

104TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 378

Deploring recent actions by the government of Serbia that restrict freedom of the press and freedom of expression and prevent the Soros Foundation from continuing its democracy-building and humanitarian activities on its territory and calling upon the government of Serbia to remove immediately restrictions against freedom of the press and the operation of the Soros Foundation.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 12, 1996

Mr. LANTOS (for himself and Mr. BEREUTER, Mr. BARR of Georgia, Mr. BASS, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. BALLENGER, and Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Deploring recent actions by the government of Serbia that restrict freedom of the press and freedom of expression and prevent the Soros Foundation from continuing its democracy-building and humanitarian activities on its territory and calling upon the government of Serbia to remove immediately restrictions against freedom of the press and the operation of the Soros Foundation.

Whereas free and independent news media and freedom of expression are fundamental tenets of democracy and are vital to assuring democratic government;

Whereas democracy can exist only in an environment that is free of any form of state control or censorship or official coercion of any kind and where freedom of the press is protected by the rule of law;

Whereas independent radio and television stations and independent newspapers in Serbia have recently been subjected to restrictions, harassment, intimidation, and closure;

Whereas the internationally respected humanitarian and philanthropic organization, the Soros Foundation, has been denied the legal authorization to function in Serbia, and one of the principal activities of the Soros Foundation in Serbia has been to provide assistance for regular publication and distribution of independent daily, weekly, and local newspapers and to provide equipment and technical assistance to independent radio and television outlets; and

Whereas parliamentary elections will take place in Serbia in the near future and the existence of free and independent news media is essential to the proper functioning of democratic elections: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) deplores the recent actions of the govern-
3 ment of Serbia that restrict freedom of the press
4 and freedom of expression and hamper civic organi-
5 zations and democratic opposition groups;

6 (2) deplores the actions of the government of
7 Serbia in revoking the legal registration of the Soros
8 Foundation, which therefore prevents the Founda-

1 tion from further activity in Serbia, and commends
2 the Soros Foundation for its past activities in Serbia
3 and elsewhere in support of freedom of the press,
4 freedom of expression, and the development of demo-
5 cratic institutions;

6 (3) calls upon the government of Serbia to re-
7 move immediately those restrictions against the
8 independent press and against independent radio
9 and television stations, to remove immediately re-
10 strictions that have hampered free activity by civic
11 organizations and democratic opposition groups, and
12 to restore immediately the right of the Soros Foun-
13 dation to operate fully in Serbia;

14 (4) declares that United States economic and
15 other assistance for Serbia and United States sup-
16 port for full participation of Serbia in international
17 financial institutions should be conditioned on the
18 full functioning of independent news media, civic or-
19 ganizations, and democratic opposition groups; and

20 (5) requests that the President and the Sec-
21 retary of State convey to appropriate officials of the
22 governments of Serbia, including President Slobodan
23 Milosevic, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of

- 1 Foreign Affairs, this expression of the views of the
- 2 Congress.

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