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... from Jaykin and Dan Parks contributed to this story.

"We feel it could be an incredi-

Sensenbrenner sees destruction, abuses

By DUNSTAN McNICHOL
States News Service

Washington, D.C. — Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner Jr. (R-Wis.) touring Yugoslavia at the invitation of Croatia's public relations firm, has reported witnessing "vast destruction and literally unspeakable human rights abuses."

Sensenbrenner, a Menomonee Falls Republican, said in a telephone interview that he had met with Croatia's president and with 10 other Croatian leaders since arriving in the war-torn republic Tuesday.

He said he has used his meetings to personally tell Croatian leaders they should monitor members of their own army for human rights abuses and should accept a proposed United Nations peacekeeping force.

"In my opinion Croatia has the moral high ground in this dispute," Sensenbrenner said. "It is obvious the Croatians are the people who are being aggressed against."

Sensenbrenner said he also met with Nenan Porges, president of the Zagreb Jewish community, to discuss allegations the Croatian government is anti-Semitic.

"He says there is no anti-Semitism on the part of Croatia," Sensenbrenner said in a telephone interview from Zagreb.

Sensenbrenner's trip is being paid for by the Congressional Human Rights Foundation, a private organization not affiliated with Congress.

The trip was coordinated by Ruder-Finn, a Washington, D.C., public relations firm that is representing Croatia in the United States. The self-proclaimed independent republic is attempting to

persuade Congress to recognize its independence.

Croatia has been fighting with Serbian Yugoslavs since the republic declared its independence last year.

Sensenbrenner is traveling with seven other Americans, including Ruder-Finn executive Jim Harff.

Sensenbrenner said the group toured Ossiack in eastern Croatia Wednesday. He said the city, its hospital and cathedral have been repeatedly shelled, sustaining damage the mayor said would cost \$650 million to repair.

"I saw just vast destruction and literally unspeakable human rights abuses," Sensenbrenner said.

He said he has met with no Serbian leaders, but would do so if a separate trip could be worked out.

"We have worked with Harff's agency as the only way to get access to high government officials in Croatia," Sensenbrenner said.

2 men convicted of stripping trees

Portland, Ore. — AP — Two men caught in a U.S. Forest Service stakeout have been convicted of stripping government-owned yew trees of 161 pounds of bark, which a pharmaceutical company uses in making a cancer drug.

A Federal Court jury Wednesday deliberated about 1½ hours before finding James H. Oviatt and Danny J. Powell guilty of three felonies: conspiracy, theft and harming government-owned trees.

An article published in the Milwaukee Sentinel in which you described the horrors you saw in Croatia has come to my attention recently.

I found your assessment of the situation particularly upsetting because your trip to Croatia in which you witnessed "vast destruction and literally unspeakable human rights abuses"--allegedly committed by Serbian forces--was coordinated by Ruder-Finn, the public relations firm representing Croatia. Furthermore, the supposed President of the Jewish Community with whom you met, Nenan Porges, is a virtually unknown entity in Yugoslav-Jewish affairs.

Did it occur to you that your trip was nothing more than an exercise in advertising on the parts of Croatia and Ruder-Finn for Croatia's independence, and that you could not possibly have received an accurate account of what actually is happening in Croatia? Did you not suspect foul play when you discovered you could not meet with high Croatian officials except through Mr. Harff's public relations agency?

In the interest of fairness, I hope you will visit the Serbian parts of Croatia and hear what they have to say about the situation. Their lives already were threatened and their property destroyed by Croatians in early 1990, before the open conflicts actually occurred, and before the alleged aggressions of the Yugoslav army and Serbian forces. Their cathedrals, stores, and houses have been ruined beyond repair, and thousands have fled their homes in fear of the Croatian government. Croatians already had begun oppressing and frightening Serbs when the world discovered, through the work of

Ruder-Finn, that the "fledgling Croatian democracy" was being "attacked by hard-line Communist Serbs".

Concerning the Croatian government's treatment of Jews, Slavko Goldstein in Zagreb has been vocal about how Jews regard the current government. And Klara Mandic, a Serbian Jew from Belgrade who was recently in Washington to discuss the situation and who founded the Serbian-Jewish Friendship Society, would welcome the chance to meet with you. But the most important evidence of the Croatian government's anti-Semitism and intolerance to other ethnic groups is in Franjo Tudjman's own writings, where he states, among other things, Jews' main characteristics as "selfishness, craftiness, unreliability, miserliness, underhandedness and secrecy" (Wastelands: Historical Truths, p 317-18).

I hope you will keep in mind that you have only seen and heard one side of the story before you form any more opinions concerning the conflict in Croatia. If I can assist you in talking to Serbian officials, or at least in hearing why Serbs eventually took up arms against the Croatian government, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Helen Delich Bentley
Member of Congress