

House asks Clinton to lift Bosnia embargo

After an extremely heated floor debate, the U.S. House of Representatives on June 9 passed an amendment, sponsored by Rep. Frank McCloskey (D-Ind.), which calls on the President to unilaterally lift the arms embargo against the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina. The amendment passed with a considerable majority, 244 to 178, despite the fact that both the administration and most of the House leadership opposed it. President Clinton had sent a letter to the Congress expressing his clear opposition. The unexpected vote reflected the impact of a national and international mobilization by supporters of the amendment.

The victory of the amendment was far more decisive than a similar amendment passed by the Senate on May 12 and sponsored by Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.). When the Senate voted on the Dole amendment, it also passed a resolution sponsored by Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me.), which was an attempt to blunt the Dole amendment by avoiding unilateral action if possible. In contrast, the House on June 9 rejected 181-242 an amendment by House Foreign Affairs Chairman Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), which called on the President to urge the United Nations to lift the embargo—thereby avoiding unilateral action.

The debate was fast and furious on all sides. "Let's not dissemble," said Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), what's going on in Bosnia is a "question of genocide." "Peace at any price is not acceptable," said House Democratic Whip David Bonior (D-Mich.) in response to House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ron Dellums's (D-Calif.) complaint that the McCloskey amendment would be "counter to [U.S.] peacekeeping . . . where you are to make no enemies." "Serb aggression has gone unchecked," said McCloskey, "turning Bosnia into a modern-day Sudetenland." Illinois Republican Henry Hyde called for "blessed unilateralism" in this pressing moral issue.

The amendment was attached to the Defense Appropriations bill and authorizes, at the request of the President, up to \$200 million in aid to Bosnia for military equipment and training. The amendment is not binding unless the Senate passes a similar resolution and it then goes to the President for signing. Supporters of such a move believe that this is possible, provided there is sufficient pressure upon senators from their constituents.

U.N.-supporters are furious

The House vote came despite a strenuous effort by supporters of United Nations world government to prevent it. A

"dear colleague" letter was sent on June 3 to all House members by Representatives Dellums, Hamilton, and Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), opposing McCloskey's amendment and backing Hamilton's counter-amendment. The dear colleague letter implored members:

"If we unilaterally violate the U.N.-imposed arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia," the letter states, "we will give the green light to others to violate U.N. sanctions. . . . Our message to the world will be:

● *Go ahead and buy Iraq's oil and sell it arms—we don't care about Saddam Hussein;*

● *Go ahead and ship oil to Haiti—we don't care about democracy;*

● *Go ahead and trade with Serbia—we don't care about Bosnia;*

● *Go ahead and trade with North Korea—we say we want sanctions, but we don't really care about proliferation. . . .*

"Don't undercut these global sanctions."

A similar letter was sent to all congressmen by the World Federalist Organization and nine other one-world groups.

The McCloskey amendment

The following are excerpts from the "Bosnia and Hercegovina Self-Defense Act of 1994":

The Congress makes the following findings:

1) For the reasons stated in section 520 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (Public Law 103-236), the Congress has found that continued application of an international arms embargo against the Government of Bosnia and Hercegovina contravenes that Government's inherent right of individual or collective self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and therefore is inconsistent with international law.

2) Before deploying United States Armed Forces to defend the territorial integrity and political independence of Bosnia and Hercegovina, or to enforce United Nations mandates in Bosnia and Hercegovina, the United States should seek to permit the Government of Bosnia and Hercegovina to obtain the means necessary to exercise its inherent right of self-defense. . . .

The President shall terminate the United States arms embargo of the Government of Bosnia upon receipt from that Government of a request for assistance in exercising its right of self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. . . .

The President should provide appropriate military assistance to the Government of Bosnia upon receipt from that Government of a request for assistance in exercising its right of self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. . . .

The aggregate value . . . of defense articles, defense services, and military education and training provided under this subsection may not exceed \$200,000,000. . . .