

INTERPRETING THE VOTES ON
KOSOVO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, the subject that is on all of our minds is the fight in Kosovo, and I would like to focus on properly interpreting the votes of yesterday and looking to what our opportunities for solving this crisis might be tomorrow.

Yesterday was a momentous day in the history of this House. First, we voted with an over 60 percent vote that the President should not send major ground forces into Kosovo without the approval of this House.

Now it is fair to point out that there were those on the other side. They argued that Congress should not have a role in determining whether ground forces are deployed. They argued that our enemies would tremble in fear if they knew that one man, the President of the United States, without the approval of Congress, could deploy 100,000 American soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, I would tremble in fear, and the founders of this republic would tremble in fear if it was thought that one man, without the approval of the representatives of the people, could send 100,000 of our men and women into battle.

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But the fact that Congress insists upon approving in advance any deployment of ground troops does not mean that Congress has prejudged the issue.

Whether this country supports ground troops will depend, in my opinion, on what we discover is happening to the men of Kosovo. Because the refugees come out, the women, the children, the old men, but the younger men and the middle-aged men are left behind. They may join the KLA, and that is their right; they may be detained, and that is not something that would cause incredible outrage. But if we discover, as so many fear, that the men of Kosovo are being systematically slaughtered, then there will be an outcry throughout Europe and the United States, and it is possible that this House would authorize the use of ground troops.

Second, and I think most telling, we voted 2-to-1, and that is very rare in this House, by a 2-to-1 majority against ending all hostilities. In doing so, we made it clear that America is not simply going to shrug our shoulders and walk away. This is the most important vote, and the vote that should be focused on by Belgrade.

The third vote, and, unfortunately, the vote that is getting the press, was a vote of 213 to 213 as to whether this House would go on record authorizing the air strikes.

Now, our own press is misinterpreting this vote, for it came just a few

hours after, by a 2-to-1 majority, my colleagues and I voted not to stop what is going on now. We are not fools. What is going on now is an air campaign, and our decision not to stop it should have been read as a decision to go forward, at least for the present time.

But our own press, let alone the people in Belgrade, misinterpret the last vote yesterday, because they fail to account for two groups that voted against the resolution. One was a group, unfortunately, of some of my Republican colleagues, who, while they support continuing the air campaign, oppose saying anything good about anything President Clinton has ever done. It is not a secret even in Belgrade that President Clinton is not popular in the Republican Caucus, but that does mean that this people or this Congress wants to stop action and let Milosevic have his way.

Second, there were a group that I respect immensely who looked at some of the hidden possible legal implications of that resolution. They noticed that under the War Powers Act there may be a challenge to any attempt by the President to put in ground troops without the approval of this House, and that there is some judicial writing to the effect that if Congress authorizes any kind of force, that we are in no position to limit any other kind of force.

Properly interpreted, the votes of yesterday are clear: We should proceed to work to put Kosovars back in their homes in security and peace, and I addressed the House earlier on some of the more creative ways to try to accomplish that.

EXEMPTING U.S. FOOD AND MEDICINE FROM UNILATERAL TRADE SANCTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I want to use these 5 minutes for purposes of commending the administration's announcement of yesterday in which they are exempting food and medicine from unilateral trade sanctions. This has a possible immediate and positive impact on agriculture exports of wheat, rice and corn.

The United States agricultural producers, and we will hear a little bit more about that in the next hour, have faced a lot of problems with trade barriers imposed by other countries; but United States sanctions, when we and some who believe that our own policies can be put forward by denying shipment of food and medicine to countries, that too becomes a sanction or a trade barrier.

We have clearly proven, I think, over the last several years that sanctions do not work; they hurt producers, and they hurt those that we do not intend

to hurt. I think that we can find much more effective ways to implement foreign policy.

Therefore, the new policy, which is part of the administration's long-term review of sanctions, which is intended to ensure effectiveness of economic sanctions, is designed to minimize the cost to United States' producers of anything and maintain the reputation of the United States as a reliable supplier, something that often gets overlooked by some who believe that these actions, as they result in what is perceived to be in the best interests of the United States, often do not accomplish that which was intended.

A recent report from the President's Export Council showed that more than 75 countries may be subject to sanctions. In 1995, sanctions cost America \$15 billion to \$19 billion and affected 200,000 to 250,000 export-related jobs.

Speaking specifically of agriculture, United States agriculture exports account for 30 percent of all U.S. farm cash receipts and 40 percent of all agricultural production. Sanctions and embargoes make it more and more difficult for farmers and ranchers to expand agricultural markets, particularly when the 95-96 farm bill was designed to make us more reliant on foreign markets. It absolutely makes no sense then to deny the market opportunity for our producers.

The Departments of Commerce and Treasury will issue new regulations with regard to Iran, Libya and Sudan. The Departments of State and Treasury must review the pending applications for agricultural sales to Iran.

On January 5, policy changes were made to authorize case-by-case licensing of food and agricultural imports to Cuba. Congress would have to amend current law to change this policy, and it is my sincere hope that Congress will take up through the committee process and hopefully through action on this floor, a sincere and open debate as to whether or not our policy that we have toward Cuba should in fact be revised along the same lines of which we are talking of other countries.

So here today I take this minute, and I will soon yield back if I have any balance of time, to just say let us use this new policy to help our producers, in this case, move wheat, corn and rice and other commodities to our customers overseas, in whatever area is affected by these sanctions.

It is important for this body and for the administration to think long and hard before we impose unilateral sanctions. Unilateral trade sanctions have never proven effective. When we sanction, when we deny markets and our friends take those markets, it only hurts producers and workers in America.