

Serbia and Montenegro: The Prospects for Change



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**A Report Prepared by the Staff of the
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ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION (OSCE)

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki process, traces its origin to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in Finland on August 1, 1975, by the leaders of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada. Since then, its membership has expanded to 55, reflecting the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. (The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro, has been suspended since 1992, leaving the number of countries fully participating at 54.) As of January 1, 1995, the formal name of the Helsinki process was changed to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The OSCE is engaged in standard setting in fields including military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns. In addition, it undertakes a variety of preventive diplomacy initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States.

The OSCE has its main office in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations and periodic consultations among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government are held.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION (CSCE)

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), also known as the Helsinki Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance with the agreements of the OSCE.

The Commission consists of nine members from the U.S. House of Representatives, nine members from the U.S. Senate, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair are shared by the House and Senate and rotate every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

To fulfill its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates information on Helsinki-related topics both to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports reflecting the views of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing information about the activities of the Helsinki process and events in OSCE participating States.

At the same time, the Commission contributes its views to the general formulation of U.S. policy on the OSCE and takes part in its execution, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings as well as on certain OSCE bodies. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from OSCE participating States.

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO: THE PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE

PREFACE

This report is largely based on the findings of a delegation of Helsinki Commission staff which traveled to Serbia and Montenegro in April 1996. The delegation was led by Ambassador Samuel G. Wise, the Commission's Director for International Policy, and included Staff Advisors Robert A. Hand and Janice L. Helwig. Developments in Serbia and Montenegro which have occurred since the delegation visit have been added.

The Commission would like to thank the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade for facilitating the visit, and to the National Endowment for Democracy for suggestions regarding the itinerary.

SUMMARY

A staff delegation of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) traveled to Serbia and Montenegro for one week in April 1996 to assess the situation in these republics in light of changes in the region resulting from the implementation of the Dayton Agreement and the end of the conflict in neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In addition to meetings in the Federal and Serbian capital, Belgrade, and the Montenegrin capital Podgorica, the delegation traveled to Vojvodina, Kosovo and the Sandzak, where large non-Serb/Montenegrin populations reside. A seminar on refugees in the former Yugoslavia, held in Kotor, Montenegro, was also attended. The delegation met with federal, republic and regional officials, as well as representatives of independent media, opposition political parties, and human rights or humanitarian groups in each location. Upon the conclusion of their visit, the staff reported the delegation's findings and recommendations to the countries belonging to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and gave a public briefing immediately upon its return to Washington.

Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, has been viewed as largely responsible for the conflict associated with former Yugoslavia's demise, especially in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and for undemocratic and ethnically intolerant conditions within Serbia itself. Montenegro, having some cultural affinities with Serbia but also a desire for distinctness, is viewed as Serbia's reluctant accomplice, especially when the two proclaimed a new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992.

The new, or "rump," Yugoslavia has largely been isolated by the international community as far as bilateral relations and multilateral activity. After almost four years of conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, the signing of the Dayton Agreement in December 1995 changed the regional environment in south-central Europe significantly. Not only did the Agreement propose a settlement for Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is now being implemented, but it also created a more positive regional environment in which other problems plaguing the region might be resolved. Dayton could not have been achieved without the international community again working with the Serbian regime.

The Helsinki Commission delegation concluded that the Dayton Agreement and its implementation had brought a degree of relief, and hence some stability, to Serbia and Montenegro, permitting some new developments to occur. At the same time, the Dayton Agreement seems only to have been possible because Serbian President Milosevic had achieved almost absolute, unchallenged rule at home, and Dayton and the new regional environment it generated have not weakened his one-man rule.

Almost everyone outside of government actually believes the human rights situation in Serbia to be worsening and the prospects for democratic development to be bleak. Popular frustration with the regime is viewed as building, but the chances for the opposition to defeat those in power in elections were almost nonexistent. The situation is somewhat more dynamic in Montenegro, but any improvements there will have minimal impact on Serbia, the dominant of the two republics.

The situation in the ethnically mixed regions also remains difficult. In Kosovo, repression of the Albanian population continues with an unabated severity. New acts of violence are further destabilizing an already highly polarized environment. In the Sandzak, the relief felt from an end to the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina is very visible, but discrimination and subtle forms of harassment of ethnic Muslims continue. In Vojvodina, there is concern over the long-term effects of demographic changes brought on by the conflict, with the earlier exodus of minorities and the more recent arrival of Serb refugees. There is also resentment of Belgrade's centralization policies at the expense of regional autonomy for Vojvodina and, more importantly to some, the cultural autonomy of the Hungarian, Croat and other minorities who live there.

While the Dayton Agreement has brought about needed stability in the short term, international policy must be based on the assumption that the region will be unstable in the long term unless there is democratic change in Serbia itself. The decision to end the Bosnian conflict by negotiation rather than military intervention compelled the international community to deal directly with Serbian President Milosevic, but the Belgrade regime has relied on the use of force to maintain power and could provoke new crises whenever it feels it convenient and expedient to do so.

The Commission staff recommends that normalization of diplomatic relations with Belgrade, and the federation's integration as a new state in world affairs, be withheld and that an "outer wall" of sanctions be maintained until there are clear signs that the conditions for human rights and democracy are improving significantly. This would include the eventual return of an OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro, which was based in Kosovo, the Sandzak and Vojvodina before being expelled in 1993. Outside support, however, should not be limited to non-Serb groups in the ethnically mixed regions. Instead, all groups within Serbia and Montenegro seeking democratic change should be eligible for such assistance, since ethnic Serbs themselves are denied many basic human rights.

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THE COMMISSION STAFF DELEGATION

From April 22 to April 28, 1996, a staff delegation of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) traveled to Serbia and Montenegro to observe the situation in the federation created in 1992. In particular, the delegation examined trends in human rights performance as well

as the prospects for democratic development. The delegation also evaluated the international community's responses to the region, specifically in Serbia and Montenegro, since the Dayton Agreement was signed in December 1995.

The Co-Chairs of the Helsinki Commission, Representative Christopher Smith (Republican of New Jersey) and Senator Alfonse D'Amato (Republican of New York), wrote to Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and Montenegrin President Momir Bulatovic announcing that the Commission intended to send a staff delegation to their republics and requesting that they meet with the delegation during its visit. Yugoslav Embassy officials in Washington cooperated fully with the Commission in facilitating the visit. Neither of the requests for meetings with the republic presidents was granted.

Beginning in Belgrade, the delegation met with the Deputy Assistant Minister for Multilateral Concerns from the Federal Foreign Ministry. His responsibilities include the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, from which Yugoslav participation has been suspended since the summer of 1992. It also met with representatives of two opposition parties—the Civic Alliance Party and the Democratic Party—as well as of three human rights organizations—the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, the Humanitarian Law Fund and the "Independence" trade union. The U.S. Charge d'Affaires also hosted a luncheon for the delegation with members of the newly formed Forum for International Affairs and other prominent Belgrade intellectuals.

The delegation made two visits to Vojvodina. First it traveled to Novi Sad, the capital, stopping in the town of Indija on the way to tour a collective center for refugees from the Krajina region in Croatia, which included a meeting with local Red Cross officials. In Novi Sad, the delegation met with the President of the Democratic Community of Hungarians in Vojvodina and the President of the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina. Later in the trip, the Commission staff traveled further north to Subotica, where it met with the city's mayor and other representatives of the Vojvodina Alliance of Hungarians and a representative of the Democratic Alliance of Croats in Vojvodina.

During its stay in Pristina, the capital city of Kosovo, the staff delegation met with the Deputy District Head and the Secretary for Information for Kosovo and Metohija. It also met with the editor of the independent Albanian-language weekly *Zeri*, members of the parliament of the self-proclaimed independent Kosovo republic and other ethnic Albanian representatives of the Democratic League of Kosovo, the Albanian Christian Democratic Party, the Liberal Party of Kosovo, the Peasants Party of Kosovo, and the Parliamentary Party of Kosovo. Other meetings were held with representatives of the Serbian Renewal Movement, the Pristina-based Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Moving to Novi Pazar, the chief city in the Sandzak region, the Commission staff met with the head of the Raska Okrug which includes the eastern part of the Sandzak within Serbia, and with the mayor of Novi Pazar. Meetings were also held with the leader of one faction of the Muslim-oriented Party for Democratic Action, a journalist for the local monthly *Sandzak*, and the president of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in the Sandzak. The Commission staff also talked with a Serbian Orthodox priest at a local monastery and visited two local Muslim families, including the former landlord for members of the OSCE Mission that was deployed in the Sandzak from September 1992 to July 1993.

The staff delegation also visited Montenegro. In Podgorica, the capital, the Commission staff met with the Montenegrin Minister for Foreign Affairs, parliamentarians from the leading opposition Liberal Alliance of Montenegro, a representative of the opposition Social Democrats of Montenegro, a university law professor focusing on human rights issues and the chief editor of the Independent monthly, *Monitor*. Traveling to Budva, they also met with the president of the Montenegrin Helsinki Committee for Human Rights. In Kotor, one member of the delegation attended a Seminar on Durable Solutions for Refugees in the Former Yugoslavia.

Departing the country on April 29, members of the staff delegation traveled to Vienna, Austria, the location of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. There, on April 30, they briefed the OSCE's Informal Ad Hoc Meeting on Kosovo, the Sandzak and Vojvodina, a group formed to monitor developments in these three regions since the forced departure of the OSCE missions in July 1993. Members of the delegation also held a well-attended public briefing in Washington on May 2, reporting their preliminary findings.

The delegation's information and assessment of the situation in Serbia and Montenegro in 1996 has been substantially enhanced by meetings held beforehand and subsequently in Washington with a variety of persons, including the president of the Democratic League of Albanians in Montenegro and mayor of Ulcinj, Montenegro, a researcher from the Institute for Social Sciences at Belgrade University, representatives of the Muslim National Council of Sandzak and members and consultants from the Working Group on the South Balkans of the Council on Foreign Relations' Center for Preventive Action.

Background on Serbia and Montenegro

Geographic and Demographic Overview

Serbia and Montenegro are located in south-central Europe in the center of the Balkan peninsula with a segment extending to the eastern Adriatic coast. Their topography ranges from agriculturally rich plain of the Danube basin in the north, to hilly and mountainous interiors, to a dry and rocky Mediterranean coastline. The two have a combined area similar to the state of Kentucky, of which Serbia is 86.4 percent and Montenegro is 13.6 percent. The capital of Serbia, as well as of the federation, is Belgrade, and the capital of Montenegro is Podgorica, formerly called Titograd.

The total population of the Serbian-Montenegrin federation is approximately 10.8 million, 93.8 percent of which (10.1 million) live in Serbia and 6.2 percent (667,000) live in Montenegro. Ethnic Serbs and Montenegrins, closely related South Slavic peoples of predominantly Eastern Orthodox faith or cultural background, constitute the majority in their respective republics, but the overall population of the federation is far from homogeneous. Approximately 30 percent of their combined populations consist of ethnic Albanians, Hungarians, Bosniac or Muslim Slavs,⁽¹⁾

Croats, Slovaks, Roma (or Gypsies), and several other groups. The Albanians, who actually outnumber ethnic Montenegrins in the federation by a two-to-one ratio, live predominantly in Kosovo, although some also live along the southern coast of Montenegro around Ulcinj and in the Montenegrin interior around Plav. The Hungarian, Croat, Slovak and other non-Serb communities live in Vojvodina, while most of the Muslim population lives on the Serbian-Montenegrin border, a historical area known as the Sandzak with Novi Pazar as its principal center, extending into Kosovo. A considerable number of Montenegrins, moreover, have migrated to Serbia, and many Orthodox Slavs in Montenegro, especially in

the mountainous north, consider themselves to be Serbs, not Montenegrins. Belgrade itself has a considerably diverse population coming from these groups as well as other peoples of the former, larger Yugoslav federation.

By religious background, approximately two-thirds are Orthodox Christians (Serbs and Montenegrins), about one-fifth are of the Islamic faith (Albanians and Muslims), and the remainder are Catholic (Hungarians and Croats) and Protestant (Hungarians and Slovaks) Christians, with only a small Jewish community still in existence. There is more homogeneity by language, with the Serbs, Montenegrins, Muslims and Croats all speaking mutually understandable languages, and most members of the other communities learning to speak the dominant language.

Historical Background

The South Slavs migrated into the Balkans over a millennium ago, and developed different cultural backgrounds which transformed them into different ethnic groups with subsequent political divisions. The Serbs established their own medieval kingdom in southern Serbia, based in Kosovo and extending into present-day Macedonia. Subsequently, the region was conquered by the Ottoman Turks and made part of their empire. The core of Montenegro, then known as the principality of Zeta, never fully fell under Ottoman control, and developed its own history separate from Serbia until the twentieth century. The region between them had some links to a Bosnian kingdom, and many of the Slavs in the region, as in Bosnia, adopted the Islamic faith of their Turkish rulers, creating the basis for what was to become known as the Sandzak.⁽²⁾ In Kosovo, the Albanians—who are believed to descend from the ancient Illyrians of the southwest Balkan peninsula and therefore indigenous to the general area—fought with the Serbs against the advancing Turks, but were also mostly converted to Islam as the region was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. Many Serbs, on the other hand, migrated north, shifting their social and economic center to the area around the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers, the site of present day Belgrade. Some moved into the Vojvodina, where, in the Fruska Gora region, a cultural renaissance would revive the Serbs' national revival in the nineteenth century. The Vojvodina, however, came under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Serbs there would mix with Hungarians, Croats, Slovaks, Germans, Ukrainians and a whole host of other groups from the north and west, giving them a different historical perspective than those Serbs who remained under Ottoman control to the south. Some Serbs would move still further, being settled by the Hapsburgs on the military frontier (Krajina) in Croatia as a defense against the Ottomans.

The nineteenth century witnessed the steady decline of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, and several Serb revolts early in the century, often bloody and sometimes with tremendous setbacks, led gradually to the attainment of autonomy and, in 1882, the proclamation of an independent kingdom under the terms of the Congress of Berlin four years before. Two rival dynasties, the Karadjordjevic and the Obrenovic, led the revolt and then the kingdom, with power changing hands four different times. It was also during this time that the "Yugoslav Idea" of a common South Slavic bond, which developed first in the Napoleonic era, merged with the notion Greater Serbia, based on the much remembered Serbian medieval history and the fact the Serbs were the largest and the first South Slavic group to establish a completely independent state in modern times. Such a concept led to the incorporation of a large portion of a partitioned Macedonia into the Serbian kingdom, along with Kosovo (including Metohija) and the Sandzak, during the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913, almost doubling the size of the Serbian kingdom. Montenegro, ruled by Orthodox bishop-princes during the Ottoman period, similarly emerged as a recognized independent kingdom which took additional territory, along the coast and parts of the Sandzak, as well. When the

first Yugoslav state—the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes—was born from the rubble of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires following the First World War, Serb perceptions of this state already differed dramatically from those of their new Croat and Slovene countrymen, with those of the lesser groups largely ignored.

The years between the World Wars saw these differences develop quickly, as centralization of the kingdom eventually led the King, Alexander Karadjordjevic, to establish a royal dictatorship in 1929 and to rename the country Yugoslavia.⁽³⁾ As tension continued to brew in a Europe unable to deal with a growing fascist threat, one last attempt was made to find a mutually agreeable framework for Yugoslavia with the adoption of an agreement, or *sporazum*, establishing Croatia as a separate entity in Yugoslavia with considerable autonomy in 1939.⁽⁴⁾ By that time, however, it was too late, and during World War II Yugoslavia was completely dismembered by pro-axis neighbors, with Croatia established as its own fascist state that very severely and brutally persecuted its Serb population along with Jews and Roma. A quisling fascist state was also established in a truncated Serbia. From within virtually all parts of the country, however, resistance developed, including the pro-monarchy, largely Serb forces under Draza Mihailovic known as the Chetniks, and the communist Partisans under Josip Broz Tito. Eventually, these liberation fronts fought with each other as well as with the German occupation forces, but Tito's fighters grew in strength, eventually received allied support, and liberated the country largely on their own. The fact that the Partisans succeeded in reuniting Yugoslavia without the intervention of the Red Army or any other outside force generated more genuine popular support for the communists than existed elsewhere in East-Central Europe.

Under Tito, support was generated by the reform-minded communism which developed following the split with the Soviet Union in 1948 and included greater freedom at home, albeit within limits, and an ability for foreigners to come to Yugoslavia and for Yugoslavs to travel abroad in great numbers. By the time democratic reform swept the region in 1989 and 1990, the reformed nature of Yugoslav communism enabled some to remain in power, but, more than that, it imbedded in the leadership at the time the belief that Yugoslavia achieved the most that could be achieved in a communist state and that no further reform was really needed. By the time some, like the last Prime Minister of the country Ante Markovic, realized otherwise, it was too late.

Beyond giving his communist regime an air of legitimacy and genuine popularity, Tito advanced the status of the traditional underdogs in Yugoslavia—the Muslim Slavs of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Albanians of Kosovo and the Macedonians—and placed checks on the dominating Croats and Serbs. While the former attained cultural rights, recognition and status beyond what was ever achieved before, Croatia was disproportionately run by Serbs while Serbia itself was not given the ability, especially after the 1974 constitution, to govern Vojvodina and Kosovo, let alone its historical piece of Macedonia. While its central motivation was the classic tactic of "divide-and-conquer," the result of Tito's policy of "brotherhood and unity"⁽⁵⁾ was a genuine respect for all national groups in a federation based on their equality. Moreover, the one idea most prohibited by Tito was the expression of national sentiment, which unhealthily denied the Serbs the ability to vent full their sense of victimization over their persecution by the fascist Croatian state during World War II and set back liberalization in Croatia in the early 1970s, as well as other national questions. As a result, as the unifying figure of Tito left the scene in 1980, people increasingly turned to these national sentiments which were just under the surface, and which were exacerbated by growing economic difficulties generally as well as economic and political diversity between the northern and southern parts of the country.

Serbia's Role in Yugoslavia's Collapse⁽⁶⁾

In the midst of Yugoslavia's political decentralization and growing economic troubles rose Slobodan Milosevic, a capable but otherwise undistinguished member of the communist apparatus in Serbia. Following the most open pronouncements of Serb complaints—some legitimate and some not—in a Memorandum produced by the Serbian Academy of Sciences in 1986, Milosevic came to the support of Serbs protesting their economic conditions and the situation in Kosovo. Seeing the political advantage of this stance, he pursued it further as he removed his rivals from party leadership positions and became head of the Serbian League of Communists. In 1988, he assumed the presidency of Serbia, following which he stripped the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina of their autonomy among other steps to establish full control and garner additional support among the Serb population. His rise encouraged already existing frustration with the federation, especially in Slovenia, prompting the effective dissolution of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and paving the way for multi-party elections in that republic in April 1990, the first in post-World War II Yugoslavia. Croatia felt compelled to follow suit, aware, however, of the potential dangers.

As the ruling communists fell from power in both northern republics, pressure built for similar elections in the remaining four republics, including Serbia and Montenegro, by year's end. In a direct vote that December, Milosevic won the right to continue as President of Serbia in an electoral process marred by harassment and discrimination by the media during the campaign period, as well as a major financial scandal revealed one month later. Nevertheless, his rhetorical support for the 25 percent of Yugoslavia's ethnic Serbs residing outside of Serbia itself found genuine support among the population, and opposition leaders lacked either the legitimacy or the credibility to challenge him on nationalist turf. Milosevic's main rival was the Serbian Renewal Movement led by Vuk Draskovic, whose positions changed erratically between advocating a western-style democracy to calling, on the basis of a mystical Serb nationalism, for actions detrimental to the non-Serb population.

In the other republics, Milosevic's rhetoric smacked of the historical calls for a Greater Serbia, and caused concern in each, with Slovenia and Croatia moving closer to proclaiming independence, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, seeking to restore equality and balance in the federation, and Montenegro, whose leadership had been manipulatively changed prior to elections, supporting Serbian positions. Meanwhile, the elections in the six republics, which had delegitimized the federation in practically all civilian respects, had given the republic leaders a mandate to negotiate the federation's future. This process occurred during early 1991, marked by intransigence by the two extremes despite the efforts of the moderates. Almost weekly, violent clashes occurred in Croatia, where armed Serb militants sought to take full control of certain regions. The most serious clash took place in April, shortly after mass protests by the opposition in Belgrade prompted a crackdown and then some concessions to those advocating greater freedoms, indicating that the coming conflict was partially and perhaps mostly being fomented in order to narrow Serbia's political spectrum and focus it on the needs of the Serb nation as opposed to the individual Serbs who comprised it. The policies of Croatia's nationalist government demonstrated an intolerance of Serb concerns and sensitivities in the republic that, of course, gave Serb propaganda regarding the threat to Serbs posed by the federation's demise just the degree of credibility it needed.

The conflict began in earnest in June 1991, as talks centered on creating a new confederation collapsed and Slovenia and Croatia declared independence. During the short-lived Slovenian phase of the conflict and the Croatian phase which lasted until the end of that year, Belgrade sought to present the fighting to the world as a legitimate struggle to preserve a recognized and sovereign state threatened by

separatism rather than an attack by one republic on another. Indeed, many high-ranking Yugoslav leaders who were not Serb did support the intervention of the Yugoslav Army convinced that the effort was to defend Tito's Yugoslavia. The reality, however, was that the old federation was already a thing of the past and that the attacks had actually doomed any idea recreating it. Moreover, in Croatia the Army was directly supporting the militant Serb forces in their effort to seize more and more territory.

When the conflict moved to its Bosnian phase in April 1992, a more accurate picture of what was happening emerged, clouded mostly by the excuses raised to justify strong action to stop it. Whereas there was some perception that Croatia, while a victim of aggression, was nevertheless partly responsible for instigating a clash with Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina was viewed as a genuinely innocent player, desperate to find stability in the midst of the latest Serb-Croat clash. While less than an adequate response, the international community's sense that the conflict was not really a clash based on one population's fears and a government's insensitivity, but on a real desire to create a Greater Serbia, led to the imposition of a severe regime of economic and political sanctions, and efforts were made to ensure that the conflict would spread no further. This, along with international recognition of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina prompted Belgrade to change tracks by announcing the pullout of the Yugoslav Army from Bosnia-Herzegovina,⁽⁷⁾ claiming not to be part of the problem, dropping any plans that might have been made for spreading the conflict into Kosovo or Macedonia, and, finally, proclaiming a Federal Republic of Yugoslavia consisting of only Serbia and Montenegro.

The new federation set the stage for the peculiar entry of Milan Panic, a successful Serb-American businessman, who was brought in to serve as the federal Prime Minister. Though viewed by some as a puppet and others as ineffectual, Panic did challenge the Milosevic regime as he pleaded with the international community to refrain from taking action against Serbia and Montenegro. In December 1992, he legitimately challenged Milosevic in a direct election for President of Serbia, proving he was not simply a front for Milosevic, but he lost in an electoral process that was even more blatantly marred than in 1990. The fact that only a relative outsider could pose a challenge to Milosevic, however, revealed the shortcomings of the Serbian opposition and the degree to which some of its best minds had either joined the regime or left for abroad. Taking their place were the most extreme nationalists, especially Vojislav Seselj and his Radical Party but also internationally wanted criminal Zeljko Raznjatovic⁽⁸⁾ and Mirko Jovic. At this time, there was also some indication that Montenegro, not pleased at being under the double yoke of international sanctions and the extreme nationalists, preferred to distance itself from Belgrade. The election outcome, however, brought Montenegro more fully into line. As in 1990, the Kosovar Albanians boycotted the elections, this time joined by the majority of the Sandzak Muslims. It remains an open question whether their participation in the political system would have been tolerated to the extent that would justify the sacrifice of their declared independence which participation is perceived to mean.

A slow and reluctant slide of the international community toward some sort of stronger action in Bosnia-Herzegovina prompted additional efforts by Milosevic to appear to be out of the conflict. He appealed personally for peace plans the Bosnian Serbs would reject. When, in 1994, the Bosnian Serbs rejected a "Contact Group"⁽⁹⁾ peace plan that was offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis with severe consequences for those who did not accept it, the international community could only agree on some additional sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro. Milosevic, by this time seeing some of the Bosnian Serb leaders—along with Seselj as the most powerful nationalist within Serbia—as potential rivals anyway, reacted by allegedly closing the entire border to traffic that could assist the Bosnian Serb militants and even

permitting a limited international monitoring of the border. The international response to this was not only to reverse course and not impose additional sanctions, but also to ease some of the milder sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro such as participation in international sporting events.

Increasing efforts were also undertaken to have Milosevic bring pressure to bear on the Bosnian Serbs to make at least some compromises that would make a settlement at least appear not to be a complete capitulation by the West in the face of aggression. Through the end of 1994 and the first half of 1995, Milosevic either did not see a need to put real pressure on the Bosnian Serb militants, or Bosnian Serb leaders like Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic were sufficiently independent to resist. Evidence exists for both points of view. In any event, with the pending collapse of the Bihac pocket in northwestern Bosnia-Herzegovina and the actual collapse of the UN-designated safe havens of Srebrenica and Zepa in the east, the Bosnian Serb leadership had reason to believe—especially from their isolated vantage points—that they not only could keep the 70 percent of Bosnia-Herzegovina they occupied, but could actually take additional territory with virtual impunity.

In fact, the Bosnian Serb militants had overstepped their bounds in that the threats made against U.N. peacekeepers apparently prompted the United States, with added motivation based on the tragic but accidental loss of three senior negotiators in Bosnia-Herzegovina, to undertake its strongest diplomatic initiative in the war, other than ending the Croat-Bosnian fighting and forming a protective zone around Sarajevo in February 1994. Washington also acquiesced and probably gave actual support to a combined Bosnia-Croatian military offensive to liberate the Serb-occupied Krajina region in Croatia, centered around Knin, relieve the besieged Bihac pocket in Bosnia-Herzegovina and then retake enough Bosnian territory by force that the 51/49 split proposed by the Contact Group plan was realized, albeit with some later, mutually agreed exchanges. This offensive proved successful, with some credit having to go to Milosevic for withdrawing his support for the militants and refusing to come to their aid, as some predicted he would be compelled to do. Well over one hundred thousand Serbs fled Croatia for Serb-occupied Banja Luka in northwestern Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as for Serbia itself, followed by Bosnian Serbs also fleeing to the Banja Luka area in front of advancing Bosnian and Croatian forces. Efforts to retaliate by shelling civilians in Tuzla to the northeast prompted sustained NATO airstrikes against key Bosnian Serb positions.

Milosevic was again asked to bring the Bosnian Serbs under control, and this time he did so, representing them in negotiations in Dayton, Ohio, which produced a political settlement ending hostilities in December 1995. During the first months of 1996, new peacekeeping forces under NATO command—including American contingents—entered Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the two opposing forces withdrew from the front lines. For the first time since mid-1991, the war Milosevic was widely accused of being personally responsible for starting seemed over, and all but an "outer wall" of economic and political sanctions were lifted. While the United States and other countries, to varying degrees, kept a degree of political distance from Milosevic himself, Serbia and Montenegro's isolation was effectively ended, and problems in implementing some provisions of the Dayton Agreement have prompted the international community to seek Milosevic's assistance in keeping the more militant Serbs remaining in Bosnia-Herzegovina in line.

Observations of the Contemporary Scene

The Commission staff delegation noted two principal developments during the course of its visit to Serbia and Montenegro in April 1996. The two are related, but also somewhat contradictory. First, the relative cessation of hostilities in neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina produced a widespread sense of relief,

and some hope that what appeared to be the end of nearly a half-decade of conflict would permit attention to be focused on making improvements. Second, there was a sense that the political situation in the country remained bad, and was showing signs of worsening.

The fact that mass killings next door had essentially stopped produced abstract improvements, but it is difficult to document how this concretely improved the situation in Serbia and Montenegro. There certainly was psychological relief caused by such things as the recent decision to exchange the semi-military uniform of the police force in the two republics to the more traditional one used by those engaged in civilian law enforcement. Consideration was being given to an amnesty law for those young men who fled the country to avoid being drafted into the military and potentially sent to fight in Bosnia-Herzegovina or Croatia. Though flaws in the law were raised, such as the possible loss of rights to inherit property, and few were returning so far, the draft law nevertheless has given some relief.

In addition, the most severe economic sanctions had been lifted on Serbia and Montenegro, raising hope for some economic recovery. While this, too, contributed to a brighter post-Dayton picture, there were also a considerable number of skeptics. Many view the harsher sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro as only part, and perhaps the lesser part, of the country's economic woes. When the sanctions were in effect, one could still obtain most goods, fuel being the only commodity dramatically affected. The hyperinflation, which did the most to lower living standards, was actually brought under control while the sanctions were still in effect, and new inflationary pressures were evident in the first half of 1996 after the sanctions had been lifted. In fact, it was during the visit of the Commission staff delegation that a political confrontation was brewing between Serbian President Milosevic and the head of the Yugoslav National Bank, Dragoslav Avramovic, regarding the latter's desire to implement policies to maintain economic stability at the expense of the former's desire to implement policies enhancing his political power. Avramovic became popular for reducing the inflation rate in 1994 with the introduction of the "super-dinar," but was nevertheless removed from his position as bank chief in June 1996. While the economy has remained stable since, the incident clearly revealed Milosevic's vulnerability since the lifting of the sanctions which have been his cover to date. This, in turn, has caused Belgrade to express increasing interest in renewing ties with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which remain prohibited by the "outer wall" of sanctions still in effect.

The new optimism arising after the Dayton Agreement was tempered by what most felt was a worsening of the overall political situation in 1996. The reality of having to deal directly with Milosevic in order to obtain an agreement ending hostilities in Bosnia-Herzegovina was widely recognized, but political and ethnic opposition alike view the Serbian President as largely responsible for the war. They therefore expressed displeasure at the rush with which so many European countries—the United Kingdom and France in particular—moved from simply dealing with the Serbian regime to full recognition of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as well as the subsequent appointment of ambassadors to Belgrade.⁽¹⁰⁾ Not only has this created the perception among some people that Milosevic had taken on the international community and won, but that he would be given a free reign at home as long as he enforced Bosnian Serb compliance with the Dayton Agreement.

In this context, many observers noted that the United States had refrained from returning an ambassador to Belgrade. Some, however, also expressed dismay over U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to Belgrade in January, which did not include meetings with opposition or human rights groups. In February, soon after this visit, the authorities moved against the independent television station Studio B,

taking it over using a legal technicality and changing its staff, ending years of geographically limited, but nevertheless popular, free expression. Shortly thereafter, Serbia's courts also took action against the Belgrade office of the George Soros-funded Open Society Institute, which supported a number of independent broadcast and print media as well as humanitarian organizations and international exchanges. The office was closed, although continued pressure and persistent willingness to work out differences led to its reopening in June 1996.

Serbia

The picture appears particularly bleak in Serbia itself. Despite the existence of a federal apparatus and the technically equal status of Serbia and Montenegro within the federation, those who follow the situation view the Serbian Government controlled by President Slobodan Milosevic and his Socialist Party to be the center of the country's power. As early as 1992, Milosevic could claim to be the only leader to have faced the dramatic political changes in the region, especially from 1989 to 1991, and stayed in power. By 1996, however, an almost five-year period of conflict in neighboring republics—the worst in Europe since World War II—had seemingly ended with the signing of the Dayton Agreement, and the Serbian leader needed an alternative to nationalism as the basis for support. Indeed, some nationalists—including Vojislav Seselj and, some speculate, Radovan Karadzic in neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina—posed the greatest threat to his regime in recent years, and could gain followers if he was viewed as having abandoned the Serb cause in permitting the Krajina to fall and agreeing to anything short of Bosnia's complete partition.

His response in 1996 seems to have been to abandon nationalists completely before they abandoned him. He had already been doing so since 1994 by becoming publicly critical of Karadzic and provoking Seselj to the point that, for a time, he was incarcerated. In February 1996, the Socialist Party took a dramatic step further by reelecting Milosevic as their leader in a nearly unanimous vote in a party congress eerily reminiscent of the days of one-party rule. As delegates called each other "comrade" and guests from Cuba and China were applauded, close advisors to Milosevic with nationalist leanings were purged. Mirjana Markovic, Milosevic's wife who has strong credentials among communists, meanwhile formed a Yugoslav United Left (YUL) to appeal to a larger audience, including even non-Serbs, who might be nostalgic for the one-party state of the past but do not fully align themselves with the ruling party that earlier had disowned that era to the extent it hurt Serb interests. While distinctly different parties, there were no signs that they were genuinely opposing each other, and most people seemed to assume that there was a real, if informal, coalition between them.

Whereas nationalism as the ideological basis for Milosevic's power might be changing, the staff delegation found nearly universal agreement that it was the Serbian police that was the chief instrument of his power. While estimates of the size of this force differed, perhaps because some included the "secret police" in their figures, everyone felt that the size of the police force was out of all proportion to the real need of the country. Even for some other countries in the region with larger populations, their police forces were believed to be significantly smaller than that of Serbia. In addition, the police force was very well funded, equipped and loyal. While the changing to more traditional police uniforms was viewed with relief as a sign of some normalization, the also recent introduction of military ranks into the police force was a sign that the changes were largely on the surface. As far as the Yugoslav armed forces were concerned, the military establishment has given the appearance of being less supportive of Milosevic but potentially sympathetic to the point of view represented by YUL.

Ironically, in tandem with the strong police force, under Milosevic organized criminal activity has thrived. It obviously grew as a result of sanctions-busting trade, but the regime had tolerated the growth of banks which scandalously soaked money from the population. Belgrade, meanwhile, became a hotspot for the purchase of antiques taken from conquered Bosnian territory. Even with sanctions lifted, criminal activity continued, with recent shootings occurring near the Hyatt Hotel in Belgrade.

As far as respect for human rights, there continues to be a severe curtailment of the right to free expression. Independent broadcast media has been particularly limited by the authorities, even to the point of closing down voices of opposition at Studio B despite its limited range. Some independent print media is tolerated, most notably the daily *Nasa Borba* (Our Struggle) which emerged from an earlier takeover of the semi-official and at one time independent-minded *Borba*, and the monthly magazine *Vreme*. While print media, too, has faced harassment and takeovers by the authorities (the newspaper *Politika* for a while also expressed independent views until it fell to the same fate as *Borba*), for the most part they are tolerated.

Similarly, several independent human rights groups, including the Humanitarian Law Fund and several Helsinki committees, are allowed to function. Members of these groups report being asked to report to the police for "informative talks," but there are no apparent repercussions for those who decline to do so because no written summons was received. They conclude that their activities are generally tolerated because their activity does not spread much beyond intellectual circles in Belgrade and some other cities and, therefore, pose little domestic threat to the regime. In addition, these groups have contacts with foreign organizations --- such as the links of Helsinki committees to the International Helsinki Federation based in Vienna, Austria—which preclude any action from going unnoticed and could lead to a undesirable worsening of Belgrade image abroad. Indeed, these groups admit that, to a large extent, they serve as "window dressing" or "decoration" for the regime, which uses their tolerance in arguing to foreign governments and international organizations that Serbia is essentially democratic. Indicating the importance of international contacts, a representative of one organization reported receiving a telephone call from a ministry office asking that letters sent to that office not be so frequent, apparently because the letters not only raised specific and legitimate human rights concerns that could not be easily discarded, especially since they were copied to various foreign organizations or governments.

The action against the Open Society Institute demonstrated, however, that these non-governmental organizations are exempt from more severe forms of harassment. Government officials stressed that the problems this organization was having, like those of Studio B, was based on legal questions and technicalities. Such explanations, of course, can be understood for any particular case, but they become less persuasive individually when they form a larger pattern. The timing for the particular action against these organizations cannot, for example, be easily explained by the reason given for the action, indicating the possibility of a political decision to take the action for a specific reason. One obvious reason for the actions taken against the Open Society Institute and Studio B was to make it clear to everyone, and especially those overly optimistic about the implications of the Dayton Agreement for Serbia, that the post-Dayton period did not mean any real political change. The technical problems not only serve as a pretext; they allow for a quick fix or a positive gesture if the action is protested strongly enough.

It also seems possible that those groups who have the potential to gain wider domestic support among the Serb population are more likely to be targeted than those like the Helsinki committees and the Humanitarian Law Fund that serve primarily as monitors. Studio B and any other independent media outlet

that crosses a threshold of popularity would therefore be more likely targets. The Open Society Institute engages in a wide variety of activities, including exchanges and the provision of assistance. Given the well-know fortunes of its benevolent founder, George Soros, it is also perceived to have ample and steady funding.

Similarly, one could expect the "Independence" trade union to be a target as well, especially if it succeeds in drawing support from workers frustrated by a stagnating economic situation that can no longer be blamed on international sanctions. The independent trade union does organize a trade union school, but it views the average Serb worker as still passive and concerned about being labeled a traitor to his or her nation for becoming active on workers' rights. The few who do become active are frequently suspended from their jobs. As a result, there remains little chance at present for workers actually to change Serbia's political landscape, but the fact that high-level international trade union officials visiting Serbia in early 1996 were not granted meetings with senior government officials and prohibited from entering into factories indicates an official desire to keep it that way.

Political parties are also tolerated, but it seems somewhat less so than politically inactive non-governmental organizations, reenforcing the view that the potential to gain a domestic following plays a role in the latitude given by the authorities to particular activities. To maintain a democratic veil, the authorities cannot simply prohibit opposition parties, and to do so could in fact increase their popularity. Instead, the regime has generally relied on the inability of the opposition to organize, unite and genuinely oppose. The opposition has never been represented by any one party, whereas elsewhere—including in other parts of the former Yugoslavia—opposition parties frequently had to transform almost into mass movements in order to take control from the communists in power. The leading opposition party in Serbia, the Serbian Renewal Movement, did, in fact, come close to becoming a mass movement for Serbs against the regime. The eccentricity of its leader, Vuk Draskovic, may well have limited its ability to do so by denying the Movement some credibility and a lot of consistency. That said, when the Serbian Renewal Movement did come closest to challenging the regime with mass demonstrations in Belgrade in early March 1991, Milosevic distinguished himself from most of the other communists trying to maintain power in that period by his willingness to bring out tanks and armed personnel carriers against the country's ethnic majority.⁽¹¹⁾ It is, therefore, not just the character of the opposition that has kept Milosevic in power.

The opposition does, however, acknowledge many of its shortcomings. It realizes that its leaders in 1996 are largely the same that have been defeated in Serbian elections since 1990. It realizes that the nationalists, some extreme, and its political liberals can not wholly unite, and that the egos of some personalities have limited the cohesiveness of otherwise like-minded parties. Some have, in fact, been enticed into distancing themselves from the opposition by offers of cooperation from the ruling Socialist Party. At a March 9 rally commemorating the fifth anniversary of the mass protests in Belgrade, the opposition parties promised to unite in elections expected later in the year, and the less-than-expected turnout of about 20,000⁽¹²⁾ may have reenforced the need to cooperate. One party representative saw the next elections as the last chance for the current opposition. Even if there is increased unity, however, the opposition in early 1996 seemed to have little in the way of an alternative program. Indeed, the very basis of their unity may be their complaints about those in power, which will likely prove insufficient to sway the overwhelming portion of the Serb population that is more concerned about their own well-being, especially economic, than the limits placed on human rights which they have no intention of testing in the first place.

At the time of the delegation visit, Yugoslav bank chief Dragoslav Avramovic was viewed as a potential rallying point for the opposition, much as Milan Panic was in 1992. Unlike Panic, Avramovic had the advantages of being associated with no other country than Yugoslavia, popular for his previous success in stabilizing the economy and focused on continued economic recovery at a time when sanctions no longer could be used as an excuse for stagnation. Some actually believed Milosevic to be vulnerable. However, the banker made it clear that he had no political ambitions, and, when he was sacked, the opposition failed to capitalize on his martyrdom. Like Panic, Avramovic seemed to have had no seriously damaging effect on Milosevic's power.

There were signs that the political opposition might face increased harassment in 1996 for more than the above-mentioned reasons relating to the treatment of other non-governmental critics. Elections are likely in the new Yugoslavia within the year. Harassment can be expected to pick up in parallel with increased election activity, but those in power are probably not entirely confident of their full control over Serbian politics in the post-Dayton period. Several observers felt the authorities were becoming more confrontational, generally tolerating the March 9 rally, then having its supporters throw leaflets into an opposition rally in Nis to the south a few weeks later, and then bringing in supporters from other parts of the republic to confront directly opposition demonstrators in Novi Sad in late April, even though the last incident was smaller than the first. Opposition leaders all felt that the media provided them no avenue to transmit their views to the public and, in fact, the media continued to be used to attack them as traitors. The authorities have also taken legal action against Zoran Djindjic, the head of the opposition Democratic Party, for the party's reporting on alleged corruption involving the Serbian Prime Minister.

If the current opposition fails to make a reasonable showing in elections again, it is unclear what type of alternative opposition might emerge, especially since many other potential candidates have either been coopted by the regime at some point or left the country in apparent disgust. The one small hope that emerged at the time of the Commission staff delegation was the continued existence of those who were officials prior to Milosevic and represent Yugoslavia and Serbia's reform-minded communist past, such as those associated with the Forum for International Affairs or Milosevic's predecessor as head of the Serbian League of Communists, Ivan Stambolic. They best combine the intellectual capacity, previous experience and perhaps the credibility to lead a more popular opposition to Milosevic than the current political opposition, although there are few signs that they might even attempt to do so. Moreover, many from this group are from the older generation of Yugoslav politics and will gradually fade from the scene.

Nobody with whom the staff delegation met seemed to believe that Milosevic was interested in giving up any or all of his power, or that he would be willing to do so peacefully if someone were to succeed in an electoral process drastically stacked against them. If, on the other hand, the international community has sufficiently closed the possibility for the current Serbian leaders to foment conflict outside the republic to enhance their power at home, Milosevic could become vulnerable in the future. This is especially the case if, as many opposition representatives claim, the current leaders are losing popularity due to continued economic stagnation. Some analysts who look at the contemporary scene in a historical context are concerned about this mix, noting the tendency in Serbian politics for change to occur through violence. Whether this would manifest itself in a small coup or a wide-scale civil war seems as questionable as who would win, but, if the perpetuation of the current regime is not satisfactory then a brighter future may only occur if the situation first becomes even worse.

Montenegro

The fact that Serbian, not Yugoslav, authorities are the center of power in the federation becomes apparent in Montenegro, where the situation is more fluid. Since opting to remain federated with Serbia in a referendum held the same weekend in early 1992 that Bosnian voted favorably for their independence, Montenegro has been a reluctant partner. First, the Montenegrins themselves are somewhat divided between those in the south who maintain a Mediterranean character stressing distinctness from Serbs and affiliation with western Europe. In the mountains, Montenegrins tend to be more pro-Serbian, at times to the point of claiming actually to be ethnic Serbs and espousing the most extreme Serbian nationalism. Indeed, Serbian President Milosevic, Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic and paramilitary leader Raznjatovic (Arkan) all have Montenegrin roots, and attacks on neighboring portions of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia frequently originated in Montenegro.⁽¹³⁾ As Montenegro began again to distance itself politically from Serbia in 1996, some moderate Montenegrins remarked ironically, if unfortunately, that their republic had never been so well represented in Belgrade. There was also the complaint that Montenegro, significantly smaller and poorer than Serbia and previously a net recipient of funds from the former federation, now is a net donor to the new federation.

To some extent, Montenegrin President Momir Bulatovic has freedom to maneuver the republic between support for and independence from Serbia. It is clear there are limits as to how far Belgrade will let Montenegro move toward independence before taking some action against it. Montenegro is Serbia's only remaining access to the sea, a matter of importance not only in today's international economy but in earlier periods as well. A Belgrade-to-Bar (a Montenegrin port) railroad has long been considered important to Serbia's economy.

On the other hand, the more independence-oriented opposition in Montenegro has a popularity that must be respected, and the regime, often likened to chameleons for their changing political colors, could never completely associate itself with Belgrade. Especially when sanctions were placed on both republics and Milan Panic challenged Milosevic as head of the federal government, Montenegro sought to distance itself from responsibility for the aggression next door. Differences narrowed following Panic's departure, but, in the post-Dayton period, they were resurfacing again. In fact, at the same time that the Commission staff delegation was visiting Podgorica in late April, the Prime Minister of Montenegro, Milo Djukanovic, was visiting the United States and expressing a surprising degree of criticism of the Serbian regime. The extent that support for Montenegro was not more forthcoming reflected the concern that the current Montenegro authorities demonstrated a sufficient degree of cooperation with Serbia in the past that current differences did not preclude the possibility that Montenegro could serve as a front for Serbia in terms of trade and assistance, thereby perpetuating those in power in Belgrade.

Signs of Belgrade's concern were nevertheless apparent. In April, just prior to the Commission staff delegation visit, the two commercial airports in Montenegro—Podgorica and Tivat—were placed under federal control. At about the same time, limits were placed on the rebroadcast of Montenegrin television news on Serbian television in retaliation for Montenegrin authorities' open support for Dragoslav Avramovic in his confrontation with Milosevic. Finally, as speculation developed over Milosevic's plans for his future after his last constitutionally permitted term as President of Serbia expires, as well as about the possibility of Belgrade's making a deal with the Kosovar Albanians on a limited form of political autonomy, ideas for changing the framework for the new Yugoslavia began to circulate that included doing away with the

federal structure which gave Montenegro the autonomy it had. While such rumors may have made Montenegrins more resentful of their big brother to the north, it likely also made them aware how much bigger that brother really was.

Internally, Montenegrin politics is much more vibrant than in Serbia. Whereas the parliaments in Belgrade were viewed as barely functioning, in Montenegro the lively proceedings are televised. The leading opposition, the Liberal Alliance, is led by Slavko Perovic, considered to be a credible potential leader of the republic. The Alliance, based in the historic Montenegrin capital of Cetinje, draws support from those advocating maximum autonomy within a federation if not outright independence from it. Moreover, unlike the highly ethnically divided politics in Serbia, the Liberal Alliance, a newer Social Democratic Party and other opposition parties have a more multi-ethnic character. The Albanian and Muslim minorities, as well as the self-identified Serb community, have their own parties. With the exception of the Muslims' Party of Democratic Action (SDA) in the Sandzak region in 1992, these parties have participated in the political system.

This does not mean, however, that Montenegro's political situation, while better than that of Serbia, is satisfactory. The media are not completely free, with legal action occasionally taken against journalists and editors of independent newspapers for criticism of the authorities. Minorities similarly do not enjoy full respect of their rights. One example of the problem is in Ulcinj, a town on the Montenegrin coast with a mayor from the Albanian-oriented Democratic League in Montenegro. The mayor complains that his local authority has been completely taken from him, and that Podgorica's tolerance of minorities' sharing political power in the republic is limited. The principal reason matters are not worse for the Albanians of Montenegro is that, unlike Kosovo, no territorial autonomy questions are involved. While released the year before, the incarceration and torture of SDA leaders was an indication of the Montenegrin leadership's earlier willingness to follow Serbia in violating human rights. As a sign of the more recent trend of independence, Podgorica has officially pardoned the Muslim leaders who were sentenced under federal legal statutes.

Kosovo, the Sandzak and Vojvodina

While the situation in each differs greatly, Kosovo, the Sandzak and Vojvodina share the common problem of having significant non-Serb, and, in the case of the Sandzak, non-Montenegrin populations in a country which has become highly nationalistic. As a result, they have also received the most attention from an international community perceiving the greatest threat to stability throughout the region to be ethnic tension.

Perhaps because they were the most vulnerable to violent spillover effects while there was conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the post-Dayton period Kosovo, the Sandzak and Vojvodina perhaps witnessed the greatest collective sighs of relief as well. Had the conflict ended other than through relatively forceful, if mostly diplomatic, international intervention, there might have been increased instability out of fear that those responsible for the aggression would turn to them next. If there was one constant in United States policy incorporated into the international response to the Bosnian conflict, it was that the conflict should not be allowed to spread. While the best way to ensure that this was the case was actually to stop the slaughter in Bosnia-Herzegovina, something the international community was not prepared to do, considerable effort went into other options. Missions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (the OSCE)⁽¹⁴⁾ were deployed in Macedonia as well as in Kosovo, the Sandzak and Vojvodina. Both Presidents Bush and Clinton warned Belgrade not to instigate conflict in Kosovo, the most volatile of the regions.

The latter three missions—actually three parts of the same mission which was headquartered in Belgrade—were accepted in late 1992 by the Federal Government of Milan Panic, with mixed signals as to whether the Serbian Government found them acceptable or not. The Montenegrin Government did work with them at the republic level as far as the Sandzak was concerned, although some local Montenegrin officials were among the most hostile to the international presence. As Panic and his government left the scene and the mission's mandate came up for renewal, Belgrade conditioned its continuation on the lifting of OSCE's suspension of Yugoslavia. This was not an acceptable demand for the OSCE States, and, when the last visas for mission members expired in late July 1993, the Mission and its regional offices were closed.

By 1996, the situation had changed very little as far as this issue was concerned. While the end of the Bosnian conflict and progress in implementing the Dayton Agreement might have created conditions conducive to Belgrade's renewed participation in the OSCE had the mission been permitted to remain in place,⁽¹⁵⁾ the linking of its redeployment to full participation by Belgrade created a real diplomatic impasse. Federal Foreign Ministry officials with whom the Commission delegation met stressed a willingness to have the mission return as it was, subject only to the lifting of the suspension. They acknowledged that the Mission had, in fact, served Belgrade's interest in the balanced reporting it provided, but they also stressed their feeling that the OSCE had not treated Yugoslavia fairly. At the United Nations in New York they claimed their representatives received better treatment. They criticized diplomats accredited with bilateral embassies sometimes traveling together as if they were on an official OSCE delegation, but they said they were taking the extra step of tolerating such "undiplomatic" activity. The Commission delegation stressed that not only return of the mission but also implementation of the Dayton Agreement—including cooperation with the international war crimes tribunal in the Hague—would be required steps to resume full participation in the OSCE.

Slobodan Milosevic rose to power in the late 1980s arguing that non-Serbs were given collective rights within Serbia contrary to the interests of that republic and the Serb people. In the case of the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina—the Sandzak never had an official political status in Yugoslavia—he stripped them of their autonomy and not only circumscribed greatly some of the benefits the minorities had, but denied members of these minorities many of the individual rights as well. Police harassment, particularly in Kosovo, problems in minority-language education and media, and discrimination in the form of employment became commonplace. Milosevic, however, never had relied on minority populations for his support; Serbs were the basis for his power. In some respects, therefore, ethnic Albanians, Hungarians and other minority groups have had some additional freedom, at least in terms of the expression of their views, as long as it was confined to their group. To some extent, this phenomenon has become more evident in 1996, apparently since, in the post-Dayton period, Milosevic no longer sees a need to use nationalism so aggressively to maintain power. Minorities are therefore not so strongly targeted as they may have been before, although there is no sign that they are about to be treated as citizens on an equal basis. Ultimately, unrest among Serbs is the threat to those in power, and the ability of Serbs to oppose the regime actively may, in some respects, be more circumscribed.

That said, the situation for members of national minorities in Serbia and, to a somewhat lesser degree, Montenegro remains much worse than for members of the national group. Of the three regions, Kosovo is by far the most problematic. There, the Albanian population constitutes the overwhelming majority—90 percent—of the population, and it has openly challenged Belgrade's right to rule the territory by declaring it to be an independent republic with a completely parallel, if unrecognized, social system. This includes

self-established government, schools and medical facilities, among other things, while such services officially provided are recognized by and large only by ethnic Serbs who live in the region. The two societies seem only to interact in the form of the frequent Serbian police harassment of the Albanian population, which seems often to be indiscriminate and severe. Those taken into police custody are known frequently to be beaten, sometimes to death.

The situation in Kosovo has been so bad for so long that it had, to some extent, stabilized, although it was always vulnerable to either a spontaneous or planned civil explosion. To the extent that it had not exploded can largely be credited to the Kosovar Albanians' passive resistance and restraint in the face of provocation, as advocated by their proclaimed President, Ibrahim Rugova, and his Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). With the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina effectively ended, however, additional attention began to focus on Kosovo in 1996. It was hoped that, like Bosnia-Herzegovina, some deal could be brokered by the international community resolving the dispute between Serbia and the Kosovar Albanian population. Even the leaders of that population, naturally cynical about Belgrade's intentions, had some hope for progress. However, with nothing concrete offered by officials in Belgrade, the Kosovar Albanian leadership has not felt compelled to make a gesture of its own. Both sides have agreed to talk in principle on matters that could at least be addressed while larger ones remained open, but Belgrade has insisted on a one-on-one setting while the Kosovars insist on the presence of an outside, mediating party. The seriousness of Belgrade's offer has also been questionable, as some officials seem still to consider declared abandonment of independence claims as a precondition for talking to any ethnic Albanian leaders.

Some small improvements have nevertheless occurred. Early in 1996, for example, President Milosevic suddenly agreed to, after previously rejecting, a U.S. proposal to open an Information Office of the United States Information Agency in Kosovo's capital, Pristina. The office clearly has symbolic significance and does effectively reestablish some form of international presence in Kosovo. The office officially opened in July 1996.

Another positive step, again the result of a U.S. initiative, was to convince Belgrade to drop the requirement of exit visas for travel to Albania. While not actually visas, Albanians from Kosovo had to report to local police stations to get permission to travel abroad, which was usually denied in the case of travel to Albania. The denial would lead to official confiscation of a passport or some other form of punishment if the traveller was discovered to have been done without approval.

These and other developments have led to speculation that Yugoslavia's constitutional basis might indeed be changed to make some sort of accommodation to Albanian concerns. Some Kosovar Albanians even felt it might be possible to establish Kosovo as a republic within the Yugoslav federation. Others felt that a federation of republics might be done away with altogether, in favor of some regional division for primarily economic and administrative purposes. It seems as if these ideas were not much more than speculation, but they probably did increase hopes for elevating Kosovo's status as they raised concern in Montenegro that that republic's status might be threatened.

These developments, on their own, might have been viewed as sufficient gestures from Belgrade had they not been countered by continuing repression. Throughout 1996, police harassment continued. By April, when the Commission delegation visited the region, tensions were heightened further by the recent, fatal shooting of a young Albanian student in Pristina. The incident prompted a demonstration by Albanian women in downtown Pristina. Combined with other shooting incidents elsewhere in Kosovo, including

some in which police officials were the targets, there was a rise in fear if not in tension. The police presence in the streets increased dramatically, and Pristina may have been "buzzed" by Yugoslav military aircraft.⁽¹⁶⁾ The Commission delegation itself made a public call for calm and restraint on all sides in a press conference in Pristina.

Since that time there have been more incidents like these, and, in early August 1996 there were additional attacks on the police. Some, pointing to the Albanian women's demonstration as the first public gathering by Albanians which did not first get approval from Kosovar Albanian officials, believe that some Albanians are increasingly frustrated by the lack of progress in Kosovo and are moving away from the passive approach advocated by the Kosovar Albanian leadership. This leadership, in fact, has often warned foreign officials that they could not keep Albanians from responding to violence with non-violence forever. It may be, however, that the rise of seemingly spontaneous incidents of violence are due less to the lack of progress than a fear of it, with radicals on both sides hoping, through these incidents, to keep the talks even on potentially resolvable issues like education hostage to the almost unresolvable issue of whether Kosovo is part of Serbia or not. While the presence of paramilitary, criminal elements like Arkan are already known in Kosovo, some now credibly speak about radical, Albanian terrorist organizations. Efforts to bring the two sides together continue, but the latent effects of the Dayton Agreement seem to have now run their course.

Some hope that a new environment might be created if the Kosovar Albanians were to run in future elections, at least at the federal level. If they did, they have the potential for gaining a sufficient number of seats to be influential and perhaps the largest single opposition to those currently in power. Officials in Belgrade repeatedly tell foreign visitors that they want them to participate, but this may be done only with the expectation that the Albanians will not participate. The Albanians have been encouraged by the international community to participate, arguing that doing so does not constitute abandonment of any of their goals but only their postponement or potential achievement through more incremental means. The Kosovar Albanian leadership, however, seems firm in deciding on another election boycott.

The Albanian-language media is another potential source for finding solutions to Kosovo's problems. Journals like *Zeri* have some difficulties functioning, especially with costs and other difficulties associated with getting printed at an official publishing house, but many of their editors are dedicated journalists who will criticize Kosovar Albanian leaders and attempt to solicit directly the views of Serbian officials. They can test the limits of free speech in that their speech is in the Albanian language of a population Belgrade knows is already against Serbian rule. Such media could become the venue through which some sort of indirect negotiation could take place.

If no solution is found to Kosovo soon, it may become only more difficult to solve. Not only might a new militancy be generating as a response to Serbian repression, but also a new generation of Albanians is growing up without the benefits of the educational system of the late-Tito era that was a showpiece for the promotion of minority rights. Without the education, the skills needed for a well functioning society will gradually vanish. Moreover, young Albanians do not have the benefits of contact with their Serb neighbors and, again unlike their parents, are not even learning to speak Serbian. This not only further isolates them for as long as Kosovo remains part of Serbia; it precludes the mutual understanding that could serve as the basis for future tolerance. Thus, the problem of Kosovo—more than other human rights problems in the region—may be viewed as a tragedy with far wider and damaging consequences than is often assumed.

The Sandzak region seems, in some respects, to be the region where progress was most evident in 1996. The Sandzak did not have a political status as a distinct region with autonomy even when Kosovo and Vojvodina did, and the Muslim, or Bosniac, population did not share with other minorities in Serbia or Montenegro the problem of having another language from that of the majority, usually the source of problems regarding education and media for most minorities in the region.⁽¹⁷⁾ As a result, the Muslims have traditionally been fairly well integrated, almost indistinguishable except for names, dress and other customs (many of which Muslims were abandoning anyway), and, it seemed prior to the 1990s, relatively content. Their elevation in status in the former Yugoslavia is evident with the continued appearance of Tito's portrait in Sandzak Muslim homes. This satisfaction, however, may have made the situation in the Sandzak the most destabilized of all when war came to the region. Sandzak Muslims were not prepared for the nationalism among Serbs and Montenegrins that would lead to clear discrimination against them. Moreover, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, right next door, it was the same two national groups that were fighting, one falling victim to the ethnic cleansing of the other. The deep distrust this brought to Sandzak society was reenforced by the large influx of Bosnian Muslim and Serb refugees in 1992 and 1993. There were also forays by Serb paramilitary from Serb-occupied eastern Bosnia into the Sandzak, officially tolerated if not sanctioned, with kidnappings, beatings, killings and property destruction virtually clearing all of western Sandzak, except for the major towns, of its Muslim population. Even the Yugoslav military harassed local Muslims, especially by tolerating unruly behavior by its soldiers. Things became especially bad in 1993, after the departure of the OSCE Mission, when many of the local leaders of the Party for Democratic Action (SDA)⁽¹⁸⁾ in both Serbian and Montenegrin parts of the Sandzak were taken into custody, tortured and sentenced for subversive activity.

With the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina seemingly concluded, the problems associated with that conflict, especially the paramilitary activity in the Sandzak and new refugee flows, seem to have ended as well. The release of imprisoned SDA leaders further improved the situation there, and, although they clearly find it no more acceptable, the Sandzak Muslims may simply have become more accustomed to the official discrimination against them than they were a few years ago.

In 1996, one of the main problems in the Sandzak appeared to be the care of Bosnian refugees. While the Serbian Red Cross took care of Serbs, the independent aid organization Merhamet was left to take care of the Muslims, and it had been doing so under difficult conditions. With the Dayton Agreement, however, much of the territory from which these people came in eastern Bosnia had been officially accepted as under Serb control, eliminating any hope that might have remained that the ethnic cleansing which led to this situation could be undone. Sandzak Muslims also were concerned about more recent refugees from the Serb militant conquest of the UN-designated safe haven of Srebrenica in July 1995; these refugees were unregistered and apparently kept almost like prisoners by the Serbian authorities. As far as the internally displaced persons are concerned, nothing has been done to return and provide the needed security to those tens of thousands who were forced to flee western regions of the Sandzak in 1992 and 1993. And, indicating the lingering effects of the human rights violations which occurred at that time, a demand for some form of official accounting for those Sandzak Muslims kidnapped by Bosnian Serbs from a bus in 1992 and a train in 1993 seemed popular among more of the population than just the families and friends of the missing. While most conclude that these people, probably taken for use in a prisoner exchange with the Bosnian military, are dead, the incidents clearly left a deep impression.

A new problem, or at least one which is more visible in 1996 than it may have been earlier, is the attempt of the Serbian authorities to milk the Muslim population of its income. The Sandzak's principal city, Novi Pazar ("New Bazaar" in English translation), has a long history as a commercial center, and the authorities have established what the local Muslim leadership call the "financial police," who fine businesses heavily for even the smallest infraction of what are, in some cases, rules and regulations intentionally designed for extortion.

Part of the reason Belgrade has not seen the need for stronger measures in the Sandzak is that the Muslim population may be split politically. While Sandzak Muslims, like many ethnic groups located outside what is the center of their culture, are known for being more militant than their brethren from Bosnia-Herzegovina, they are also known for being divided between seeking autonomy and integration.⁽¹⁹⁾ Indeed, there is some speculation that the neo-communist YUL party which cooperated with the ruling Socialist Party in Belgrade could make some inroads among Tito-nostalgic Sandzak Muslims. Multi-ethnic opposition parties in Montenegro certainly view Sandzak Muslims as potential supporters.

There is also a split within the leading ethnic party, the SDA, allegedly based on different approaches to Belgrade but likely also based on personality differences among the two leaders. The split may have earlier origins, but when the local SDA leaders were first taken into custody in 1993, Sulejman Ugljanin, the leader of the SDA and the larger umbrella organization, the Muslim National Council of Sandzak was essentially put into exile by the placing of charges against him.⁽²⁰⁾ His deputy, Rasim Ljajic, remained in Novi Pazar but by this time had become a critic of Ugljanin. There may be some differences in goals, with Ugljanin unequivocally in support of some form of actual autonomy for the Sandzak and Ljajic open to possible reintegration of Sandzak Muslims on an equal basis as before, as well as means, with Ugljanin allegedly willing to resort to violence if necessary. Ugljanin may have more support among the politically active and Ljajic among the population at large. Both have sought Sarajevo's intervention on their behalf. Both sides, however, recognize that the authorities have sought to use the split to their advantage. While formally recognizing the Ljajic faction as representing the official SDA, Belgrade officials have also held talks with representatives of Ugljanin's faction and may even drop the charges against him so that he can return to Novi Pazar. In any event, as an indication of the degree to which things might have moderated in the Sandzak, both factions anticipate participating in elections later this year after boycotting the elections of 1992.

The Muslim media in the Sandzak is, of course, in a language that anyone in the Serb or Montenegrin population can read, but the coverage is sufficiently Muslim-oriented that it is unlikely to be widely read by many Serbs or Montenegrins. As a small, but concrete, example of how the limits on minority-run media may be easing, a journalist from the journal *Sandzak* told the Commission delegation that a recent edition ran a cover picture of Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, something which was not permitted earlier. Cooperation between Sandzak Muslim activists and leading opposition parties in Serbia and Montenegro appear to be reasonably good.

Vojvodina has generally speaking been less severely repressed than the other two regions. The majority of the population is Serb, and there is really no one minority but a plethora of minorities, including Hungarian, Croat, Slovak, Ukrainian, Ruthenian and Czech. With war and repression to the south, the ranks of the Romani population have increased in Vojvodina in recent years. Adding to the relative quiet in the region is the relative prosperity, Vojvodina being the most agriculturally rich area in all the former

Yugoslavia.⁽²¹⁾ Finally, the population of Vojvodina, and the Hungarians in particular, have had the advantage of proximity to Hungary and, from Hungary, to the West, while the people of Kosovo and especially Sandzak are much more isolated.

The Serb population can actually be divided into three parts. First, there are the Serbs who have been inhabitants of the region since fleeing Ottoman Turk armies centuries ago. With substantial Hapsburg influence, these Serbs are known to be highly tolerant of their non-Serb neighbors and are of a much different character than the Serbs to the south. Following World War II, an increasing number of Serbs migrated from the south. Then, with the recent conflict in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, new waves of Serb refugees swept into Vojvodina. Particularly numerous were those who came in following the collapse of the Serb-occupied Krajina region of Croatia in August 1995.

It was these later arrivals that particularly worsened the situation in Vojvodina, adding over 100,000 refugees. The Serbian authorities clearly did not want these refugees, who, largely because they believed the propaganda fed to them for years with Belgrade's support, were angry at Belgrade for not coming to their defense when attacked by Croatian forces. They were not accorded the internationally recognized legal status—and certainly not the benefits that would come with that status—of refugees, leaving them in a precarious position. Local Red Cross officials, working with somewhat limited international assistance, did the best they could to help the newcomers, who overwhelmed some towns in Vojvodina with their presence. Some were housed in camps, or with families, or in summer farm residences that could be spared temporarily. The facilities were generally acceptable by refugee standards, although there was a reportedly great degree of variation between the types of accommodations.

Several hundred refugees, men of military age, were forcibly returned to Serb-occupied Bosnia and conscripted into military units there, while others were forcibly sent to Eastern Slavonia, the remaining Serb-held region in Croatia, in order to fill the ranks of paramilitary units in the event of another Croatian offensive. Some refugees—between 10,000 and 15,000—were sent south to Kosovo. Despite their small share of the total population there, Kosovar Albanians expressed fear of a new colonization effort, but the Serbs were themselves so unhappy about being forced to migrate to Kosovo that even Kosovar Albanian leaders ultimately expressed sympathy over their situation. Most remained in Vojvodina, and, by April 1986, at least 30,000 had registered with the Helsinki Committee of Serbia as wishing to return to their homes in Croatia. However, Croatia has made it clear that it does not want them back.

In addition to the plight of the refugees, local minority populations in Vojvodina have also suffered. There were reports of Croat families being forced from their homes to make room for arriving Serbs. Names of Croat families were given to the arrivals, or sometimes were just found by scanning local telephone books for Croat-sounding names. In all, over 1,000 Croats, and some Hungarians, left the country, albeit some willingly for Croatia, in about a one-month period from mid-August to mid-September. This particular problem seems solved due to increased police protection.

Combined with the large outmigration of minorities, especially young people and draft-age males in particular, the new arrivals have drastically changed the demographic landscape. It is estimated that the new arrivals of Krajina Serbs alone constitute 10 percent of Vojvodina's population, while that of its largest minority, the Hungarians, is only around 15 percent. For the most part, those that left, many for Hungary or Croatia, have since largely resettled, and, as of April 1996, few had begun to return. The proposed amnesty law for draft evaders was insufficient enticement for those thinking of returning.

The representatives of minority groups in Vojvodina have always distinguished themselves from the Kosovar Albanians and the Sandzak Muslims by participating in the political system. They use their participation to push for greater rights and protection for the minority populations they claim to represent. Among the largest minority group, the Hungarians, there is a split between two groups, the Democratic Community of Hungarians in Vojvodina and the Vojvodina Alliance of Hungarians. Differences, as elsewhere, rest partly on incompatible personalities, but they assert themselves also in approaches to minority problems. While the latter group seems to maintain a more traditional, reasonable approach to the minority situation, the former seems to look for innovative but perhaps riskier approaches, one of which is labeled "personal autonomy," which grants special rights to minority members largely as individuals in select areas. Interestingly, members of non-ethnic opposition parties in Vojvodina oppose such approaches, seeing the problem in Vojvodina not as a minority problem but as a regional problem. Vojvodina previously had autonomy, and the minorities prospered under that autonomy. Seeking autonomy for just one group as opposed to all who live in Vojvodina, it is argued, will not work and may make it worse for everybody. Opposition parties, ethnically based or regional, all seem to have no illusions about the nature of the Serbian regime, but continue to hope to gain power at local levels throughout Vojvodina and at least maintain a satisfactory situation there for the people until better times come.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The situation in Serbia and Montenegro has changed somewhat in 1996, mostly because of the Dayton Agreement. The underlying problems have not, however, disappeared. The prospects for real change in Serbia remain bleak, and, so long as that is the case, the prospects for change in a more dynamic Montenegro seem circumscribed, given Belgrade's continuing dominance over the country.

In the end, nobody with whom the Helsinki Commission staff met—before, during or after its visit to Serbia and Montenegro—believe that Milosevic is willing to surrender or even substantially share political power. He came to power on the basis of nationalism and maintained power through repression and the instigation of conflict directed largely against civilians in neighboring republics of the former Yugoslavia. In so doing, he has been able to eliminate any meaningful opposition to his rule, and, in the end, he is willing to deny basic human rights even to the Serb population he purports to defend. He is, in fact, the only East European communist leader in power in the late 1980s who remains, with his party, in office today. Having taken extreme nationalism to its limits, he has been able to turn on his earlier nationalist minions, now turned rivals, and return to a pseudo-communist approach to governance.

The situation for non-Serbs remains poor especially in Kosovo but in the Sandzak and Vojvodina as well. In Montenegro, things are moderately better. While non-Serbs continue to be the most vulnerable to repression, the gap between the denial of rights to Serbs and non-Serbs may have narrowed somewhat due to the deterioration of the situation for the former, not improvements for the latter. Unfortunately, while the Serb population can also be considered a victim of the regime, albeit in a less violent way than other victims, it has largely fallen for the official propaganda and therefore associates itself with the guilty rather than the innocent.⁽²²⁾ Milosevic undoubtedly remains popular in the country and can be expected to go largely unchallenged in upcoming elections. The only chance for change at present is for Milosevic to make a mistake that will deny him credibility among the Serb population and generate a mood for real change.

By and large, the international community has chosen merely to make the best of this situation, or tried to ignore it, rather than try to change it. The U.S. approach to Milosevic rests on the notion—or hope—that he has such power that he can deliver on important matters if convinced it is in his interest to do so. Absent the international political will to take substantially stronger measures early on, this is the only way a settlement on Bosnia-Herzegovina could have been achieved in Dayton. In addition to Bosnia-Herzegovina, the settlement may produce some results for Kosovo and Eastern Slavonia in Croatia, but it is unlikely to go further than that. Moreover, if Milosevic came to power through undemocratic means, based on his record one can safely assume that he will test the degree to which he will be held accountable, and do everything necessary to maintain power.

The post-Dayton approach of many European states to the Yugoslav federation ranges between the incomprehensible and the reprehensible. The seeming rush to recognize the new federation without condition, and the growing support for lifting the suspension on Yugoslavia in the OSCE and giving that country access to international sources of finance, represent the worst possible approach to what continues to be a source of instability for the continent. Representatives of some European countries have responded by claiming their forthcomingness enables them to better monitor and influence the situation, but there is very little evidence yet to support such a position.

On the other hand, the continuation of what is often called "Serb-bashing" is more ill-advised than ever. It has become popular to characterize what has happened as unique to the Serbs, who have always been the villain of the Balkans, and it is clear that Serbs are sensitive to this. It is a mistake to deny the victimization of Serbs in the past or to ignore their legitimate, present-day complaints. Misrepresentation of the Serbs not only feeds official propaganda of an international conspiracy against them, it also blinds countries to future menaces that may be developing elsewhere.

Based on these conclusions, the Helsinki Commission staff supports the following policy options:

SANCTIONS: Based on Belgrade's unwillingness to cooperate fully with the Hague tribunal prosecuting war crimes and other shortcomings in implementing the Dayton Agreement, the international community should be prepared not only to maintain the outer wall of sanctions but also to reimpose some previous sanctions. It is clear that Belgrade wants access to international financial assistance for its ailing economy, and the lifting of remaining sanctions can usefully be tied to some significant demonstration of a greater willingness to respect human rights and democratization. Permitting a country-wide, independent television station would be one such step which almost all opposition leaders, Serb and non-Serb, strongly advocate. Other measures could include the return of passports to those Kosovar Albanians who have had them confiscated, the removal of measures discriminating financially against Muslim businesses in the Sandzak and the return of all refugees, but particularly those from Krajina. With elections approaching in November, a transparent electoral process and a free and fair campaign should be encouraged and monitored by foreign observers. These measures are reasonable and can be done quickly if there is sufficient pressure to do so. Insisting on a wide array of additional measures, on the other hand, not only goes beyond what other countries have been called upon to do or are doing now,⁽²³⁾ but also discourages an already hesitant regime from even taking lesser measures. While sympathy must be expressed for the negative effects of sanctions on Montenegro, the current Montenegrin leadership must demonstrate that it genuinely seeks democratic change and will not serve as a conduit for aid to Serbia.

OSCE MISSION: Agreement to the return of the OSCE Mission is an absolute precondition for Belgrade's full participation in the Organization. It became clear to the Helsinki Commission staff delegation, however, that the previous Mission's limited focus on the three ethnically mixed regions of the new Yugoslav federation is no longer as necessary given the end of fighting next door, and does not meet the larger issue of democratic development and respect for human rights throughout the country. The previous focus on Kosovo remains absolutely necessary but is not as critical for the Sandzak and very limited for Vojvodina. A new Mission, therefore, should have a mandate to cover situations throughout the country and a sufficiently broad mandate to focus on problems unique to a particular area. Perhaps this sort of reconfiguration of a Mission could provide a way out of the current impasse between Belgrade and OSCE States.

DEMOCRATIZATION: The prospects for democratic change are obviously bleak, but a failure at least to try to begin a process of change could lead to a situation that could again be violent. The international community, probably best through the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, should therefore consider a program for democratization to be made available to Serbia and to Montenegro, either together as a federation or individually as republics.⁽²⁴⁾ Such a program should seek to include an educational effort regarding the recent conflict in the former Yugoslavia and its causes.

SELF-DETERMINATION: It is clear that many attributes of self-determination are frequently and arbitrarily denied as a collective right to peoples in Serbia and Montenegro, and, at the same time often exploited by these peoples to justify their most extreme goals and aspirations. It is unfortunate that, with the Equal Rights and Self-Determination of Peoples being one of the ten Principles Guiding Relations Between States in the Helsinki Final Act, that little attempt was made to define the parameters of this principle before it became entangled in ethnic tensions and violence in many parts of the OSCE region. While it is too late in some cases, some agreement on this principle is still needed for dealing with difficult issues such as Kosovo's future, as well as the aspirations and concerns of the Sandzak Muslims and the threatened minorities in Vojvodina.

Endnotes

1. For this report, "Muslim" and "Bosniac" are considered to refer to persons of the same ethnic group, and are different from "Bosnians" who are citizens or residents of Bosnia-Herzegovina regardless of their ethnic background. "Muslim" is an ethnic designation officially created by the Yugoslav regime of Josip Broz Tito in 1968 for those South Slavic peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Sandzak of Islamic faith or cultural background. Many now prefer the designation "Bosniac," which was not acceptable previously in communist Yugoslavia, and it is being more frequently used. To complicate matters, in the former Yugoslav state, a large number of people—mostly Albanians, Turks and some Macedonians—were also of the Islamic faith or cultural background, but were considered "Muslim" only in the more accurate religious sense as opposed to the rather artificial ethnic sense.

2. Actually, the term "sandzak" (also spelled sandjak and sanjak) applies to a unit of the Ottoman Empire, of which the Sandzak of Novi Pazar was only one of many. With a special status accorded this particular sandzak by the 1878 Congress of Berlin, however, it became known as "the" sandzak. Unlike Kosovo and Vojvodina, however, it never achieved any official political status in any other Yugoslav states which existed since 1918, although in the immediate post-World War II period there was some expectation by the Muslims in the region that the new communist regime would grant it such status.

3. In 1934, Alexander was assassinated in Marseille, France, by Croat and Macedonian extremists.

4. The other parts of the country, including Serbia, were divided into *banovinas*, regions largely named after the principal rivers running through them.

5. "Bratsvo I Jedinstvo" have even found their way into English-language conversations about the Yugoslav conflict and its causes.

6. Montenegro's role is best described as supporting that of Serbia, albeit sometimes with reluctance, which was largely nominal except in the casting of votes in the Yugoslav presidency and being a staging area for attacks on neighboring regions of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

7. In "pulling out," the Army essentially transferred weaponry and some personnel to the Bosnian Serb militant forces.

8. More widely known by his paramilitary name, "Arkan."

9. The Contact group consisted of the United States, Russia, Germany, the United Kingdom and France.

10. In May 1992, most ambassadors in Belgrade were recalled as a protest against Belgrade's role in starting the Bosnian conflict several weeks earlier.

11. Draskovic was detained during the course of these demonstrations. In 1993, his activism also led to a severe beating, which left him hospitalized and prompted a major international outcry.

12. Less than one-fifth the size of the rally and demonstrations they were commemorating.

13. See Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia* (first edition, 1992), pp. 130-133.

14. When the missions were created, the current OSCE was then still the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the CSCE). The name was changed on January 1, 1995.

15. One other outstanding issue remains: whether the new Yugoslavia would be considered the successor of the old and the suspension simply lifted, or whether the new Yugoslavia would have to share the successor status and apply, like all the other former Yugoslav republics, as a new member.

16. Earlier in the 1990s, "buzzing," or the passing of very low-flying fighter military aircraft, was not uncommon for Pristina and other towns and cities in Kosovo, but it has become rare at least since 1993.

17. In the former Yugoslavia, Serbs, Croats, Muslim Slavs and Montenegrins all spoke what was considered a common language—Serbo-Croatian. Only Slovenes and Macedonians of the South Slavic groups considered "nations" in Yugoslavia had another language for the mother tongue. There are definite dialects in Serbo-Croatian, varying more according to region than nationality, with only the personal but far from universal preference for the Cyrillic script among Serbs and Montenegrins instead of the Latin script traditional to Croats and Muslims. With Yugoslavia's demise, however, separate Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian languages have been generally acknowledged that are nevertheless mutually intelligible.

18. The SDA in the Sandzak is an affiliate of the Muslim party of the same name and in power in neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina.

19. Some Bosnian leaders, in fact, have Sandzak roots. Other examples of the phenomenon of being generally more militant but also divided in the former Yugoslavia include Montenegrins (at least as far as their relationship with Serbia), and Bosnian Croats (western Herzegovinians especially being known for their nationalism). Kosovar Albanians, constituting such a majority of their region, do not fit this picture, although the Albanians in Macedonia may.

20. Ugljanin was in Turkey at the time, and was actually spending much of his time there before he was charged.

21. Vojvodinians will also claim their previous industrial greatness as well, until Tito moved much of it to the more protected hinterlands, especially Bosnia-Herzegovina, following his split with Stalin in 1948.

22. One anecdote shows the complexity of this problem. In the 1992 elections, one local representative of an opposition party complained profusely to Helsinki Commission staff about the degree to which the official broadcast media was biased against the opposition, going as far as to call much of the reporting blatant lies. When the conversation inevitably turned to the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, this same person, who himself had a satellite dish and could understand the foreign broadcasts he was receiving, chose to believe official Serbian media accounts of what was happening instead of the "biased" foreign news. While limiting information is clearly part of the way Milosevic has retained power, there are underlying conditions in the way the Serbs view themselves and their neighbors that directs them toward one view even when alternatives are present.

23. For example, television and radio are not only state-run but also very biased for the party in power and against the opposition in countries such as Croatia and Albania, two of Serbia's greatest critics.

24. Serbia, at present, is unlikely to accept such a program, but Montenegro may be willing to cooperate.