

and not allow the FBI to even put electronic surveillance on him is a real dereliction of duty.

Mr. GIBBONS. Well, I thank the gentleman for, of course, his interest in looking into this issue. It is on the forefront of the minds of a great number of Americans, and I applaud him for his interest in keeping all of us apprised of this and looking into it on behalf of the committee and on behalf of the American people.

PEACEFULLY RESOLVING THE SITUATION IN KOSOVO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for holding some time while I ran over from Rayburn. I was expecting that the other side would offer a special order, and I did want to make sure that we took this special out this evening, and I am happy that my good friend from Nevada is going to be joining us as we review, Mr. Speaker, the past 4 weeks and actually 5 weeks and discuss an effort by this Congress to move the process involving Kosovo to a new level and a new direction, and that is to try to find a way to solve the situation peacefully.

Mr. Speaker, it was actually a little bit over 4 weeks ago, the week of April 6, when Russian friends of mine who I have been involved with for the past 5 years in a formal Duma-Congress relationship called me at my home and asked if I would be open to some ideas about engaging with them to find a peaceful solution to the Kosovo crisis. They were calling me for several reasons.

One, they said they had, the Russians had been shut out of the process by our government in terms of working with them once the bombing campaign began, that there had been no overture on the part of our State Department or our administration to involve Russia, but rather our administration in the minds of the Russians had become convinced that they could solve the problem of the ethnic cleansing in Serbia by bombing and bombing in a massive way.

The second reason they called, Mr. Speaker, was because these pro-western leaders in Russia were concerned. They saw their country heading down the wrong path. In fact, they cited examples of evidence that Russia had become much more anti-American than at any point in time that they had seen since the days of the Soviet communist regime.

In fact, they said that Americans were now being told not to speak English on the streets of Russia, that the Duma had canceled all activities interconnecting with America, canceling all conferences. The Harvard University Study Group that goes on every

year was canceled. The initiative to involve exchanges of staffers was canceled. Every possible contact between us and Russia had been severed, not just because of the bombing but because of our administration's refusal to work with Russia in a proactive way.

In fact, as I mentioned earlier today, Mr. Speaker, a Duma member was here in this Capitol building, and he said something very interesting: that for decades and decades the Soviet Communist Party had spent billions of dollars to try to convince the Russian people that America was bad, that we were a Nation that was filled with hate and that Russia should not in the end want to be friends with, and he went on to say that the Soviet Communist Party failed. All the money they spent, all the activities they engaged in could not convince the Russian people that America was evil or that America was not a nation of the highest standards.

And he went on to say today that in just 45 days this President has done what the Soviet Communist party could not do in decades and decades of attempts, and that is because of the Kosovo crisis, because of the incessant bombing of the people of Serbia; because of the lack of involvement of Russia, the Russian people had turned against America, and that the polls were showing that Russians all over that nation now see America in their minds and in their eyes in a negative way.

What they have told us is that if we continue this policy, we are going to push Russia right into the hands of the communists and the ultra nationalists who want to revert back to the Cold War days when America was the enemy.

Russia has elections scheduled for this year, Mr. Speaker, and the Russians that are friends of ours, the pro-Western forces, are saying if you continue the policies that you are currently pursuing, you will defeat us in the election and you will end up with the Duma, a federation council and a president who are anti-American, who are anti-West and who will turn toward the Middle Eastern, in many cases the rogue states.

That is not what we want, Mr. Speaker.

So when the Russians called me 5 weeks ago at home, I said, "Send me what you would like us to pursue." They sent me a simple document that contained three ideas.

The first one was that Russia should accept responsibility for helping to stop the ethnic cleansing, and they called it ethnic cleansing.

Number two, that Milosevic had to come to grips with the NATO requirements. The only problem Russia had with that was that they felt U.S. and British troops on the ground would not be appropriate, since America and Britain were the primary bombers that were persecuting the raids over Serbia.

And, number three, that there be a commission established between the

Congress and the Duma to oversee any agreement that would be reached.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that was a simple plan, but as I looked at it, I said, "You know, it's something we can build on." So I took that document. Not wanting to work outside of our government, I wrote up a memo.

I first of all called the White House and talked to Leon Fuerth, the top security adviser to Vice President Gore, and I said, "Mr. Fuerth, this is what the Russians have done. You know of my involvement with them. I want to send you a copy of their proposal, and I want to let you know I am going to work with them quietly."

He and I suggested that I follow up that call with Carlos Pascual from the National Security Council who focuses on Russian issues. I called him. I faxed him the same memo.

In that first week of April I told no Republican what I was doing, but I kept our government informed.

Over the weekend we had additional calls.

The following week I decided to brief the Director of Central Intelligence, George Tenet. I let him know that I had been contacted, what my response was and that I had told the Russians that I was supportive of the five points that NATO had eventually come to put into writing and the administration's approach, that I was willing to work with them to try to find a peaceful solution.

Also that week, Mr. Speaker, which was the week of August or April 13, I contacted two Democrat colleagues in this body: the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA). Congressman Hoyer is my cochair on the Russian Duma-Congress Initiative, he is very well respected by the administration, and he is a good friend of mine who I trust. Congressman Murtha, also a good friend, is a key person that the administration relies on.

I asked the gentleman from Pennsylvania and the gentleman from Maryland to talk to the administration, to talk to Strobe Talbott and talk to the White House and let them know what I was doing, and they both did that, and they told me they did. The gentleman from Maryland talked to Strobe Talbott, and the gentleman from Pennsylvania talked to the White House.

Also that week, Mr. Speaker, I approached three other Democrats in this body: the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BLAGOJEVICH) because of his Serbian background and ethnic ties; the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) who had just returned from Kosovo; and the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) who had gone with me to Moscow in December.

So during the second week of this process I contacted no Republicans but again focused on the other party and the administration, trying to find common ground.

At the end of that week, Mr. Speaker, I called the State Department and

talked at length two times to Steve Sestanovich, who is in charge of Russian affairs within the State Department. I talked to his assistant from my home, Andre Lewis, who had traveled with a delegation that I chaired to Moscow in early December of last year. I briefed them on what had happened and told them that I was trying to work out an idea that the Russians had brought to my attention because of their frustration in seeing that the administration had cut off contact with Russia in trying to solve the Kosovo conflict peacefully.

Mr. Speaker, besides talking to Sestanovich and Andre Lewis and all of the others that I mentioned earlier, I decided to challenge the Russians because they asked me to bring a bipartisan delegation to meet with them when they travel to Belgrade to meet with Milosevic. I said: Give me that in writing. Give me the request on your official letterhead. Tell me who the colleagues will be from the Russian side that we will interact with. Give me the written time and date of the meeting with Milosevic. Give me an understanding and a commitment that we will meet with our POWs, who up until this point in time had not been talked to by anyone, even the Red Cross. And commit to me that you will go to a refugee camp of our choosing to see the pain and suffering brought forward by Milosevic.

Mr. Speaker, the Russians agreed to all five points. They wrote to me. First, Deputy Speaker Ryshkov and now chairman of Chernomyrdin's political faction, Nosh Dom, Our Home is Russia, wrote to me a very personal letter, and he asked me to get formally involved. Again, Mr. Speaker, I did not go to my Republican colleagues. I went to my Democrat friend and colleague, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), and I said, "Can you help me get a meeting with the White House? Can you help me get a meeting with Sandy Berger so I can run this idea by him?"

I called Sandy Berger three times, Mr. Speaker. He never had the courtesy to return my phone call. So I asked again the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) if he would work with me to get a meeting with Strobe Talbott. He said, "Call Talbott. He will return your call and you'll get a meeting."

□ 2045

This was Thursday, Mr. Speaker, April 23. Strobe Talbott said I will meet with you today.

I said I want to bring the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) with me. I picked the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) up. We drove down to the State Department and for 90 minutes we met with Strobe Talbott and three of his top deputies.

We went over with him the offer of the Russians to come to Budapest to achieve a dialogue of understanding based on those first three principles; then the drive together on a bus to Bel-

grade, where at 1:00 on that following Monday we would have a face-to-face meeting with Milosevic; we would have lunch with our POWs and travel to a refugee camp so the Russians would see the horror that Milosevic has perpetrated on the Kosovar people.

After the meeting, Strobe Talbott said, I have concerns about what you want to do but I will talk to the Secretary of State and Sandy Berger. Two hours later that evening, Thursday, April 23, Strobe Talbott called back and said, you can do what you want as a citizen, we cannot stop you, but our advice is that you should not travel to Belgrade.

I said to him if my government says we should not go, I will not be a renegade. I will call the Russians and tell them that we are not coming to meet with them, and I did.

That was a very upsetting telephone call to the Russians because they had also arranged for one of Milosevic's top aides, Dragomir Karic, to meet with us and drive with us to Belgrade. Karic is a very successful businessman in Belgrade, in Russia. His companies employ 64,000. He owns a TV station in Serbia. He owns a bank. He owns extensive companies. He is not a member of the government but is a key financial supporter and a close personal friend of Milosevic and his wife. He was going to be the person who accompanied us into Belgrade for these meetings.

When we were turned down by our government, I told the Russians that the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) had suggested that we have another meeting in a neutral site, and the State Department, through Strobe Talbott, agreed and thought that would be a good idea. So I told the Russians that weekend that they should plan a trip to a neutral city, and they said we will go to Vienna on April the 30; Vienna, Austria.

Then Monday of last week, Mr. Speaker, I developed a 3-page letter which I sent to all 435 Members of the House. That 3-page letter documented everything I had been doing, including the fact that I had not involved the Republicans because I did not want our friends on the minority side and the administration to say somehow we were doing something partisan or that somehow we were doing something that was less than honorable or that somehow we were doing something to embarrass the President. No one could say that. In fact, no one can say that today.

That letter went out to every Member and I invited every Member of this body to join with me and with others in trying to find a bipartisan solution to the Kosovo crisis that would end the bombing and end the hostility.

On Tuesday and Wednesday evening of last week, we had meetings with Members of Congress. We sat together and we talked. A number of us at our Republican Conference on Wednesday asked our leadership not to have the votes on Thursday, because we felt

they would be too confusing to have votes about whether or not to declare war or whether or not to withdraw the troops.

We asked our leadership to postpone those votes until this week. We were not successful, because the gentleman who offered that resolution, the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL), wanted to have the votes on that day, which, in fact, is a requirement of the War Powers resolution.

In fact, I went to the Committee on Rules that night at 10:30 and asked the Committee on Rules to consider a motion to be made in order to allow me to table the votes until this week so we could meet with the Russians to see if there was some possibility of common ground.

We were not successful in that attempt. The votes occurred, and all day Thursday I sought to get the approval for a plane to take a delegation to Vienna.

Working with colleagues like my friend, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS), we got the approval and at 6:00 last Thursday evening, 11 Members of Congress got on an airplane that holds 12 people. We flew all night and we arrived in Vienna the next morning.

That delegation, Mr. Speaker, included the most liberal Members of this body, including now a good friend of mine, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), our only socialist and independent; Democrats who support the President, like the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHY) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. Brown); Democrats who have been concerned about the President's policy, like the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) and the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) and 5 Republican Members who ranged from moderate to the very right in terms of the political spectrum, like the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS).

Eleven of us traveled to Vienna overnight. We had discussions on the way over about what our approach would be. I briefed them on the backgrounds of the Russian delegates. I told them what we would hope to accomplish, and we reached agreement.

When we arrived in Vienna at 8:30 in the morning on Friday, we went right to our hotel. We had just enough time to change and we proceeded to go to the state house of Austria, where we had a meeting for an hour and a half with the chairman or the speaker of the Austrian parliament.

We wanted to get a feel for what Austria, an independent, nonaligned nation, would think about the Kosovo crisis and the bombing and the ethnic cleansing.

After we got the chance to meet with the speaker of that body, we went to the Russian hotel where the Russian delegates were staying and we began our meetings.

Mr. Speaker, in those meetings, besides the 11 Members of Congress representing Republicans and Democrats, I invited a State Department employee, who works in the Russian desk, who works for Stestanovich, Andre Lewis, to sit with us at our meetings, not to be a participant because this was a legislative session, but to listen to what we were saying so that no one could misconstrue our approach, our methodology and our process.

He sat through every meeting and every dinner and every breakfast and session that we had. Along with the Russians and along with the Americans, we had Dragomir Karic. He is, as I said earlier, one of the strongest financial supporters of Milosevic. He was there to advise the Russians. The Russian delegation included Vladimir Ryshkov who was most recently the first deputy speaker, number two, in the state Duma, their parliament. He now is the chairman of a very successful political party in Russia called Our Home is Russia. In fact, it is the party that Chernomyrdin is a member of. He is a very close associate of Chernomyrdin, who was Russia's envoy on the Balkan issue, the Kosovo issue, and he had had conversations with Chernomyrdin both before and during the time he arrived in Vienna.

The second member of the Russian side was Vladimir Luhkin, the former Soviet ambassador to the U.S., a member of the Yabloko, a moderate faction in the Duma, and also the chairman of the International Affairs Committee. Luhkin is a very well respected member of the Duma, someone that Duma deputies look to for advice on foreign affairs and international issues.

The third representative in the Duma delegation was Alexander Shapanov. Shapanov represented Seleznyov, the Communist faction, the largest faction in the state Duma. He was there to bring the broad coalition of political ideology to the table so that if we reached agreement it was not just with one faction or with one part of the government, but actually represented a consensus in Russia of what should be our approach to solving this problem peacefully.

Along with those three deputies was Segie Konovalenko. Konovalenko, who is a good friend of mine, is the chief protocol officer for the Russian Duma who works with all the players in the Duma and all the political factions in Russia. There are seven major factions in the Duma. He works with all seven.

In beginning our discussions, Mr. Speaker, I said that we had some basic premises that we needed to understand. Number one, we were not representing our government. We were not there as official representatives of President Clinton, nor were we representing our State Department. We were parliamentarians, engaging in parliamentary discussions as we have on numerous times over the past 5 years on a variety of issues.

The second point was that the five points that NATO had put forth were

the basis of our discussion. We were not deviating from the policy of this administration. We were building on what President Clinton and the NATO countries said had to be the basis for a peaceful resolution of this conflict.

With that in mind, we started our discussions, and for the rest of Friday every member on both sides had a chance to give their views. During our discussions, the Russian side, and the representative of Milosevic, said to us you all have to come with us to Belgrade on this trip. It is extremely important that you meet with Milosevic. They said to us, if you come to Belgrade, you will be given one, perhaps two or possibly three, of our POWs. They will be released if you come to Belgrade for discussions.

I told our Russian friends, and I told the representative of Milosevic, that we would not be going to Belgrade; that I had given my word to Speaker HASTERT that our delegation would not go down to Belgrade because in his conversations with Madeleine Albright they had agreed that we should not do that. So I told the delegates that could not be acceptable, but we continued our deliberations.

On Saturday morning, after our staffs worked through the night to develop the framework of an agreement or a discussion paper, a report if you will, we met for breakfast. We continued our discussions through breakfast, stayed in one room in our hotel until we went over every word in every sentence in the document.

If any one member of the American side or the Russian side objected, we stopped. It was not a vote. It was where any one member could object to any one word or phrase we would go back and revisit that until we reached agreement.

We did that for every line in the document until at 1:00 p.m. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, this past Saturday, we reached agreement with our Russian friends and colleagues.

The agreement, I thought, was somewhat significant, because it was the first time that Russian leadership acknowledged that there must be a multinational peace force placed inside of Kosovo, and the Russians agreed with that. It was the first time that Russian representatives agreed that Milosevic must remove the armed Serbian military and armed personnel out of Kosovo, and Russia agreed with that.

It was the first time that Russia allowed the acknowledgment of the phrase, ethnic cleansing, in a document involving Kosovo, and the Russian side agreed with that.

It was the first time that an acknowledgment by Russia offered the opportunity for the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council to determine the makeup of the multinational force. It was a document that was plain, that was simple, but gave a framework for a peaceful settlement and negotiation of this crisis.

We did not negotiate. We did not get into how many troops should be left in

Kosovo. We did not get into the makeup of the military force, because that is the job of our government, but we did agree on a framework.

We also said that three things must occur simultaneously, without regard to the order. We said, first of all, the bombing must stop. Number two, Milosevic must remove all of his armed forces from Kosovo. Number three, that KLA aggression must also stop. The Russians agreed to that as well.

When we finished the document about 1:00 in the afternoon, we were pleased because we had come together as representatives of different points of views but now deciding on a common agenda to move forward together that we could take back to our governments as parliamentarians and encourage them to work on.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, Milosevic's representative, Mr. Karic, took the document that the Russians gave him and faxed it to Belgrade. Approximately one half-hour later, Milosevic himself was on the phone with Dragomir Karic for the third time in our discussions, and he told Karic that if we came to Belgrade, this delegation of 11 members, if we went to Belgrade, and they would provide the bus, that was not a question, it would have been a 7-hour journey down through Budapest into Belgrade, if we went to Belgrade that two things would happen. Number one, and this was said to all 11 members in the room at the same time, at 1:00 on Saturday, we were told all three prisoners of war would be released to the American delegation.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we were told, as a group, that Karic felt 100 percent certain that if we went to Belgrade the framework that we had agreed upon with the Russians would be publicly embraced by Milosevic. Now, that was certainly something new, Mr. Speaker, in both regards.

We had not gone to Vienna to talk about the POWs, but this was the way that Karic was wanting to get us to go to Belgrade.

I thought to myself, this is significant. Even though I have given the Speaker of the House my word, I have got to check with our State Department.

So I asked the representative of the State Department who was with us, Andre Lewis, to call back to Washington, the special ops center for the State Department, and see what the response would be of his bosses. He made a call and got on the phone with Steve Stestanovich, who is in charge of Russian affairs at the State Department. He asked me to get with him on the phone, and I did.

I read him the 2-page document. I told him about the agreement. I told him that we were not negotiating on behalf of the country but we reached an agreement on a framework, and I told him what Milosevic had said through Karic and what the Russians had agreed to, that if we went to Belgrade we would bring the POWs out

and that Milosevic would embrace the framework publicly.

□ 2100

He said to me, CURT, I have got to have someone higher up talk to you. I will have someone call you. I said, fine.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, one of the Members of the other side of the aisle who was with us, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MAURICE HINCHEY), who is a strong supporter of the President, called the White House from Vienna.

Through the White House Special Operations Center he got in touch with the Chief of Staff for President Clinton, Mr. Podesta. He told Mr. Podesta that the five Democrats on our trip were convinced that something was happening of significance, that the White House should talk to the State Department, because we had faxed them the two-page document.

Mr. Podesta said he would immediately contact the State Department to see what the significance of this event was, and through the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) we encouraged the White House to encourage the State Department to consider whether or not we should pursue the opportunity available to us.

Mr. Speaker, by that time a phone call came in from Washington that I was asked to get involved with from the Under Secretary of State, Tom Pickering. Tom Pickering is a long-time friend, and someone who I have a great deal of respect and admiration for. Five years ago when we started the Duma-Congress effort, he was the ambassador from our country to Russia in Moscow.

He said to me, CURT, what is happening? I said, Mr. Ambassador, and I read the document to him. I said, we have come to an agreement, a framework which I think might be useful to bring Russia and Milosevic in line with what you, the State Department, want in terms of a peaceful resolution of this conflict.

I said, I'm not asking you to endorse this paper, but I'm telling you what we have agreed upon as parliamentarians. Let me tell you what they want us to do. I said, Mr. Ambassador, they want us to go into Belgrade. They have committed to us, Milosevic through Karic, that all three POWs will be released. In addition, they have said that they are 100 percent certain that Milosevic will embrace the principles that the Russians and Americans agreed to.

He said, CURT, those promises have been made before. You can't trust Milosevic's word. What makes you think you are going to be successful? He went on to say, you know, a couple of missions have tried to get the POWs out. In fact, he said, Jesse Jackson's mission has been a failure. He is not bringing out the POWs.

Mr. Speaker, that phone conversation was at approximately 1:30 or 2 o'clock last Saturday afternoon. I had not been following the Jackson delega-

tion, although I was supportive of what he was doing because he was trying to get our POWs out.

I said, all I am telling you, Mr. Pickering, is what the Russians and Karic tell us. I will not take this delegation to Belgrade if you say that you advise against that, because I understand that we are not to interfere with the policies and the negotiations of this government, and that we are not to go in and, in effect, create interference, especially when hostilities are occurring. So if you say don't go, even though we could go as independent citizens, we won't go.

At the end of that conversation I thanked Ambassador Pickering and went downstairs. I told my friends from the Congress, the Russian Duma deputies, and Karic on behalf of Milosevic, that we would not be going into Belgrade. They were disappointed, very upset. In fact, a couple of our Members who were with us from both parties wanted to go into Belgrade on their own. I said, no, we are not going to do that. We are going to stay together as a group.

We did open the possibility of Milosevic making some kind of a public statement which would perhaps change things. Pickering had told me, if that happens, call me back.

That was about 2 o'clock, Mr. Speaker. We met in the same meeting room that we had been in all day to decide further actions that we would take in both Moscow and the U.S. to create a visibility of our agreement, to spread it throughout the country and throughout Russia and Europe; that we thought there was a capability for a common framework, for a solution, a negotiated settlement on the terms of NATO and our government.

Two hours and 15 minutes after we had told Milosevic that we would not go to Belgrade, we were sitting in the room together and one of our military escorts came in the room and announced to us that CNN had just announced on television that Milosevic had agreed that he would release the POWs within 3 to 5 hours to Jesse Jackson's delegation.

We were ecstatic, Mr. Speaker, because that is not why we went to Vienna, but we were happy that they were being released. Obviously, we were disappointed because we could have been there, and perhaps if we would have been there we could have also done something that I think was equally important, and that was to get Milosevic to publicly embrace what I think will be the final process for achieving a peaceful settlement in Kosovo.

With the release of the POWs to occur in a matter of hours, we felt it was impossible to convince our State Department to give us the okay to go into Belgrade just to discuss this framework that we had agreed on.

So instead, we went to dinner with the Russians and with Milosevic's Rep, Karic, and we had a great time dis-

cussing how we had come together and how we would work together in the future to implement this process. Upon arriving back in Washington on Saturday, we agreed to meet this week, and all week we have had an aggressive agenda to move forward our agenda.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday we mailed letters to every Member of the House describing what had occurred in the delegation, along with the document. On Tuesday, every member of our delegation signed 40 letters. Those letters went to the Pope, they went to the chief cleric of the Muslim faith in Yugoslavia, they went to the head of the orthodox church in Yugoslavia.

A copy of the document went with a signed letter by all of us to Kofi Anan, and I called the U.N. and told them we were available for meetings. We faxed our document to every parliament from every NATO country, all 19 NATO countries.

I met with representatives of Ukraine and gave them a copy to give to the Rada, and the Rada is now considering passing a resolution equal to the one that my good friend and colleague that I am going to recognize in a moment prepared for consideration by this Congress, a resolution supporting the basic framework that we agreed upon.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, beside those contacts, we mailed copies of this to TRENT LOTT and TOM DASCHLE, DENNY HASTERT and DICK GEPHARDT, the White House, the State Department, so that everyone in America has been given not just last Saturday from Vienna, but this week, a copy of a framework that we felt could begin the peace process.

Imagine how we felt this morning, Mr. Speaker, when we all heard on the news and read in the papers that the G-7 countries plus Russia had met, and their meeting was historic because they announced this one-page statement.

This one-page statement, Mr. Speaker, is a statement of a process to begin the end of the Kosovo crisis. Mr. Speaker, this statement is identical to what this group did last Saturday with the Russians in Vienna. This group of 11 Members of Congress, liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans, supporters of the President and opponents of the President, put together a document that is almost identical to this document agreed to by the eight nations that govern activities in Europe and throughout the world, the G-8 group.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work that we accomplished, and that we may or may not have had an impact on this document. I know what we did. I know what we accomplished. I know that Chernomyrdin was talking to Ryshkov, we were done, and I said to him, Vladimir, how close is what we did to what your country will accept? He said, it is identical. What we have agreed upon is what Russia in the end will accept.

Today, Mr. Speaker, President Clinton was traveling around the world.

Maybe the President was not informed by his staff, maybe he does not read the papers. Let me read the quote when President Clinton was asked about the G-8 statement that was read to him.

This is what our president said. "Clinton described the agreement as important because 'as far as I know, this is the first time that the Russians have publicly said they support international security as well as civilian force in Kosovo.'"

Mr. Speaker, the President is wrong. The first time was last Saturday. The first time was in Vienna. The first time was when the leaders of the political parties in Russia agreed with us in Vienna to move forward in a new direction.

We think now is the time to seize the opportunity to reach out, to show some good faith by putting together a negotiated agreement that allows the stopping of the bombing at the same time the troops are removed, to stop the hostilities by the KLA, to reinstate the refugees, to give them protection, to provide the humanitarian assistance, to do all of those things that now we have an opportunity to succeed with.

The opportunity is in the hands of this administration. They are going to have to again reach out to Russia, but they are going to also have to reach out to Milosevic. I know we do not like to talk to Milosevic, Mr. Speaker, but we have an opportunity to end this conflict.

Forty-five days of incessant bombing, 45 days of driving people in Serbia who were enemies of Milosevic to become his biggest supporters, 45 days of driving 1 million people, along with Milosevic, out of Kosovo into the fields and to the remote areas around that country who are starving, who are without food, who are living in unhealthy conditions; and 45 days of convincing the Russian people that we are their enemy.

It is time to change that, Mr. Speaker. This framework allows us to achieve dignity, dignity for NATO, dignity for this administration and our country, dignity for the Russians, dignity for the European community, for everyone who is concerned with a peaceful resolution.

I would implore this administration not to miss this opportunity. This is a chance to end this conflict on our terms, to let NATO be able to say that they have achieved what they want, to let this government say that it had an achieved what it wants, but it has done it because of the help and cooperation of the leadership in Russia.

I would say to our friends and colleagues and to the American people, I sure hope we do not miss this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, because it is going to be once in a lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) for whatever comments he would like to make, my good friend who is a member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intel-

ligence, a distinguished member of this body, and has a distinguished military career on top of that.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, for yielding to me a little bit of time here to join with him in this very important process.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that we can enter into the RECORD a copy of the agreement, the report of the meeting between the U.S. Congress and the Russian Duma that took place over the time frame of April 30 through the first of May that we have already been discussing, and I hope maybe later on if we have a little bit of time, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) and I can go over some of the similarities between the G-8 declaration and the principles that were brought forward in our Congress and Duma process.

Before I do that I want to take just a moment, and not often does America realize the significance or the importance of the work the gentleman has been doing for the last 5 years, trying to bridge the gap, build better and more personal relationships with our counterparts in the Russian Duma, and of course the Russian Duma is similar to the House of Representatives that we have here in Congress.

It has been through the gentleman's hard work over the last several years that we have been able to call on them, to establish a working relationship that has resulted in what I think may be some of the most historic work to date from this study group.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentleman, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. GIBBONS. First, let me say that there is a real important reason for us to work together. Of course, we all know the fact that proliferation of nuclear weapons around this world is primarily something that we have a deep and abiding interest in, and being able to work together with countries that are nuclear powers oftentimes sheds light on how we can better preserve the peace, even build a little security for everyone around the world.

The relationship that I came away with from meeting with our Russian counterparts was one that struck me as something we should all take to heart. They were very concerned about the fact that NATO's attack on a small country, Serbia, was one that was envisioned as being 19 countries versus one single small country like Yugoslavia.

They were concerned that such countries, when they are threatened by a massive force such as NATO, would oftentimes reach back into an arsenal of weaponry that may include either biological, chemical, or even nuclear weapons which could end up escalating a war into something that no one, not in this body, not in the administration, in fact, I daresay no one in America would want to have happen.

□ 2115

And it is the relationship that the gentleman has with the Russians and

the relationship that was developed in this meeting in Vienna that I think helps avoid conflicts like that, avoids the fact that they know that that is not what we want, that we do not want to face an escalation of military violence of that level. So the working relationships bridges gaps, builds friendships, and builds confidence.

And I think one thing also that we ought to help our American viewers who are watching tonight understand is that the level of distrust, of mistrust—

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Members are reminded that remarks are to be directed to the Chair.

Mr. GIBBONS. I thank the Speaker; and, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that I can remind you that the level of distrust and mistrust of our Russian brothers and sisters toward the United States has never been at a lower point except for the time of the Korean War.

We have an obligation, we have a duty, and yes, indeed, we have an opportunity to sort of melt part of that iceberg that is out there so that we can get on with having a safer and more peaceful world.

I was most impressed with the gentleman's effort, his energy and his willingness to continue this fight. As I listened to the historical recitation of what he went through to ensure that we had an opportunity and a voice to bring forth those Russian ideas, those Russian concerns, that cannot be overstated.

It is so important for everyone to understand that much of this diplomatic process that we go through has a foundation, has a start somewhere, and it can only start when we reach out, reach across the sea to our Russian friends, and the gentleman has certainly done that on more than one occasion, but this is a very important time.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I would enter into the RECORD at this time a copy of the report of the meetings between the United States Congress and the Russian Duma that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) and I have talked about here this evening.

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.

Members of Congress:

Curt Weldon, Neil Abercrombie, Jim Saxton, Bernie Sanders, Roscoe Bartlett, Corrine Brown, Jim Gibbons, Maurice Hinchey, Joseph R. Pitts, Don Sherwood, Dennis J. Kucinich.

Duma Deputies:

_____, _____, _____, _____

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, perhaps the gentleman from Pennsylvania and I can go over a little bit of the similarity between our document dated the 1st of May here and the G-8, or the G-7 plus Russia announcement today.

As I look at the calendar, today is May 6, so it has been a full 5 days, and that is time enough, as I see it, for them to have an opportunity to review the good work and the hard work that we put forward in that meeting and the statement of the G-7 plus Russia principles here.

I would just like to take the first one.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. I would just like to say, before we do that, that for those who say that parliamentarians should not be involved in meeting with other parliamentarians, and I think the gentleman did a good job earlier today when he gave a 1-minute on this issue, that this administration is constantly encouraging Members of Congress to engage their counterparts around the world. In fact, we have programs that do that.

I got involved with Russia long before I was in Congress when a U.S. funded program, called the American Council of Young Political Leaders, encouraged me as a county commissioner to travel to Russia because my party thought that one day I might serve in Congress. Now, little did I realize that a couple of decades ago those early trips to Russia would result in me traveling to Russia some 19 times where I would host literally hundreds if not thousands of Russian leaders when they come to America and where I would have the opportunity, working with our friend and colleague, who is, by the way, watching these proceedings tonight, a former Member, Greg Laughlin, and starting 8 years ago a Russian-American Energy Caucus to try to find ways to bring hard currency into Russia so they would not have to sell off their nuclear technology or their conventional weapons.

The administration back then was supportive of our efforts. They were supportive of our efforts to help solve environmental problems, the nuclear waste problem up in the Arctic Ocean, out in the Sea of Japan. So it is interesting that the media in this city and the administration that has encouraged us so much to interact so much with these other leaders all of a sudden, when we do something constructive that maybe embarrasses them, all of a sudden says, well, we do not need 435 armchair diplomats.

We are not armchair diplomats, Mr. Speaker. We are doing what this administration asked us to do, which Vice President Gore and Viktor Chernomyrdin, when we started this effort 5 years ago, right down the hallway on the Senate side, stood up at a luncheon and said, it is fantastic, but now Gore-Chernomyrdin is going to be

supplemented by a Duma-Congress study group, and applauded our foresight as parliamentarians coming together to try to build trust and understanding.

So it is okay to do it when they think it is important, but when we disagree or think that things are not going the way perhaps they could be going, and we try to use that influence that we have, all of a sudden we are not doing the right thing. Is that not amazing that that could happen?

Mr. GIBBONS. That is absolutely correct.

And if the gentleman will continue to yield, I just wish to say that I could not be more pleased at the hard work the gentleman has done over the past few years in building that important relationship, because it came to fruition when the gentleman reached out and asked for them to meet with us on this very important document at this very important time in this Balkans crisis. They willingly came because of the great respect they have for the gentleman and his hard work, and that was evident throughout the meeting.

I have to say that every one of us, whether we are in Congress or just ordinary citizens, are diplomats of this country when we travel abroad. So it is impossible to separate ourselves from our American heritage. It is part of us.

And we have even a higher responsibility when we are an elected official, especially those of us in Congress, in dealing with our counterparts, for example in the Russian Duma, to reflect American policies, to reflect American ideals. And we did that without negotiating, without breaching fundamental trust with the administration.

This was something that was established and has been established, as the gentleman said, over a number of years, and it has absolutely proven to be one of the most important relationships, one of the most important things that we can do as Members of Congress, to build trust between countries so that we never have to realize conflict, never have to go back to the days of the Cold War.

I think we are teetering today on the brink of entering another cold war. If we lose the elections in Russia, if we lose that confidence, if we end up having the cynicism about U.S. relationships with Russia that are now starting to grow, we could very well end up back in that same old Cold War that we all celebrated the end of in 1989.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. I agree.

The gentleman's suggestion was a valid one, that we go through the G-8 document and compare it side by side to what we did just so that the American people know that what we agreed on with the Russians has now, in fact, become the basis of a G-8 set of principles to negotiate an end to this conflict.

Mr. GIBBONS. I would like to be the G-8, if he wants to respond to what our agreement said.

Let me take the first one. Number one, immediate and verifiable end of violence and repression in Kosovo.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. And our position on that same issue, and I will read it word for word, the stopping of NATO bombing, cessation of KLA activities, withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo, calls for termination of violence and atrocities.

If that is not identical, I do not know what is.

Mr. GIBBONS. It is almost word for word.

Let me take number two. Let us see how similar we can get with number two.

Withdrawal from Kosovo of military police and paramilitary forces.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Ours says, withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo.

Mr. GIBBONS. Identical.

Number three, the deployment in Kosovo of effective international civil and (armed) security presences, endorsed and adopted by the United Nations, capable of guaranteeing the achievement of the common objectives.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. And ours says, agreement on the composition of armed international forces which would administer Kosovo after the Serb withdrawal, to be determined by the U.N. five-member Security Council.

Mr. GIBBONS. Does not get much closer.

Let us go to number four. Number four says, the establishment of an interim administration for Kosovo to be decided by the U.N. Security Council to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants in Kosovo.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. And our document says, the composition of armed forces should be decided by a consensus agreement of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council in consultation with Macedonia, Albania, Yugoslavia and the recognized leadership of Kosovo. And the above group would be monitored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, of which both Russia and the U.S. are member nations.

And we had dinner at the ambassador's home for the U.S. with the Russian ambassador alongside of us.

Mr. GIBBONS. That is correct. And so all we did was broaden out a little bit the applicability and who would be in there helping to decide this very important objective.

So it seems so far that, of the four we have talked about, we have almost got parallel if not word-for-word concurrence with what this agreement that we worked on over the weekend says.

Let us take number five. Number five states, the safe and free return of all refugees and displaced persons and unimpeded access to Kosovo by humanitarian aid organizations.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. This one sounds close here. The voluntary

repatriation of refugees in Yugoslavia and unhindered access to them by humanitarian aid organizations.

Mr. GIBBONS. I guess they could not get more creative than to copy us word for word, could they?

Let us look at number six. Number six says, a political process towards the establishment of an interim political framework agreement providing a substantial self-government for Kosovo, taking full account of Rambouillet Accords and principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and other countries in the region, and demilitarization of UCK, which is the KLA.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. And ours says, recognizes the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, including wide autonomy for Kosovo, a multi-ethnic population, and treatment of all Yugoslavia peoples in accordance with international norms.

Mr. GIBBONS. Just reworded.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. We just did not use that fancy Rambouillet word, but the content of what we said is identical to what is in number six.

Mr. GIBBONS. That is correct.

Finally, number seven, comprehensive approach to economic development and stabilization of the crisis region.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. And we said, supports efforts to provide international assistance to rebuild destroyed refugee homes and other humanitarian assistance to victims in Kosovo.

Mr. GIBBONS. And if the gentleman will yield, as we have gone down these seven principles that were established in the G-7 plus Russia or commonly known as the G-8, I think it is very clear upon a reading of the document that we worked out over the weekend, a reading of the principles that they have stated here and a comparison of the two shows that there is a direct, an almost word-for-word influence of their statement, which has come about to be, as stated in the press, a new framework for the peaceful solution of the Kosovo crisis.

So I can only applaud and congratulate the gentleman here publicly for his effort in this, because I think it was directly because of our working agreement, our working relationship between the Congress of the United States and the Duma of Russia that we were able to bring about a higher public awareness of the willingness on terms that are satisfactory to the United States, and including many of the NATO countries, if not all of the NATO countries, for a peaceful solution of the Kosovo crisis.

I just could not be more proud of the gentleman, and I could not be more pleased to be part of this effort. Certainly, as the gentleman mentioned earlier in the evening, we do have a resolution which is going to come about next week and is going to pretty much give a sense of Congress and stating an outline of the important work

that was done here, the reason for it, and sort of giving congressional support to the framework that the gentleman worked so very hard to achieve.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Let me thank my colleague and add to what he has said and congratulate him, because he is the one that worked with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) and also worked with the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) to develop this legislation which is to be the subject of a hearing next week.

Unfortunately, the minority leadership, bowing to the White House again, would not let us hold the hearing on Wednesday, because that would require their unanimous consent, so we have to hold the hearing on Thursday. Another obstacle, another day of bombing. We could do this hearing on Wednesday and move the legislation, but, no, because we do not want to have the Congress discuss this issue, we cannot do it until Thursday because the administration has convinced the minority side, in spite of the support of their own Members, that we should not have this hearing until the full 7 days.

□ 2130

But I want to say we will have that hearing. I talked to our Russian counterparts this morning, and they are planning on bringing up the exact same resolution in the State Duma. Our hope is to have this Congress pass it, the Russian Duma pass it; and I am even hoping that members of the Ukrainian Rada will pass this.

In fact, I had a call today from a member of the German Bundestag. He received our document and he wants to pursue this with members of the European parliaments. So momentum is building.

I do want to take this time to acknowledge our other Members, as I know my colleague would. On the minority side we had an outstanding delegation. They would be here tonight, but since we ended the session, Members are on their way back to their districts. We do have a long weekend.

We are staying here because we have events in town. But our Members did do special orders earlier this week. We could not get a full hour because all the time was booked. But they would have been here tonight, and I want to acknowledge them all personally.

The ranking Democrat on our trip was the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. NEIL ABERCROMBIE), an outstanding Member, a tireless advocate for trying to find a peaceful resolution to this conflict;

The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN), a Member who has become a dynamic leader on Russian issues. She has traveled to Russia with me twice. She now chairs an effort with female members of the Russian Duma to build better relations between our two bodies;

The gentleman from New York (MAURICE HINCHEY), a strong supporter of

President Clinton who supported the bombing efforts, support the President's policies, and was a very key part of our delegation. In fact, he is the one who talked to Podesta at the White House from Vienna;

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DENNIS KUCINICH), former Mayor of Cleveland, who is an active Member who has a background from the Balkans ethnically, understands the problems. Probably no one is as well versed in this Congress on issues involving the Balkans than the Democrat from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH);

And the fifth Democrat, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. BERNIE SANDERS), who is the only Independent, the only socialist in Congress, a self-admitted liberal. He was an outstanding contributor to our effort.

In fact, it was interesting, I was in a press conference with the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. ROSCOE BARTLETT) today and he is as far to the right as the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is to the left. And the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) said, you know something, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and I sat together during all the discussions and there was not one issue that he and I disagreed on. We were in sync on every issue in every statement. My colleague and I were in complete agreement. That is the kind of relationship we have.

Perhaps my colleague would like to go over some of the other Republican Members that were with us on the delegation. I have covered the Democrats.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, first of all, if I can just repeat that my colleague down here from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) was the head of this delegation. It was a bipartisan delegation, as he has already stated.

On our side we had the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. JIM SAXTON) who is a wonderful contributor to the process, brought a great deal of insight to the committee, both his position on his committee assignment, as well as having traveled to Yugoslavia earlier in the week in an effort on his own as an individual to learn more about the process and meet and be able to inform us of his findings, as well.

We had also the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. ROSCOE BARTLETT) as my colleague has said, one of the gentleman who has a defined point of view, as we say, but yet contributed very well to the whole process as we go.

We had the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOE PITTS) a wonderful colleague who came into the same Congress as I did in the same class in the 105th Congress, a remarkable individual, very renowned for his work in education and a great member of our bipartisan delegation, as my colleague has already stated.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. His colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. DON SHERWOOD) was there also, a good friend of my colleague's.

Mr. GIBBONS. And the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DON SHER-

WOOD) a freshman who entered this Congress this year but with a great deal of enthusiasm, a great deal of respect for the process, serves on the Committee on Armed Services and made an ideal partner in all of this as we went forward during this time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Members are reminded again that they are to address their remarks to the Chair, not to the television audience.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. McNULTY (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of personal business.

Mr. BEREUTER (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today after 3:30 p.m. on account of official business.

Mr. KUYKENDALL (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of attending his son's college graduation.

Mr. BLILEY (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today after 3:00 p.m. on account of official travel on behalf of the standing committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assemblies special meeting on the Kosovo situation.

Mr. TIAHRT (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of inspecting tornado damage in Kansas.

Mr. PACKARD (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today after 3:30 p.m. on account of official business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. CARSON, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. NETHERCUTT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. WOLF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. NETHERCUTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HILL of Montana, for 5 minutes, on May 12.

Mr. KASICH, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GIBBONS, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, May 10, 1999, at 2 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1901. A letter from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Oranges, Grapefruit, Tangerines, and Tangelos Grown in Florida and Imported Grapefruit; Relaxation of the Minimum Size Requirement for Red Seedless Grapefruit [Docket No. FV99-905-1 FIR] received April 6, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1902. A letter from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Olives Grown in California; Increased Assessment Rate [Docket No. FV99-932-1 FR] received April 6, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1903. A letter from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Milk in the New England and Other Marketing Areas; Decision on Proposed Amendments to Marketing Agreements and to Orders [DA-97-12] received April 6, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1904. A letter from the Administrator, Rural Development, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program (RIN: 0572-AB31) received April 6, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1905. A letter from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense, transmitting a report of a violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1517(b); to the Committee on Appropriations.

1906. A letter from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense, transmitting a report of a violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1517(b); to the Committee on Appropriations.

1907. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting the 1999 interim report on our evaluation of TRICARE, the Department of Defense (DoD) managed health care program, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1073 nt.; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1908. A letter from the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, transmitting the Office's final rule—Risk-Based Capital Standards: Market Risk [Docket No. 99-04] (RIN: 1557-AB14) received April 16, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

1909. A letter from the Administrator, Food and Consumer Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC): WIC/Food Stamp Program (FSP) Vendor Disqualification (RIN: 0584-AC50) received April 6, 1999, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

1910. A letter from the Acting Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Law, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule—Acquisition Regulations;