

Unlike some of my colleagues, I am very confident in the ability of our Armed Forces to win this war. But I believe that we must continue to prepare for all-out war, and we must fund our Armed Forces, but we must also search for peaceful solutions.

The time is ripe. The Russians will help, and the Serbs are ready to avoid a wider war that will totally destroy their country and also sacrifice the lives of our brave young men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces.

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE IN THE BALKANS WAR

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, this evening I join my colleagues down here in the well of the House on the floor to join myself with their remarks. My colleagues, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN), I am sure are going to speak eloquently on this very subject that we are talking about this evening and that is that our hope as we stand here this evening is an opportunity to give peace a chance in the Balkans war.

No war, no conflict and certainly no humanitarian crisis has ever been resolved by bombing a country into oblivion. May I say that, as a veteran of two wars myself, that diplomacy is always preferable to war. And I am sure that we all recognize that this Balkan crisis, the war over there in Yugoslavia, the ethnic cleansing, the terrorism, the human tragedies, are an enormous crisis that this world faces; and military escalation by itself will not end, nor will it solve, this crisis. In fact, it may even precipitate an increase with the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Perhaps I can explain that in just a few words. Whenever a small country is opposed by an organization of 19 other nations, the propensity of that country to defend itself may reach extremes. To that end, it may reach for those arsenals that it could acquire from some other country of a weapon of mass destruction, whether it is chemical, whether it is biological or even whether it is nuclear, in order to defend itself from the onslaught of an attack.

I urge this administration and I urge my colleagues here this evening to seriously consider the efforts and the recommendations of the U.S. Congress and the Russian Duma meeting that was held in Vienna, Austria, this last weekend. I urge them to consider the recommendations in order to bring about a fair, an equitable and a peaceful settlement between the warring factions in Yugoslavia.

This meeting that was held with the leaders of the Russian factions in their

Duma, which is our equivalent of the House of Representatives here in Congress, reached consensus, reached an agreement, on areas that we thought would form a framework for the resolution, the peaceful resolution, I might add, of the Yugoslavia crisis.

Those include, first, ending the ethnic crisis, the ethnic cleansing and terrorism; an end of the NATO bombing; an absolute removal of the Serbian military forces; an emplacement of an international peacekeeping force that will ensure the peaceful repatriation of the refugees back into Kosovo, and wide autonomy is the final goal for Kosovo.

I think all of us here in this room this evening can agree that these are elements that we can all consider as a solution for this crisis, elements which will allow us to resolve this.

May I say that later this week my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will have an opportunity to deal with the concurrent resolution that is the result of the recommendations of this meeting in Vienna, Austria, a historic meeting, and now this resolution will simply state a sense of Congress as to the meaning that diplomacy is always better than warfare.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will give peace a chance as we debate this issue and vote on it later this week.

May I also say that it has been a great pleasure to work with my friends on both sides of the aisle when we have a common goal, a common goal of peace, not only in the Balkans but peace in the world.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to have stood down here to associate myself with my colleagues' remarks as we go forward in this process of seeking an alternative to an escalated war in Yugoslavia. I would like to thank them for the bipartisanship and the friendship and the collegiality that was demonstrated throughout this meeting. It is indeed a great honor for me to stand here, arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder, in this effort to bring peace to this world.

VIENNA PEACE TALKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Duma-U.S. Congressional Study Group, I want to take a moment to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) for his leadership in this area.

I traveled with my colleagues to Vienna, Austria, last weekend to help bring cooperation between members of the Russian parliament and the United States Congress.

The United States-Russian Duma Study Group was created 5 years ago,

and I have been an active participant in the organization for the last 3 years. As a group, our members meet to discuss national security, military affairs, housing, economic development and social welfare policies.

The importance of the working group cannot be overstated, since personal relationships by members of each of the respective governments are created, thus permitting for greater openness and increasing trust between the two governing bodies of each country.

Because Russia and Serbia have close ethnic and historical ties, I believe that members of the Russian Duma can play an important role in convincing the Serbian government to put a halt to the ethnic cleansing and help stop the refugee crisis.

I believe that the humanitarian crisis cannot be solved by just a bombing campaign and that a diplomatic solution is much more desirable than military escalation. A spread of the violence will only bring about increasing division, hatred and resentment and violence, but a diplomatic solution could lead to the increase of communication and understanding between the two sides and save countless lives.

As a Member of Congress, I feel that it is my responsibility to do everything I can within my capacity to help end this war.

I would like to point out that the congressional delegation's discussions with the Duma were not meant as a slight to the administration nor an undermining of NATO's authority. Rather, members of our group traveled to Austria to increase communication between the warring sides and act as a conduit to the present talks taking place between President Clinton, foreign policy experts and members of the Russian Government.

The main point of contention which I brought to the talks with the Russian Duma was that ethnic cleansing is, in essence, the root cause of the conflict. As the only mother in the room during the talks, I felt that it was necessary to recognize the tragedies of the refugee families.

The Russian delegation originally refused to acknowledge that it was the ethnic cleansing that began this conflict and not the NATO bombing, but before they walked away from our discussion they acknowledged that it was the ethnic cleansing that began this conflict.

Our discussion resulted in a framework for peace negotiations. One of the guidelines I would like to see during the peace negotiations is a cease-fire, a time-out from the fighting, so that both parties can refrain from fighting in order to negotiate with one another in a diplomatic fashion.

In order to smooth out the road to diplomacy, the Congressional-Duma Study Group suggests a threefold approach to resolving the conflict. This