

The NATO forces just recently took control of a television transmitter and said that the information over this transmitter was not acceptable. Just recently that transmitter was returned in hopes that the return of the transmitter to the Serbs would calm the personnel there, the people there, so that the elections could be carried out. But just the thought of taking over the transmitter is one thing. But the conditions that were placed on the Serbs in the return of the transmitter is something else again.

Our Pentagon official threatened the Serbs that if they violated the instructions that were given the television station, it would be a clear cut justification for NATO forces to retaliate. In the best of diplomatic jingoism, our Pentagon official, as quoted in the Washington Post, said, if they do not comply, we will whack them.

Hardly do I think this policy will lead to peace and a wonderful election. I really challenge the Congress here for us, in the continuation of the funding of a military operation that is doomed to fail. It is a real tragedy that we get promises made by the administration.

The troops were supposed to be in there until December 1996 and here they are, another year, supposedly, they are supposed to come out next July, but the way things are going there and by the way we comply, we are complicit in this operation and provide the funds, the odds of our troops being out of there next July are very, very slim.

This raises the question about overall policy. Traditionally, the American foreign policy, up until the latter part of this century, has been that we should have a policy of noninterference, nonintervention in the affairs of other nations and also that of neutrality with all nations.

This is proper under the Constitution. This has been traditional. Instead, we should be concentrating on national security issues. We should be concerned about what the American position is, and we should not pretend that we know what is best for everybody because we do not.

TRIBUTE TO THE ACERRA BROTHERS BASEBALL TEAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity today to pay tribute to the Acerra brothers baseball team.

Mr. Speaker, the Acerra brothers who grew up in my hometown of Long Branch are a unique phenomena in the world of baseball. The 12 brothers played club baseball for 14 years, from the late 1930's to the early 1950's. And they were inducted in June of this year into the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, NY, 45 years after their final game.

There are now seven surviving brothers, Paul, Alfred, Robert, William, Fred, Edward, and Richard, and they all attended the ceremony and obviously were very proud to do so.

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During that era when the baseball team was active, there were some 16 or so what they call all-brother baseball teams on file at Cooperstown, but no other all-brother team played as many years or accomplished as much as the Acerra brothers of Long Branch. They played in a circuit that included teams from New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. The team stayed together even during World War II, even though six of the brothers enlisted in the service at various times. When the Acerras were being scouted by major league teams, their ages ranged from 17 to 40 years old. One brother, Alfred, continued to play catcher after having lost an eye while playing ball. Besides baseball, the brothers excelled in football, basketball, golf, softball, swimming, and bowling. Their achievements were extensively covered in newspapers and on radio and television and obviously they are very well known in my hometown of Long Branch and in the surrounding area where they and their children and their grandchildren continue to live.

While compiling remarkable statistic feats on the field of play, the Acerra brothers never lost sight of the sense of family, and I cannot express that enough. These brothers were all and had a very strong sense of family. Their father, Pop, never missed a game and was active in coaching. Two of the brothers were offered professional contracts but turned them down because they did not want to leave their mother and break up the family team. There was another brother who turned down a football scholarship for the same reasons.

Mr. Speaker, it is really a great honor for me to join with the Baseball Hall of Fame in paying tribute to the great accomplishments of the Acerra brothers baseball team and to extend my best wishes to the entire Acerra family and many of their friends. I am going to be with some, if not all, of them this Sunday where we are also going to be paying tribute at an event in Long Branch to them and I am just very proud of them and all that they have accomplished. They certainly bring a great sense of pride to my hometown of Long Branch, NJ.

STOP THE THEFT OF OUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. FILNER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents have alerted me to a serious attack on our personal privacy, and that is an insidious practice that

has become known as identity theft. Amazingly enough, this theft is facilitated by a public agency, the Internal Revenue Service, which aids and abets this theft not through the Internet or any high-technology means but through the U.S. Postal Service.

Yesterday I introduced a bill which I entitled the Stop the Theft of Our Social Security Numbers Act. This will prohibit the IRS from including our Social Security numbers on the mailing labels of the tax booklets the IRS mails us every year. It will also stop the IRS from printing Social Security numbers on the refund checks that millions of people receive annually in a way that numbers are visible when mailed.

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes of this decade. Identity thieves make off with billions of dollars each year and each day more than 1,000 people are being defrauded. With just your name and your Social Security number, a thief can open credit lines worth \$10,000, rent apartments, sign up for utilities, and even earn income. Your credit rating is ruined, you risk being rejected for everything from a college loan to a mortgage, and it is up to you to fix it all. Law enforcement will generally not pursue these identity theft cases.

In light of this, making it even easier for identity theft by allowing public view of Social Security numbers on IRS mailings and refund checks seems criminal. Yet that is precisely what the IRS is doing. Taxpayers all know that their Social Security number appears just above their full name and address on tax booklets. It appears the same way on refund checks and is clearly visible through the window on the envelope. What more can the IRS do to aid the theft of your identity? Hand mail the thieves and unscrupulous people who might handle your mail your mother's maiden name?

When I brought this to the attention of the IRS, I was told that there is no way that IRS can change this practice before the 1999 tax season. I find it incomprehensible that neither this agency nor its contractor can change a computer program for booklets that will be mailed out for 1998. The IRS apparently has decided to be the conduit for identity theft with the Postal Service as a de facto accomplice.

My bill will force the IRS to make this change in time to protect one of the most precious keys to our personal information, our Social Security number, before the coming tax filing season. To do any less would expose millions of us to devastating personal and financial losses and the most important loss of all, our good name.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. FLAKE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FLAKE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]