

So we came together as brothers and sisters in search of peace. We came together hoping to create a framework for peace which we could bring back to our Nation and give our nations an opportunity to reconstruct, in this fragile and even grim climate, an opportunity to set the world on the path of light instead of the path of might, on the path to negotiation instead of the path of annihilation; to create for the world a new opportunity towards peace.

We came in peace, and we departed as brothers and sisters in search of peace, with a framework which I am pleased to have a copy of here.

Mr. Speaker, I include this framework for the RECORD.

The material referred to is as follows:

REPORT OF THE MEETINGS OF THE U.S.

CONGRESS AND RUSSIAN DUMA

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

30 April—1 May 1999

All sessions centered on the Balkan crisis. Agreement was found on the following points.

I. The Balkan crisis, including ethnic cleansing and terrorism, is one of the most serious challenges to international security since World War II.

II. Both sides agree that this crisis creates serious threats to global and regional security and may undermine efforts against non-proliferation.

III. This crisis increases the threat of further human and ecological catastrophes, as evidenced by the growing refugee problem, and creates obstacles to further development of constructive Russian-American relations.

IV. The humanitarian crisis will not be solved by bombing. A diplomatic solution to the problem is preferable to the alternative of military escalation.

Taking the above into account, the sides consider it necessary to implement the following emergency measures as soon as possible, preferably within the next week. Implementation of these emergency measures will create the climate necessary to settle the political questions.

1. We call on the interested parties to find practical measures for a parallel solution to three tasks, without regard to sequence: the stopping of NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, withdrawal of Serbian armed forces from Kosovo, and the cessation of the military activities of the KLA. This should be accomplished through a series of confidence building measures, which should include but should not be limited to:

a. The release of all prisoners of war.

b. The voluntary repatriation of all refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and unhindered access to them by humanitarian aid organizations. NATO would be responsible for policing the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's borders with Albania and Macedonia to ensure that weapons do not re-enter the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with the returning refugees or at a later time.

c. Agreement on the composition of the armed international forces which would administer Kosovo after the Serbian withdraw. The composition of the group should be decided by a consensus agreement of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council in consultation with Macedonia, Albania, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the recognized leadership of Kosovo.

d. The above group would be supplemented by the monitoring activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

e. The Russian Duma and U.S. Congress will use all possibilities at their disposal in

order to successfully move ahead the process of resolving the situation in Yugoslavia on the basis of stopping the violence and atrocities.

2. We recognize the basic principles of the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which include:

- a. wide autonomy for Kosovo
- b. a multi-ethnic population
- c. treatment of all Yugoslavia peoples in accordance with international norms

3. We support efforts to provide international assistance to rebuild destroyed homes of refugees and other humanitarian assistance, as appropriate, to victims in Kosovo.

4. We, as members of the Duma and Congress, commit to active participation as follows:

Issue a Joint U.S. Congress-Russian Duma report of our meetings in Vienna. Concrete suggestions for future action will be issued as soon as possible.

Delegations will agree on timelines for accomplishment of above tasks.

Delegations will brief their respective legislatures and governments on outcome of the Vienna meetings and agreed upon proposals.

Delegations will prepare a joint resolution, based on their report, to be considered simultaneously in the Congress and Duma.

Delegations agree to continue a working group dialogue between Congress and the Duma in agreed upon places.

Delegations agree that Duma deputies will visit refugee camps and Members of Congress will visit the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Mr. Speaker, this agreement begins with stopping the bombing, a withdrawal of the Armed Forces from Kosovo, a cessation of military activities of the KLA, releasing all prisoners, returning all refugees, providing for their safekeeping with an international peacekeeping force, rebuilding their shattered homes, and helping to rebuild their shattered lives.

This is such a great country with such a great heart, because we care about people all over this world. We want to bring peace to those who are suffering.

Our delegation, Mr. Speaker, gave us a chance, at a moment when it looked like escalation was the only recourse, with the leadership of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CURT WELDON), with the participation of our leader, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. NEIL ABERCROMBIE), we finally had the opportunity to begin anew to look at each other as brothers and sisters in search of peace, to come up with a framework which we would all hope would be the start of a new opportunity to look forward to perhaps a cease-fire, to a cessation of bombing, to restoring the refugees and rebuilding the war-ravaged area.

Let us continue to pray for peace, and let us continue to act in consonance with our prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must remind all Members that it is not permissible to introduce or bring to the attention of the House any occupant of the gallery.

BIPARTISAN DELEGATION TRAVELS TO BRUSSELS TO SEEK PEACE IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

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

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the other Members who are here this evening. I will not take the full time, but I will merely read a brief excerpt as an addendum to the remarks that have been made at this point.

We are very grateful to our colleagues who are here on another matter tonight who have graciously consented to allow this interruption because of the serious nature of the business that was conducted this past weekend.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read just some excerpts from a letter addressed to the ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. IKE SKELTON), a letter sent to him today in conjunction with the report that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) just cited and the activities that we engaged in in Vienna this past weekend.

The letter was a cover letter also containing the resolution that we expect to bring forward to all of our colleagues here on the floor shortly that we hope will provide a path towards reconciliation and resolution of the crisis in Kosovo.

Mr. Speaker, I will just read briefly from the letter:

Dear Ike, as you are aware, I recently returned from a trip to Vienna as the senior Democrat on a congressional delegation that met with the leadership of the Russian Duma. My earlier trip to the region prompted me to lead a group comprised of Corinne Brown, Maurice Hinchey, and Dennis Kucinich. Since you are the ranking member on the Committee on Armed Services, I wanted you to have a copy of the report of the meetings to review.

Not only did we arrive at a viable framework around which the Congress and the Duma can facilitate an end to the violence in the Balkans, we learned much from our Russian colleagues. Our Duma counterparts represented the full spectrum of ideology and Russian politics. Together we reached agreement on three important components of peace and a possible road to implementation.

More than ever, I am convinced that the road to peace is through Moscow. Without movement towards peace, I see escalating costs, increasingly convoluted options, and unacceptable casualties just over the horizon.

Undermining the Administration's objectives was certainly not our desire, and I wish to reiterate that the delegation was not on a mission to negotiate peace. Instead, we were on a mission to reach out to our Russian counterparts. Because of her unique historic and cultural ties to Serbia, Russia has the credentials to act as an intermediary in achieving a negotiated peace in the Balkans.

Mr. Speaker, I submit this letter for the RECORD.

The letter referred to is as follows:

NEIL ABERCROMBIE,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 4, 1999.

Hon. IKE SKELTON,
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE SKELTON: As you are aware, I recently returned from a trip to Vienna as the senior Democrat on a Congressional delegation that met with leadership of the Russian Duma. My earlier trip to the region prompted me to lead a group comprised of Corrine Brown, Maurice Hinchey, and Dennis Kucinich. Since you are the ranking Member of the Committee on Armed Services, I wanted you to have a copy of the report of the meetings to review.

Not only did we arrive at a viable framework around which the Congress and the Duma can facilitate an end to the violence in the Balkans, we learned much from our Russian colleagues. Our Duma counterparts represented the full spectrum of ideology and Russian politics. Together we reached agreement on three important components of peace and a possible road to implementation. More than ever, I am convinced that the road to peace is through Moscow. Without movement toward peace, I see escalating costs, increasingly convoluted options, and unacceptable casualties just over the horizon.

Undermining the administration's objectives was certainly not our desire, and I wish to reiterate that the delegation was not on a mission to negotiate peace. Instead, we were on a mission to reach out to our Russian counterparts. Because of her unique historic and cultural ties with Serbia, Russia has the credentials to act as an intermediary in achieving a negotiated peace in the Balkans.

The bipartisan delegation prepared a resolution expressing the sense of Congress in supporting the recommendations of the Vienna meeting to bring about a fair, equitable and peaceful settlement in Yugoslavia. That draft resolution is attached. Additionally, I have attached a letter I sent to minority Leader Gephardt. I ask that you also support a bipartisan caucus so that the delegation can brief all members of Congress. Absent a bipartisan caucus, I ask your support for the delegation to brief the Armed Services Committee.

This meeting with members of the Duma represents a singularly important step toward a negotiated solution. I seek your counsel and recommendations on how to best proceed.

Sincerely,

NEIL ABERCROMBIE,
Member of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to conclude my remarks by merely saying that the road to the resolution of this crisis is not in Belgrade and is not in Brussels, but is in fact in Moscow.

□ 2045

The 11 of us, the bipartisan delegation which went to Vienna, had as its sole purpose the reaching out to the Members of the Russian Duma in an attempt to bring resolution to this crisis and bring it to a resolution at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the time and I thank my colleagues for their generosity in providing it.

MOTHER'S DAY: A TIME TO REFLECT ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE ON AMERICAN WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, as we embark upon Mother's Day this coming Sunday, distinguished women of the House thought it was really fitting to come and talk again on women and Social Security and Medicare and how these two critical issues will impact women leading into the 21st century. I have gathered with me tonight a distinguished core of women of the House to speak on these critical issues.

As the Co-Vice Chair of the Women's Caucus, I think it is vitally important that we ensure retirement security for women as we work to strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the two women who have been in the forefront on these issues, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. THURMAN). Each will speak to these issues as we progress tonight.

Social Security has played a very vital role in ensuring financial security for most elderly women; however, there are still far too many elderly women living in poverty. In our work here in the House to establish a better and more secure retirement system, we must not exacerbate this situation but rather do all we can to resolve the discrepancy now and for all future generations.

Mr. Speaker, tonight is the night for women to speak to the two issues and to voice their concerns from their constituents in their respective states. So I will call on them tonight as they come to speak to this issue as we embark upon Mother's Day this coming Sunday.

I have tonight the great gentlewoman from the State of Florida (Mrs. MEEK), who will speak to this issue as she relates to it in the State of Florida.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank very much the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) my colleague, friend, and sister who is the Co-Vice Chairman of the Women's Caucus for yielding me this time, and acknowledge my associates in the Women's Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be a member of the Women's Caucus. It gives me a special chance to come before this body and talk about not only the contributions of women, but the issues and concerns of all women. Therefore, being a Member of Congress gives us a special platform where we can say to the Nation that as women we do have special concerns and special problems that this Congress should address.

Mr. Speaker, our government has a Social Security system. It is affecting women and it affects them in terms of their security and their retirement. But the truth is Social Security provides benefits on a gender-neutral basis. Benefits are based on an individual's earning record, employment history, and family composition.

Mr. Speaker, I am an older woman so I do know the benefits of Social Security and the benefits of retirement. I am not so sure the younger women who are in here tonight will be able to benefit from the Social Security system as I have. Hopefully, they shall. If it is up to this Women's Caucus, the women will get a chance to benefit.

Thus, while women tend to collect benefits over a longer period than men do because we live longer, our life expectancy is longer, women on an average have lower monthly Social Security benefits since they have lower earnings, more frequent breaks in employment because of our childbearing years, and we are more likely to be widowed or unmarried in retirement.

This occurs despite Social Security's inclusion of certain safety net provisions that generally narrow the gap in benefits between men and women. Some of the Social Security reform options currently being contemplated will change or eliminate the social adequacy components of the program, thus disproportionately affecting women relative to men.

It is important to note that women are generally paid less than men and women are more likely than men to leave the workforce. Our government must do everything possible to preserve Social Security. That is why the Women's Caucus is focusing on this. And it is very fitting. It is near Mother's Day. It is our day coming up.

We know that Social Security is perhaps the most important and the most successful antipoverty program ever adopted. Without Social Security, over 50 percent of the elderly would be in poverty. Social Security is a major source of income for 65 percent of beneficiaries over age 65.

Mr. Speaker, it is sort of important that we stress the many good benefits of Social Security. We are not saying that the Social Security system is the best in the world and it is the only thing and it cannot be improved on. The Women's Caucus is not saying that. They are saying to take a look at it to be sure that it does what it purports to do and it continues to keep women out of poverty.

The problem many times in Social Security is worse for minority women because of our earnings over the years, and we are much poorer than white women, particularly white women age 65 years of age or older. As a Member of the Women's Caucus, particularly one over the years that has stressed older women, I ask my dear colleagues to consider the unique issues of women: Lower earnings, longer life spans, shorter work histories, greater dependency on spouses, divorce, and outliving