

able to provide them with knowledge of the river currents, having grown up on the lake. Gene and the rescue team members worked late into the day. Gene's efforts greatly contributed in the search for the missing swimmer.

On behalf of all the citizens of western Wisconsin I ask that the United States House of Representatives recognize Gene Krigsvold for his courage and thank him for being a concerned and giving community citizen.

PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN
KOSOVO RESOLUTION

SPEECH OF

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 42) regarding the use of United States Armed Forces as part of a NATO peacekeeping operation implementing a Kosovo peace agreement:

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Chairman, there are many occasions when this body meets to consider important matters of national business. But none more important than this.

To discuss and debate a resolution regarding the development of American troops in a foreign land is the utmost in constitutional and moral responsibility. It is one we do not undertake lightly.

Yesterday during testimony before the House International Affairs Committee, former U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick was asked if she thought it was appropriate for this Congress to debate this issue at this time.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick, who supports potentially deploying U.S. troops in Kosovo, replied that it is always the constitutional prerogative of the Congress to weigh in on grave matters of national security. And so we do.

But we do so with caution and concern. I approach this issue from the perspective of preserving our national security and protecting our national interest. These are two essential principles that I believe must guide our policy as we work to guide the world toward peace.

How will it affect our national security—and how is it in our national interest? These are two questions which must be decided—before any troops can be deployed.

As someone who has been at once an internationalist in foreign policy and an advocate for more defense spending, I do have to say I find it somewhat ironic that we continue to discuss deploying our troops overseas to provide protection for other nations while here in our own nation we fail to provide basic protections for our own troops like good pay, benefits, training, and equipment.

I would urge this Congress to address the need to increase defense spending. Across the board. For every armed service. No more delays. No more broken promises.

Beyond that, I want to state for the record in no uncertain terms—that I believe the atrocities of Milosevic are despotic, demonic, and despicable. I need no clarification as to whether he is evil or whether he will do more evil. He is. And he will.

We don't need to guess what he will do in the future—we have seen what he has done in the past. The prospect of another Croatia or another Bosnia can give us little comfort.

Yet I remain deeply troubled by the possibility of deploying United States troops in Kosovo. Can we really make a difference in this far away land? At this point, I have my doubts. It's probably only wishful thinking, but it is tempting to think of what might have been.

If only the administration would consult the Congress more fully and more openly. They haven't.

If only Ambassador Holbrooke could outline a specific agreement with all parties involved. He can't.

And if only we thought that an agreement would change Milosevic. It won't.

But more importantly, I find myself returning to the two questions I raised at the beginning—how will this impact our national security—and how is it in our national interest?

On these two grounds, I cannot justify the deployment of U.S. troops. Sending American soldiers and sailors will impact our national security by placing American service men and women directly in the line of fire.

For example, one of the often discussed goals of this mission is to take the weapons away from the Kosovo Liberation Army.

Mr. Chairman, a situation the American Army is trying to take weapons away from another Army—is a situation ripe for American casualties.

And how is this in our national interest? Supporters of the deployment tell us that Milosevic is a Hitler in the making. They argue that if we don't stop him now, he will continue to expand his sphere of influence into other areas of Europe.

Admittedly, on the issue of our national interest, it is a much closer call for me. I do think Milosevic is a threat to the entire region. However, I am not convinced he is a threat to the entire world.

But more importantly, I am not convinced that his actions in Kosovo warrant the sacrifice of our most sacred national asset—the men and women who wear the uniform.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, I want to say that this has been a solemn and sobering process for me. The decision that I have reached has not been easy. It has been gutwrenching.

I will oppose this resolution not because I believe there is nothing at stake in Kosovo or because I am unconvinced of Milosevic's evil.

I do so only because I believe that the deployment of U.S. troops requires that we meet an extremely high threshold. We should seek peace throughout the world.

But not at the expense of our national security and not in the absence of a national interest. We owe the world nothing more. We owe our troops nothing less.

HONORING JULIE SELCHERT, LISA STRANGE, JERRY ASHWELL AND KATHY PLANK

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 16, 1999

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a local hero from western Wisconsin. I want to honor Julie Selchert, Lisa Strange, Jerry Ashwell and Kathy Plank who took courageous action to aid another citizen.

For the past three years the Eau Claire Fire Fighters Local Union 487, in conjunction with the Eau Claire Fire Department, have recognized area residents who acted bravely in emergency situations. The recipients of the Citizen Community Involvement Awards are citizens who put the safety and well being of their neighbors ahead of other concerns in a time of need.

Julie Selchert, Lisa Strange, Jerry Ashwell and Kathy Plank are a few of those extraordinary citizens. It was around 6:15 p.m. on August 24, 1998 at The Regis Hair Salon in the London Square Mall in Eau Claire, Wisconsin when there was a small explosion, seriously injuring a salon employee. The woman had gone into the dispensary room to gather products to refill the retail display shelves in the salon. She reached for a can of hair spray but missed and it fell to the floor. As it fell the nozzle broke and the contents of the bottle spilled onto the floor. The dispensary room filled with the flammable gas. As the woman bent over to pick up the bottle there was an explosion and the contents were ignited by a gas dryer that was in use. At the sudden noise Lisa Strange ran to the room followed by Kathy Plank who told Jerry Ashwell to dial 911. Julie Selchert, Kathy's client, began to tear off the woman's burning clothes. Lisa grabbed the fire extinguisher and began putting out the fire while Julie attempted to calm the woman down. With this group working together they were able to help the woman and greatly reduce her injuries.

On behalf of all the citizens of western Wisconsin I ask that the United States House of Representatives recognize Julie Selchert, Lisa Strange, Jerry Ashwell and Kathy Plank for their courage and thank them for being concerned and giving community citizens.