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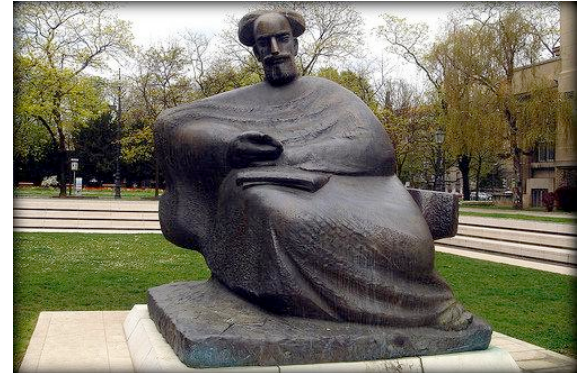
Deputy Speaker of the Croatian Parliament visits Washington...

"Deputy Speaker of the Croatian Parliament visits Washington for President's Prayer Breakfast, Meets with Croatian Caucus Co-Chairs in the US Congress."



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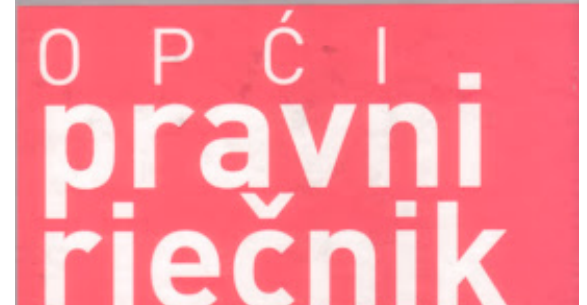
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February 26, 2014

For Immediate Release from Washington: Dr. Zeljko Reiner, Sabor Vice President and a top HDZ party leader, met new Co-Chair of the Congressional Croatian Caucus, Rep. David Joyce (R-OH), while visiting Washington for President Barack Obama's annual prayer breakfast. The meeting with Caucus Co-Chair Joyce also included Croatian Ambassador Josko Paro and Joe Foley, Public Affairs Director to the National Federation of Croatian Americans. The NFCA was a co-sponsor of Dr. Reiner's February visit and assisted the Deputy Speaker while in our nation's capital.

Dr. Reiner also met earlier with Rep. Janice Hahn (D-CA), the other House Caucus Co-Chair, the former Speaker and current House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi also of California, long serving US Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), and other important Members of Congress during his four days in Washington.

The meetings with Representatives Joyce and Hahn had as a major discussion topic the introduction in the US House of Representatives of a version of the 'Begich Resolution' (S. Res. 131), as introduced in the US

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Senate by Alaska Senator Mark Begich in early May.

This initiative recommends the creation of a Presidential Special Envoy to promote a more thorough evaluation - for the US Congress and Executive Branch - of the successes and shortcomings to date of the Dayton Peace Accord, especially in regards to the fate of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

In particular, the Begich Resolution highlights the persistent political and economic discrimination experienced by Bosnian Croats in BiH. The Resolution is also very timely with respect to the significant economic unrest and spontaneous citizen demonstrations that Bosnia experienced earlier in February. Senator Begich's bill in Congress also highlights the concern of the NFCA and Croatian Americans at-large that the future political and economic treatment of Bosnian Croats is a template for the potential future progress of BiH as a successful nation-state. The detailed text of S. Res. 131 can be viewed at:

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?
c113:S.+Res.+131:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c113:S.+Res.+131:)

Also reviewed in Caucus leadership meetings was the status of inclusion of Croatia in the US Visa Waiver Program, which is currently under consideration in Washington. Further discussed was the eventual elimination of the harmful economic effects of 'double taxation' on Croatian Americans with economic interests in Croatia and who travel to the Republic regularly. "Both these two issues are considered important economic adjustments in the relations between our two countries that will yield positive economic developments and reliable growth for Croatia. The NFCA will continue to address these complex matters in Washington because of the stable and strong ally that we now have in Croatia via its NATO and EU membership," said Paul Tonsetic-Kunder, the NFCA's national president.

Included in the meeting with Representative Joyce and Deputy Speaker Reiner were the Congressman's

Legislative Aide for international affairs, Chris Cooper, and Ambassador Paro's long time political affairs officer, Martina Tenko. The meeting with Rep. Hahn was also joined by her Chief of Staff, Laurie Saroff, and Legislative Counsel Brian Bell.

The Sabor's Deputy Speaker skillfully represented his country at this important annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast gathering. NFCA President Tonsetic-Kunder thanked Dr. Reiner for his visit and said: "It is always important for Croatian government leaders to stop by the US Congress when in Washington. The Croatian Caucus is an important repository of good will for Croatia, and Representatives Hahn and Joyce continue to serve very well their many Croatian American constituents by meeting with the Deputy Speaker and creating deeper dialogue between our two countries."

The NFCA is the national umbrella organization established in 1993 for Croatian Americans, related professional associations, and the many fraternal lodges that collectively represent approximately 130,000 members. For individual membership and chapter information, recent newsletters, opportunities to donate to the NFCA, and for other Croatian American news please visit our web site: www.nfcacf.org

Posted by **Studia Croatica** at 14:15 

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