

PEACE

Reflections On The War In The Balkans

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In The House of Representatives

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Mr. Speaker, we are told tonight that we are at the beginning of the end of the war in the Balkans. But before the ink has dried on the agreement there are a few reflections that I think are in order, because we cannot just sign this piece of paper and pretend that we can move on, pretend that we have peace, because the truth is that problems could arise and we could end up in a multi-party land war right in the middle of the Balkans, with our young men and women put in grave danger.

I would like to take this discussion tonight to another level which goes beyond the fine print of agreements, which inevitably are lost, and goes to higher principles. This is an appropriate time to reflect on the lessons that we have learned in the Balkan war, and to take those lessons and transform them, and to transform these thoughts of war into thoughts of peace, and turn the thought of peace into the reality of peace, and to speak to higher principles, which this country has the ability to create so that we can continue in our historic quest to be the light of the world, to be what the prophet spoke of as the shining city on a hill, resplendent in our commitment to all human values, to evolve into a country which can win the peace without finding it necessary to take up arms to win a war.

The values which are enshrined in the Declaration of Independence animate our concern for each other and for people around the world. These words ring in the hearts of Americans: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

These values, these ideas, these ideals, are so powerful that they cause others to rise up in defense of their own rights all over the world. We Americans love democracy, and it hurts us when we see tyrants imposing death or death of hope on people anywhere in the world.

Recent humanitarian catastrophes have occurred and the United States did not intervene: 80,000 dead in Algeria; 10,000 dead in the Ethiopian-Eritrean war in a recent month; 820,000 dead in Rwanda over 5 years; 1.5 million dead in Sudan in the first 15 years; 40,000 Kurds dead at the hands of Turkish forces; 200,000 people killed in East Timor by Indonesian forces.

These tragedies have befallen our brothers and sisters around the world, people we surely care about but people we did not help, people who died while the world watched.

We have the strongest Nation in the world, yet with that strength through great difficulty we learned to exercise the greatest discretion in the use of force, because once that force is used the consequences cannot be predicted.

Sometimes the very people we intend to help may end up being hurt.

Such a dilemma has faced us in the Balkans. We have advanced here a doctrine of humanitarian intervention. By all fair accounts, that intervention has produced conditions which are worse than they were before we began our involvement.

Ethnic cleansing was being undertaken against the Kosovar Albanians. NATO's bombing accelerated it. Serbian paramilitary attacks cause masses of Kosovar Albanians to flee the province. NATO's bombing turned masses into a great human tide seeking to flee the war. Serbian paramilitary forces destroyed the homes and villages of Kosovar Albanians. NATO's bombing widened the area of destruction.

Today there will be a semblance of peace or a chance for peace in Kosovo, but what kind of a peace? It will be a peace which will have been gained at the cost of thousands of lives of innocent civilians of both sides? It will be a peace where the province has been decimated by both sides by cluster bombs, by booby

traps, by landmines. It will harken to the comment that was made in another war: We have created a desert, and have called it peace.

Certainly in a democracy our history has shown us that there are some things worth standing up for. I think the most important thing that any one of us can do in life is to stand up and to fight for those things we believe in.

In this country, we believe in freedom of religion. We hate to see that freedom denied to anyone anywhere else in the world. Yet that freedom is being denied today in China, in East Timor, in Burma, in North Korea, and in other nations; and that bothers us as Americans.

In the United States, freedom of religion is essential to our democracy. It is first in our amendments. It is first in our hearts. People come from all over the world here to find freedom of religion to follow that truth that resonates with their own hearts. Americans fought for that right. Indeed, it is a human right.

This freedom of religion means that all may pray and worship; that no one is forced to worship any faith except that which they believe; that the State sponsors no religion, but respects all religion. This is a powerful principle of freedom of religion.

We separate church and State in America, but separation and such separation by our Founders was never meant to imply that we should separate the practice of government from high principles or the actions of government from spiritual principles.

Our motto in the United States, as we all know, is 'In God We Trust.' That motto is not simply the recognition of an external transcended reality. It is a communion of the Nation with the angels. It has become a clarion call for moral leadership. If we truly trust in God, then each of us must become as moral leaders. If we trust in God, each of us can summon a transcendent morality.

Spiritual awareness enkindles the power of the human heart, which brings to each of us love which transcends all, love which heals all, love which comforts all, love which sees all, love which forgives all, love which conquers all, love which speaks to all, love which you hear, love which you can feel, love you can

touch, love you can see; and then we comprehend understanding, and we are able to touch the wings of angels.

That appeal to sense in essence transcends language when we communicate with each other through the heart. Love speaks to all languages. The language of the human heart speaks through all languages.

Now in Christianity, the highest commandment is to love one another. Love yourself. Love your neighbor as yourself. As we affirm love in our hearts, we affirm the future; and the future is in turn revealed to us, because a heart filled with love is like a magnet that draws to it the love that it desires. What the heart seeks, the heart finds. What the heart asks for, the heart receives. If the heart asks for peace, its prayer will be answered. So will be the prayer be answered if it asks for war. The doors at which the heart knocks on are open. As we affirm love in our hearts, we affirm truth, and eternity is revealed to us.

When this war in the Balkans first began, Mr. Speaker, I felt this illogic of war grip this Capitol. It was as a physical force, whirling like a vortex, the start of war. Words of war, actions of war produce war. We can be co-creators of our own world.

So as we are near the end of what we can only hope be the last war of this century, it is time to ask what kind of a world do we want in the next century and how can we avoid the wars of the next century. How can we build the peace of the next century. We want a world of love, a world of hope, a world of joy, a world of prosperity, a world where all may worship, a world where all may live, a world where all may strive, a world where all may grow, a world of peace.

Many of us have come to America, indeed many of my constituents have come to America from different nations. That is one of our strengths in this country, our diversity. The motto which soars above this majestic chamber speaks to the unity of one people, e pluribus unum: out of many, one. That is why it is so painful for we Americans to watch people suffering anywhere in the world, because they happen to have a different religion, a different race, a different ethnic group, a different political philosophy.

We come here from many Nations. We share a common destiny as brothers and sisters of a common planet. What kind of a world do we want? Only through the application of higher principles can we hope to have our systems of government forsake war and destruction and to make the survival of each person a sacred commitment.

In this world of strife and war, we are called upon to be channels of peace. In this world of darkness, we are called upon to bring light. In this world of fear, we are called upon to bring courage. In this world of despair, we are called upon to bring hope. In this world of poverty, much poverty, let us bring forth plenty. In this world of ignorance, let the light of knowledge light the world. In this world of sorrow, let us use our spiritual principles to bring forth joy. In this world of judgment, certainly we are asked to bring forth mercy. It is through the heart that we connect with all humanity. It is through the heart that we connect with the infinite. These are principles that transcend governments. Governments kneel before these principles. The Congress of the United States, even this Congress, is nothing next to these principles. The government of any country is humbled before these principles. It is through the human heart that we meet injustice and we transform it and through the application of spiritual principles we change the world.

We have throughout the last few months employed doctrines which are decidedly not spiritual in an attempt to solve our international problems in the Balkans. These doctrines speak to our limitations as a Nation, limitations which may burden us today, but limitations which we can jettison and which can fall away from our conscience, actions like the separation of a stage of a rocket falling back into the atmosphere as the capsule of destiny rockets higher and higher towards the stars.

But back on earth, we ought to inspect those doctrines which keep us earthbound which will make it impossible for us to have real peace. The doctrine of the end justifying the means. NATO has bombed civilians. NATO has bombed a civilian structure. NATO has helped to destroy a civil society with its bombs.

Now the ends which NATO has sought to achieve, the end of ethnic cleansing, the dislodging of a powerful dictator, we have to ask if the ends have justified the means.

As one Russian leader asked us when we were in Vienna, would in fact it be a proper pursuit of peace if their government had decided to drop a nuclear bomb on a U.S. city? So we need to inspect this doctrine of the end justifying the means.

We need also to inspect the doctrine of might makes right. Now, I happen to believe that in America the law is what makes right. Yet, in this conflict, we have seen the United Nations charter, which this Nation was proud to lead the world in organizing, violated by an organization which saw fit to take the law into their own hands because they did not want to go through the United Nations, a United Nations which we recognize at this moment had to have been instrumental in finally bringing about an agreement in the Balkans.

The United Nations charter states that its primary purpose was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It States in its article IV that `all members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.'

If might makes right, the U.N. charter does not mean anything. If might make rights, the North Atlantic Treaty signed in 1949, article I, may mean nothing.

Article I states, `The parties undertake, as set forth in the charter of the United Nations, to settle any international disputes in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.'

So from the United Nations, that principle flowed into the North Atlantic Treaty. But if might makes right, the North Atlantic Treaty means nothing.

If might makes right, the Hague Conventions of 1907, which prohibit penalizing a population for someone's acts, means nothing.

If might makes right, the Geneva Convention of 1949, which prohibits attacks on objects indispensable for the survival of a civilian population, such as an electric system, water system, sewer system, if might makes right, the Geneva Convention means nothing.

If might makes right, the 1980 Vienna Convention, which bars coercion to make nations sign agreements, means nothing because the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was told at Rambouillet that they would either sign that agreement or be bombed.

So we need to inspect this doctrine of might making right and we need to also, as we inspect it, determine whether the Constitution of the United States itself has the meaning which its founders imbued in it when it said in Article I, Section 8 that the Congress shall have the power to declare war.

And notwithstanding my affection for the person who holds that office right now, I have to ask whether or not the War Powers Act was violated and whether or not the Constitution of the United States itself was violated in this pursuit of an exercise of power. If might makes right, perhaps even the Constitution is without meaning.

We have to also, as we review this war, determine whether or not the doctrine of retributive justice, an eye for an eye, is to stand; that by killing people we teach people that it is wrong to kill people. When we advance such a doctrine, we end up in a moral cul-de-sac. We find ourselves chasing into a darkness and unable to extract ourselves from it.

The idea of vengeance is something that is a very old idea. In the literature of Beowulf from many, many years ago the concept of Wergild was that if you did something to somebody's relative that other family had the obligation to come back and kill one of yours. Yet we were told that in this wonderful book we know as the New Testament that there was a new law brought forward; that the law of an eye for an eye was no more. Vengeance is mine, said the Lord. I will repay.

And if we have confidence in that doctrine, in the belief that there is a higher power who judges all and dispenses justice, then we have to ask about our feeble efforts to render justice through retribution and look at this doctrine of retributive justice.

In this war we get the opportunity to inspect the doctrine of collective guilt; that just because people happen to live in a country which is governed by a tyrant, which is governed by an individual who does not support basic human rights of an important minority group in his country; that because of that everyone in that country is guilty. We need to look at that doctrine. Because behind that doctrine is a sense of punishment which NATO apparently felt it had to mete out to the people of Serbia, taking over 2,000 lives of innocent civilians. We must look at that doctrine of collective guilt.

We must look at the doctrine of collateral damage. I have been in meetings in this Congress where the idea of collateral damage was brought forth, and if one did not listen carefully enough, one would not be aware that it meant killing innocent civilians. That phrase means the death of innocent civilians. And so in this war we have developed an acceptance of the idea of collateral damage. But these are people. These are innocent civilians who were killed; people going to visit their relatives while riding on a passenger train; people riding a bus to work or to go to the market; refugees in a convoy trying to get out of a war-torn country; people sitting in their homes eating dinner; people in factories just trying to do their work; people like us who were just trying to live. And yet they become collateral damage. They do not even have names. They do not even have descriptions. They are deprived of their humanity. And when they are deprived of their humanity, we deprive ourselves of our own humanity. So we need to look at this doctrine of collateral damage.

We need to look at the doctrine of accidental bombing. How many times could we hear over and over and over again it was an accident; that we blew up these innocent civilians? An accident. I mean if any one of us driving a car found ourselves over and over and over again getting into accidents, two things would

happen. We would not be insured any more and a court would take our license away. And so should NATO's license to prosecute a war against a civilian population be taken away, because there are no accidents when the accidents keep repeating themselves.

The doctrine of necessary distortion of meaning. George Orwell knew well this conflict. The idea of peace bombs. A peace war. Bombing for peace does violence to cognition and does violence to the commitment that this Nation has, as a people, to speak plainly to those we represent, to tell them the truth of what is going on, to do it in language which is clear and sparkling so that no one can mistake what our intentions are and to not distort meaning.

Indeed, in listening to an earlier discussion about the culture of violence in our society, is it any wonder when we send out so many conflicting messages about the violence which is wreaked by international organizations that the children of any nation would be confused about violence being visited in their own midst? And one other doctrine we need to inspect is the doctrine of creation of enemies. I remember years ago when I was a student at Saint Aloysius, an elementary school in the City of Cleveland, the United States was in a conflict with Russia. It was called the Cold War, and we used to do drills in school in the fifth grade. Some of my colleagues will remember those drills. They were called duck and cover. We were told that we should expect that at some time there was this possibility that a nuclear attack could be launched by Russia at the United States.

And we were told that if only we would put our arms around our head and protect it and tuck our head deep into our lap and closed our eyes and prayed, that when the flash came, we would not be blinded and perhaps we could go back home after school.

President Eisenhower himself knew in that era that such drills were folly because a nuclear strike would mean the annihilation of a major population. So those drills were merely to try to assuage the fears of the American people about the cataclysm of a nuclear war. But we felt throughout that time in the Cold War that

the possibility for destruction was there because enemies were being created and in that dialectic of conflict that went back and forth across the oceans, we found ourselves fearing each other, preparing to destroy each other.

And last month, in the middle of this Balkan conflict, the leader of the Yablako faction in Russia said that the effort to blockade the port in Montenegro was putting us on a direct path to nuclear escalation.

Last week, Premier Chernomyrdin of Russia, in an op-ed piece in the Washington Post, stated that the world was closer to a nuclear conflict than at any time in this decade because of the Balkan conflict. Russians were our enemies. They became our friends. And again we have tested that friendship and we began a repolarization, trying to exclude them right from the beginning from this process of peacemaking which could have been made possible through the U.N. Security Council so many months ago.

As we create enemies, we may fulfill the prophecy of destruction; and we will bring ourselves to a nuclear confrontation, we fear, if we stay on that path of the creation of enemies. We create enemies, and then we are ourselves our own enemies. 'We have met the enemy,' in the words of Pogo, 'and he is us.'

Mr. Speaker, because of this great concern which Members of Congress had, 11 of us went on a mission of peace to Vienna on April 30 to meet with leaders of the Russian Duma, including Vladimir Luhkin, a leader of the Yablako faction, who only weeks earlier had made this powerful statement about the nations being on a direct path to nuclear escalation.

And in Vienna, under the leadership of my good friend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Curt Weldon) 11 of us sat down with leaders of the Russian Duma and began to work out a framework for peace, to reestablish this amity which we have worked so hard for, where only a year ago Russian and American astronauts could work together in the same space program, where a short few years ago Russian and American astronauts could fly around the world together in the same space capsule.

We went to Vienna at a time where some were challenging whether or not Russian leaders and U.S. leaders ought to be together in the same room. And yet we took that step forward to apparently and quietly over a period of 2 days put together not an agreement between nations, but a framework that could be used to take steps towards peace and unravel what looked like a concentration of war energy that was moving like a juggernaut across this world.

That was many, many, many weeks ago, Mr. Speaker. And in that time since then, many opportunities toward peace were lost and many lives were lost and much damage was done to property and to people's hopes and dreams.

There are times that people around the world depend on the United States as being a protector of human rights to rise and to defend the principles that are enshrined in our own statue of liberty in the harbor in New York City, that lady who holds the lamp in the harbor, the encryption at the base, which reads, 'Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the tempests, to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door.'

So I speak of Bosnia. Now, I had the opportunity to witness firsthand, as a Member of the United States congressional delegation, the effects in Bosnia of hatred and tolerance where Muslim people were driven from their homes, where there was an attempt to destroy people for what they believed in, an attempt to destroy the homeland of Muslim people.

I saw graves ringed with fresh marble. I saw homes that had been blown up everywhere and everything riddled with bullets. I met with people that had been driven from their villages by fear and terror. And I met people that wanted to go home because home called them, as home calls us all. But fear put up a roadblock and governments put up a roadblock. I met with the Muslim women of Srebrenica who lost their husbands, who lost their fathers, who lost their brothers, who lost their children when 5,000 Muslims were lined up and murdered only because they were Muslims.

I met with Dr. Sarich in Sarajevo and learned of the difficulty placed in the path of Muslims who simply wanted to return home in keeping with the Dayton Agreement. I appealed to the State Department and the Justice Department for the women of Srebrenica. I spoke on the floor of the Congress for an appeal to the Government of the United States to remember what happened in Srebrenica and to maintain their commitment to the people of Bosnia as they try to resettle and restore their country and to help bring those who are responsible for the atrocities in Bosnia to justice.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it could be said that the seeds of the current war in the Balkans could have been sown because the world community failed to bring to justice those who committed war crimes. Because until they are brought to justice, can there really be justice with respect to Bosnia and to help find the missing and to help heal the broken families and broken hearts and to work with the assembled nations to help protect the peace and to help rebuild the civil society? Can that really be done if those who were responsible for creating that moment are not brought to justice?

The Dayton Agreement was merely a promise. It is not a reality. We must continue to work to make it a reality. And it is the responsibility of the Government of the United States to show leadership in the world and to make sure the promise of Dayton becomes a reality.

I am not a stranger to the Balkans. I was in Sarajevo. I was in Brzko. I was in Tuzla. And I was also in Croatia last year to visit family, to hope to have a chance to see the place where my own grandfather was born, a little town in eastern Slovenia called Botnoga, where John Kucinic was born many, many years ago. And I so much wanted to see the place where he was born.

And when I went to Zagreb to visit with friends and relatives, I learned that in Botnoga, there was no 'there' there. In fact, the town had been leveled in the previous war with Serbia. And yet when I learned in that moment the feelings that I had felt, strong feelings, it occurred to me again, do we move forward in this world, hoping for peace if we believe that there must be vengeance, if we believe

in an eye for an eye, if we believe that every injustice which is done to us must be returned in full measure by us? And so in my own way I was confronted with those feelings.

I do not think that any of us could say that we have suffered the kind of tragedy which the Kosovar Albanians have suffered. And it is true that the world community has a responsibility to do everything it can to try to repair their shattered lives. We had a moral responsibility to take steps that stopped the destruction of Kosovo . We have a moral responsibility to bring about a peaceful resolution there. But I believe that right at the beginning, our responsibility rested on understanding the primacy of international law as expressed through the United Nations and through the U.N. Security Council and through the Geneva Convention, and through the Hague and through the United States Constitution, Article 1, section 8.

Now, ultimately military solutions are not adequate. Ultimately truly peaceful structures, we can call them democratic structures, must be in place. We had that opportunity more than a year ago. We remember when 100,000 people marched through the streets of Belgrade protesting the regime, asking for support, asking for an opportunity to uphold democratic values, asking for a chance to keep their media free, to keep their exercise of basic rights as part of their ongoing civic life. And yet that movement did not receive the support which the world community owed it. But peaceful structures must be put in place, notwithstanding the massive destruction, and the international community has agreed to participate in the rebuilding of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. But with that rebuilding must come democratic structures so people can live, people can worship, people can work, people can play and people can live out their lives. And so it is appropriate for the State Department, working with the United Nations, to begin to work to negotiate transitional government structures. To do less while simply giving lip service to humanitarian efforts is a cruel hoax. It has been said before and it should be said again, until the leadership in Belgrade is

replaced through a democratic process, it will be very difficult to be able to have a lasting peace.

Now, the Bible says, 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.' We have to be seekers of the truth about what happened in the Balkans, so we do not repeat the same mistakes. And so that we can create new possibilities for peace. Let our country be seekers of the truth in our own land and in our own foreign policy, so that we can all see the light, when the light of truth shines through the darkness and the darkness will not overcome truth. Such is always the promise of America when we live by the ideals upon which this country was founded, the ideals of truth, the ideals of justice, freedom of religion, freedom of speech.

As we strive to become one Nation with liberty for all, one Nation with justice for all, one Nation with freedom of speech for all, one Nation with freedom of religion for all, let us remember that unity is something that all of us seek after, a transcendent unity of higher purpose. So let us strive for a government which strives for peace. And let us have a government which protects the freedom of all to worship, let us have a government which practices toleration, let us have a government which stands against discrimination, let us have a government which makes us always proud of our Nation, let us have a government which fulfills the promise of one of America's greatest Presidents, Abraham Lincoln, who spoke of a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

In America, the beauty of this country is that we are always creating a new Nation. Years ago we spoke of creating a Nation conceived in liberty. Today we create a new Nation again. And in this new millennium, which we are advancing towards, we can create a new millennium where peace, not war, is the imperative, begun in unity, where those who seek truth, where those who know truth and have found truth unite their thoughts across religions and cultures, drawing from the universality of the human condition and the higher consciousness which is the impulse of a universe that calls us forward.

Now, there is real power in that kind of America, power that transcends a \$270 billion military budget. There is real power in a kind of America where we live by our ideals, where we stand by the spiritual principles which our founders held dear. This recognition would lead us to create a harmony that would dissipate the inevitability of war and consecrate the inevitability of peace.

As we move towards a new millennium, we can summon a new creativity and thought, a new vibration and feeling, a new consciousness which will help us create new worlds. It is time for us to think in terms of studying peace as we would study war. We have a war college. There ought to be a college for peace. We ought to spend more time in this country studying conflict resolution and mediation, at local, State and at the Federal level, so we can teach people, even in the schools, how to deal with their feelings, teach people how to respect each other's rights, make ours a quest for something that we have not even been able to grasp, a new condition for peace.

Perhaps it is time for a Department of Peace, as we have a Department of Defense, where the impact of every government decision, particularly with respect to the work of the Department of Defense, is studied finely as to what its effect would be on peace. I mean, if 1 percent of the Federal budget would be used for such a department, 1 percent of the Federal budget used for the military, that is, 1 percent of \$270 billion, we would have enough to make a major beginning in a new millennium towards promoting tolerance which comes from understanding. Because once people understand, there will be more tolerance. Once people understand, there will be more acceptance, because acceptance follows knowledge and leads to the brotherhood and sisterhood of all. We could move together to create peace, not the peace of the grave which we are all too familiar with in the tragedies we have witnessed, but the peace of a joyful life, not just peace which is a cessation of war but peace which is something more innate, peace which is inside each one of us, peace inside which no one can take away, an inner peace which we in turn give to the world.

Peace on earth truly begins within each of us, and that inner peace which makes each of us is a source of peace in the world which we extend to those who are persecuted, which we extend to those who hate us, which we extend to those who misunderstand us, which we extend to those, until their hearts open up and their eyes open up, my fellow Americans, our arms open up and we embrace each other as brothers and sisters, and we hold each other in a triumph of love, in a triumph of universal peace; Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, black, white, yellow, red, brown, brothers and sisters.

Mr. Speaker, peace.

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