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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2002

CAUCUSES
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ENERGY TASK FORCE

April 9, 1992

The Honorable George H.W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

It was great shock and dismay that I learned of the United States ill-timed recognition of the breakaway Yugoslav republics.

As you may know, Monday was the anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia. April 10th is the anniversary of the creation of the World War II Ustashe puppet regime under the Nazis, the only previous manifestation of an independent Croatian state in modern history. This regime was responsible for the extermination of hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, and even Croats.

Even the European Community held off official recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina until Tuesday, in deference to events in the Second World War, not that I agree that their push for recognition of Bosnia was in the area's best interest.

In fact, recognition of the breakaway republics has resulted in increased bloodshed, and the very real threat of an all-out civil war in the Balkans. As Cyrus Vance stated today, "Recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina ... that again threw another factor of instability into the stew just as early recognition of the republics of Slovenia and Croatia did."

The timing also represents a slap in the face not only to the Republic of Serbia, but also, and just as important, to the 1.5 million people of Serbian descent in this country, including myself.

It is in that vein, that I would respectfully request that the United States, in establishing full diplomatic relations with the Republic of Croatia, put pressure on the Tudjman regime to issue an apology for Croatia's involvement in the genocide of the Second World War.

Such action is not unprecedented. Germany has apologized for its genocidal policies in World War II, as has Austria. Even the Soviet Union has apologized for the Katyn Forest massacre.

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Had such an apology been made previous to last June's outbreak of hostilities, as I had advocated, I sincerely believe that the current situation would have manifested itself in a quite different and much more peaceful manner.

Even now, an apology would go far in assuaging the fears of ethnic Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina, and ultimately hasten the ongoing peace process.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,



Helen Delich Bentley
Member of Congress

c.c. The Honorable Sam Skinner
The Honorable Brent Scowcroft