

**The U.S. Helsinki Commission Delegation
to Hungary, Greece, Macedonia and Croatia
(Codel Deconcini)
November 11-17, 1992**



1993

**A Report Prepared by the Staff of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

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.

**THE U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION DELEGATION TO HUNGARY, GREECE,
MACEDONIA AND CROATIA (CODEL DeCONCINI)
November 11-17, 1992**

PARTICIPANTS

Senator Dennis DeConcini (D-Arizona), Commission Co-Chairman
Representative Frank McCloskey (D-Indiana)
Samuel G. Wise, Commission Staff Director
Jane Fisher, Commission Deputy Staff Director
Robert Hand, Commission Staff
Vinca Showalter, Commission Staff
Richard Johnson, Staff of Representative McCloskey
Lieutenant Colonel Nicki Watts, U.S. Air Force Escort
Major Greg Feest, U.S. Air Force Escort

INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki or CSCE Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 by Public Law 94-304 with a mandate to monitor and encourage compliance with the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which was signed in Helsinki, Finland, on August 1, 1975 by the leaders of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada.

The Helsinki Final Act and subsequent CSCE documents encompass nearly every aspect of relations between States, including military-security; economic, scientific and environmental cooperation; cultural and educational exchanges; and human rights and other humanitarian concerns. In addition to setting standards for international behavior, the Final Act initiated a diplomatic process that has continued to the present. Periodic review meetings are held -- Belgrade (1977-78), Madrid (1980-83), Vienna (1986-89) and Helsinki (1992) - - with short experts meetings, seminars and longer conferences on specific issues in between. The goal has been to lower the barriers which had artificially divided Europe for more than four decades, and to build confidence and security between the participating States. With the Cold War over, however, the CSCE taken on new tasks in addressing the instabilities of a Europe and Central Asia troubled with inter-ethnic strife as well as difficulties for emerging democracies in their political and economic reform efforts. The CSCE has also added many new members, including Albania, the Baltic States, the republics of the former Soviet Union, and three of the former Yugoslav republics.

The Commission consists of nine members of 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 Chairman and Co-Chairman are shared by the House and Senate and rotate every 2 years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff of approximately 15 persons assists the Commissioners in their work.

The Commission carries out its mandate in a variety of ways. First, it gathers and disseminates information on Helsinki-related topics both to the U.S. Congress and the public. It frequently holds public hearings with expert witnesses focusing on these topics. Similarly, the Commission issues reports on the implementation of CSCE commitments, particularly by the countries of East-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union but also

by the United States. It also issues reports on specific CSCE meetings. The Commission plays a unique role in assisting in the planning and execution of U.S. policy at CSCE meetings, including through participation as full members of the U.S. delegations to these meetings. Finally, members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials and private individuals from CSCE participating States. These contacts are maintained in Washington but also take the form of Commission delegations, usually with the participation of other Members of Congress, to other countries, such as the November 1992 Commission delegation to Hungary, Greece, Macedonia and Croatia.

HUNGARY

November 12-13, 1992

OBJECTIVES

Budapest, Hungary, was the first stop of the Helsinki Commission delegation led by Commission Co-Chairman Senator Dennis DeConcini to Hungary, Greece, Macedonia, and Croatia.

While in Hungary, the delegation planned to discuss a variety of domestic, bilateral, and regional issues with President Arpad Goncz, Prime Minister Jozsef Antall, and other high-level Hungarian officials. Chief among them were questions regarding the ongoing crisis in the former Yugoslavia; the delegation hoped to gain perspective on the regional ramifications of the crisis, and to learn more about Hungary's needs, concerns, and recommendations. Also critical was discussion of the specter of anti-Semitism and intolerance in Hungary, as manifested by the outspoken Vice President of the ruling Hungarian Democratic Forum Istvan Csurka; the delegation wished to express its strong condemnation of Csurka's divisive and exclusivist version of nationalism. Hungary's relations with the soon-to-be-independent Slovakia were also on the agenda, as well as the ongoing controversy over the Gabcikovo-Nagymoros Dam.

Co-Chairman DeConcini also planned to participate in a seminar on the government's role in developing high technology industry, including distance education, co-sponsored by the University of Phoenix and the Szamalk Center in Budapest.

THE CONTEXT OF THE VISIT

The Commission delegation came to Budapest at a time of fear and crisis in the region and of faltering political consensus in Hungary. While Hungary has earned its reputation as a model of stability in a turbulent region, the past year has revealed strains and divisions in Prime Minister Jozsef Antall's government as it makes its way toward the general elections of 1994. The nightmarish devastation in Yugoslavia and the burgeoning numbers of refugees it has created has remained a source of anxiety, challenge, and concern, heightened by manifestations of anti-foreigner intolerance in Hungary as well as Germany and other parts of Western Europe. And economic restructuring, with its attendant inflation and unemployment, has been trying the patience of the population.

The strains in the Antall government have appeared in several guises. In February 1992, the Independent Smallholders' Party, protesting its lack of influence in the government, voted to withdraw from Prime Minister Antall's governing coalition. Though some Smallholder members and deputies decided to remain, the crisis

weakened the coalition's majority in parliament. Antall's relationship with President Arpad Goncz had also been tested over the past year, with a debate over the leadership of Hungarian Radio and Television serving as the lightning-rod for deeper disagreements.

In August 1992, a lengthy article written by Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) vice president and parliamentarian Istvan Csurka caused a major political uproar, not only in Hungary but also abroad. In his scathing analysis, printed in the MDF party newspaper, Csurka reviewed recent developments in Hungary, castigating Antall and his affiliates for weakness and railing against the opposition, liberals, Jews, and Western institutions like the International Monetary Fund for humiliating the country. The Csurka article prompted U.S. Congressman Tom Lantos to lead a special order denouncing the manifesto on the floor of the House of Representatives on September 23, 1992. Helsinki Commission Chairman Steny Hoyer was among the members who took part in this special order. Ostensibly to buy time to regroup, the MDF postponed its party congress from November 1992 until January 1993.

Hungary has avoided the blatant and repeated violence against foreigners that has darkened Germany's horizon, but the country has not been spared from anti-Semitic and anti-minority/foreigner appeals, as well as skinhead violence against dark-skinned individuals and Roma (Gypsies). In the months before the delegation's visit, numerous moderate Hungarians and observers noted that in this regard, Csurka's manifesto -- presented as a mainstream policy paper by a prominent politician -- was especially dangerous. Their fears were bolstered when, on October 23, a hostile crowd consisting mostly of skinheads prevented President Arpad Goncz from delivering an address commemorating the 36th anniversary of the 1956 revolution. Some opposition representatives blamed the government and coalition parties for the incident -- an accusation that was hotly denied.

Hungary's national security interests are threatened by violence and instability in neighboring countries, and its foreign policy is inextricably linked to the fate of the some 3.5 million Hungarians living in Romania, Slovakia, and Serbia. The Commission delegation came to Hungary aware that the conflict in the former Yugoslavia had more than once threatened to spill over into Hungary, and that Hungary has accepted at least 60,000 war refugees over the past year. One potential crisis spot in the ongoing war is the province of Vojvodina, home to some 400,000 ethnic Hungarians. On October 9, a CSCE Mission of long-duration began its on-site effort in Vojvodina to monitor developments and defuse potential conflicts. CSCE-mandated teams were also sent to the Hungarian-Serbian border to help the Hungarian authorities monitor compliance with the UN sanctions.

Concerns regarding the fate of ethnic Hungarians are also vital to the south, with regard to the 2 million ethnic Hungarians in Romania, and to the north, where the imminent emergence of an independent Slovakia has underscored concerns about the rights of minorities residing there. The long-festering dispute over the Gabčíkovo-Nagymoros hydroelectric dam has further strained the Hungarian-Slovak dialogue, threatening the relations those countries will have once Czechoslovakia has formally split. The multi-billion dollar project is the legacy of a 1977 treaty between the former (Communist) governments of Czechoslovakia and Hungary to build a common hydro-electric project on the Danube. Hungary unilaterally pulled out in 1989 after environmentalists said the project would endanger drinking water for millions and cause irreparable damage to the ecological system along the river banks. Czechoslovakia, however, pressed on with the project on its side. The conflict came to a head in October 1992 when Slovakia, anxious not only to capitalize on its investment but in particular to assure a source of independent power, began diverting the waters into a 16-mile long canal ending in the dam in Gabčíkovo.

Hungary bitterly attacked Czechoslovakia for wreaking environmental havoc and for changing international borders; Czechoslovakia accused the Hungarians of renegeing on the treaty without providing any compensation for the \$1.5 billion already invested in the project. European Community-sponsored negotiation talks broke down on the first day (October 21); the European Commission later ordered that work should go on to avert the risk of flooding, but that it had to stop by November 21. Hungary, meanwhile, sought to internationalize the conflict in other fora as well, including launching the CSCE emergency meeting mechanism on October 23.

Like other countries in the region, Hungary faces severe economic difficulties including the highest per capita foreign debt burden in Eastern Europe (\$20 billion total). Unemployment has been on the rise; by the end of August 1992, it had reached 11%. At the time of the Commission delegation's visit, government economic forecasts predicted an inflation rate of 17-18% for 1993. Even so, a general social and political consensus exists on the need for economic reform in Hungary. Yet some analysts fear that ongoing instability in the region may be reflected by a growing support for conservative forces in Hungary.

THE VISIT

On the morning of November 12, the delegation was met at the airport by U.S. Ambassador to Hungary Charles Thomas. Ambassador Thomas briefed the delegation on the current situation in Hungary, responding to questions on the state of the economy, the rise of nationalism and the influence of Istvan Csurka within the Hungarian Democratic Forum, expectations for the upcoming MDF party congress, Hungary's relations with neighboring countries, and the Gabčíkovo-Nagymoros Dam.

Prior to the first official meeting, Co-Chairman DeConcini was interviewed by local journalists, including a representative from the Hungarian press agency MTI. He shared his concerns about rising nationalism in the region, and responded to questions regarding the likely ramifications of a Democratic administration on U.S. foreign policy.

The delegation then traveled to the Hungarian Parliament Building for official visits. Accompanied by Ambassador Thomas, the delegation first met with President Arpad Goncz. The discussion largely focused on the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, with particular emphasis on the fate of ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina. On the subject of the former Yugoslavia, members of the delegation also asked about war crimes evidence, the effectiveness of sanctions, options for enhanced CSCE involvement, and recommendations for U.S. action. The delegation also discussed support for Istvan Csurka and extreme nationalism in Hungary, as well as Hungary's bilateral relations with Russia (President Boris Yeltsin had visited Budapest the day before) and the United States. The delegation also met briefly with Gyula Kodolanyi, advisor to Prime Minister Antall, and heard a summary of the agreement Hungary had just concluded with Russia.

Delegation leader DeConcini as well as Representative McCloskey and Helsinki Commission Staff Director Samuel G. Wise next attended a meeting with Prime Minister Antall and other Cabinet members, including Foreign Minister Geza Jeszenszky. Again, discussion centered on the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, as well as the prospects for an eruption of violence in Kosovo or Macedonia.

Co-Chairman DeConcini then departed to give an address at a seminar on the government's role in developing high technology industry, including distance education, co-sponsored by the University of Phoenix and the Budapest Szamalk Center. Representative McCloskey and others traveled to the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities to discuss minority issues with office directors Janos Bathory and Istvan Zalatnay, focusing both on minority groups within Hungary's borders and on ethnic Hungarians abroad.

OBSERVATIONS

As one Hungarian official noted, the problems of the transition period in post-communist East-Central Europe revolve around two issues: nationalism and minorities. Nationalism, the Hungarian official explained, has come to serve as a lightning rod for anti-democratic forces in the region. Yet the notion that the state must serve all its citizens equally is not fully accepted, and minorities are too often still regarded with suspicion. The Commission delegation's visit to Hungary, en route to Macedonia and Croatia, brought these two critical issues into relief.

Hungary, with over 3 million ethnic Hungarians in neighboring countries, has long promoted the position within the CSCE that national minority issues are part and parcel of security in Europe. During the delegation's visit, with the brutal saga of "ethnic cleansing" raging next door, many Hungarians pressed the urgency of finding a means to protect national minorities in Europe. At the same time, the exclusivist and anti-Semitic manifesto published by a vice president of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, and the violent, if isolated, assaults against minorities by Hungarian skinheads, served as a pointed reminder that Hungary too was susceptible to extreme nationalist, anti-minority appeals.

In keeping with the overall objectives for the trip, most of the delegation's discussions focused on the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Hungarian officials expressed repeated concern over the situation in Vojvodina, home to some 400,000 ethnic Hungarians. With 300,000 Serb refugees resettled in the area, tension in Vojvodina was seen to be mounting. While no evidence of systematic atrocities had emerged, a pattern of discrimination was clear, as numerous ethnic Hungarians had been conscripted against their will and sent to the most difficult areas of the conflict. Many ethnic Hungarians were reportedly living in fear of ethnic cleansing or violence.

The Hungarian officials believed that the West had acted too little and too late in dealing with the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. At this point, the situation had spiralled out of control, with Serb irregulars responsible for much of the violence. Sanctions were viewed with some ambivalence; one official thought they should be tighter, while another remarked that the Army had all the fuel and artillery it needed, while civilians were going cold and hungry. There was some sense that a decision had to be made on whether or not force was an option, because, as one official noted, empty threats were worse than nothing. Yet military pressure needed to be applied carefully, as a land war would be risky for the West. The United States was urged to take a larger, more leading, more imaginative role, and to be explicit in letting the Serbs know the consequences of continued aggression. Regardless, in contemplating solutions to the conflict, the U.S. was urged not to accept the new status quo in the former Yugoslavia, as this would set a disastrous precedent for future conflicts. On the question of Macedonia, one official remarked that recognition was "unavoidable" and that withholding it much longer risked the spread of war.

Regarding the impact of nationalism in Hungary, the delegation was told that statistically only 5 percent of the population supported extreme nationalism, and that Istvan Csurka ranked near the bottom of national popularity rankings. At the same time, the detrimental ramifications of Csurka's rhetoric were acknowledged. As one Hungarian commented, "He says these things to be heard, and the world listens." The prominence of Csurka's

position within the ruling party was felt to be especially damaging. With regard to those groups felt to be the targets of Csurka's manifesto, one official described the situation of Roma (Gypsies) in Hungary as "desperate." Indeed, the week of the Commission delegation's visit, a Rom (Gypsy) was murdered by two young Hungarians, one of whom was a military cadet.

The timing of the Commission delegation's visit -- one day after a visit from the Russian president, and one week after the election of a new U.S. president -- understandably prompted an exchange of views on Hungary's bilateral relations with those two countries. Significant emphasis was placed on the continued importance of a strong U.S. presence in Europe, politically, militarily, and financially. At the same time, the U.S. was advised to support President Yeltsin, and to help him withstand pressure from conservative political forces. The prospect of a destabilized, volatile former Soviet Union is evidently a horrifying prospect for Hungary, particularly given that relations with its neighbors to the north, south, and west remain tense. Hungarian officials lobbied the delegation for a sustained U.S. commitment to East-Central Europe, noting that Hungarians were proud of the progress they had made so far, but that they still needed to work on the "unwritten rules" of democracy -- educational reform, building civil society, creating an independent, professional media -- and that the U.S. had an important role to play. "I must say," one official confided, "we expect you to do that."

MACEDONIA⁽¹⁾ *November 13-15, 1992*

OBJECTIVES

The Commission delegation travelled to Macedonia to meet with government leaders and private citizens, including representatives of ethnic communities, with the goal of discussing questions related to Macedonia's recognition by the international community, and to observe the economic, political and social impact of the denial of that recognition to date. The delegation also wanted to examine the possibilities for violence and conflict in Macedonia due to the ongoing conflict in nearby Bosnia-Herzegovina and repression in neighboring Kosovo, and to hear Macedonian insights on this conflict and repression. Related to all the above, and central to the Commission delegation's concerns, was the degree of democratic development in Macedonia, especially in regard to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The delegation travelled to Macedonia via Thessaloniki, Greece. Taking advantage of this transit, a further objective of the delegation was to hear the views of Greek officials on issues related to Macedonia, and the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia in general.

Finally, the Commission delegation wished to visit refugees from the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina to gain information on the circumstances leading to their presence in Macedonia, as well as to observe the quality of their treatment as refugees in that country.

THE CONTEXT OF THE VISIT

The Republic of Macedonia is about the size of the state of Maryland with a population of just over 2 million, the majority of which consider themselves ethnic Macedonians, 25-40 percent ethnic Albanians, 5 percent Turks, and 2 percent Muslims, Gypsies and Serbs respectively. While Macedonians are primarily

Eastern Orthodox, most of the remaining population is of the Islamic faith. The republic is located in the center of the Balkan peninsula and was the southernmost part of the former Yugoslav federation, with borders with Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Kosovo and Serbia proper. Its capital is Skopje.

The situation in Macedonia at the time of the visit cannot be de-linked from the larger picture of the violently disintegrating Yugoslav federation of which it was a constituent part. The wave of reform which swept communist Central and East Europe in 1989 and 1990 enveloped Yugoslavia one decade after the passing of Josip Broz Tito, and of subsequently increasing economic and political differentiation between the six constituent republics and two autonomous provinces which comprised the former federation. This differentiation not only created contrasting goals among these constituent parts but fueled tension between the peoples of Yugoslavia, as the uncontrolled freedom with which self-determination could be exercised, differing degrees of political and economic development, and the memories of past strife made their goals virtually irreconcilable.

Following Slovenia and Croatia -- the two northernmost, politically liberal and western-oriented republics -- in April 1990, Macedonia held its own multi-party elections in November 1990 (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro followed within the month thereafter). A still strong though reformed and renamed communist party, strong ethnic Albanian support for their own party, and growing support for a nationalist bloc of parties led by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization ("VMRO" in Macedonian, a successor to a 19th century nationalist group that engaged in terrorist activities) led to a political deadlock in the republic. While VMRO garnered the most parliamentary seats, the former communists, along with some moderate parties and the ethnic Albanian party were able to keep control of government. Kiro Gligorov, a prominent communist during much of the Tito era, was chosen as the republic's President, while Nikola Kljusev was chosen to be Prime Minister.

Despite the varying degree to which they were free and fair, the fact that each of the Yugoslav republics held multi-party elections by the end of 1990 provided a basic mandate for their political leaders to begin serious discussions in early 1991 on reshaping the federation. Even then, there were clear signs that the country would not stay together at all, and that it would, in fact, descend into civil war. This became reality as Slovenia's and Croatia's departure from the federation in late 1991 prompted the Yugoslav military, along with militant Serbs in Croatia, to use force to achieve their own political goals. Macedonia, like Bosnia-Herzegovina, did not want to see this breakup of a genuine Yugoslav federation, only under which they ever existed as distinct entities. Indeed, just prior to the fighting, they had jointly proposed a new basis for such a federation. At the same time, as break-up became evident they did not want to remain in a rump Yugoslavia either, without Croatia and Slovenia to counter Serbian domination. Macedonia opted for its own independence, supported by a popular referendum in September 1991. In December, it applied for recognition by the European Community, and the EC Arbitration Commission declared that the republic met the EC criteria for recognition, including those related to human rights (only Slovenia also received a passing grade; Croatia was pushed through by the Germans with additional human rights guarantees, and Bosnia-Herzegovina was required first to hold its own referendum). Macedonia also took additional constitutional steps in an attempt to convince its neighbors, Greece in particular, that it had no territorial ambitions.

Still, Greece blocked Macedonia's recognition as well as membership in international organizations, including the United Nations and the CSCE, until the republic changes its name, citing the Greek origin of that name, claiming that its use implied territorial ambitions, and stressing the communist creation of "Macedonian" as a nationality. Greece also complained that the constitutional amendments made by Macedonia were insufficient, and cited what it called "propaganda" emanating from Skopje which allegedly reinterpreted history to the detriment of Macedonia's place in Greek history and heritage. Bulgaria, where some call themselves Macedonians

and not Bulgarians, has recognized the Macedonian state but not the nationality. Russia, Turkey and a handful of other countries have recognized Macedonia as well. Neighboring Albania has withheld recognition out of concern about the ethnic Albanian population residing in Macedonia. The Yugoslav military left Macedonia, and the Prime Minister of the self-proclaimed new Yugoslav federation, Milan Panic, sought to recognize Macedonia's independence, although nationalists in Belgrade subsequently blocked such a step. The United States is sympathetic but continues to follow the European lead, which continues to be held up by Greece.

The hold on Macedonia's recognition reflects a continuation of the "Macedonian question" which warfare and uprisings throughout this century have been unable to answer. Historically, Macedonia has been a region of the south-central Balkan peninsula of which the former Yugoslav republic is only one of three parts. The other two are the region of Greece that includes the port city of Thessaloniki, often called "Aegean Macedonia," and the southwestern portion of Bulgaria, commonly called "Pirin Macedonia" after the mountains in the region. Some refer to the region consisting of the former Yugoslav republic as "Vardar Macedonia," after the river which originates in and runs through it. Since the time of Macedonia's most ancient well-known native, Philip II, and his son, Alexander the Great, Macedonia has played an important role in the spread of Greek heritage and the development of Greek national identity through the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. To Greeks, therefore, Macedonians are ethnic Greeks, not Slavs. An early medieval Bulgarian kingdom and a later Serbian kingdom which covered the territory of much of the present-day Republic of Macedonia, in turn, developed the national identity of these two Slavic groups, and are the basis for Bulgarian claims that contemporary Macedonians are really western Bulgarians and less pronounced but still evident counter-claims that they are "South Serbs."

During centuries of Ottoman Turk domination, distinct Macedonian national sentiments eventually developed, and, in 1903, the so-called Illinden uprising led to the establishment of an independent Macedonian state -- the Krushevo Republic -- for 11 days, which was then brutally crushed by the Ottoman authorities. From that time until the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991, Macedonians would be denied their own state. As Ottoman control waned, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria liberated Macedonia from the Turks in the first Balkan War in 1912, only to divide the region among themselves. Bulgarian dissatisfaction over its share led it to attack the others one month after the conclusion of the first war in 1913, but, as Romania and the Ottomans subsequently used the second war to attack Bulgaria, the latter achieved no territorial gains. Soon thereafter, tensions between Serbia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire set off the first World War, after which the south Slavic groups were united in a new Yugoslav state, the southernmost part of which were the Serbian-held territories of Macedonia. During World War II, this region was divided by Albania and Bulgaria, only to be reunited with the other parts of Yugoslavia liberated by the communist partisans under Tito.

Tito recognized the Macedonian nationality and made Macedonia one of six constituent Yugoslav republics in 1946. While his motivation may have been, in part, to correct historical wrongs, it also served his "divide-and-conquer" communist mentality which balanced the various nationalities in the multi-ethnic state. In his early years in power, it was also one step toward the possible creation of a Balkan federation under his control, which would include neighboring regions of Greece, where communist guerrillas were receiving Yugoslav support. It was the communist-inspired revolt Greece in 1947 which developed from the potential communist takeover that prompted the Truman Doctrine of containment that became the central Cold War policy of the United States. Soon thereafter, differences between Tito and Stalin led to Yugoslavia's abandonment of these expansionist policies, but they nevertheless left bitter memories in Greece which remain to the present day.

Regardless of the contrasting historical claims, the current reality has been that non-recognition has been politically destabilizing for Macedonia, encouraging nationalist elements to attack the moderates in power, and, on the opposite side of Macedonia's ethno-political spectrum, separatist tendencies within the Albanian population. It has also led to the economic isolation of the republic, devastated by the breakup of the Yugoslav economy on which it was so dependent, the application of sanctions on Serbia (which it observes despite the denial of UN membership) which Greece uses to place its own economic blockade on Macedonia, and difficulties in obtaining international assistance for the tens of thousands of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina currently within its borders.

Soon after the EC insisted on a name-change before it would recognize Macedonia at its Lisbon summit in June 1992, the Kljusev government collapsed. An alliance between Macedonian moderates and Albanians kept VMRO from taking control, and a young Social Democrat, Branko Crvenkovski, became the new Prime Minister. Still, VMRO has serious clout, and its anti-Albanian stance continues to cause concern about ethnic strife. Moreover, the cross-border shooting of Macedonian Albanians by Yugoslav border guards in Kosovo in early October, and clashes between Macedonian police and ethnic Albanian protesters in Skopje one month later that left four dead and over 30 injured, have heightened tensions in Macedonia. These tensions have taken on an increased international concern in light of the possibility of fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina spreading to the Sandjak region of Serbia, into Kosovo, and then into Macedonia itself, where Albania, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey could be drawn into the conflict. As a result, the CSCE established a Monitor Mission in Macedonia,⁽²⁾ which has, as its central purpose, "to contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to help ensure against a spillover of the kind of warfare that has so tragically ravaged other areas of the former state of Yugoslavia." The United Kingdom, as President of the EC for the latter half of 1992, selected Robin O'Neil to seek a mutually agreeable solution to the dispute and to report to British Prime Minister John Major before the Edinburgh summit in December 1992.

THE VISIT

From Budapest, the delegation first arrived in Thessaloniki, Greece, the morning of Friday, November 13. At the airport, the delegation met with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Greece, Virginia Tsouderou, who presented and explained Greek views on recognition of the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, as well as Greek thoughts on the larger questions of the international response to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

The delegation then travelled from Thessaloniki to Skopje, first switching vehicles at the border. Upon its arrival in Skopje, the delegation was briefed by Robert Rackmales, the Charge d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade, as well as by Robert Frowick, a U.S. Ambassador who heads the CSCE Monitor Mission. During this meeting, U.S. policy toward Macedonia was explained, as well as the experiences to date of the CSCE Mission, particularly in regard to the border shooting incidents one month before and the riots in Skopje one week before the delegation's visit. The delegation then met with Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov, which was followed by a meeting with Stojan Andov, President of the Macedonian Assembly, and approximately 12 other Members of the Assembly. The evening ended with a dinner hosted by President Gligorov, at which Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski, Foreign Minister Denko Maleski and other senior Macedonian officials were present. During the course of the meetings with Macedonian officials, issues related to international recognition, as well as domestic developments, were discussed.

The next day, the first snowfall of the winter forced the Commission delegation to cancel its planned travel to neighboring Kosovo, where it intended to meet with local Serbian officials, leaders of the Albanian community and federal ministers for Justice, Human Rights and Education from Belgrade. It also had to cancel a planned visit to Tetovo in western Macedonia, where it was scheduled to meet with the head of the Party of Democratic Prosperity, the primary voice of Macedonia's ethnic Albanian population. Nevertheless, before its departure the delegation did visit a camp for refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina at Chichino Selo, outside Skopje, where it talked to the refugees about what happened in their homeland and their current situation as refugees in Macedonia. It also met with the Vice President and Secretary of the Party of Democratic Prosperity, Sami Ibrahim and Mithad Emini. By mid-day, the delegation began its return trip to Thessaloniki, where, upon arrival, Co-Chairman DeConcini telephoned Deputy Foreign Minister Tsouderou to inform her of the conclusions of the visit. After spending the night in Thessaloniki, the delegation flew to its next destination -- Zagreb, Croatia -- the morning of Sunday, November 15.

OBSERVATIONS

The primary observation of the Commission delegation was the extreme economic hardship the breakup of Yugoslavia, international isolation and an in-flow of refugees has brought to Macedonia. Many factories, including the country's only oil refinery, are closed down, unemployment runs at about one-quarter of the total work force, and inflation is well into the double digits for monthly, let alone annual, rates. According to Macedonian officials, more than half of Macedonia's commercial links outside the republic were with Serbian enterprises, and the severing of those links have severely disrupted a newly independent Macedonian economy with its own currency and undergoing a process of economic reform. The fact that the United Nations placed sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro -- which together comprise a new, self-proclaimed Yugoslav federation -- and Serbian counter-measures, made the break a rapid one, rather than a gradual easing into a new situation. International assistance from such bodies as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund are unavailable as long as the republic remains largely unrecognized by the world.

By far, the closest and most accessible port for landlocked Macedonia is Thessaloniki. As President Gligorov stated, with the north cut off Macedonian commerce must look south. However, the Greek blockade has forced Macedonia to resort to obtaining oil for fuel through Bulgaria, which must be done by truck (there are no direct rail links with Bulgaria) over much longer distances from Black Sea ports. The fuel shortage has led to long lines of empty cars leading up to closed gas stations and the heating of homes for only a few hours per day. Even the vehicles used for the delegation ran on fuel that had to be obtained on the burgeoning black market. Food supplies and other necessities did not seem to be in as severe a situation -- in part due to some outside assistance -- but witnessing the first snowfall of the winter in Skopje dramatized the dire straits Macedonia in which will find itself during the coming months. Some Macedonians concluded that their situation was worse than in Serbia itself, a cause for considerable public anger given the contrast between Serbia's aggression and Macedonia's behavior during the collapse of the old Yugoslav federation.

The delegation pressed its Greek interlocutors particularly strongly on the economic blockade it has imposed on Macedonia, and asked that the 90,000 tons of already purchased crude oil being held in Thessaloniki be released to Macedonia. It was alleged that the economic problems Macedonia was facing were more the result of the breakdown of a socialist economy than of sanctions. The types of economic problems Macedonia is experiencing, however, does not validate this claim, nor would sanctions be justified even if the claim were true. Another claim was that restricting commerce with Macedonia was necessary to enforce sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, since Macedonia would be willing to sell what it purchased to these other former Yugoslav

republics. The delegation concluded that this made little sense, given the incredible shortages of fuel in Macedonia. Indeed, the delegation used the meeting to inquire about reports of a tanker flying the Greek flag which recently arrived in the Montenegrin port of Bar; the Greek Deputy Foreign Minister acknowledged the incident but responded that Greece cannot control ships coming from ports in other countries, even when they carry the Greek flag.

Macedonian officials added that the lack of recognition also restricts technical assistance the country needs for the political transformation to a democracy. They noted, in particular, the suspension of such assistance by the U.S. Government after Representative Lee Hamilton, in his capacity as Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, inquired why this assistance was going to a country the United States does not recognize. U.S. Embassy officials indicated that the State Department intended to correct this situation by talking with Representative Hamilton, and the Commission delegation indicated that it would do the same.

The social situation has become increasingly problematic as a result of this economic situation, as well as by a general resentment by Macedonians over being told to change their national identity. As one private citizen remarked, many Macedonians are becoming desperate and wish only for the opportunity to leave the country. Macedonian officials told the delegation that retaining their national identity is a matter of principle for them. Whether anybody else likes it or not, Macedonians genuinely feel they are Macedonians. Rhetorically they ask what they are, if not Macedonian. The answer Macedonian officials speculate would be given is that they are then to be considered part of another, neighboring people, meaning that denying their Macedonian nationality inevitably will lead to Serbian, Bulgarian and even Greek claims to their territory. Without Macedonian identity, they conclude, they no longer have a country. On this point, the Commission delegation expressed support for the recognition of Macedonia, although it did query Macedonian officials on the possibilities for obtaining Greek acquiescence, such as through use of dual names. In response, concern was expressed that, after moving on the name issue, the Greeks might then find some other reason for isolating Macedonia.

While their national identity seemed to be central to all Macedonians whom the delegation encountered, the questioning of this identity has encouraged nationalism among some segments of the population has caused friction with the large Albanian population. The ethnic Albanian political leaders with whom it met have accused the Macedonian Government of placing them in a second-class status in which they are excluded from playing a real role in the political life of the country. Claiming that gerrymandering of electoral districts has led them to be underrepresented in the Assembly,⁽³⁾ they said that, time after time, measures have been passed that have been detrimental to their interests, including the republic's constitution. As a more recent example, they pointed to the blocking by Macedonian nationalists in the Assembly of a measure that would permit personal identity cards to be done in the Albanian in addition to Macedonian language. Education for ethnic Albanian children is another grievance expressed. The delegation's ethnic Albanian interlocutors claimed that ethnic Albanians are continually discriminated against in the respect shown for their rights. One ethnic Albanian parliamentarian went as far as to express fear that "ethnic-cleansing" would occur in Macedonia were the nationalists led by VMRO to come to power. For this reason, more extreme ethnic Albanian political leaders have called upon the international community to withhold recognition until Macedonia improves its performance regarding recognized rights of national minorities.

Macedonian nationalism has also caused actions which further anger an already concerned Greece. First and foremost, Greek officials pointed to the adoption of a flag with the emblem of Philip of Macedon -- a gold, 16-pointed star -- as confirming their fears of Macedonia's intentions. They also pointed to the Macedonian

Constitution, the Preamble of which refers to the Krushevo Republic and Article 49 to caring for the rights of Macedonian peoples in neighboring countries, both of which they claim imply territorial ambitions and have not been amended to meet Greek concerns. Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Tsouderou also denounced Macedonian propaganda, including educational textbooks, for advancing the idea of Slavic Macedonian national identity and for interpreting the history of the region to the strong detriment of its Greek aspects. If anything, she concluded, the name should be changed because it creates confusion, noting how action was taken to remove Greek products designated as Macedonian -- meaning from the Macedonian region of Greece -- from a Bulgarian trade show. The Deputy Foreign Minister argued that Greece favors recognition and that not only Macedonia but Greece would benefit from commerce, but that the government in Skopje must correct the problems raised before there could be progress in this regard. In making this point, she also mentioned the human rights concerns of ethnic Albanians.

The delegation, noting in particular how the newly adopted Macedonian flag was so prominently displayed throughout Skopje, raised these points with Macedonian officials, including a parliamentarian from VMRO, during the course of its visit. The delegation indicated that, while some things were rightly matters of principle for Macedonia, others were not, and failure to compromise in the latter areas would only worsen the current deadlock. In response, the Macedonian leaders in the government, consisting primarily of moderates, saw national identity as a critical issue but seemed generally to acknowledge the excesses of the nationalists among them, although they did not outrightly criticize them and claimed that, until there is progress on recognition, they have done about all they can do to develop a democratic system. They also pointed to the fact that ethnic Albanians do, in fact, have a sizable representation in the Assembly, and that five of the newly established government's ministers are ethnic Albanians. They made clear that Macedonia has no Kosovo within it, referring to the Serbian repression that exists just across the border, and that they were indeed trying. Some Albanian complaints were acknowledged by Macedonians, but it was concluded that until the issue of recognition was overcome, the development of a democratic system in which they could be adequately addressed would be difficult.

In addition, even as the differing statements of ethnic Albanians revealed, there exists varying degrees of Albanian nationalism among them, causing some to be more sympathetic to Macedonian concerns while other call for some degree of political autonomy for the Albanian population. In the back-and-forth with Albanian parliamentarians, a VMRO representative called Albanians "tools" of the Serbs, accusing some of them of wanting to form their own republic and break away from Macedonia altogether. And while Albanian representatives claimed that they were targeted for police actions, as the incident the week before allegedly demonstrated, Macedonians pointed out that Albanians, on the other hand, are the central actors in black market operations.

As far as Greeks were concerned, President Gligorov stressed the point that Macedonia has no territorial claims against neighboring countries and will not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, two points which were, in fact, clearly stated in amendments to the Macedonian constitution. Moreover, he noted that no state in the Balkans can or should seek to undue their ethnic mixtures. He concluded that a call for all Macedonians to live in one state would lead to another Balkan war. He also noted that, despite the current tension between the two countries, Macedonia and Greece have never been at war with each other, and that there is no historical basis for animosity toward Greece. The VMRO representative made the same point, albeit with less enthusiasm, saying that his party accepts the reality of the Balkans and the existence of Macedonia within its borders. He

added that he wanted to see good relations with Greece without precondition, such as having to change names. A central VMRO goal, it was claimed to counter criticisms against it, is to remove the last vestiges of socialism from Macedonia.

A central concern of Greece regarding recognition of Macedonia is the potential impact of such an action on the domestic scene. This concern is explicitly expressed in the warning given to the delegation that recognition would cause the current Greek Government to fall, and would turn the Greek population against those countries favoring recognition. Indeed, there already have been criticisms of, and even the boycott of products from, some fellow EC countries who took issue with the Greek position. Less discussed, however, is the issue of Greece's own ethnic make-up, with strong Greek denials of the existence of a Slavic Macedonian population within its borders. The concern may be that, after decades of assimilating a population many claim had existed, Greece does not want to see the question of Slavic Macedonians resurface to the possible detriment of social tranquility in Greek Macedonia. Greek officials deny this as a problem, since they claim that there has been no Slavic Macedonian population in Greece. Instead, they point to about 20 "troublemakers" in Greece who seek to convince people otherwise.

Nevertheless, the response to questions on this matter reveals extreme Greek sensitivity. The Commission delegation, for example, inquired about two individuals currently on trial in Athens, allegedly for expressing themselves to be Slavic Macedonians and for travelling to CSCE meetings to raise their concerns. The Greek response was that these were neither important nor typical cases, and that the trials were taking place not for the reasons raised but because the individuals involved did not behave as they should and had offended other citizens. This discussion was used as a pretext for criticizing the coverage of Greece's Slavophone population in the U.S. State Department's 1990 human rights report; the Greek Deputy Foreign Minister expressed satisfaction that this "terrible" report had been corrected by the one issued the following year.

In both Thessaloniki and Skopje, the discussions of Macedonia's future did not take place outside of a general concern over the ongoing conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and the great possibility for that conflict to spread. In both locations, the possibility for the fighting to spread was likened to a conflagration waiting for a mere spark to set it aflame. Greek officials advised patience and cautioned against international use of force to stop the fighting, arguing that Serbian President Milosevic is losing political support and faces a challenge in upcoming elections. A more urgent tone was expressed in Macedonia, where the need to prevent the fighting from spreading was viewed as absolutely critical. President Gligorov claimed that Serbia, in fact, should be Greece's main concern, arguing that the denial of the ports of the Croatian coast and the limits to Montenegrin ports compels him to look, through Macedonia, toward Thessaloniki. He also expressed considerable concern about the situation in Kosovo, the potential source of a massive wave of refugees into Macedonia were hostilities to occur, as Serbia would seek to ethnically cleanse Kosovo as it has Bosnia-Herzegovina. The President noted that he has asked the United Nations for the deployment of peacekeepers in Macedonia. Gligorov recommended that the world should not recognize Serbian gains in Bosnia-Herzegovina and that support should be given to democratic forces in Serbia, especially in light of the upcoming elections. In particular, he urged international efforts to focus on ways to free Serbian media from the hold propaganda has on it.

The visit to the camp for refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina brought home the human tragedy which has struck the region, and the detrimental effects of the bickering over Macedonia's international status on efforts to assist those in need. The particular camp, at Chichino Selo outside of Skopje, was originally a summer camp that now houses over 300 refugees, with approximately six to eight individuals per room. While representatives of Catholic Relief Services described plans to get electric heating into the camp soon, none had been provided so

far. The refugees, primarily Muslims ethnically cleansed by Serbian militants from their homes in the Foca region of eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina, came to Macedonia in early summer with few provisions, many wearing only sandals and lacking shoes for the winter months. They described some of the atrocities which had occurred back home, although none were actual witnesses of specific acts by people they could identify other than the local Serbian political leaders. Some had members of their families who were still missing. Most, however, stressed that, as horrible as their experience was, what they were most concerned about now was how to survive the winter. Indeed, they expressed frustration that their repeated requests for assistance as winter approach had so far gone unheeded, and that now snow was on the ground. The delegation heard the views of Macedonian officials running the camp and, later, from officials of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, each giving different views on why this dismal situation was not corrected. Both sides, indicated, however, that they would do what they could to break administrative deadlocks and get necessary items, including shoes, into the camps. In total, more than 30,000 refugees are registered in Macedonia, but the actual number presently in the country is thought to be double that figure.

CROATIA

November 15-17, 1992

OBJECTIVES

The Commission delegation's main interest in travelling to Croatia was to examine the situation for Bosnian refugees residing there as winter approached and to hear their reports of what was happening in Bosnia-Herzegovina. More generally, the delegation wanted to obtain a more detailed picture of the situation in the region as a whole as the fighting raged on. This included developments within Croatia itself, such as the situation regarding displaced persons and in the United Nations Protected Areas, as well as Croatia's role in the Bosnian conflict. Finally, the delegation had an interest in seeing the newly created U.S. Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) unit at Pleso Airport outside Zagreb.

THE CONTEXT OF THE VISIT

Croatia is located in south-central Europe and has borders with Slovenia, Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. While it now exists as an independent state, the basis for its current borders derives from the 1974 Constitution of the now-defunct Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The capital of Croatia is Zagreb. Its area is somewhat smaller than the state of West Virginia, but its boomerang-shape stretches across three principal geographic and climatic regions: a long-Adriatic coast, a central mountainous region, and a relatively flat region stretching into East-Central Europe. Croatia's current population of 4.76 million is fairly diverse, with 78 percent ethnically Croat and 12 percent ethnically Serb. There are also sizable populations of Muslim Slavs, Hungarians, Italians, Albanians, Czechs, Slovaks and Ukrainians. The Croatian majority and many of the minorities are Roman Catholic, while the Serbian population is Eastern Orthodox.

Croatia's recent history is generally similar to that of the other former Yugoslav republics, including Macedonia. However, its current situation is different in several respects which reflect its deeper historical attachment to the Austro-Hungarian Empire rather than to Byzantium and the Ottomans. They also reflect Croatia's quest for independence and the rivalry this quest has developed between Serbia and Croatia.

While Yugoslavia was grappling with economic decline, increased decentralization and growing nationalist sentiment ten years after the passing of Tito, the East-Central European countries of the Warsaw Pact were the scene of revolutionary political developments in 1988 and 1989. Pressures for democratization were felt in Yugoslavia as well, and were, in fact, viewed as a possible answer to the political crisis developing in the country, but democratic development was by that time possible only at the republic, not the federal, level. The economically advanced northern republics -- Slovenia and Croatia -- moved in front of the wave of sweeping political reform in the region, while others in the federation fell increasingly behind it. In April 1990, first Slovenia, then Croatia, held multi-party elections. The League of Communists of Croatia, renamed the Party of Democratic Changes, was ousted by a nationalist bloc led by the Croatian Democratic Union ("HDZ" in Croatian) in elections that were conducted generally in a fair and open manner, albeit with problems on election day due largely to inexperience with competitive elections. The new HDZ parliament selected its leader, Franjo Tudjman, as the republic's President.

In the aftermath of the elections, the relationship between the Croatian majority and the ethnic Serb minority of the republic's population polarized significantly. The new Croatian Government embarked on a nationalist program calling for Croatian sovereignty in what would be, at most, a loose confederal arrangement in Yugoslavia. In doing so, it ignored the concerns and sensitivities within certain segments of the republic's large ethnic-Serb population, which retained the strong memories of what the independent fascist state of Croatia had done during World War II. Serbia's still communist regime, led by President Slobodan Milosevic, took full advantage of this situation by instigating leaders of the Serbian community in Croatia to increased militancy for the purposes of establishing a "Greater Serbia" under the banner of seeking to preserve the federated Yugoslav state.

Following ill fated attempts to determine the Yugoslav federation's future through negotiations, a civil war began after the June 25, 1991, declarations of independence by Slovenia and Croatia. The Yugoslav military, with its own, separate agenda but under increasing Serbian control in Belgrade, attempted but failed to take control of Slovenia by force. It later joined Serbian militants fighting in Croatia. European Community (EC) mediation was largely in vain. The fighting finally subsided in January 1992 with a fragile and occasionally broken peace under a ceasefire agreement mediated by United Nations envoy, which included deployment of U.N. Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) in four Protected Areas (UNPAs) of Croatia. The Vance plan called for the return of the Croatian military to barracks, the withdrawal of the Yugoslav military from the republic, the disarming of Serbian militants, the return of normal civilian controls in the UNPAs, and, most critical for Croatia, the return of displaced persons to their homes. By the time of this agreement, an estimated 10,000 were dead, 700,000 people were displaced from their homes, reports of atrocities abounded, and many towns and cities throughout Croatia, especially in the Slavonian and Dalmatian regions of Croatia, were severely damaged or destroyed.

The continuation of the fighting over such a long period of time eliminated any hope for maintaining a Yugoslav federation, and, after much international squabbling, Croatian independence was recognized, along with that of Slovenia, by most of the world during the first months of 1992. Both were able to join the United Nations and the CSCE later in the year. At the same time, the ceasefire agreement left significant portions of Croatian territory effectively out of Zagreb's control. Meanwhile, as the fighting intensified in neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina, hundreds of thousands of refugees from that republic strained Croatian resources to the point that Croatian authorities claimed they could take no more. The heavy physical destruction of Croatia during the conflict, the heavy refugee/displaced person burden on the government, and the de-linking of the Yugoslav economy all caused a serious deterioration in the economic well-being of Croatia.

In turn, Croatia's political development was hindered as well, especially as the effects of the war combined with the less than democratic leanings of factions within the ruling HDZ. While certainly anti-communist in their rhetoric, many HDZ actions betrayed the retention of a mindset shaped by decades of communist power. On August 2, 1992, Croatia held new multi-party elections in which Franjo Tudjman and the HDZ easily retained power, reflecting the legitimate choice of Croatia's voting population but, at the same time, demonstrating disappointingly little democratic progress in Croatia since 1990.

With a stronger grip on power than ever before, the main preoccupation of the Croatian Government at the time of the Commission delegation's visit was to resolve the problems created by what had been negligible progress by the United Nations in implementing the Vance plan. This situation caused the continued and heavy drawing from the Croatian treasury and created resentment over U.N. forces perceived to be doing more to protect Serbian militants than restoring Croatian territory to Croatian control. In the meantime, the continued outflow of refugees from the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina added to Croatia's burden.

THE VISIT

The Commission delegation arrived in Zagreb around midday on Sunday, November 15. Its first activity was to attend the formal opening of the U.S. 212th MASH unit at Pleso Airport outside Zagreb, which will be available for use by UNPROFOR troops in both Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Immediately after the opening, the commanders of the unit, Colonel Greg Stevens and Lieutenant Colonel Everett W. Newcomb III, gave the delegation a tour of the facilities.

After being briefed on the political and economic scene in Croatia by the Ron Neitzke, the Charge d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb, the delegation then travelled to the nearby town of Karlovac, a major transit point for refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina. There, it met with officials of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and many refugees themselves, including several who had only recently been released from Serbian-run camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Upon the delegation's return to Zagreb, it met with President Franjo Tudjman. During this meeting, the ongoing war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the growing refugee burden and other domestic developments in Croatia were discussed.

Following the meeting, Senator DeConcini departed for a return flight to the United States. Representative McCloskey and two staff members remained in Croatia for an additional day and one-half, during which time they focused more specifically on the situation in Croatia. They travelled to the eastern Slavonian city of Osijek, which Representative McCloskey visited while it was under siege in December 1991. In Osijek, the delegation met with the head of the city's executive council, Branimir Glavas, and other local officials, and toured a facility for displaced Croatian citizens. They also visited the main hospital, which was still scarred from heavy shelling one year ago. On the return to Zagreb, the delegation stopped at a camp for refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina near Gasinci.

Before departing, the delegation held a series of meetings in Zagreb. It first met with members of the Bozo Kovacevic and Franjo Zenko of the leading opposition Croatian Social Liberal Party, both of whom were elected to the House of Representatives of Croatia's bicameral Assembly. It also met with the Milan Djukic, head of the Serbian People's Party in Croatia and Vice President of the House of Representatives, and Croatian Deputy Prime Minister Mate Granic. These meetings focused on internal developments in Croatia, the growing refugee burden and the international response to the ongoing war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Finally, the delegation

met with Sefko Omerbasic and Ahmed Ikanovic of the Islamic Community of Croatia and Slovenia. The tragic war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the attempted genocide of the Muslim population there, and the possibilities for stopping them both were discussed in greater detail.

OBSERVATIONS

The visit to Croatia confirmed the view that, despite the many efforts undertaken, the international response to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia has been inadequate in many respects. If more forceful action is not taken soon, Bosnia-Herzegovina will be doomed. Hundreds of thousands more refugees will need help. Hundreds of thousands of those remaining will die of cold, disease and starvation during the winter. Meanwhile, the conflict will spread to southern part of the former Yugoslavia and be renewed in Croatia itself.

With the arrival of winter, care for refugees and displaced persons in Croatia was a major concern. Material assistance seemed to be generally adequate, with food, shelter, medicine and sanitary facilities being provided by Croatia, international government assistance and private relief organizations. Of course, more is needed as new refugees arrive. At the camp in Gasinci, the provision of housing units by the German and Dutch Red Cross, while most definitely helpful, did not meet the shelter needs of the camp's 1,700 refugees, many of whom still lived in tents. There were recent reports of typhus breaking out in camps in Split and Zagreb. In contrast to the refugees the delegation met in Macedonia, those in Croatia seemed to be much better accommodated, having at least heating. Moreover, unlike those in Macedonia, some of the refugees in Croatia experienced worse treatment as prisoners in Serbian-run camps, and were therefore thankful to the ICRC for their release from captivity. As a result, while those in Macedonia complained of their current conditions, those Bosnian refugees met in Croatia seemed more relieved to be away from the fighting and atrocities taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Like those in Macedonia, however, the Bosnian refugees in Croatia almost all had dead or missing relatives, and all were concerned for those left behind.

A greater problem in the care for refugees and displaced persons in Croatia is financial support. While material assistance has been provided, the Croatian Government must pay hotels and private individuals for housing refugees and displaced persons. Payment per person seems nominal, but considering the fact that there are almost 300,000 displaced persons, many for more than one year, and over half of the more than 400,000 Bosnian refugees housed in this manner, the financial strain is enormous. Croatian officials said that care for refugees and displaced persons now takes up about 20 percent of governmental budget outlays. Croatia has had to resort to mass printing of the new Croatian dinar to pay for the private housing. This is contributing to the rising inflation rate, which is now as high as 40 percent per month. What Croatia needs, the Commission delegation was told, was international financial assistance that would counter this spiraling problem.

Compounding the refugee problem is the inequitable sharing of the refugee burden. While Croatia has been urged not to close its borders to additional arrivals, clearly more refugees need to transit through Croatia to other countries. Croatian officials told the delegation that their current burden would be the equivalent of 50 million refugees in the United States. The United States was not so much criticized for raising the number of Bosnian refugees it would accept to only an additional 1,000 individuals (about 300 families) as much as for the six-week processing period required before they could come to the United States. The delegation was told that, given the continual flow of refugees through Karlovac, a six-week processing period was too long and that more internees in Serbian-run camps could be released at a faster pace if processing of refugees was expedited. The delegation

concluded that, given this situation, both the number of refugees taken by the United States and the speed with which they were processed should be increased, if anything to provide a basis for pressing countries closer to the former Yugoslavia to assume a greater share of the burden as well.

Similarly compounding the problem with displaced persons has been the inadequate implementation of the Vance plan in UNPAs. More specifically, none of the displaced persons from these areas have been able to return, and the Serbian militants who have yet to be disarmed continue, in fact, to force non-Serbs to leave while they entrench themselves in these regions. Some displaced persons, frustrated over this situation, have threatened to march back to their home towns and villages. And it was clear from conversations with Croatian officials, including those in Osijek coping with this problem at the local level, that non-implementation is not only prolonging the burden of housing and aiding the displaced persons, but is also breeding resentment of the U.N. presence. The Commission delegation heard numerous reports of UNPROFOR personnel, especially those from Russia, engaged in black market activity in such things as women's lingerie and other consumer goods, and that the UNPROFOR mandate was insufficient to cause the Serbian militants to implement the Vance plan. When Osijek officials, who said that Croatia will never accept a continual U.N. presence like Cyprus or Lebanon, asked why the international community was not ensuring that the plan agreed to was actually implemented and why continued Serbian cleansing of Croatian territory was tolerated, the delegation responded that it has been asking the same questions.

As a result of this problem, Croatian officials consider one-quarter of Croatian territory to continue to be occupied. While most of these officials stated their continued commitment not only to the Vance plan but to the UNPROFOR presence, others advocated UNPROFOR's departure from Croatia when its mandate runs out in March 1993. In doing so, they requested a lifting of the arms embargo on Croatia so that they could defend themselves from renewed Serbian attacks, and stated that they would seek the implementation of the Vance plan themselves. The clear indication was that, if UNPROFOR operations in Croatia do not result in progress in implementing the Vance plan and especially in returning the displaced to their homes towns and villages, there could easily be renewed fighting on a wide scale in Croatia. Some of the delegation's interlocutors in Croatia expressed serious concern about the repercussions of having UNPROFOR leave and lifting the arms embargo on Croatia, but none questioned the need for improving UNPROFOR operations and implementing the Vance plan sooner rather than later.

The human tragedy of what has happened in the former Yugoslavia was blatantly evident in Karlovac as well as in Osijek and Slavonia generally. The refugees interviewed in Karlovac had only just been released from Serb-run camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where they had been interned for months. They reported the most horrible atrocities, including torture and the random killing of prisoners. At the refugee camp in Gasinci, children had drawn pictures of the horrible events they witnessed before fleeing to Croatia, with blood-stained bodies and enflamed houses. In Slavonia, village after village had shelled homes and buildings, and buildings in Osijek dating back to the Habsburg period remained pocked by the bullets and shells fired about one year ago. The hospital there, which was heavily hit, remains in need of repair. Representative McCloskey had the good fortune, however, of discovering that a seriously injured nineteen year-old whom he had seen brought into the hospital the previous December and presumed to have since died not only survived but was visiting the hospital for his regular therapy that day. Now an invalid, the young man emotionally expressed appreciation for the concern shown for him, and asked about the possibility of being brought into contact with invalids in the United States and elsewhere. Others, ranging from managers of refugee camps to the delegation's interpreters, told their own stories of how they dealt with the conflict and almost universally expressed pessimism over the prospects for peace and stability in the region. Experts told the delegation that, even under the most optimistic scenarios, tens of thousands

of Bosnians will still die this winter from the cold, lack of food and medicine, pointing out that some regions of that country have remained totally isolated since the war began in the first half of 1992 and have never received any humanitarian relief.

When asked about Croatia's role in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatian officials, and President Tudjman in particular, stressed that Croatia had recognized that former Yugoslav republic as an independent state and had no ambitions regarding its territory, despite the fact that some Bosnian Croats may want to unite with Croatia. They also indicated that they felt a need to protect ethnic Croats in Bosnian-Herzegovina from Serbian aggression. Tudjman added that measures were taken to prevent atrocities from being committed by Croatian forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including pressure on Bosnian Croats that led to the opening of internment camps. Given the war which has been imposed on Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, he stated, he could not deny certain acts by irresponsible individuals, but he assured the Commission delegation that he is doing what he can to ensure that Croats are not responsible for committing atrocities. Expressing concern first about Serbian domination and then of Islamic control of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the President said that the country did not have to be divided along ethnic lines but should be governed on the basis of equality between the three main nationalities which have resided there.

The meetings in Croatia, supported by its experiences in Macedonia, led the delegation to conclude that, inevitably, the key to resolving the refugee problem, stopping the atrocities, minimizing the number of additional deaths, and preventing the fighting from spreading to the south or being renewed in Croatia, all rest on bringing the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina to a halt immediately, and that this really could only be done by international intervention. Even criticisms of Croatia's behavior in Bosnia-Herzegovina could not be credibly pressed given international acquiescence to aggression by Serbian militants.

Moreover, there was widespread support for the investigation and prosecution of war crimes by the international community. While an amnesty was passed in Croatia for those guilty of violating Croatian law due to their involvement in the conflict, it did not protect individuals from being prosecuted for violations of international humanitarian law. Croatian officials, and especially those in Osijek, indicated that they advocated restoration and reconciliation on a democratic basis, but that they would never negotiate or work with those they considered war criminals. Clearly, punishing those personally responsible for atrocities is essential for restoring Croatian society to a normal state, not only so that those guilty are punished but so that the innocent are vindicated as well. Otherwise, the societies affected will be tensely divided, surviving victims will seek their own vengeance, and a signal will have been sent that political goals can be achieved through force and crimes against humanity.

On purely domestic concerns, the delegation was assured by President Tudjman of his commitment to human rights and democratic development in Croatia. Others, however, expressed continued disappointment with progress in these areas. Given growing economic problems -- and the Bosnian conflict and non-implementation of the Vance plan at the root of these problems -- the people are generally not interested in democracy. Meanwhile, the government has cracked down on the free media, and there is no private television or radio stations present in Croatia. Moreover, the legal system has not been well developed. Opposition party leaders indicated that the opposition is generally united but not very strong, and that good people within the ruling power are not sufficiently powerful to create a more open political environment.

1. The visit to Greece was a brief and served as a prelude to the visit to Macedonia. It is therefore covered in this section of the CODEL report.

2. Although, due to the need for full consensus of the 51 active participating States, the Mission is designated as "to Skopje" rather than "to Macedonia."

3. Ethnic Albanian leaders in Macedonia claim that Albanians comprise as much as 40 percent of the republic's population. Surprisingly, Greek officials used the figure 45 percent. Albanians boycotted the most recent census, in 1991. Macedonian officials concede that their share has increased from the 21 percent of the 1982 census, and probably ranges between one-quarter and one-third of the population. There seems to be general agreement that the Albanian population is large and underrepresented, including in the Assembly. At the same time, it should not be assumed that the share of seats going to an ethnically based political party is the sole determinant of the representation of the individuals belonging to that same ethnic group.