

US Senate Resolution 131 is introduced recommending designation of a Presidential Special Envoy to the Balkans to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to provide policy recommendations to the US Congress

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Washington, DC: The National Federation of Croatian Americans Cultural Foundation (NFCA) highly commends US Senator Mark Begich of Alaska for his insight on matters affecting economic and political progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and for his introduction of Senate Resolution 131 on May 8 in the US Senate. A copy of Senator Begich's new Resolution is attached.

The comprehensive text of S. Res. 131 – after prolonged debate and ineffective action on Balkans progress in Washington and internationally – pointedly recommends that there be a Presidential Special Envoy designated for the Balkans to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to provide policy recommendations, and to report back to Congress within one year. The NFCA in Washington has pressed foreign policy decision makers on these important security matters in South East Europe for many years and for plentiful reasons.

The intentions of the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords (DPA) were lofty, and certain success has been achieved because of the Accords' important contribution towards ending the Bosnian homeland war. However, a political stalemate has been reached in BiH which directly affects the economic benefit of BiH's three constitutive peoples and, potentially, the future political success of this new nation-state. In addition, the treatment and condition of Bosnian Croats has dramatically deteriorated over time, and a domestic path forward in BiH for their political and economic welfare is not easily seen in the midst of this 'frozen conflict'.

When NFCA requested a comment from Senator Begich after his introduction of S. Res. 131, the Senator noted: "It's an honor to be the only US Senator of Croatian descent, which has allowed me to travel to the region twice in the past three years. I've witnessed enormous potential and huge challenges as the region recovers from the war and gains political stability," Senator Begich said. "The United States should continue to play a vital role in the region and this Resolution is designed to keep an American focus on a vital part of the world for us. I'll be recruiting co-sponsors in the US Senate and working with my colleagues in the US House of Representatives to pass this Resolution to provide policy direction to the Obama Administration."

The NFCA will also actively promote legislative consideration and

passage of S. Res. 131 in the US Congress in coming months. In regards to the current plight of Bosnian Croats – the smallest of the DPA-designated constituent peoples of BiH – NFCA President Bill Vergot vowed: “We will not forget our fellow Croats in Bosnia until equality is achieved. Never!” The NFCA believes the US Congress is favorably disposed to offer corrective advice and related assistance to the US State Department and President Obama’s Administration to help solve the roundly acknowledged national impasse in BiH. The Special Envoy’s report back to the Congress will be an instrumental means for achieving sound guidance and will contribute towards the construction of a better path forward for the entire Balkans region.

President Vergot further claimed: “While the focus of the world has left the prior crisis in the Balkans for the time being, that does not mean US diplomatic work is done here. The NFCA expects a productive evaluation of the current circumstances by a much needed Presidential-appointed Special Envoy, and we anticipate a comprehensive report back to the US Congress prescribing highly desired positive action. We thank Senator Begich for his forward-looking view on these important international matters. The text of his Resolution provides an impressively thorough outline of the current problems and needed solutions for these persistent roadblocks in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I encourage all to review the Begich Resolution in detail.”

For further response on this NFCA press announcement and S. Res. 131, please contact Mr. Joe Foley, Public Affairs Director in Washington, on (301) 294-0937. 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, and other Croatian American news please visit our web site: www.nfcacf.org <<http://www.nfcacf.org>> .