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Congressman
Jim Moody



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"MOODY CITES HIGH U.S. STAKES IN YUGOSLAV CONFLICT." "CALLS FOR SWIFT SUPPORT FOR UN PEACE KEEPING AS ONLY VIABLE WAY TO AVOID WAR AND EVENTUAL U.S. ENGAGEMENT."

1. I have just returned from an 8 day fact finding trip, taken at my own expense, to Yugoslavia in an effort to become more knowledgeable about an issue of concern to thousands of citizens in the Milwaukee area. Although the conflict is thousands of miles from Wisconsin its outcome effects every American.

The killing in Yugoslavia is a deep concern to thousands here in Milwaukee area due to strong historic and family ties with the peoples of Yugoslavia--Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

2. I met with a wide spectrum of political and military leaders at various levels in both Serbia and Croatia. I conferred with Catholic, Orthodox, Moslem and Jewish clergy. I visited the battle front area, and listened to the horrifying personal experiences of Serbian and Croatian refugees driven from their homes by the war.

3. Key leaders on both the Serbian and Croatian side, including the Presidents, Foreign Ministers and military commanders in the two republics, welcomed my involvement. I strongly believe it is important to promote dialogue with all major elements in the war despite the urging of some groups here in the U.S. who want U.S. officials to speak only to one side. I thought it important to meet with both sides in this conflict, that was the only way to ascertain the facts.

4. The United States has a great economic stake in avoiding an all out Yugoslav war which, if ignited, could dwarf the recent Persian Gulf conflict. The goal of reducing U.S. military commitments in Europe to re-direct money to important needs here at home will be aborted if a Balkan war breaks out. The investment of many billions of American taxpayer dollars over the Cold War period to produce a stable and democratic Yugoslavia would also have been wasted.

5. The U.S. policy should now get firmly behind a UN-led peace-keeping force to separate the warring parties, and stop letting Germany and the European Community set the agenda. A UN approach is the best way to head off war and insure that the reduction of U.S. troops in Europe continues.

JIM MOODY
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Findings

of a

Dec. 23-31 Visit to Yugoslavia
by Congressman Jim Moody

I have recently completed an 8-day fact finding and peace-supporting trip to Yugoslavia--a country I know well from serving there 2 years with CARE, whose language I speak, and whose people I deeply admire. My wife and I travelled at our own expense.

We met with over 50 political, military and religious leaders spanning the entire political and ethnic spectrum, visited the war front to see the devastation, and heard the horrifying personal experiences of Serbian and Croatian refugees driven from their homes by the war.

Unless decisive action is taken, Yugoslavia stands at the abyss of a catastrophic war that could easily (1) kill tens of thousands of people, (2) destabilize a region that is important for the U.S. economically and by historic ties, and (3) jeopardize the recent democratization process of the region

The U.S. has a economic and political stake. The many billions of dollars American taxpayers have invested since 1948 to bring about a democratic and economically viable Yugoslavia is now in jeopardy. A general Balkan war would cost the West and the U.S. many billions more.

Key Points to Understand

. This war is essentially a continuation of an old conflict between Serbs and Croats, not an ideological struggle over Marxism as often alleged.

. The Yugoslav army has it's own political and economic agenda which seriously jeopardizes prospects for peace.

. Despite disagreements on details and timing, there are substantial points of agreement on both the Serbian and Croatian government sides that could serve as the basis of agreement.

My key conclusions are:

1. The shooting must be stopped as soon as possible. Given the seething distrust and ill will on both sides, every day the war goes on makes it harder to reach final solution by negotiation.

2. It is particularly important to prevent the fighting from spreading to Bosnia-Herzegovina where a spark could ignite a bloody war of endless reprisals involving not only Serbs and Croats, but also Moslems.

3. The Yugoslav National Army, the second largest and most powerful in Europe, must be brought under immediate civilian control. It now acts largely autonomously and has itself become a major "player" in the crisis. Its composition has become predominately Serbian, but it has institutional and political goals separate and apart from Serbia.

Crucial Concerns that must be Included in Any Solution

The two crucial concerns that must be addressed for any durable solution to the conflict:

I. Extreme concern by Serbia for the personal safety and free cultural expression of Serbs living under Croatian control.

In my judgement this Serbian insecurity and fear is the single most emotional element driving the war. Obviously it springs from the 1941-45 experience when an estimated 700,000 Serbs were slaughtered under the last existing separate Croatian state. Croatians were killed too but in far smaller numbers.

Clearly a separate Croatia state today would not be a puppet of Facist Germany as the 1941-45 one was, and it would be operating in a totally different European and international environment. Hopefully airtight and absolutely assured guarantees and circumstances could allay these intense Serbian fears. Likewise, given the historic ill feelings of Croatians for Serbs, developed from earlier periods but strongly reinforced by this war, any durable solution would have to entail comparable guarantees for Croatian safety and cultural rights.

II. Croatia's absolute insistence on legal and political independence from any and all parts of Yugoslavia. They want to leave Yugoslavia at all cost. This is a many-decades old desire by Croatia and must also be part of any stable solution.

Here is where the Yugoslav army's separate agenda plays a crucial role. Only a state much larger than Serbia can support the army's enormous annual budget, its future pensions, the provision of housing etc. for its thousands of career officers. If Croatia succeeds from Yugoslavia, along with Slovenia and possibly Bosnia-Macedonia, the army's future economic status is deeply jeopardized. This explains the Yugoslav's army's strong motive to continue the war to prevent Croatia and the country from further break up.

I support fully meeting both sets of concerns, items #I and #II outlined above. Serbs must be protected and Croatia must be allowed to leave Yugoslavia.

The key issues will be how and when these are accomplished.

Achieving the Peace

The main ways to achieve both #I and #II fall into two approaches:

1. Plebiscites, held under international supervision, in the disputed border areas, to let people choose what republic they want to live in.

This could well--would probably--cause some changes in the border areas now in Croatia where Serbs are a clear majority. For this reason the Croatian government will clearly oppose this proposal just as "land for peace" proposals in the Middle East are often resisted by those with entrenched interest.

Plebiscites to confirm or adjust Yugoslav borders by popular will would have to be supplemented with voluntary population exchanges for people ending up on the "wrong" side of any border. (Other Balkan countries have had such swaps in the past, with very favorable results).

The alternative approach is:

2. Absolute guarantees for personal safety and cultural expression for Serbian and Croatian minority populations outside their "home" republics. These would have to be internationally guaranteed for the Serbs and Croatians to have confidence in them and prevent future violence.

I personally prefer option #I--plebiscites and voluntary population swaps--because continuous on-site guarantees by international organizations would be extremely expensive as they would have to be of open-ended duration. Also, the plebiscite option better fits with the traditional American philosophical commitment to self determination. In my opinion, the "land for peace" option based on popular vote, not political gerrymandering, would be far more secure and durable.

Final Observations

There is relatively little time left before the Yugoslav powder keg explodes.

The immediate need is for an outside force to physically separate the warring parties--both regular and irregular units. Only then can time be obtained to begin productive negotiations and stop continued needless killing.

... on peace keeping force is now the only realistic way to provide the outside intervention needed right now--the so called "Blue Helmet" option. Neither the E.C. or any other multi-national body has the international stature or the neutral coloration to be effective. From my talks with Presidents Milosevic and Tudjman this would be acceptable.

The Blue Helmet option also depends on agreement by all members of the UN Security Council where the U.S. has particularly strong influence in light of the current international conditions.

Unfortunately--most unfortunately--the Bush Administration has until now deferred almost entirely to E.C. leadership, thus greatly strengthening the hand of Germany which is deeply distrusted by Serbs from their experience in World Wars I and II. The Bush Administration has also been very slow to recognize the two essential ingredients of Croatian independence and allaying Serbian minority fears for physical safety.

Official U.S. policy has clung tenaciously to the obsolete notion of Yugoslavia as a viable single nation state. In this context the U.S. policy until now has failed to address the key problem of a vastly oversized Yugoslavia army with its own agenda.

No one knows when the current momentum towards total war in Yugoslavia will reach the point of no return, so UN action must be swift.

The sooner the Bush Administration moves to urge the United Nations to act, the sooner lives will be saved and a peaceful outcome secured.

Aide says Moody was unaware of Serb's infamy

Lawmaker visited militia blamed for hundreds of Croatian civilian deaths

By BENJAMIN READ
Sentinel staff writer

Rep. Jim Moody (D-Wis.) probably would not have visited a Serb paramilitary leader during his December trip to Yugoslavia if he had known of atrocities the leader is accused of committing, Moody's top aide says.

An Associated Press photo of Moody smiling and walking past uniformed militiamen with Serbian Volunteer Guard leader Zeljko Raznjatovic caused a stir when it was published in American newspapers, including the Milwaukee Sentinel and the Milwaukee Journal on Dec. 30 and 31.

Raznjatovic, better known by the name Arkan, leads one of several bands of Serb irregulars held responsible for killing hundreds of civilians in Croatia last year, according to news reports and human rights monitoring organizations.

"In retrospect, because of the obvious inflammatory nature of this, he probably wouldn't have done it," Marcus Kunian, Moody's chief of staff, said Tuesday. "The fact of the matter is that this was not purposeful on his part. This (was) not an intentional statement of anything."

A videotape from Yugoslav television, given to a reporter by a Croatian-American couple, shows Moody wearing the red beret of Arkan's forces, handling a large commando knife in Arkan's presence, and looking over captured mortars and other weapons.

The meeting in Erdut, Croatia, was televised in the United States by Satellite Communications for Learning, a cable channel. SCOLA broadcasts unedited news programs from foreign countries for educational purposes.

The Croatian-American couple, Arnold and Stefanija Harris of

Mount Horeb, and other local Croats contend that these scenes indicate Moody was not visiting the Serb leader as a neutral observer, as he insists.

"The whole point of this is that he's in very thick with these people. And what we're claiming is that his presence there, which he lied about, is one of the things that gave the Serbs the idea that they could attack the neighboring states with impunity," said Mr. Harris, 58.

Kunian called the idea that Moody supports Arkan "ludicrous" and said Moody's actions, such as his wearing of the beret,

were only "diplomatic niceties."

Since Moody's visit, Arkan's forces have engaged in further atrocities in the former Yugoslav republics — including the April killings of 27 civilians, most of them Slavic Muslims, in the Bosnian city of Bijeljina, according to a draft report by the New York-based human rights group Helsinki Watch.

The killings were also documented by news reports and photos in the April 20 issue of Time magazine.

The New York Times has described Arkan as a reputed gangster, wanted for bank robbery in several West European countries and "widely touted in the Yugoslav press as being a hit man for the Yugoslav secret police."

Moody speaks Serbo-Croatian and once lived in Yugoslavia with a Serbian family. He reportedly has raised thousands of dollars in

campaign funds through contributions from Serbian-Americans around the country.

Croats allege that Moody's extensive knowledge of Yugoslav affairs suggests he must have known about Arkan's identity and background before meeting with him.

However, Kunian said the meeting was spontaneous, and that Moody "had no idea who this guy was."

Kunian also charged that the Croats' allegations were politically motivated. Tomislav Z. Kuzmanovic, a Croatian-American lawyer from Milwaukee, has been vocal in his opposition to Moody on the issue of the Yugoslavian conflict.

Kuzmanovic also is working for the election campaign of State Sen. Russell D. Feingold (D-Middleton), who along with Milwaukee businessman Joseph W. Che-

cota is vying with Moody for the Democratic nomination to run against Sen. Robert W. Kasten Jr. (R-Wis.) this fall.

Mr. Harris said he opposes Moody but he does not support any other Senate candidates.

Kunian said Moody did not take sides during his December trip to Yugoslavia and met with political and religious leaders of many ethnic backgrounds, including Serbs and Croats.

He also defended Moody's visit with Arkan in principle, saying it was necessary to meet with all factions to sound out their opinions on a United Nations proposal to begin negotiations.

"His purpose in going there and going into that dangerous location was to try to gauge whether there was willingness on this particular faction's part to lay down their arms or withdraw or engage in meaningful negotiations," Kunian said.



Moody: Once lived in Yugoslavia