

take strong action early on, we will wind up with another Bosnia in Kosovo.

Kosovo again are people, Albanians, 90 percent ethnic Albanians, they have no rights, they have no political rights, they have no economic rights, unemployment is high, they cannot teach in the Albanian language. They are constantly oppressed, harassed, beaten and murdered. This Sunday they conducted their own elections. The Albanian leadership conducted their elections. Dr. Ibrahim Rugova was reelected as the president. They elected a parliament. This parliament and Dr. Rugova had been elected 6 years ago but the parliament had never been allowed to meet under threat of jail or exile.

We had hoped to go there, but we were stopped at the border. First, we were denied visas here in Washington and then we were denied visas when we flew to Macedonia; in Skopje we could not get visas. We went to the border and we were stopped by the Serbian guards, who told us we could not get in.

It is unprecedented that three Members of this Congress would be barred from visiting another country. This is the first time that I have been barred and the first time I have heard of Members of Congress being barred. But again it shows the arrogance of the leadership of the Serbian government, particularly President Milosevic, who has done the kind of atrocities in Europe that makes one remember the Nazi era, with the ethnic cleansing and the genocide being perpetrated first on the Bosnian Muslims, now on the Albanians, a constant pattern of harassment and killings and intimidation of the Albanians.

The people of Kosovo I believe have the right to self-determination, the same self-determination we would want for ourselves or for all free peoples around the world. They have the absolute right to determine their destiny. They have the absolute right to determine their political future if they want to be an independent republic.

I personally, this Congressman support them, and if they want to do whatever they want to do as a free people, they have the right to do so. The United States must very strongly stand with them. This House last week passed a resolution sponsored by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and myself and lots of other people calling on the Serbs to end their oppression, condemning the Serbian oppression against the Albanian majority in Kosovo. The contact group is meeting tomorrow. Under the able leadership of Ambassador Gelbard and Secretary of State Albright they will be pushing for further sanctions on the Serbian regime. They have to understand that the people of Kosovo need to be free, the people of Kosovo will not tolerate and the people of the world will not tolerate the wanton slaughter of innocent men, women and children.

They went into villages and just killed people. This is unheard of. We

will not stand by and allow genocide and ethnic cleansing to continue. The gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) and myself all took very, very strong stands. It was outrageous that we were not allowed to go into the border. We can only say that the Serbian leader must be hiding something because he does not want us to know the truth.

To add insult to injury, while we were not allowed to go to the border, Mr. Milosevic's forces jailed six Americans on trumped-up phony charges, jailed them and put them in prison. Thankfully, those prisoners were finally released yesterday after our State Department intervened, after the three of us made very strong statements urging their release, and they are here in Washington and we are going to meet them in a little while to have dinner with them, and tomorrow morning we are calling a press conference to let the world know what we saw and the brutality that Milosevic is putting onto the Albanian people. We are going to have these Americans who were imprisoned against their will join us at the press conference.

I would like to now yield to either one of my colleagues if they would like to comment. We are going to spend the next 15 minutes talking and comparing notes and letting the American people know precisely what is happening.

CONGRESSIONAL TRIP TO KOSOVO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I too just returned from the Republic of Macedonia, where I participated in this 14-member bipartisan congressional mission to Kosovo, invited to observe presidential and parliamentary elections in the Republic of Kosovo. We also sought to learn the facts surrounding the brutal repression currently taking place in Kosovo by the Serbs. Our mission was simply to observe and bear witness to the happenings in this troubled part of the world.

Unfortunately, the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, denied our entry into Kosovo. Let us be clear. We worked very diligently in advance of this trip to ensure that we would receive our visas to enter Kosovo. We contacted the Yugoslav embassy in Washington well in advance of our trip. We submitted our visa applications and generally provided whatever information was needed to support this important trip.

We waited several days for a response to our request and called the embassy on a daily basis to inquire into the status of our request. The answer always came back the same, "We are considering it. We'll get back to you." With still no answer, our delegation made the decision to proceed with the hope that we would be granted visas. Unfor-

tunately, we arrived in Macedonia, which borders Kosovo, to the disappointing news that our request had been denied.

Why? Supposedly the reason given was the inadequacies of the information we provided in our visa applications to the Yugoslav government. Perhaps the true reason was that President Milosevic did not want us to see firsthand the brutal campaign of repression he has waged against the ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo.

Despite this denial, Mr. Speaker, we decided to make one last effort to cross the border. We assembled the delegation and made our way to the nearest border post separating Kosovo and Macedonia. The location was a remote one. It was extremely cold as we made our way on foot from the Macedonian checkpoint to the border of Kosovo. Unfortunately, the heavily armed border guards had no intention of allowing us to proceed.

A CNN camera crew which was already across the border in Kosovo was prevented from coming down to the border checkpoint to talk with us. We finally gave up, Mr. Speaker, and returned to the capital of Macedonia, where we established an election monitoring effort there. The election did take place despite repression and violence by Serb police and paramilitary units, and the people of Kosovo elected Ibrahim Rugova to another term as President.

Sadly, the Serbs consider this election an illegal one and continue to deny the people of Kosovo basic human rights, such as the right to choose their own elected leaders. Mr. Speaker, the people of Kosovo want nothing more than to simply live and work in peace, yet the Serbs time and again resort to violence and repression in an effort to maintain control over the former Yugoslav republics.

I want my colleagues in this institution as well as the American people to know of our experiences in simply seeking to observe an election and investigate human rights abuses. I want them to know of the violence that is taking place right now against the people of Kosovo.

I heard today that another half a dozen villages have been surrounded and there is heavy artillery up there around these new villages that have been surrounded. Many are dead, tens of thousands are homeless, and scores of towns are currently under siege by Serbian military units. Innocent civilians are without food and heat. It was recently reported that six ethnic Albanians died from starvation and cold.

I want the world to know of what is going on in Kosovo because we must not allow Kosovo to become another Bosnia. Yet that is exactly what could happen. Until now, the resistance in Kosovo has largely been peaceful and nonviolent. I hope and pray that it remains that way. My greatest fear is that the Serbian brutality and repression results in more armed resistance

in Kosovo which will lead to only greater violence and bloodshed.

We must not allow this to happen, Mr. Speaker. The world community can prevent this if it has the will to do so.

CONGRESSIONAL TRIP TO KOSOVO

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

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I joined the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) over the weekend. Our intent was to go to Kosovo because we were aware of the brutal violence that the Milosevic regime had imposed upon the Kosovo people. They went into villages and wiped out the village. The Interior Minister of Kosovo, who was acting under the orders of Mr. Milosevic, said that if there are even two terrorists opposed to our regime, we consider the entire village opposed and are justified in eliminating it.

They killed 87 people, innocent men, women, children. They lined them up. Many of them they only killed after torturing them. These people were not a threat. Virtually all of them were unarmed. They wiped them out because they were afraid that they might at some point pose a threat to their regime. Why would it be a threat? Kosovo is a country of 2.2 million people. About 2 million of them are Albanian Muslims. A little less than 10 percent of the population is Serbian. Many of those Serbs have been sent there by Mr. Milosevic, who is the head of the Serbian government, that now calls itself the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, sent to populate Kosovo. Most of the Serbs there did not want to be there. Some of them had been driven out by Croats, out of the Krajina region in Croatia, but the reality is that the vast majority of the Kosovo people want to have their own representation. They had a vote in 1991, overwhelmingly elected Mr. Ibrahim Rugova as the President. That presidency was not allowed to take effect, that government was not allowed to take effect. Mr. Milosevic took over control of the country. The way he maintains control over 90 percent of the population is through the most brutal repression, the same kind of brutality we saw in Bosnia.

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I can tell you one instance when I visited Kosovo earlier, there was a school that was fit for about a thousand students. Half of the school was reserved for a handful of Serbian children, the other half, a thousand Albanian Muslim children were consigned to. The government bricked over the bathrooms. One of the parents who had two daughters there complained about the conditions. That man had his body mutilated, was slit from head to toe

and dumped on the doorstep of the family. That is the kind of brutality that enables a very small portion of the population, through a reign of terror, to control 90 percent of the population.

That is why we went there, in defense of human rights, of democracy and, in fact, of free enterprise because the Serbian regime out of Belgrade seized control of the private businesses. The majority of the population are not allowed to own their businesses. They seize the assets of the banks, they deprive people of the means of livelihood. You have an 85 percent unemployment rate in Kosovo. What you have is a landmine that is going to explode.

President Rugova believes in non-violence. The six Americans who were imprisoned believe in nonviolence. In fact they were there to preach non-violent conflict resolution, and yet they were arrested by the police under a phony charge that has never been used before, that they had not registered their exact location with the police. They had moved from one home to another, apparently, and so they had their heads shaved, they were sentenced to 10 days.

This is an untenable situation. It cannot continue in the way it is. We are going to have a press conference tomorrow. We will have a rally tomorrow. I hope that free peoples around the world will join in unison against these repressive tactics, restore independence to Kosovo.

THE MISUSE OF EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, last week the President reportedly asserted executive privilege over conversations the President had with his longtime aid Bruce Lindsey as well as conversation the First Lady had with White House aide Sidney Blumenthal. This is the first time since President Richard Nixon, during Watergate, that a President has asserted executive privilege in a criminal proceeding. This stunning misuse of executive privilege is one of the White House's many delay tactics designed to drag out investigations.

As the New York Times editorialized this morning, Mr. Clinton's attempt to block grand jury testimony by two important White House aides, Bruce Lindsey and Sidney Blumenthal, is an alarming attempt to extend presidential power. Even former Clinton advisor George Stephanopoulos recognizes the absurdity of this claim of executive privilege when on This Week with David Brinkley he said, "They cannot win this fight on executive privilege. It has been tried before in the Whitewater case and eventually they turned over the documents." That was a quote from This Week on March 22, 1998.

The President initially raised executive privilege with the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, my committee, in a deposition of Bruce Lindsey last fall. The President's White House counsel directed Bruce Lindsey not to answer questions regarding conversations Lindsey had with the President about campaign contributor James Riady.

When we challenged the White House on these claims, the President's counsel informed the committee last week that the President would not assert these claims over Mr. Lindsey's conversations. It is important to note that the committee could have held Mr. Lindsey in contempt for refusal to answer the questions if the committee determined that there was no basis for a valid claim of privilege.

The President's former White House counsel, Lloyd Cutler, wrote in a 1994 executive privilege memo, quote, "In circumstances involving communications relating to investigations of personal wrongdoing by government officials, it is our practice," the White House's practice, "it is our practice not to assert executive privilege either in judicial proceedings or in congressional investigations and hearings." End quote.

The President is not following his own order on executive privilege when it comes to the grand jury. Since these proceedings are all behind closed doors, the White House raises frivolous arguments to delay the proceedings. In the light of day with Congress the White House has backed down.

Executive privilege is supposed to be used only rarely when national security would be significantly impaired, conduct of foreign relations would be impacted, or the performance of the President's constitutional duties would be impacted.

This is not Bosnia, this is not the Middle East. These are scandals about possible personal wrongdoing by government and political officials. It has been White House policy since the Kennedy administration not to invoke executive privilege when allegations of wrongdoing are at issue. In contrast to Mr. Clinton, President Reagan declined to claim executive privilege over any matters in Iran-Contra where sensitive foreign policy decisions and negotiations were at issue. Executive privilege is not supposed to be used as a shield against responding to criminal proceedings. This is a clear misuse of the executive privilege.

As George Washington University Professor Jonathan Turley recently stated, quote, "It is ironic to see the extent to which the Clinton administration has adopted executive privilege arguments far beyond those made by the Nixon administration." End quote.

Mr. Speaker, this administration and the President has no basis to claim executive privilege on matters before the grand jury that Mr. Starr is conducting, and, Mr. Speaker, I believe they