



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE **106th** CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 145

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 1999

No. 64

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, a very present Help in trouble, You do not send natural catastrophes but help us to endure them. Our minds and hearts are focused on the tragic deaths and the destruction left in the aftermath of the series of tornadoes that wracked the Oklahoma City area and sections of Kansas, leaving more than 45 people dead and homes and neighborhoods razed. Especially we pray for the families who lost loved ones and had their homes destroyed. Care for them with Your sustaining comfort and strength. Bless the police, emergency workers, doctors, and medical personnel who are seeking to help those who are suffering. Strengthen Senators DON NICKLES and JIM INHOFE of Oklahoma and SAM BROWNBACK and PAT ROBERTS of Kansas as they give leadership in this emergency.

We commit to You the work of the Senate today. Guide the Senators in all that they do and say, discuss, and decide. As crises at home and abroad mount, grant them clear minds, steady hearts and wills to seek and to know You and do Your will. Through our Lord and Savior. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will immediately begin a rollcall vote on the Byrd resolution, S. Res. 94, commending Rev. Jesse Jackson for his role in the return

of our POWs. Following the vote, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators COVERDELL and DORGAN in control of that time. At 11 a.m. the Senate will resume consideration of the Sarbanes substitute amendment to S. 900, the financial modernization bill, with a vote on the Gramm motion to table occurring at approximately 12 noon. Additional amendments are expected and therefore Senators can expect votes throughout today's session of the Senate.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed for 2 minutes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE OF OKLAHOMA AND KANSAS

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the Chaplain for his prayer. This is a nation which, in the words of Benjamin Franklin, believes in the scriptures and particularly that scripture to which Franklin called the attention of the other framers of the Constitution in Philadelphia in 1787:

Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

We, the colleagues of the Senators from Oklahoma and Kansas, share their concern about the people who have lost lives, loved ones, and property. Our hearts go out to their constituencies and to them as well as they serve their people every day.

COMMENDING THE REVEREND JESSE JACKSON

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, let me read the resolving clause of the resolution on which we are about to vote.

(1) The Senate commends the Reverend Jesse Jackson for his successful efforts in securing the release of Sergeant Ramirez, Sergeant Stone, and Specialist Gonzales and for his leadership and actions arising from his deep faith in God; and

(2) The Senate joins the families of Sergeant Ramirez, Sergeant Stone, and Specialist Gonzales in expressing relief and joy of their safe release.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, Two days ago, when that military transport plane touched down at Andrews Air Force Base and we saw our three American soldiers safe again at last, I said, instinctively, "thank you."

"Thank you, God, and thank you, Jesse Jackson, for bringing Steven Gonzales, Andrew Ramirez and Christopher Stone safely home from their captivity in Serbia." Millions of people all across our country, I suspect, said much the same thing. I am pleased today to repeat those words here, in the United States Senate, and to support this resolution honoring Reverend Jackson and the others in his delegation who played such a critical role in securing the release of our service men.

"When I was in prison, you visited me." That was one of the ways Jesus said we could recognize those who do his work. In daring to visit our soldiers in prison in Serbia, Reverend Jackson and the delegation of religious leaders who accompanied him surely were following Jesus's teachings as they understood them. Our nation owes them a debt of gratitude.

Some have questioned the wisdom of the delegation's trip. There has been speculation about what effect their going to Serbia could have on political or military tactics. Frankly, I don't want to get into that debate. This was not a political or military mission. It was a humanitarian mission.

- This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

Much praise rightly goes to Reverend Jackson, who organized the trip. I also want to acknowledge another member of the delegation: Congressman ROD BLAGOJEVICH, a second-term Congressman from Chicago's North Side, and the only Serbian-American in the House of Representatives.

There are moments in history where a person emerges who seems almost to have been born to fulfill a critical role. On this mission, ROD BLAGOJEVICH was that person. Not only is he a man of significant political and moral courage, he is also the son of Yugoslav immigrants. His father spent four years in a Nazi POW camp during World War II. He learned to speak Serbo-Croatian as a child, and still speaks it.

I remember when I first was elected to the House. I sought out several of my political heroes to ask them "How can a young Congressman make a difference—a real difference—in people's lives?" ROD BLAGOJEVICH has found an answer to that question. Steven Gonzales, Andrew Ramirez and Christopher Stone are united today with their families, in large measure because of the courage he, and Reverend Jackson, and the other religious leaders in their delegation displayed in going to Serbia.

Today's Washington Post contains an interesting account of their mission, from the time it was first conceived by Reverend Jackson through their triumphant return home. I ask unanimous consent that a copy of that article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, May 5, 1999]

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: THE CONGRESSMAN WHO PULLED STRINGS FOR POWS' RELEASE

(By Kevin Merida)

The interview begins with a little shake-rattle-and-roll. Rod Blagojevich doing Elvis Presley.

"I'm all shook up, unh-hunh-hunh."

Blagojevich is a huge fan of The King ("Do you think he's still alive?"), and he's feeling loose. It's not often—let's say never—that a second-term congressman from the North Side of Chicago can thrust himself onto the international stage, help rescue three Americans held captive and claim a patch of glory. That would be the patch right behind Jesse Jackson's. Meaning he's in all the brought-back-our-boys camera shots, but not prominently placed. But he's okay with that. Blagojevich is the boyish-looking dude with the mop of brown hair combed to the left, a cross between John Travolta and Henry Winkler. He sometimes takes his meals at Ben's Chili Bowl on U Street. No one recognizes him there. Maybe someone will recognize him now.

Without Rod Blagojevich (pronounced bla-GOYA-vich), there might not have been a trip to Belgrade, no meeting with President Slobodan Milosevic, no tearful family reunions this week for U.S. soldiers Christopher Stone, Andrew Ramirez and Steven Gonzales. Blagojevich was the arranger, working his contacts in the Serbian American community when it looked like the trip was dead. Those contacts ultimately cleared a path to Milosevic himself.

Not that the whole country is applauding. Some administration officials carped—anon-

ymous carping is the best fun of all—that the unofficial Jackson peace mission only undercut the NATO bombing campaign and could potentially fracture the allies. Not to mention that it might damage President Clinton's credibility at home on the war. Pundits spouted: PR props for the Serb-led Yugoslav government.

"If Mother Teresa had been one of those prisoners and we had gotten her out, we would have been criticized," Blagojevich says. "I guess if you're not being criticized, you're not important. But it's thrilling to be in the mix. It sure beats digging a ditch for a living."

Blagojevich, 42, a Democrat, is the only House member of Serbian descent, which is perhaps the key part of this story. He grew up speaking both English and Serbo-Croatian. Still does. His father, Rade, was an immigrant to this country. A Yugoslavian army officer, Rade Blagojevich was captured by the Nazis in World War II and spent four years in a German POW camp. He eventually made his way to the United States and married a Chicago-born woman whose parents had emigrated from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Together they tried to raise Rod and his brother as Americans, but as Americans with a rich understanding of their ancestry. Often, their mother would pull in one direction and their father would tug in the other.

It was one thing to play the tamburitza, a ukulele-like instrument; it was another thing to sport the white-socks-and-sandals look that his dad thought was authentically Yugoslav.

"I don't want to wear that," he told his father. "I'm going to get laughed out of the neighborhood if I wear that. That's a bad look."

Blagojevich parents have passed away, but it is with their memory in mind and all that he has learned about Serb culture over the years that he injected himself into this war. He felt he had a unique perspective to offer. Ironically, some in the Serbian community here have been disappointed in him for not being more active in Serb American affairs.

Shortly after the soldiers were captured on March 31, Blagojevich telephoned national security adviser Samuel "Sandy" Berger and White House chief of staff John Podesta to offer his help. Nothing grew out of those calls. He then read in the newspapers that Jackson wanted to take a delegation of American religious leaders over to visit the soldiers and try to win their release. Jackson was having trouble getting guarantees from Milosevic that the delegation could even see the GIs.

Blagojevich approached Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-Ill.) on the House floor and mentioned that he had some contacts who might be able to help. The younger Jackson put Blagojevich in contact with his father. Blagojevich got to work. Soon, he was talking directly to Yugoslavian deputy premier Vuk Draskovic. Things were working out. Draskovic had assured the group's safety and a visit with the soldiers. The soldiers would be allowed to talk to their families. He'd get it in writing. The trip was back on. Except on the eve of departure, the maverick Draskovic was axed.

Blagojevich recalls the Rev. Jackson's reaction to that development as they were hashing out last-minute details for the trip in Washington. He lapses into his Jackson impersonation. "Blagojevich, our boy just got fired. You got any others out there?"

Actually, Blagojevich did.

Once in Belgrade, it was Jackson who set the agenda, Jackson who commanded the spotlight. Blagojevich, as he put it, "worked the corridors" and took advantage of his "cultural connection" and ability to speak the language.

As Blagojevich explained his role in a conversation in his office yesterday, he pulled out two business cards. Nebojsa Vujoovic, spokesman for the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. They had a common friend in Chicago. Bogoljub Karic, minister without portfolio, Republic of Serbia. He had met with this guy in his congressional office two days before the bombing campaign. He later saw the same man on TV emerging from a Milosevic cabinet meeting.

While all the attention was focused on Jackson, Blagojevich says, "it was proper and part of the strategy to be working these other guys. He and I were working different angles."

Jackson and Blagojevich both were in the three-hour meeting with Milosevic on Saturday morning that produced the release of the American prisoners the next day. Jackson then met with Milosevic privately.

The trip produced some light moments amid all the intensity and emotion—Blagojevich, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, greeted Sgt. Stone by promising him a raise—but there were no light moments with Milosevic.

"I detected absolutely no warmth toward me," Blagojevich says. "In fact, I detected a decided lack of warmth."

A lack of warmth? Could it be that Milosevic remembered that this Chicago congressman had pronounced him guilty of "ethnic cleansing" and compared his tactics to those of Nazi leaders?

Once back home, Jackson, Blagojevich and others met at the White House Monday evening with Clinton. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was there. Berger was there. Vice President Gore dropped by for a moment.

Jackson gave a detailed explanation and interpretation of what the delegation heard and saw in Belgrade. He said that Milosevic's gesture deserved to be matched. He talked of other leaders who were so far apart, but had talked to each other and had become closer over time. Sadat and Begin.

"Then I was up," recalled Blagojevich, who told Clinton that the Serbs weren't backing down. He pitched his proposal for a partition of Kosovo, which would give Serbs control of the northern region where most of the Orthodox cathedrals and historic sites important to them are located. An autonomous homeland would be created in the south for the ethnic Albanians driven out by Milosevic's forces.

"I like Clinton. I'm happy I voted to impeach him. I do think he needs to step up to the plate and take charge of this. With all due respect, I think Madeleine Albright and Sandy Berger are running the show."

Blagojevich says he is "extremely skeptical" that the bombing campaign will be successful. The NATO allies have underestimated the Serbs' resolve, he believes. "Despite the bombs, daily life goes on." The timing for a negotiated solution is right, he thinks.

The administration apparently thinks not.

"They were on a mission of peace and it was successful," says National Security Council spokesman David Leavy of the Jackson-led group, "but the fundamental reality remains the same. There are a million Kosovars who are not going home to their families."

However the war ends, the Jackson-Blagojevich bond has strengthened.

"I feel like I'm a second cousin now," Blagojevich says.

The younger Jackson puts the relationship in context: Blagojevich's father-in-law, Alderman Dick Mell, is a longtime Chicago machine boss. Blagojevich's district, 1 percent black, is a bastion of white ethnic pride. For

many years, it was represented by Dan Rosenthal. It is not a district in which Jesse Jackson and Jesse Jackson Jr. are exactly popular.

"Us relating to Rod and Rod relating to us is something taboo," Rep. Jackson explains, noting that although he and Blagojevich and their wives have grown close personally, he understands that the North Side member takes flak for the association.

"You being part of that Jackson thing is really going to cost you your career," says Jackson Jr., imitating his friend's critics. "But after this trip, he is now officially an honorary South Sider. Apparently, it was a great growing experience for both him and Reverend Jackson."

After his 15 minutes of fame at Jackson's side, Blagojevich's only question is this: "When do I take my seat on the back bench again?"

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I will vote for this resolution because I share in the happiness and relief that the families of Sergeant Ramirez, Sergeant Stone, and Specialist Gonzales, and all Americans feel now that these fine young men have been released from captivity. We are all thankful that they are home, safe from harm.

I do not believe, however, that private diplomacy that is at odds with our country's objectives in this war and public relations stunts by Mr. Milosevic deserve our praise. I cannot commend the participation of any American in his propaganda.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL-LARD). Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

COMMENDATION OF THE EFFORTS OF THE REVEREND JESSE JACKSON

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to vote on adoption of S. Res. 94, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 94) commending the efforts of the Reverend Jesse Jackson to secure the release of the soldiers held by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll. Mr. FITZGERALD (when his name was called). Present.

Mr. HELMS (when his name was called). Present.

Mr. SESSIONS (when his name was called). Present.

Mr. THOMAS (when his name was called). Present.

Mr. WARNER (when his name was called). Present.

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) and the Senator from New York (Mr. MOYNIHAN) are necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) is absent attending a funeral.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) would vote "aye."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber who desire to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 99 Leg.]

YEAS—92

Abraham	Edwards	Lott
Akaka	Enzi	Lugar
Allard	Feingold	Mack
Ashcroft	Feinstein	McCain
Baucus	Frist	McConnell
Bayh	Gorton	Mikulski
Bennett	Graham	Murkowski
Biden	Gramm	Murray
Bingaman	Grams	Nickles
Bond	Grassley	Reed
Boxer	Gregg	Reid
Breaux	Hagel	Robb
Brownback	Harkin	Roberts
Bryan	Hatch	Rockefeller
Bunning	Hollings	Roth
Burns	Hutchinson	Santorum
Byrd	Hutchinson	Sarbanes
Campbell	Inhofe	Schumer
Chafee	Inouye	Shelby
Cleland	Jeffords	Smith (NH)
Cochran	Johnson	Smith (OR)
Collins	Kennedy	Snowe
Conrad	Kerrey	Specter
Coverdell	Kerry	Stevens
Craig	Kohl	Thompson
Crapo	Kyl	Thurmond
Daschle	Lautenberg	Torricelli
DeWine	Leahy	Voinovich
Dodd	Levin	Wellstone
Domenici	Lieberman	Wyden
Durbin	Lincoln	

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—5

Fitzgerald	Sessions	Warner
Helms	Thomas	

NOT VOTING—3

Dorgan	Landrieu	Moynihan
--------	----------	----------

The resolution (S. Res. 94) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 94

Whereas on March 31, 1999, Staff Sergeant Andrew A. Ramirez, Staff Sergeant Christopher J. Stone, and Specialist Steven M. Gonzales were taken prisoner by the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia while on patrol along the Macedonia-Yugoslav border;

Whereas Sergeant Ramirez, Sergeant Stone, and Specialist Gonzales conducted themselves throughout their ordeal with dignity, patriotism, and faith;

Whereas the Reverend Jesse Jackson led a delegation of religious leaders to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that succeeded in negotiating the release of Sergeant Ramirez, Sergeant Stone, and Specialist Gonzales; and

Whereas the Reverend Jesse Jackson has previously succeeded in securing the release of hostages held in Syria, Cuba, and Iraq; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved. That—

(1) The Senate commends the Reverend Jesse Jackson for his successful efforts in securing the release of Sergeant Ramirez, Sergeant Stone, and Specialist Gonzales, and for his leadership and actions arising from his deep faith in God; and

(2) The Senate joins the families of Sergeant Ramirez, Sergeant Stone, and Specialist Gonzales in expressing relief and joy at their safe release.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as if in morning business for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MIDWEST TORNADOES

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, yesterday, Senator INHOFE and myself, Congressmen J.C. WATTS, FRANK LUCAS and STEVE LARGENT, as well as the Governor of Oklahoma, and James Lee Witt, Director of FEMA, toured the Oklahoma tornado disaster.

I have been in the Senate, I guess, 19 years now, and I have looked at the damage of several tornadoes in the State for the last many years. But I have never seen this type of devastation nor this level and this extent before. This may be the most devastating tornado that we have had in total damages in our State history. It has certainly produced one of the largest tornadoes, probably the largest number of tornadoes. I read one press account that said there were 45 tornadoes in the State of Oklahoma on Monday. One particular tornado was much larger than the others. Many reports said it was a quarter of a mile wide, or maybe half a mile wide, and at some points it was maybe a mile wide and stayed on the ground for a long period of time—some people said maybe as much as 2 hours.

What we did see was a tremendous amount of damage—a devastating amount of damage that destroyed, it was estimated, 1,500 or 2,000 homes. We will find out. Unfortunately, it has taken 40-some lives. I say unfortunately. I think Oklahoma is very fortunate. I think the fatality toll could have been in the hundreds if not thousands, because we looked at homes that were just totally demolished as if a bomb had gone inside each one of those homes and absolutely exploded the homes. There was nothing but just some elements of rubble. To think that people survived in many of these homes is truly a blessing, truly a miracle that I think we will find recounted day after day.

Needless to say, we are moved by the tragedy, and also by the compassion that is being expressed by so many people from across the country.

We were there to say that we wanted to help, that our government would help, that we will do everything that we can. Our government steps in in times of tragedy and national disasters to help lend assistance. And we will do that.

I will also say that won't be enough. It will take a lot of support from individuals, from churches, from communities, from families and friends to try to replace these homes and these families, and to make them whole again. And they will. They will survive. They are very solid.

One of the things I will never forget was seeing this area that is totally demolished and one house which hardly had anything left standing, and there was an American flag flying very high with people very proud.

Mr. President, it makes me proud to be an Oklahoman. It makes me proud to be an American, and proud to represent the great people of Oklahoma.