

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman has no further speakers, I am prepared to close.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I thank Mr. Whelan's family for continuing to fight for his release and for bringing this matter to our attention.

He is a pawn. Russia quite clearly has a terrible track record of taking care of people, whether it is bombing hospitals in Syria intentionally or whether it is just abusing people in other parts of the world—Venezuela—or imprisoning Americans. It is obviously their track record.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Democratic and Republican colleagues to support this resolution. I thank the chairman for bringing it up, the family for fighting, and everybody who spoke.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank Representative STEVENS for her hard work on this measure.

Paul Whelan, an American citizen, as my colleagues have mentioned, has endured mistreatment in a Russian prison without the Russian Government offering up any evidence that he has done anything wrong.

H. Res. 552 calls on the Russian Government to either provide some evidence of wrongdoing to explain Mr. Whelan's imprisonment or release Mr. Whelan immediately so he can come home to the United States and receive the proper medical treatment he so urgently needs. He and his family have suffered enough as part of Putin's political games.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their strong support for this resolution. It is a good measure. I urge all Members to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 552.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE EXECUTION-STYLE MURDERS OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS YLLI, AGRON, AND MEHMET BYTYQI IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA IN JULY 1999

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the con-

current resolution (H. Con. Res. 32) expressing the sense of Congress regarding the execution-style murders of United States citizens Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi in the Republic of Serbia in July 1999.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 32

Whereas brothers Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi were citizens of the United States, born in Chicago, Illinois, to ethnic Albanian parents from what is today the Republic of Kosovo, and who subsequently lived in Hampton Bays, New York;

Whereas the three Bytyqi brothers responded to the brutality of the conflict associated with Kosovo's separation from the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of which Serbia was a constituent republic by joining the so-called "Atlantic Brigade" of the Kosovo Liberation Army in April 1999;

Whereas a Military-Technical Agreement between the Government of Yugoslavia and the North Atlantic Council came into effect on June 10, 1999, leading to a cessation of hostilities;

Whereas the Bytyqi brothers were arrested on June 23, 1999, by Serbian police within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia when the brothers accidentally crossed what was then an unmarked administrative border while escorting an ethnic Romani family who had been neighbors to safety outside Kosovo;

Whereas the Bytyqi brothers were jailed for 15 days for illegal entry into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Prokuplje, Serbia, until a judge ordered their release on July 8, 1999;

Whereas instead of being released, the Bytyqi brothers were taken by a special operations unit of the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs to a training facility near Petrovo Selo, Serbia, where all three were executed;

Whereas at the time of their murders, Ylli was 25, Agron was 23, and Mehmet was 21 years of age;

Whereas Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was removed from office on October 5, 2000, following massive demonstrations protesting his refusal to acknowledge and accept election results the month before;

Whereas in the following years, the political leadership of Serbia has worked to strengthen democratic institutions, to develop stronger adherence to the rule of law, and to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia evolved into a State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in February 2003, which itself dissolved when both republics proclaimed their respective independence in June 2006;

Whereas the United States Embassy in Belgrade, Serbia, was informed on July 17, 2001, that the bodies of Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi were found with their hands bound and gunshot wounds to the back of their heads, buried atop an earlier mass grave of approximately 70 bodies of murdered civilians from Kosovo;

Whereas Serbian authorities subsequently investigated but never charged those individuals who were part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs chain of command related to this crime, including former Minister of Internal Affairs Vlajko Stojiljkovic, Assistant Minister and Chief of the Public Security Department Vlastimir Djordjevic, and special operations training camp commander Goran "Guri" Radosavljevic;

Whereas Vlajko Stojiljkovic died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in April 2002 prior to being transferred to the custody of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia where he had been charged with crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war during the Kosovo conflict;

Whereas Vlastimir Djordjevic was arrested and transferred to the custody of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in June 2007, and sentenced in February 2011 to 27 years imprisonment (later reduced to 18 years) for crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war committed during the Kosovo conflict;

Whereas Goran "Guri" Radosavljevic is reported to reside in Serbia, working as director of a security consulting firm in Belgrade, and is a prominent member of the governing political party;

Whereas the Secretary of State designated Goran Radosavljevic of Serbia under section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2018 as ineligible for entry into the United States due to his involvement in gross violations of human rights;

Whereas two Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs officers, Sretan Popovic and Milos Stojanovic, were charged in 2006 for crimes associated with their involvement in the detention and transport of the Bytyqi brothers from Prokuplje to Petrovo Selo, but acquitted in May 2012 with an appeals court confirming the verdict in March 2013;

Whereas the Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic promised several high ranking United States officials to deliver justice in the cases of the deaths of Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi;

Whereas no individual has ever been found guilty for the murders of Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi or of any other crimes associated with their deaths; and

Whereas no individual is currently facing criminal charges regarding the murder of the Bytyqi brothers despite many promises by Serbian officials to resolve the case: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—*

(1) those individuals responsible for the murders in July 1999 of United States citizens Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi in Serbia should be brought to justice;

(2) it is reprehensible that no individual has ever been found guilty for executing the Bytyqi brothers, or of any other crimes associated with their deaths, and that no individual is even facing charges for these horrible crimes;

(3) the Government of Serbia and its relevant ministries and offices, including the Serbian War Crimes Prosecutor's Office, should make it a priority to investigate and prosecute as soon as possible those current or former officials believed to be responsible for their deaths, directly or indirectly;

(4) the United States should devote sufficient resources fully to assist and properly to monitor efforts by the Government of Serbia and its relevant ministries and offices to investigate and prosecute as soon as possible those individuals believed to be responsible for their deaths, directly or indirectly; and

(5) progress in resolving this case, or the lack thereof, should remain a significant factor determining the further development of relations between the United States and the Republic of Serbia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 32.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking Mr. ZELDIN for authoring this resolution.

This measure is one particularly close to my heart. In my career in Congress, I have had long dealings with the Albanian community both in the Balkans and in America, so this one really hurts since I know the family of these three brothers who were murdered.

Ylli, Agron, and Mehmet Bytyqi were three brothers from New York State who were killed execution-style by Serbian officials after they mistakenly crossed the unmarked Serbia-Kosovo border. Their bodies were discovered with their hands bound behind their backs in a mass grave in 2001.

Serbian President Vucic promised me 3 years ago that his government would bring the murderers to justice, but this hasn't happened. In fact, there isn't even a serious criminal investigation underway. This is appalling.

Sadly, it is part of a pattern we see with Serbian war criminals responsible for crimes against the people of Kosovo.

The Bytyqi brothers are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to post-conflict justice in Serbia. We had a hearing on the Foreign Affairs Committee several weeks ago about this very topic.

Approaching 3 years ago, the Belgrade-based Humanitarian Law Center released a dossier detailing the murder of nearly 1,000 Kosovars, killed by Serbs in Kosovo, then transported to Serbia, and dumped in a mass grave.

The U.S. Government has raised this atrocity with the Serbian war crimes prosecutor. But once again, no one has been held accountable, although I believe with all my heart that Serbian authorities know who is responsible for this.

Let's be clear, if Serbia wants to join the West and its institutions, they must deal with their past and prosecute those responsible for war crimes.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage our EU friends to hold Serbia to this standard when considering Serbia's candidacy.

Today's resolution makes it clear that Serbia must fully investigate the Bytyqi brothers' case and bring justice to the families of these murdered New Yorkers. Their family currently lives in New York in Mr. ZELDIN's district.

It also calls on the U.S. Government to encourage and assist a successful prosecution of this case.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this measure, and I again thank Mr. ZELDIN for his excellent work and partnership with me in trying to push the Serbian Government to find justice for these New Yorkers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 32. I wish to start off by thanking the House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman ELIOT ENGEL for his long-time passion and advocacy on this very important issue for my district, as well as GRACE MENG, who also has been supportive.

This execution-style murder of Ylli, 25 years old, Agron, 23 years old, and Mehmet Bytyqi, 21 years old, has greatly impacted my own district. These were three brothers born in the United States who resided in Hampton Bays, New York.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Bytyqi brothers' murder. In July 1999, these three brothers went overseas toward the end of the Kosovo war and were arrested by Serbian authorities for illegally entering the country when they accidentally crossed into Serbian-controlled territory.

The brothers were kidnapped, murdered, and dumped into a mass grave in Serbia by government officials still serving today.

Since taking office, I have been committed to helping the Bytyqi family receive the justice they have long deserved.

In February, Chairman ENGEL and I traveled to Munich to meet with Serbian President Vucic, where he once again promised to resolve the case of the Bytyqi brothers.

Despite many promises by Serbian officials to resolve the case of this state-sponsored murder, there has been no justice served.

This resolution notes that progress with this investigation should remain a significant factor that determines the further developments of U.S.-Serbian relations.

The Bytyqi brothers gave their lives to fight injustice. Now, we must return this favor and deliver justice for their family.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank Chairman ENGEL and lead Republican McCaul for their leadership and assistance on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers and am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all of my colleagues to support this important resolution.

For those in Serbia listening to today's floor debate, it is an important lesson that, 20 years later, we have not

forgotten. We will not forget. We will continue to strongly encourage them to do the right thing. This issue is not going away if they wish it away. On a bipartisan basis, we will continue to advocate to fight this injustice.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good measure to seek justice for this senseless murder of three innocent American citizens, three innocent New Yorkers. We cannot allow this horrific crime to continue to go unpunished.

As Mr. ZELDIN mentioned, and others who we have worked with, we have raised this repeatedly with the Government of Serbia to no avail. They know exactly who killed these American citizens. They know what happened and why their bodies were dumped in a mass grave. They are withholding it.

It is unconscionable that these American citizens cannot get justice, that their families cannot get justice.

We will not stop. I know Mr. ZELDIN and I won't, and other people won't, until we get justice and answers as to who killed these American citizens, the Bytyqi brothers, who were born in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all Members will join me in supporting this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 32.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CORPORATE TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2019

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 646 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2513.

Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) kindly take the chair.

□ 1743

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2513) to ensure that persons who form corporations or limited liability companies in the United States disclose the beneficial owners of those corporations or limited liability companies, in order to prevent wrongdoers from exploiting United States corporations and limited liability companies for criminal gain, to assist law enforcement in detecting,