



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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Kampelman Interview, Journal de Geneve, July 11, 1991

"It is not for the United States to oppose independence for Slovenia or Croatia."

Ambassador Max Kampelman, head of the U.S. Delegation at the CSCE Meeting of Experts in Geneva, has always taken a very firm position in debates on the Baltic question. We asked him how he reconciled this firmness with the flexibility President Bush is currently showing on Yugoslavia and the Helsinki principles regarding the inviolability of frontiers.

Interview:

In 1975, the U.S. affirmed in Helsinki that if there were going to be changes in European borders, they should take place "gradually and peacefully." We don't believe that the Baltic States fit in the category of those which should be subjected to the procedure of self-determination. Conquered by force, they do not represent a minority. Since 1940, we have condemned their illegal annexation by the USSR, and we have never altered that position. But the process of separation from the USSR should follow the path laid out in Helsinki -- dialogue, and the renunciation of violence on both sides.

If changes are necessary in Yugoslavia, following the Helsinki principles, we will be advocates of dialogue and of non-recourse to violence. The efforts of American diplomacy produced a meeting with all the parties around the table. We think it's preferable to keep the existing borders, as we declared in 1975, but the Yugoslavia constitution allows for succession, as long as it has mutual consent. If the dialogue leads to independence for Slovenia and Croatia, it's not for us to oppose it, as long as the conditions mentioned above are respected.

Question: The concept of "minority" seems different for the U.S. compared to the Europeans. For us, a minority is ethnic, religious, cultural, not to mention geographic. What is it for you?

Europe herself is not united on that question. For most countries, a minority exists in a given "cadre": it means people who have lived in a region for centuries, with their culture, their language, and their religion. They have the right to special protection. This is not the same as immigrants who move to other countries to look for work, or for any other reason. Those people know they should submit themselves to the laws of the country in which they reside, and to its culture, language, and institutions.

Question: What happens to individual rights in this picture?

If individual rights are respected, it follows that community (group) rights will be too. People belonging to a minority have the right to speak their language, to write it, to associate freely, to open special schools, churches, as long as all of that is in conformity with the laws of the country.

There are controversies in American public opinion, as a result of a lack of a clear definition of "minority." I'm talking (we're talking) about employment quotas. We are moving away from a painful legacy of racial discrimination. Some people would like to give preferential treatment to minorities that were formerly discriminated against. In theory (principle), no one wants quotas. But in practice, questions are still raised.

Question: In the United States, you have numerous minority groups that would like to be recognized. What do you make of this?

All of these groups -- homosexual, pro-life, etc. - make a lot of noise. All of them can be heard in an open society. Lots of them feel they are victims of discrimination. Americans oppose all forms of discrimination. A homosexual who might have lost his job because of his way of life would have the right to seek recourse before a court of law. On the subject of employment, I associate myself fully with what Ambassador Blackwell said at the Geneva conference regarding the black and hispanic minorities in our cities who are facing poverty. But employment should not be limited to a minimum or maximum percentage of blacks or hispanics. The challenge facing my country is to give everyone the possibility to further himself and to participate in economic and social life.

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USIS:JGARNER
USIS:BTURNER
USIS:NONE
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USMISSION GENEVA
USINFO WASHDC, PRIORITY
SECSTATE WASHDC, PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK, PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BERN
AMCONSUL ZURICH

USIA FOR P/M, P/FW, P/G, P/PF, VOA/BXC
SECSTATE FOR EUR/CE, IO, HR/HA

E.O. 12356: N/A

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: YUGOSLAVIA, CSCE

CENTER-RIGHT JOURNAL DE GENEVE JULY 11 CARRIED AN INTERVIEW BY PAUL-EMILE DENTAN WITH AMBASSADOR MAX KAMPELMAN, U.S. DELEGATION LEADER AT THE CURRENT GENEVA EXPERT MEETING ON MINORITIES. IT WAS HEADED "MAX KAMPELMAN SAYS U.S. NOT OPPOSED TO INDEPENDENCE OF SLOVENIA AND CROATIA." EXTRACTS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

(BEGIN TEXT) FROM THE START, AMBASSADOR KAMPELMAN HAS TAKEN A VERY FIRM POSITION ON THE QUESTION OF THE BALTIC STATES. WE ASKED HIM HOW HE RECONCILED THIS FIRMNESS WITH THE FLEXIBILITY PRESIDENT BUSH IS SHOWING OVER YUGOSLAVIA AND THE HELSINKI PRINCIPLES OF THE INVIOABILITY OF FRONTIERS.

AMB. KAMPELMAN: IN 1975 THE UNITED STATES MAINTAINED AT HELSINKI THAT IF THERE WERE TO BE CHANGES IN EUROPEAN FRONTIERS, THEY SHOULD HAPPEN "GRADUALLY AND PEACEFULLY." WE DO NOT THINK THAT THE BALTIC STATES COME INTO THE CATEGORY OF STATES WHICH SHOULD GO THROUGH A PROCEDURE OF SELF-DETERMINATION. CONQUERED BY FORCE, THEY ARE NOT 'A MINORITY.' SINCE 1940, WE HAVE DENOUNCED THEIR ILLEGAL ANNEXATION BY THE USSR, AND WE HAVE NEVER CHANGED OUR OPINION. BUT THE PROCESS OF DETACHMENT FROM THE SOVIET

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UNION MUST FOLLOW THE PATH LAID OUT AT HELSINKI, THAT OF DIALOGUE AND RENUNCIATION OF VIOLENCE BY BOTH SIDES.

IF CHANGES ARE NECESSARY IN YUGOSLAVIA, THEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THOSE HELSINKI PRINCIPLES WE ARE IN FAVOR OF DIALOGUE AND THE RENUNCIATION OF FORCE. AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS ARE AIMED AT GATHERING ALL PARTIES AROUND THE TABLE. WE CONSIDER IT PREFERABLE TO MAINTAIN EXISTING FRONTIERS, AS WE STATED IN 1975, BUT THE YUGOSLAV CONSTITUTION PROVIDES FOR SECESSION, IF IT IS HANDLED WITH MUTUAL RESPECT. IF THE DIALOGUE LEADS TO THE INDEPENDENCE OF SLOVENIA AND CROATIA, WE WOULD HAVE NOTHING AGAINST IT, PROVIDED THE ABOVE CONDITIONS ARE RESPECTED.

QUESTION: THE UNITED STATES SEEMS TO HAVE A DIFFERENT IDEA OF A MINORITY TO THAT OF THE EUROPEANS. FOR US, A MINORITY IS ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL, OR EVEN GEOGRAPHIC. IS THAT REALLY THE CASE FOR YOU?

ANSWER: EUROPE ITSELF IS NOT OF ONE MIND ON THIS QUESTION. FOR MOST COUNTRIES, A MINORITY EXISTS WITHIN A GIVEN CONTEXT: PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED IN A REGION FOR CENTURIES, WITH THEIR CULTURE, LANGUAGE, RELIGION. THEY ARE ENTITLED TO SPECIAL PROTECTION. THAT ISN'T THE CASE WITH MIGRANTS WHO HAVE JUST SETTLED IN ANOTHER COUNTRY TO SEEK WORK, OR FOR SOME OTHER REASON. THEY KNOW THEY HAVE TO COMPLY WITH THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY THEY EMIGRATE TO, AND TO ITS CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND INSTITUTIONS.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS TO INDIVIDUAL HUMAN RIGHTS FROM THIS VIEWPOINT?

A: IF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS ARE RESPECTED, RESPECT FOR COMMUNITY RIGHTS WILL FOLLOW. PERSONS IN A MINORITY SITUATION ARE ENTITLED TO SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE, WRITE AS THEY WISH, MEET TOGETHER, AND OPEN SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES, AS LONG AS IT CONFORMS WITH THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY OF SETTLEMENT. SOME CONTROVERSIES ARE OCCURRING AMONG THE AMERICAN PUBLIC FOR WANT OF A CLEAR DEFINITION OF A MINORITY. WE TALK ABOUT JOB QUOTAS. WE ARE EMERGING FROM THE HEAVY HERITAGE OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION. SOME WOULD NOW LIKE TO GIVE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT TO MINORITIES FORMERLY DISCRIMINATED AGAINST. A MAJORITY SEEMS OPPOSED TO THAT. IN PRINCIPLE, NO ONE WANTS QUOTAS. BUT IN PRACTICE, THE QUESTION IS STILL NOT SETTLED.

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Q: IN THE UNITED STATES YOU HAVE MANY MINORITY GROUPS SEEKING RECOGNITION. WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?

A: ALL THESE GROUPS--HOMOSEXUALS, OPPONENTS OF ABORTION AND SO ON--MAKE A LOT OF NOISE. IN AN OPEN SOCIETY, EVERYTHING COMES OUT. MANY OF THEM COMPLAIN OF DISCRIMINATION. AMERICANS ARE AGAINST ALL DISCRIMINATION. A HOMOSEXUAL WHO HAS LOST HIS JOB BECAUSE OF HIS LIFESTYLE IS ENTITLED TO TAKE THE MATTER TO COURT. REGARDING EMPLOYMENT, I FULLY AGREE WITH WHAT AMBASSADOR BLACKWELL, UNITED STATES DELEGATE TO THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, SAID AT THE GENEVA CONVERENCE REGARDING BLACK AND HISPANIC MINORITIES WHO ARE FACING POVERTY IN OUR CITIES: EMPLOYMENT SHOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO A MINIMUM OR MAXIMUM PERCENTAGE OF BLACKS OR HISPANICS. THE CHALLENGE MY COUNTRY FACES IS TO GIVE EVERYONE THE POSSIBILITY OF EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE. (END EXTRACTS)

S.A. SANCTIONS LIFTED

SWISS FRONT-PAGE HEADLINES JULY 11 INCLUDED "BUSH BACKS DE KLERK" (LE MATIN, LAUSANNE), "BUSH LIFTS SANCTIONS" (24 HEURES, LAUSANNE), "U.S. SANCTIONS REMOVED" (BERNER ZEITUNG), AND "SOUTH AFRICA: END OF U.S. SANCTIONS" (TAGES-ANZEIGER, ZURICH).

EDITORIAL COMMENT INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

CENTRIST LA SUISSE OF GENEVA: COMMENTARY BY WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT YVETTE LAUDY ENTITLED "CONTROVERSIAL DECISION": "PRESIDENT BUSH SAID HE HAD NEVER BEEN KEEN ON THE SANCTIONS IMPOSED ON SOUTH AFRICA, BUT ADDED IT WAS 'LESS A QUESTION OF JUDGMENT THAN OF DETERMINING IF THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED BY THE CONGRESS HAD BEEN FULFILLED.' THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAY THEY HAVE, SO THE SANCTIONS HAVE BEEN LIFTED. BUT NOT EVERYONE AGREES.

"'IT IS IRRESPONSIBLE TO ACT BEFORE THE BLACKS HAVE OBTAINED COMPLETE FREEDOM,' SAID DIRECTOR HOOK, OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE. 'IT'S PREMATURE,' OPINED SENATOR KENNEDY AND REP. DYMALLY, CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA. BUT MR. BUSH ISN'T OBLIGED TO CONSULT THE CONGRESS WHICH IMPOSED SANCTIONS OVER MR. REAGAN'S HEAD IN 1986, AND THE CONDITIONS FOR REMOVING THEM."

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CENTRIST 24 HEURES OF LAUSANNE: "INTERNATIONAL OPINION ON SOUTH AFRICA HAS RADICALLY CHANGED FOR THE BETTER SINCE PRESIDENT DE KLERK DEMOLISHED APARTHEID AND OPENED A DIALOGUE WITH THE BLACK MAJORITY. BLESSINGS ARE NOW RAINING ON PRETORIA. SOUTH AFRICA WILL BE READMITTED TO THE OLYMPIC GAMES, AND YESTERDAY PRESIDENT BUSH ANNOUNCED THE LIFTING OF MOST OF THE SANCTIONS ON THAT COUNTRY. HE BELIEVES PRETORIA HAS FULFILLED ALL THE CONDITIONS POSED BY THE CONGRESS FOR THE REMOVAL OF SANCTIONS. ESPECIALLY, HE HAS ACCEPTED THE EXPLANATIONS GIVEN REGARDING POLITICAL PRISONERS; THOSE REMAINING, IT IS CLAIMED, ARE GUILTY OF BLOOD CRIMES.

"AT FIRST SIGHT, THE DECISION SEEMS CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION. IT IS ALWAYS GOOD TO SEE A COUNTRY REJOIN THE CONCERT OF NATIONS BY DECIDING TO IMPROVE ITS CITIZENS' LOT. BUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO TO ACHIEVE FULL RESPECTABILITY. BLACKS ARE STILL EXCLUDED FROM POLITICAL LIFE. NOW IT IS UP TO THE WHITE RULING CLASS TO SHOW IT IS WORTHY OF THE PRAISE LAVISHED UPON IT." GARNER##

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CSCE

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debates on the Baltic question. We asked him how he
reconciled this firmness with the flexibility President Bush is
currently showing on Yugoslavia and the Helsinki principles regarding
the inviolability of ~~borders~~ ^{frontiers}.

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going to be changes in European borders, ~~which~~ they should
take place "gradually and peacefully." We don't believe
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should be subjected to the procedure of self-determination.
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1940, we have condemned their illegal annexation by
the USSR, and we have never ~~changed~~ ^{altered} that position.
But the process of separation from the USSR should
follow the path laid out in Helsinki -- dialogue,
and the renunciation of violence on both sides.

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— What happens to individual rights in this picture?

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discrimination. Americans oppose all forms of discrimination.

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before a court of law. On the subject of employment, I associate myself fully with what Amb. Blackwell said at the Geneva conference regarding the black and hispanic minorities in our cities who are facing poverty.

But employment should ^{not} be limited to a minimum or maximum percentage of blacks or hispanics. The challenge ~~before~~ ^{faces} my country is to give everyone the possibility to further himself and to participate in economic and social life.