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SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING

Topic: S. 1793, sanctions legislation relating to the
Yugoslav civil war

Witness: Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ralph Johnson

Location: Dirksen Building, room 419

Time: 10 a.m.

October 16, 1991

The editor of the report is Steve Ginsburg. Tim Ahmann, Eric Beech, Peter Ramjug and Paul Schomer also are available to help you. If you have questions, please call 202-898-8345. For service problems inside the District of Columbia, call 202-898-8355; outside D.C., call 1-800-537-9755.

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a pleasure to be with you today to discuss the very difficult issues surrounding the situation in Yugoslavia. I have a statement, which I would ask be entered in the record, and I would begin with an abbreviated version of that statement, if I may.

Mr. Chairman, the events we are witnessing today in Yugoslavia are nothing less than a tragedy. Forty-six years after the killing ended in the bloodiest war that human civilization has known, a war that was particularly devastating to Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia is poised on the brink of massive violence. What has occurred already is terrible enough. But if the peace process fails the future may hold far worse horrors. That is why we believe it is essential for the United States to assist efforts to bring about a negotiated, peaceful solution to this crisis, one that is based on Democratic principles and on respect for the rights of all the people involved.

Our policy towards Yugoslavia has evolved over the past year, but it's central elements haven't changed. We strongly oppose the use of force, violence, and intimidation to settle political disputes. We will not accept changes in external or internal borders that are achieved by force, and we insist on human rights, including the rights of members of minority groups to be guaranteed in all republics.

Many Americans are asking why we have not done even more to resolve this crisis. And that's an understandable question. The bottom line in this crisis, however, is that we cannot stop Yugoslavs from killing one another so long as they are determined to do so.

What we can do is use our influence and the powers of persuasion that we have to convince the parties to this conflict that they cannot win, and indeed they can only lose if violence is not stopped. We can support the efforts of other countries and of international organizations such as the CSCE to mediate an end to the fighting and work to keep doors open for the peaceful resolution of disputes. But we ourselves cannot stop

the violence or resolve this conflict. Only the peoples of Yugoslavia and their leaders can do that.

We have been supporting and intend to continue to support the European Community's CSCE mandated effort to bring about a genuine cease-fire and a political settlement. We believe that collective efforts have the best prospects for influencing the situation.

Should a peaceful settlement emerge, I would hope the United States would be able to contribute materially as well as diplomatically to its implementation. Why are we supporting the EC's efforts, rather than taking the lead ourselves. We believe that Europe has the most at stake in this crisis, and that European leverage, economic, as well as political, is far greater than ours.

Europe's trade and investment in Yugoslavia far exceeds that of the United States. It is therefore appropriate for the EC to take the lead, and the nations of the CSCE have agreed to support the European Community in that role. That doesn't mean that we are not actively involved ourselves. Our ambassador in Belgrade, Warren Zimmerman, is in almost constant touch with all the parties to this conflict. He and his staff have been engaged every day in working to bring the parties together and to prevent a worsening of the conflict.

Here in Washington, we too have been active. We've imposed an arms embargo in July, long before the United Nations took action on a global basis in September. Deputy Secretary Eagleburger and many officials have met with a long list of Yugoslav central and republic leaders as well as with opposition politicians and human rights activists. The main goal of our policy is to try to have a constructive impact on the crisis. Should the European Community decide to impose sanctions, we would support its decision and work to coordinate with the EC to impose sanctions ourselves.

The kind of sanctions we would apply would depend in part on what the EC did, since we would want to act in a way that if possible reinforced what the EC has done or will do, may do. It would also depend, however, on what steps we considered to be most effective, and on any constraints that might be imposed by U.S. law.

In that regard, I would like to turn briefly to the proposals contained in S. 1793. We do not believe that legislation of this kind would advance the goal of achieving a peaceful negotiated settlement in Yugoslavia. The current crisis is complicated, and the administration must have the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances, and to tailor its approach accordingly. This legislation would deny us that flexibility, and thus hamper rather than improve the effectiveness of our policy in Yugoslavia.

For example, in the area of assistance, the U.S. has few incentives to offer that might Yugoslav behavior. Yugoslavia traditionally has not received substantial U.S. assistance because it was better off economically in relative terms than other countries in the region. Our economic assistance package for Yugoslavia amounts to about \$5 million a year of primary--or \$5 million total at the moment, of primarily technical assistance in areas such as privatization, energy efficiency, and management. Of that amount, only a small portion is actually being spent as a result of the conflict.

This is insignificant beside the \$925 million that the

European Community was providing before the crisis. While the EC has suspended its financial aid, it continues to provide a much larger package of technical assistance programs than do we.

With regard to aviation, no U.S. carrier currently flies to Yugoslavia, and a cut off of landing rights for the Yugoslav national airline, JAT (phonetic), would not have an appreciable impact in our view, on the crisis.

We endorse the thrust of the conditions proposed in section 6-B of the legislation. But as I have already stated we do not believe that this kind of approach is the best way to achieve these goals.

Let me turn for a moment to what is happening inside Yugoslavia. The Serbian regime of Slobodan Milosevic with the frequent support of the Yugoslav federal military has repressed dissent at home and has revoked the autonomy of the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo. For the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo, their worst nightmares have already come true. Serbia has closed down Kosovo's schools, fired ethnic Albanians from the civil service, schools and universities, arrested hundreds of Albanians on trumped up charges, embarked on a campaign to Serbian-ize the province, and blocked the free exercise of democracy during the recent vote on independence.

The U.S. government was the first to condemn these actions and along with 16 other CSCE states invoked the CSCE human dimension mechanism in August 1990 to underscore our concern over the repression.

Since then the situation has worsened.

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October 16, 1991
MORE

AM-YUGOSLAVIA-USA

BUSH AIDES OPPOSE GO-IT-ALONE POLICY ON YUGOSLAVIA SANCTIONS
WASHINGTON, Reuter - The Bush administration opposes a go-it-alone policy over sanctions on Yugoslavia but seeks to support European Community efforts to end the civil war, an official said Wednesday.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ralph Johnson said Yugoslavia was poised on the brink of ``massive violence.``

``What has occurred already is terrible enough but if the peace process fails the future may hold far worse horrors,`` he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Committee chairman Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., and other senators have introduced legislation to impose a trade embargo on Serbia until it ceases its armed conflict with other Yugoslav republics and restrict U.S. aid to Serbia until it halts human rights violations and holds fair elections.

Johnson said Washington intended to continue to support EC efforts to bring about a genuine cease-fire and political settlement. He said European countries had a greater stake in the crisis and greater economic and political leverage than the United States.

If the EC decided on sanctions, he said, Washington would support the decision and work to coordinate with it to impose U.S. sanctions. This could include an ban on U.S. trade and economic relations with Yugoslavia with possible exceptions for humanitarian supplies, he said.

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