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| Original OA/ID Number:<br>2724 |            |               |             |                |
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| Document ID: 9902905           |            |               |             |                |
| Stack:<br>v                    | Row:<br>46 | Section:<br>4 | Shelf:<br>4 | Position:<br>1 |

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NSC/RMO PROFILE

RECORD ID: 9902905  
RECEIVED: 19 APR 99 12

TO: BERGER

FROM: WOLF, FRANK R

DOC DATE: 13 APR 99  
SOURCE REF: 301461

KEYWORDS: KOSOVO  
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE  
REFUGEES

ALBANIA  
DEFENSE POLICY  
NCO

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: WRITES RE DIFFICULTY GETTING INTO ALBANIA & MILITARY POSTURE &  
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

ACTION: SEE 9902445 FOR FINAL ACTION

DUE DATE: 30 APR 99 STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: HURLEY

LOGREF: 9902445

FILES: PA

NSCP:

CODES:

D O C U M E N T   D I S T R I B U T I O N

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COMMENTS:

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DOC 1 OF 1

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ACTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT

RECORD ID: 9902905

DOC ACTION OFFICER

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CAO ASSIGNED ACTION REQUIRED

Z 99041912 PREPARE MEMO FOR BERGER  
X 99052517 SEE 9902445 FOR FINAL ACTION

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COMMENTS:

*see enclosed report*

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FRANK R. WOLF  
10TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

TRANSPORTATION—CHAIRMAN

TREASURY—POSTAL SERVICE  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

FOREIGN OPERATIONS  
EXPORT FINANCING AND  
RELATED PROGRAMS

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND  
COOPERATION IN EUROPE



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

April 13, 1999

Mr. Samuel R. Berger  
National Security Advisor  
The White House  
Washington DC 20500

Dear Sandy:

Last week, I visited Northern Albania to assess the humanitarian efforts needed to cope with the massive exodus of refugees being driven from Kosovo by Milosevic's naked brutality. I wanted to share with you a copy of my trip report. Quite frankly, I was disappointed by some of what I found.

I (and I understand other Members as well) had a difficult time just getting to Tirana. To my knowledge, I was the only member to get there although others tried. It almost seemed as though there was something to hide from the Congress. I finally found my way onto a Belgium Air Force C-130 Hercules on loan to the non-governmental organization (NGO) AmeriCares arriving in Tirana on Easter Sunday. We then worked our way to the Kosovo border near the Albanian towns of Kukes and Medina.

The enclosed report speaks to what I saw and to my conclusions. It is difficult to see how the administration did not know that ethnic cleansing would result when bombing of Serbia commenced. Perhaps it would have occurred even without bombing but our government must have anticipated it and chose not to respond.

Had our leadership and that of other Western powers chosen, humanitarian assistance and supplies in sufficient quantities could have been amassed and positioned nearby. Sufficient manpower needed to help these refugees could have been assembled in advance. But nothing was done. And too many are now paying a terrible price.

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www.house.gov/wolf/

TO: LEGISL.  
DEFENSE  
KOSOVO

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SHORT RESP.  
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APR 16 19:21

Mr. Samuel R. Berger  
April 13, 1999  
Page 2

The NGO's are doing as much as they can with what they have but it is not enough. I hope the administration is at least making adequate preparations for the long haul, because these refugees will be around for a long time to come and the government of Albania is certainly not capable of going it alone.

Thank you and best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf  
Member of Congress

FRW:ach

**FRANK R. WOLF**

10TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

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### Report by U.S. Rep. Frank R. Wolf of Virginia Visit to Albania: Refugees--An Exodus of Biblical Proportions April 4 - 7, 1999

*This report provides details of my trip to Albania on April 4 - 7, 1999. I met briefly with Albanian leaders in Tirana and spent the bulk of my time at the Kosovo-Albanian border near Morina and the nearby town of Kukes. Thousands upon thousands of refugees streamed across the border, 24 hours a day. They desperately need lifesaving care now and will require sustaining aid for a long time until all the problems revolving around Kosovo are solved, and they can once again return home.*

An exodus from Kosovo of biblical proportions is taking place. I saw a newspaper headline yesterday, "Europe's turn in the killing fields." That writer must have seen what I saw, a catastrophe that should have been anticipated. Ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo are now paying a heavy price for this poor judgment.

I just returned from a four-day visit to Albania -- my second since mid-February. I went this time to focus on humanitarian conditions and needs with tens of thousands of refugees streaming across the border from Kosovo each day.

By the time we left on Wednesday, an estimated 270,000 - 300,000 refugees had crossed the border from Kosovo. They have added about 10 percent to the Albanian population in a matter of only a few days.



We arrived in Tirana on Easter Sunday courtesy of Americares -- one of the many non-governmental organizations (NGO's) saving lives, delivering food, water, blankets, medicine and other items desperately needed in large quantities.

**Congressman Wolf hears firsthand the tales of horrors from Kosovar Albanians who were forced from their homes.**

Our airplane, a Belgian Air Force C-130 Hercules, seconded to Americares, was loaded with baby food, flour, and other emergency supplies. About 20 passengers were on board, mostly print and TV

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This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.

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journalists and Americares staff and volunteers. A few NBC people from the TODAY show were there. We crowded in amid relief supplies, wherever there was room to sit.

The Tirana airport is just beginning to come alive with relief supplies and equipment arriving from many nations. U.S. Air Force personnel, with their positive attitude and "can do" spirit, have set up a tent city to get the planes off-loaded and the goods dispersed. They are doing a great job, and planes do not linger on the ground.

We left Tirana very early the next morning for Kukes, a northern Albania town nearest the border crossing. It is a drive of six to nine hours or more, depending on traffic, weather and luck. We travelled with USAID's Disaster Response Team (DART) which was going to assess and coordinate relief efforts.

It is the only road to Kukes. It is the only road available to transport relief supplies to Kukes. It is the only road for newly arriving refugees to travel out of Kukes to the villages, towns and cities throughout Albania where they will stay, or be moved to other countries.

It is a treacherous road — a dangerous road through mountains and valleys with steep drop-offs of hundreds of feet. It is barely two lanes wide with no barriers to prevent going over the edge. The roadway is dotted with flower adorned memorials to earlier accidents and fatalities.

We bounced from pothole to pothole around tight S curves, dodging traffic going in both directions. Worse, the roadbed in a number of places is being undercut by the passage of heavy trucks. Chunks of road are just falling off. As more and more relief trucks make the trip, the roadway may deteriorate to the point where it is impassable.

Officials are looking at creating an airstrip near Kukes capable of handling up to C-130 Hercules aircraft. They need to hurry.

In Kukes we joined up with Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Like other NGO's, CRS is doing a remarkable job with what they have to work with. The overall relief effort was late in getting started, is slow in coming up to speed and, thus far, is overwhelmed by the vast number of refugees.

Our first introduction to the area was the stench -- the overpowering smell of urine and feces from the enormous numbers of refugees with no place to go to the bathroom. In many places, the ground was covered with feces. It won't be long before disease breaks out under these conditions, especially among people who are



Refugees from Kosovo stream across the border into Albania, many pulled in tractor-drawn farm trailers.

already dehydrated, malnourished and sick. Four cases of measles had been confirmed by Tuesday and the NGO's were trying to arrange a massive inoculation program.



**Unending lines of tractor-drawn wagons of Kosovo refugees provide an emotional scene.**

They are everywhere, camped on hillsides, along the road, in parks and plazas, and in parking lots. Most arrive as an extended family in trailers being pulled along by tractors, or in some cases, by horse. Some arrive in cars, but many are on foot. Their only possessions are carried on their back.

Our time at the Morina border crossing was an overpowering, emotional experience. We saw an unending procession of people and families, each with a horrific story to tell. Many had been travelling for days under constant threat of being harmed or killed by Serb militia.

Perhaps just reaching the border was an emotional release for them. There were many more women, children and elderly than younger men. Tears were streaming down their faces -- many sobbed uncontrollably. We had an interpreter and the tales they told were chilling.

\* An 18-year-old boy from the village of Blac was randomly pulled out of line and shot to death -- in front of his mother and family. They wouldn't even let his mother kiss him goodbye.

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Everyone has a story. Most have had their homes destroyed. There is a need to document these reports while they are still fresh, not only for war crimes, but for history as well.

The number of people in Kukes was startling. This is a town of 23,000 inhabitants which is growing by tens of thousands each day. About 30,000 refugees are estimated to cross the border every day, 24 hours a day. Only about 15,000 to 20,000 refugees are transported from Kukes daily to other places. The population continues to swell. The most common estimates are that about 80,000 refugees were in Kukes on Tuesday and Wednesday.



**Elderly from Kosovo, driven from their homes, wonder what tomorrow will bring.**

The refugees have little food, water, shelter, sanitation or medical care. We went with a CRS feeding mission on Monday night. It was scheduled after dark to keep the hungry people from seeing what was going on and getting out of hand at food distribution points. But it didn't work. As soon as the distributors showed up, starving people began clamoring and struggling for food. The trucks were overwhelmed and had to speed away to keep people from being injured. Police were helping as much as they could but they are too few. We saw individual policemen on duty for 24 hours straight. Many Albanian families, and especially some in Kukes, were warm, welcoming and generous. Many opened their homes to refugees they did not know and had no earlier connection with.



**Trailer-loads of Kosovar Albanian refugees await the next move in Albania.**

I visited two apartments in Kukes to see for myself. In one, the residents vacated their two-room apartment so that a Kosovar family of 17 could have a place to stay. The grandfather was blind and just sat facing a wall. There was a baby girl, just weeks or perhaps a few months old. They had been a thriving family in Kosovo, but now have nothing, not even an idea of what the future holds.

In the next two-room flat, 10 refugees stayed in one room and 17 in the other. The host Kukes residents stayed with them, all sleeping on the floor.

Albania is a poor country in wealth, but rich in generosity.

We also sat in on a coordinating meeting of NGO's who are struggling to cope, many themselves on the edge of exhaustion and sickness. The room was filled with coughing and sneezing -- respiratory cases about to happen.

The talk was of how to provide the most help. Who could do what? Who could best ease the shortfall of supplies? The overall conclusion was one of inadequacy, of being overwhelmed, of having too little to share among too many. And the talk was especially about poor logistics and communications.

The refugee situation in Albania, in spite of the tremendous effort of people on the scene, is a disaster. I think the Clinton administration, the international community and NATO were ill-prepared to deal with this crisis they should have anticipated. The information was there, but those who decided the course of events, particularly the Clinton administration, did not listen.

Satellite imagery could detect the large lines of refugees forming along the way to the borders, but this information has not been available to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with overall coordinating responsibility.

People on the ground in Kosovo before the bombing began warned of the possibility that Serbs would begin to brutalize ethnic Albanians. I visited Kosovo in February, a few days before Rambouillet talks broke down ending hope for a truce with NATO peacekeepers in Kosovo. Many Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), UNHCR and NGO representatives and diplomats predicted then that ethnic Albanians would be attacked before NATO troops could arrive. In Kosovo, nearly every Serb family is armed, not with Saturday-night specials, but with Kalishnikov automatic rifles. The Serb Army and Police are heavily armed, too. Real concern existed that, hidden from western observers, helpless and unprotected ethnic Albanians would be brutalized. That is exactly what happened. Had this been anticipated by decision-makers, measures to provide relief and the basis for survival of refugees could have been put in motion. Shiploads and caches of relief supplies then could have been positioned nearby.

Even now, when it is clear that enormous problems exist, too little is being done. There is much talk of providing for the long run. But people are dying today. Massive amounts of life-giving supplies are needed now.

I would like to close with a few comments and recommendations.

1. This brutality has been taking place for too long. Serbian President Milosevic is the father of the Kosovo tragedy as he was in Bosnia and even before. Beginning in the fall of 1991 when Serbs shelled, bombed and laid siege to Vukovar, Croatia, Milosevic has continued a pattern of destruction. Kosovo is just the latest chapter.
2. Milosevic is an evil man who has directly caused nearly a decade of terror, killing and destruction. Nine Serb generals have just been warned that they may be named as war criminals for their actions in Kosovo. Shouldn't Milosevic head the list?
3. There is a life and death crisis in Albania. President Clinton should immediately send high level people from the National Security Council, State and Defense departments—people who can make decisions on the scene—to the border crossings in Kukes. A decision-maker/policy person has yet to visit there. And that's where you have to go to see what is really happening. Too many visitors stop briefly in Tirana and quickly move on, thinking they know what is taking place. They don't. Today, the refugee problem is hemorrhaging at the border. That's where the compress now needs to be applied. Once the influx of refugees ends, and they are placed throughout Albania, the same amounts of massive help and support must be re-targeted to provide long-term assistance.



**Desperately needed food and blankets are provided to Kosovo refugees.**

4. Massive amounts of infrastructure supplies and communications equipment are needed at the border along with people to assemble and operate them. It is not enough to ship a load of tents. People to erect them, dig toilets and purify water must be there as well. Equipment alone is insufficient. Operators and technicians must be there, too. When refugees stop coming to the border, these needs will continue throughout Albania where massive numbers of refugees will be housed.
5. There is a huge shortage of food, and people are starving today. Once the influx of refugees ends, the problem of sustaining them for a longer period will be no less critical. Albania can't feed itself. Food is the country's largest component of imports. Albania is going to need help.
6. Albania also has difficulty maintaining law and order, even in Tirana. In many remote areas, police protection is non-existent. Unemployment is very high, and there is no capacity to provide work and economic sufficiency for refugees. The Albanian government will need to be propped up and the economy improved.
7. Refugees report that a vast number of houses, buildings and infrastructure have been destroyed in Kosovo. Rebuilding will take a long time and care for refugees must be worked out while this takes place.
8. Little is known about the refugee situation in Montenegro, but it will undoubtedly add to the overall problem.
9. It is doubtful that Kosovo can ever again be a part of the Yugoslav federation. It will take a long time to implement workable solutions. In time, Albanians will tire of having Kosovo refugees to deal with and infringe upon normal life. Most Kosovo refugees have no documentation, no identity cards, medical histories or necessary records. Even the license plates were ripped from cars as they crossed the border. This, too, will take time to reconstruct.
10. And lastly, let me say a word about the press. Without their coverage as refugees began to pile up, it would have taken even longer to recognize the crisis at hand. The press has done a good job of telling the world what is happening and in mobilizing people to come to the aid of hundreds of thousands of the neediest people. Members of the press should be proud of their work.



**Many fleeing refugees were given only an hour or two to gather their possessions before being forced from their homes.**

**FRANK R. WOLF**

10TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

## COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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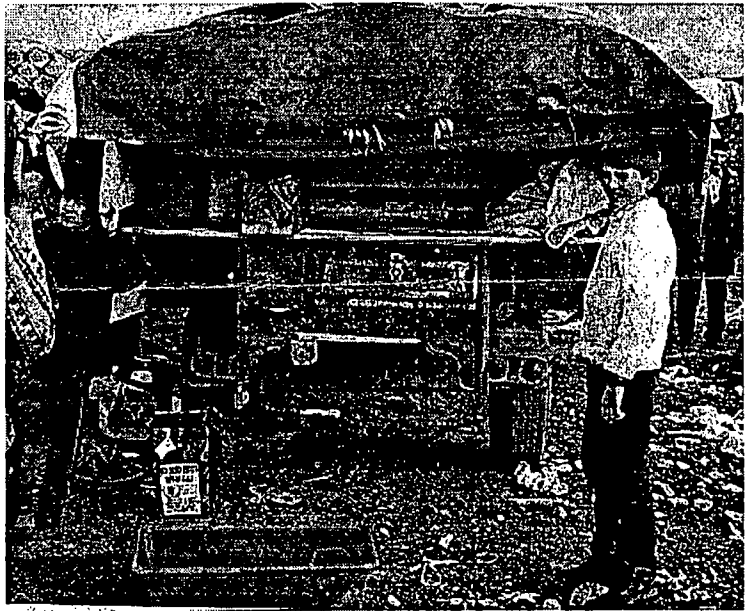
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3. There is a life and death crisis in Albania. President Clinton should immediately send high level people from the National Security Council, State and Defense departments— people who can make decisions on the scene—to the border crossings in Kukes. A decision-maker/policy person has yet to visit there. And that's where you have to go to see what is really happening. Too many visitors stop briefly in Tirana and quickly move on, thinking they know what is taking place. They don't. Today, the refugee problem is hemorrhaging at the border. That's where the compress now needs to be applied. Once the influx of refugees ends, and they are placed throughout Albania, the same amounts of massive help and support must be re-targeted to provide long-term assistance.



**Desperately needed food and blankets are provided to Kosovo refugees.**

4. Massive amounts of infrastructure supplies and communications equipment are needed at the border along with people to assemble and operate them. It is not enough to ship a load of tents. People to erect them, dig toilets and purify water must be there as well. Equipment alone is insufficient. Operators and technicians must be there, too. When refugees stop coming to the border, these needs will continue throughout Albania where massive numbers of refugees will be housed.
5. There is a huge shortage of food, and people are starving today. Once the influx of refugees ends, the problem of sustaining them for a longer period will be no less critical. Albania can't feed itself. Food is the country's largest component of imports. Albania is going to need help.
6. Albania also has difficulty maintaining law and order, even in Tirana. In many remote areas, police protection is non-existent. Unemployment is very high, and there is no capacity to provide work and economic sufficiency for refugees. The Albanian government will need to be propped up and the economy improved.
7. Refugees report that a vast number of houses, buildings and infrastructure have been destroyed in Kosovo. Rebuilding will take a long time and care for refugees must be worked out while this takes place.
8. Little is known about the refugee situation in Montenegro, but it will undoubtedly add to the overall problem.
9. It is doubtful that Kosovo can ever again be a part of the Yugoslav federation. It will take a long time to implement workable solutions. In time, Albanians will tire of having Kosovo refugees to deal with and infringe upon normal life. Most Kosovo refugees have no documentation, no identity cards, medical histories or necessary records. Even the license plates were ripped from cars as they crossed the border. This, too, will take time to reconstruct.
10. And lastly, let me say a word about the press. Without their coverage as refugees began to pile up, it would have taken even longer to recognize the crisis at hand. The press has done a good job of telling the world what is happening and in mobilizing people to come to the aid of hundreds of thousands of the neediest people. Members of the press should be proud of their work.



**Many fleeing refugees were given only an hour or two to gather their possessions before being forced from their homes.**

**PRESIDENTIAL/NSA CORRESPONDENCE**

**IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED**

ACTION OFFICER:

Hurley

LOG NUMBER:

2905

DUE DATE:

4.30

DATE STAFFED:

4.19

**CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESSED TO:**

☐

PRESIDENT

☒

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

FROM:

Rep Wolf

PREPARE A RESPONSE FOR THE PRESIDENT'S OR NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR'S SIGNATURE WITHIN 10 DAYS. IF A LETTER DOES NOT REQUIRE A RESPONSE, PLEASE RETURN IT TO RECORDS MANAGEMENT (RM 379) WITH THIS FORM, ANNOTATED ACCORDINGLY.