send U.S. troops to Kosova as a part of NATO, and at the time many of us arguing in favor of the resolution said that it was necessary for the United States to be a leader of NATO and to show that we are the leader and to have 4000 of our troops, if necessary, participate in the NATO peacekeeping force which would only be 15 percent of the total and which would in essence be a poster child for burden sharing. When I got up to the floor, as did many of my colleagues, we talked about genocide and ethnic cleansing and said that it was important for NATO to have a presence in Kosova in order to prevent ethnic cleansing.

Today in the front page of the Washington Post there is unfortunately an article which says "Kosovo Killings Called a Massacre," and I just wanted to read some of the article and then ask to have the entire article put into the RECORD, but the article starts off by saying:

An independent forensic report into the killings of 40 ethnic Albanians in the Kosovo village of Racak in January has found that the victims were unarmed civilians executed in an organized massacre, some of them forced to kneel before being sprayed with bullets according to western sources familiar with the report. The findings by Finnish forensic experts set to be released Wednesday in Pristina, the Kosovo capital, contradicts claims by officials of the Serb led Yugoslav government that the dead were armed ethnic Albanian separatists or civilians accidentally caught in a cross-fire between government security forces and separatist rebels. Western officials have blamed the killings on government police.

It has been apparent for many years now, but especially during the past several months, that ethnic cleansing and genocide has been going on in Kosova, and by the way I say "Kosova" because that is the way 92 percent of the people who live there who are ethnic Albanians pronounce it. They pronounce it "Kosova" and in my estimation, if that is what the people who live there call their land, that is what I call it. We have said that ethnic cleansing and genocide has been going on, and that is why it is just so important for NATO to be there. People who say that it is not in our vital interests, I would argue that it is in our vital interests to stop genocide and also in the U.S. vital interest to prevent a larger outbreak of the war which would surely, if given a chance, suck in many neighboring countries, including the potential to suck in NATO allies of Turkey and

Greece and Bulgaria and other countries as well. And so that is why the U.S. has a vital interest.

But I wanted to come to the floor today to point out the ethnic cleansing and the genocide and to say that when the United States has the ability to help prevent these kinds of atrocities we ought to do it.

Again this is an independent panel. This is not some panel that is hired by one side or another. This is an independent panel, independent forensic report, and it is what we said all along that these are innocent civilians, unarmed civilians, men, women and children who are being ethnically cleansed who are being killed by the Serbian led forces under Slobodan Milosevic, who in my opinion is a war criminal and should be prosecuted by the International Tribunal at the Hague.

Mr. Speaker, I place the entire article into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD at this time:

[From the Washington Post, March 17, 1999]
KOSOVO KILLINGS CALLED A MASSACRE—SOME VICTIMS SHOT WHILE ON THEIR KNEES

(By R. Jeffrey Smith)

ROME, March 16—An independent forensic report into the killings of 40 ethnic Albanians in the Kosovo village of Racak in January has found that the victims were unarmed civilians executed in an organized massacre, some of them forced to kneel before being sprayed with bullets, according to Western sources familiar with the report.

The findings by Finnish forensic experts, set to be released Wednesday in Pristina, the Kosovo capital, contradict claims by officials of the Serb-led Yugoslav government that the dead were armed ethnic Albanian separatists or civilians accidentally caught in a cross-fire between government security forces and separatist rebels. Western officials have blamed the killings on government police.

Because of the extreme sensitivity of the case, leaders of the European Union, which sponsored the probe, have asked the forensic team to withhold some of its most potentially inflammatory findings when its members appear at a news conference Wednesday, officials said.

The request, they say, was made out of concern that the results will further polarize the two sides in the Kosovo conflict and impede the Belgrade government's acceptance of a peace agreement for the Serbian province at talks underway in France.

One Western official said the German government, which holds the rotating chairmanship of the European Union, had ordered the Finnish team not to release a summary of its probe, which includes details about how some of the victims appeared to have died. Instead, at Bonn's request, the team agreed to release only the voluminous summaries of autopsies it helped conduct on bodies of the victims.

The killings on Jan. 15 at Racak, an ethnic Albanian village southwest of Pristina, outraged the world and became a turning point in the year-long conflict between security forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army, the main ethnic Albanian rebel group fighting for Kosovo's independence from Serbia, the dominant republic in the Yugoslav federation.

NATO leaders condemned the killings at the time and renewed their threat to carry out punitive airstrikes against Yugoslav military targets. Days later, both sides in the conflict agreed to take part in peace

talks in France sponsored by the United States, Russia and four west European nations.

On Monday, ethnic Albanian negotiators pledged to sign a draft peace agreement that would provide substantial autonomy to Kosovo, while Belgrade officials have continued to object not only to the language of the proposed political settlement, but also to a provision mandating deployment of 28,000 NATO-led troops in Kosovo to enforce its terms.

The forensic team's investigation, based on an examination of evidence at the site and autopsies conducted jointly with Yugoslav government pathologists, determined that 22 of the victims were slain in a gully on the outskirts of Racak, precisely where their bodies were found on the morning of Jan. 16. The gully is so narrow that these victims could only have been shot deliberately at close range, the sources said.

Although the bodies of some other victims in the village were moved into homes or a mosque before international observers arrived, the forensic experts were able to determine where all but four of the 40 victims had died. From the pattern of the bullet wounds on their bodies and other evidence—such as their civilian clothing and possessions—the team found no reason to conclude they were killed accidentally or were members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, said the sources, who asked not to be identified.

Western officials say the team found that the angle of the bullet wounds in the victims' bodies was consistent with a scenario in which some of them were forced to kneel before being sprayed with gunfire from automatic weapons. This "spray pattern" finding is among the sensitive details that officials said may be withheld at Wednesday's news conference. Wounds on the bodies of some other victims evidently suggest they were shot while running away, the sources said.

On Jan. 16, U.S. special envoy William Walker, head of an international monitoring mission in Kosovo, described the killings as a massacre by government forces, and Yugoslav officials ordered him out of the country. The order was later suspended after the West threatened punitive action.

Western sources subsequently disclosed that telephone conversations between top Yugoslav and Serbian officials about the slayings showed that the officials explicitly sought to contrive an explanation for the killings that would shift blame away from security forces.

The Yugoslav government invited the Finnish forensic team to conduct the investigation at a time when many countries were demanding an inquiry by the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. Yugoslavia has refused to cooperate with the tribunal or recognize the legitimacy of its mandate over matters of Yugoslav territory, so the Finns were accepted as compromise.

Officials in Belgrade, aware of the potential impact the forensic report might have on foreign sentiment about the conduct of its army and paramilitary forces, have mounted sustained propaganda campaign to cast the forensic team's conclusions in a favorable, and, according to the sources, highly misleading light.

An article in today's editions of *Politika*, a Belgrade newspaper connected to the government, claimed for example that the team had established that all the victims all had fired weapons before their deaths and that the bodies of all of them had been moved. The chief public prosecutor for Serbia, Dragisa Krstmanovic, alleged similarly last week that forensic tests showed the victims all had been shot from a distance. As a result, he said, government troops could not be prosecuted for their actions in Racak.

The forensic team searched but found no evidence to support these claims. On the other hand, its findings cast doubt on the assertion of some Western officials, including Walker, that the bodies had been deliberately mutilated by government troops.

Although 45 people reportedly were slain at Racak, the Finnish team was given access to only 40 bodies. The investigators learned that at least five more bodies, including those of at least two women, were removed from the area and presumably were buried in a cemetery south of Racak, along with as many as seven others who apparently were wounded during the assault and died later.

AMERICA'S FARMERS FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVELIHOOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I am here today because our American family farmers are suffering. While the general economy is strong, the U.S. agricultural economy continues to experience significant declines in agriculture commodity prices that began over a year ago. The price declines experienced by wheat and cattle producers over the last couple of years have expanded now to all of the feed grains, oil seed, cotton, pork and now the dairy sectors at record all-time lows. Farm income is expected to fall from \$53 billion in 1996 to \$43 billion next year, nearly a 20 percent decline.

Mr. Speaker, last week I met with a number of farmers just from Ohio. One left me with a letter that I would like to read tonight. It says:

DEAR MS. KAPTUR: The purpose of my Washington, D.C. trip is twofold. Not only am I here today representing Ottawa County, but as a wife and partner of an Ottawa County farmer. I am very concerned about the plight of America's farmers. I can remember as a youngster back in the late 1940s all the farmers, eight full-time farmers within just 2 miles of here who lived on our road in northwest Ohio. They had dairy cows, hogs and chickens. At the present time within that same two miles there is only one full-time farmer. Since our numbers are dwindling and the American farmer only makes up 1.8 percent of our population, the American farmer is fast becoming an endangered species.

I want to know what is going to happen to the American farmer, and does Washington and our Nation really care? With the way our grain prices are falling and our costs are increasing, how is a present-day farmer going to continue and also encourage new generations to enter the farming profession? The prices are lower now than during the 1940s.

With the combination of low prices and the loss of productive agricultural ground to urban sprawl, most farming operations will cease to exist. Where is our Nation going to obtain its food? If the United States relies in greater and greater measure on foreign countries to supply its food needs, their food checkoff day will surpass the February 9 date.

Since U.S. consumers have never gone hungry, they have no concept if they lose the American farmer, their safe food supply could diminish or be completely cut off. How long can the average American farmer afford to spend \$168,000 for just one piece of equipment?