

Serbian Unity Congress Press Release

November 3, 2001

The unfortunate events of September 11th prevented the Serbian Unity Congress from holding its long-awaited annual convention in Belgrade, Serbia. As a result, the annual election of the officers of the Serbian Unity Congress did not take place.

To facilitate the need for continuity of the Serbian Unity Congress' leadership in Serbian Diaspora and expansion of its programs, the Board of Directors of the Serbian Unity Congress voted to add six new board members and assign specific responsibilities for every member. The following new members have been added to the board:

Miroslav Djordjevich, San Francisco, California

Michael Bozic, Kiawah Isl., South Caroline

Steven Katich, Denver, Colorado

Edita Kronic, New York, New York

Jasmina Vujic, Berkeley, California

Olga Danilovic, Vienna, Austria

At the same time the Board of Directors selected **Miroslav Djordjevich**, Founder and Past President, to become the new President of the Serbian Unity Congress.

"Changes in Yugoslavia last October followed by the tragic events of September 11 have made our challenges greater than ever," said incoming President Miroslav Djordjevich. "But while the tasks facing our homeland are enormous, I am confident that the Serbian Unity Congress can play a major role in addressing them."

The Board of the Serbian Unity Congress appreciates the continued support of its membership as the organization moves forward on its many important projects.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Serbian Unity Congress is instituting a section for Editorials from time to time which will express opinions and commentary on critical or significant issues. Guest editorials will also be presented periodically.

EDITORIAL

IS SERBIA STILL OUR STEPMOTHER?

According to the Voice of Canadian Serbs (October 25, 2001), the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs, Goran Svilanovic, stated that Diaspora Serbs should have only "honorary functions" in the Yugoslav diplomacy. "It is unacceptable that people who have not lived in the Fatherland for 10 years or longer represent Yugoslavia abroad." He added that Serbs "in Diaspora have done a lot for changes in the country, but they cannot be ambassadors. They can have honorary positions, such as Counsels." He has not elaborated as to why the Diaspora Serbs are "unacceptable" to serve their Homeland.

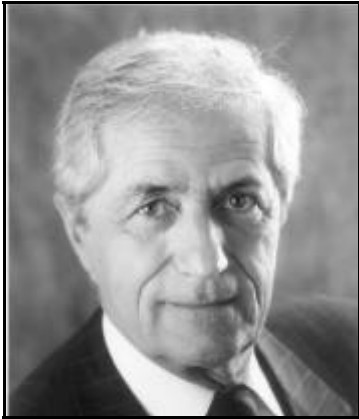
There are countless past examples in the world where the Diaspora provided some of the most outstanding diplomats, presidents and premiers in their Homeland. For example, the first President of the Republic of Czechoslovakia Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, and Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel, lived abroad for many years. So did Serbian King Peter I. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, former communist countries abound with examples of competent people from the Diaspora serving in high offices, such as the Foreign Minister of Armenia or the President of Latvia.

Are Mr. Svilanovic's views within the main stream of public sentiment in Serbia? The majority of people there clearly recognize the value the Diaspora could play in helping the Homeland. A recent survey of Serbian public opinion conducted by Medium Index Ltd. shows that 55% of the people in Serbia favor "giving competent Serbs from abroad responsibilities in government functions, such as in the Administration or Diplomacy." Only 30% objected to this policy, while 15% had no opinion.

Clearly, those who have lived in Serbia for the past decade have suffered the most, and they should have every opportunity to lead the nation. But Belgrade should also take advantage of the many resources its Diaspora can bring to the table. A policy that unnecessarily permits only Serbs who have lived in Yugoslavia for the past decade to positions of responsibility in the government runs the risk of making the daunting task of rebuilding the Homeland even more difficult. Moreover, such a policy perpetuates a legacy of Titoist past and the Milosevic regime which purposely promoted hostilities and alienation between the Homeland Diaspora brothers.

Many in the Diaspora are eager to serve and will do all within their power to help. Rather than reject such offers, leaders in Belgrade should take advantage of them. The people of Serbia recognize that it doesn't matter where a Serb has lived for the past ten years - if they have a skill that can help Yugoslavia, it ought to be used. After all, regardless of our mailing address, we're all Serbs.

PRESIDENT'S GREETING AND MESSAGE



It is now ten years since I was honored to be the first President of the Serbian Unity Congress. Like most beginnings, ours too was full of hope and excitement. We earnestly believed that a new era of emancipation, liberation and return to national roots was beginning for our suffering people in Yugoslavia. And we were ready and eager to help it come along. No one in his or her worst nightmare could have envisioned the terrible events, incomparable trials and profound tragedies of the Serbs during the last decade of the last century.

Overnight, our young organization was projected into a conflict of unprecedented complexity and grave dangers for Serbia and Serbs. With little resources and no cooperation from the Milosevic government, we steadfastly fought many a battle in defense of the Serbdom and universal values of truth and honor. Looking back on those years now, I am proud of our many members and supporters. We strove persistently and sacrificed generously. To be sure, we have made a difference. I thank you all.

You may rightly wonder why I am back. Among several compelling reasons, one stands out: unfinished work. Although much more cautious and subdued, the hope we had ten years ago for our people is back. Also, we do indeed have a chance to help them out, and this help is now much more significant and needed than ever before. Many of the harmful legacies of the communist past still pervade Serbdom. They must be cast away and quickly if Serbia is to have a better tomorrow.

From the Yugoslav and Titoist past, in my mind, two vastly destructive concepts among many others persist: Serbian patriotism is bad and dangerous, and good living can be had without hard, honest work. We must wage a relentless fight against these ideas for like deadly cancer they are destroying the fabric of the Serbian nation. Serbian love for their history, tradition and country has been perverted and defamed by definitions first made by Tito, subsequently embellished by Milosevic and then accordingly redefined by "the international community." If we let these monstrous lies continue, Serbia will eventually lose its identity and will not survive.

In their past, Serbian wise men and women clearly recognized that "nema hleba bez motike" - there is no free lunch! Communism and Titoism have made the Serbs forget this universal principle. Thus, we must help Serbia regain proper work ethics, habits and discipline. They must recognize and accept that for honest pay one must perform honest work.

Elsewhere in this bulletin, you will read about our organization's Mission Statement. Obviously, we must also work to preserve our cultural heritage and spiritual values among us in the Diaspora. Please note that the new Board has already started defining concrete and doable projects which will all be in support of one or more of the three Missions. If we sincerely support these efforts and programs and do not lose the sight of the two aforementioned evil legacies of communism, we shall accomplish something permanent and noble. Personally, I am dedicating myself to these goals. I hope and ask you to join me and the new Board in rising to this unique challenge of helping rebuild the nation of our ancestors. At this critical time of world history, a strong, democratic, self-reliant and self-confident Serbia should again be a significant force in defending our Western civilization against its new implacable enemy, who is waging terrorist warfare against us and our cherished values.

May God help us.

OUR PLAN FOR ACTION

Below are the overarching Missions of the SUC as approved by the new Board of Directors. They are the foundations and philosophical framework for directions and actions. The intent of the Board is that each director will work on a concrete project in support of at least one or more of these Missions. These projects will be of specific and tangible value to our people here and in the Homeland. A few initial projects have been identified and others will be in place by year-end. Each project will have its own budget, and we will seek the support of our members and friends in our endeavors to implement them.

MISSION OF SERBIAN UNITY CONGRESS

YEAR 2001 ONWARDS

Serbian Unity Congress is the organization of Serbs and their friends in the Diaspora. It was established in 1990. Its main goals are:

1. To sustain and nurture the Serbian heritage, culture and identity of Serbs in the Diaspora;
2. To garner the talents, experiences and abilities of all Serbs and their friends abroad in order to help economic, social, cultural and other positive changes towards a free political system and a moral society in Serbian lands;
3. To inform public opinion and key policymakers in the world about the true goals and aspirations of the Serbian people, as well as to endeavor to re-establish the Serbian good name and image damaged by the events of the past decade of relentless defamation.

THE HOMELAND VIEW OF THE SERBIAN DIASPORA

Serbian Unity Congress asked Medium Index Ltd. to conduct a scientific pooling of public opinion in Serbia prior to the 12th Annual Convention in Belgrade in September 2001. Key findings follow (a complete copy of the report is available at the S.U.C. Central Office for \$7.00).

Should the Serbs from the Diaspora be included in political and economic life of the country?

<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>DON'T KNOW</u>
76%	11%	13%

Should competent Serbs from abroad be given responsible government functions, for example, such as in the Administration or Diplomacy, etc.?

<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>DON'T KNOW</u>
55%	30%	15%

Should the Serbs in the Diaspora have Serbian-Yugoslav citizenship and the right to vote in Serbian elections?

<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>DON'T KNOW</u>
72%	15%	13%

Homeland says: "You give to us money, we'll give to you brains." **Diaspora** says: "Our contribution is also in brains and worldly experiences."

<u>MONEY</u>	<u>KNOWLEDGE/EXPERIENCE</u>	<u>DON'T KNOW</u>
42%	36%	22%

Past divisions on Chetniks and Partisans: declaration for reconciliation.

<u>S U P P O R T S</u>		<u>A G A I N S T</u>		
<i>Fully</i>	<i>Generally</i>	<i>Generally</i>	<i>Fully</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
37%	21%	8%	13%	21%

Interestingly enough, but not surprising, the survey noted that 47% of those who identified themselves as members/supporters of the Socialist Party (Milosevic's Party) were against giving any responsible positions in the government to the Diaspora Serbs. This number is even higher among followers of the Seselj's Radical Party, being 61.3%. Among all other political parties, support for the Diaspora had clear majorities.

It is rather apparent and indisputable, therefore, that the Serbian people want to bridge the gap and overcome the hostilities of the past regime towards the Diaspora. First, it is now up to the democratic government of Serbia/Yugoslavia, and secondly, to all of us to quickly find ways on how to bring our people together - for together we can do a lot of good for our Homeland.

" The settling of Afghan-trained mujahideen in the Balkans began around 1992, when recruits were brought into Bosnia by the ruling Islamic party of Bosnia, the Party of Democratic Action, from Chechnya, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, as well as Italy, Germany and Turkey. They were all given journalists' credentials to avoid explicit detection by the West. Others were married immediately to Bosnian Muslim women and incorporated into regular army ranks."

Wall Street Journal Europe
November 1, 2001

Al Qaeda's Balkan Links

By Marcia Christoff Kurop, a former editor of the Washington-based weekly newspaper Defense News.

The Balkans' uncharacteristically silent exit from the world stage as the most prominent international hot spot of the last decade belies its status as a major recruiting and training center of Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda network. By feeding off the region's impoverished republics and taking root in the unsettled diplomatic aftermath of the Bosnia and Kosovo conflicts, al Qaeda, along with Iranian Revolutionary Guard-sponsored terrorists, have burrowed their way into Europe's backyard.

For the past 10 years, the most senior leaders of al Qaeda have visited the Balkans, including bin Laden himself on three occasions between 1994 and 1996. The Egyptian surgeon turned terrorist leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri has operated terrorist training camps, weapons of mass destruction factories and money-laundering and drug-trading networks throughout Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Turkey and Bosnia. This has gone on for a decade. Many recruits to the Balkan wars came originally from Chechnya, a jihad in which Al Qaeda has also played a part.

These activities have been exhaustively researched by Yossef Bodansky, the former director of the U.S. House of Representatives' Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare. The February testimony of an Islamist ringleader associated with the East Africa bombings have also helped throw light on these actions.

They have however been disguised under the cover of dozens of "humanitarian" agencies spread throughout Bosnia, Kosovo and Albania. Funding has come from now-defunct banks such as the Albanian-Arab Islamic Bank and from bin Laden's so-called Advisory and Reformation Committee. One of his largest Islamist front agencies, it was established in

London in 1994.

Narco-Jihad Culture

The overnight rise of heroin trafficking through Kosovo -- now the most important Balkan route between Southeast Asia and Europe after Turkey -- helped also to fund terrorist activity directly associated with al Qaeda and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. Opium poppies, which barely existed in the Balkans before 1995, have become the No. 1 drug cultivated in the Balkans after marijuana. Operatives of two al Qaeda-sponsored Islamist cells who were arrested in Bosnia on Oct. 23 were linked to the heroin trade, underscoring the narco-jihad culture of today's post-war Balkans.

These drug rings in turn form part of an estimated \$8 billion a year Taliban annual income from global drug trafficking, predominantly in heroin. According to Mr. Bodansky, the terrorism expert, bin Laden administers much of that trade through Russian mafia groups for a commission of 10% to 15% -- or around \$1 billion annually.

The settling of Afghan-trained mujahideen in the Balkans began around 1992, when recruits were brought into Bosnia by the ruling Islamic party of Bosnia, the Party of Democratic Action, from Chechnya, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, as well as Italy, Germany and Turkey. They were all given journalists' credentials to avoid explicit detection by the West. Others were married immediately to Bosnian Muslim women and incorporated into regular army ranks.

Intelligence services of the Nordic-Polish SFOR (previously IFOR) sector alerted the U.S. of their pres-

ence in 1992 while the number of mujahideen operating in Bosnia alone continued to grow from a few hundred to around 6,000 in 1995. Though the Clinton administration had been briefed extensively by the State Department in 1993 on the growing Islamist threat in former Yugoslavia, little was done to follow through.

The Bosnian Embassy in Vienna issued a passport to bin Laden in 1993, according to various reports in the Yugoslav press at the time. The reports add that bin Laden then visited a terrorist camp in Zenica, Bosnia in 1994. The Bosnian government denies all of this, but admits that some passport records have been lost. Around that time, bin Laden directed al Qaeda "senior commanders" to incorporate the Balkans into a complete southeastern approach to Europe, an area stretching from the Caucasus to Italy. Al Zawahiri, the Egyptian surgeon reputed to be the second in command of the entire al Qaeda network, headed up this southeastern frontline.

By 1994, major Balkan terrorist training camps included Zenica, and Malisevo and Mitrovica in Kosovo. Elaborate command-and-control centers were further established in Croatia, and Tetovo, Macedonia as well as around Sofia, Bulgaria, according to the U.S. Congress's task force on terrorism. In Albania, the main training camp included even the property of former Albanian premier Sali Berisha in Tropje, Albania, who was then very close to the Kosovo Liberation Army.

Not even stalwart NATO ally Turkey escaped the network. Areas beyond government control were also visited by bin Laden in 1996 according to London-based Jane's Intelligence Review. The government has been battling two terrorist groups: Jund al Islam, whose assassinated Syrian leader was one of bin Laden's closets confidantes, and the Kurdish PKK, whose leader, Abdullah Ocalan, merged his group's activities with those of Iran's Hezbollah in 1998.

Furthermore, as revealed in the February 2001 East Africa bombing trial testimony of Jamal al Fadl -- an al Qaeda operative in charge of weapons development in Sudan -- uranium used in "dirty bombs" that release lethal radioactive material, had been tested in 1994 by members of the Sudan-based Islamic National Front in the town of Hilat Koko, in Turkish-held northern Cyprus. Cyprus, both its north and

southern sides, has also become a center for offshore money laundering by Arab banks fronting al Qaeda funds into the Balkans. The CIA puts al Qaeda's specific Balkan-directed funds -- those tied to the "humanitarian" agencies and local banks and not explicitly counting the significant drug profits added to that -- at around \$500 million to \$700 million between 1992 and 1998.

So where was the U.S. in all this? It was not until 1995 that the Clinton administration was forced to start pursuing the Islamist network in the Balkans. Not quite a month after the Dayton accords had been signed in November 1995, an influx of Iranian arms came into Bosnia with the apparent tacit approval of the administration, in violation of U.N. sanctions. While publicly pressing Bosnian President Alija Izebegovic to purge remaining Islamist elements, the administration was loath to confront Sarajevo and Tehran over their presence.

Instead, Islamist groups went quietly underground as the windfall of weapons landed in their hands. They later joined up with a new Islamist center in Sofia established as a kind of rear guard by the al Zawahiri. Following the Zagreb arrest and extradition of renowned Egyptian militant Faud Qassim, an al Zawahiri favorite, the Sofia-based militants planned the deployment in Bosnia of terrorists capable of planning and leading possible major terrorist strikes against U.S. and SFOR facilities, according to al Fadl's testimony to the House Task Force on Terrorism.

Islamist infiltration of the Kosovo Liberation Army advanced, meanwhile. Bin Laden is said to have visited Albania in 1996 and 1997, according to the murder-trial testimony of an Algerian-born French national, Claude Kader, himself an Afghanistan-trained mujahideen fronting at the Albanian-Arab Islamic Bank. He recruited some Albanians to fight with the KLA in Kosovo, according to the Paris-based Observatoire Geopolitique des Controversial Relationship

By early 1998 the U.S. had already entered into its controversial relationship with the KLA to help fight off Serbian oppression of that province. While in February the U.S. gave into KLA demands to remove it from the State Department's terrorism list, the gesture amounted to little. That summer the CIA and

CIA-modernized Albanian intelligence (SHIK) were engaged in one of the largest seizures of Islamic Jihad cells operating in Kosovo.

Fearing terrorist reprisal from al Qaeda, the U.S. temporarily closed its embassy in Tirana and a trip to Albania by then Defense Secretary William Cohen was canceled out of fear of an assassination attempt. Meanwhile, Albanian separatism in Kosovo and Metohija was formally characterized as a "jihad" in October 1998 at an annual international Islamic conference in Pakistan.

Nonetheless, the 25,000 strong KLA continued to receive official NATO/U.S. arms and training support and, at the talks in Rambouillet, France, then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright shook hands with "freedom fighter" Hashim Thaci, a KLA leader.

As this was taking place, Europol (the European Police Organization based in The Hague) was preparing a scathing report on the connection between the KLA and international drug gangs. Even Robert Gelbard, America's special envoy to Bosnia, officially described the KLA as Islamic terrorists.

With the future status of Kosovo still in question, the only real development that may be said to be taking place there is the rise of Wahhabi Islam -- the puritanical Saudi variety favored by bin Laden -- and the fastest growing variety of Islam in the Balkans. Today, in general, the Balkans are left without the money, political resources, or institutional strength to fight a war on terrorism. And that, for the Balkan Islamists, is a Godsend

YOUR BOARD



Miroslav Michael Djordjevic, *President*

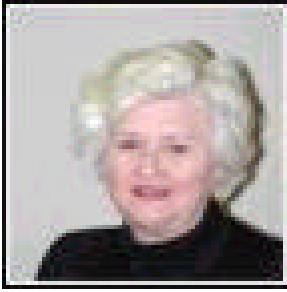
Michael Djordjevic, the organization's founder and current President is chief executive officer of Bank of Southeast Europe International, Inc. He was active in civic affairs and held a responsible position in California politics. Djordjevic was awarded the Americanism medal, the highest award bestowed upon foreign born nationals by the daughters of the American Revolution, and served as a member of the Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Centennial Commission. During the decade of the 1990s, he was actively involved with the United States Congress and State Department, as well as with the Democratic Opposition in Yugoslavia in endeavors to bring peace, stability and democracy to this troubled region. Djordjevic is also a founder and President of *Studenica Foundation*.



Nenad Vukicevic, *Executive Vice President*

Born in Jagodina, Serbia. Graduated from University of Belgrade, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, and immigrated to United States in 1984. Resides in California and specializes in computer software development technologies. Married and has three children.

Sofija Skoric, Secretary



Sofija Skoric is a Slavic Reference Librarian and the Head of Petro Jacyk Central and East European Resource Center at the University of Toronto. She graduated from the university of Belgrade, in Yugoslav Literature, obtained her M.A. Degree at McMaster University, in Russian Studies and then graduated from the University of Toronto in Library Science. She is a scholar, writer and translator. In 1996 she established the Serbian Literary Company (Toronto) in order to publish and promote books about Serbs and by Serbs.

Mirjana Samardzija, Treasurer



Her professional career encompasses close to 20 years in the area of international finance and financial business management working in the American, European and Asian markets. She received both her BA and MA degrees in International relations at the School of International Services at American University in Washington, D.C. Born in Belgrade, Mirjana immigrated to the United States as a small child in 1957.

Jasmina Vujic, Vice President



Jasmina Vujic is Associate Professor of Nuclear Engineering at the University of California at Berkeley, specializing in the development of advanced numerical methods for particle transport, reactor analysis and design, and medical application of radiation. She received BS in Electrical and Nuclear Engineering, and MS in Engineering Physics from the University of Belgrade, as well as MS and PhD in Nuclear Science from University of Michigan. Received many awards for her professional work. Organized many seminars, workshops and conferences. Member of ASWC. Born in Loznica, raised in Sabac, educated in Belgrade and Ann Arbor, MI. Lives with her family in Berkeley, California.

Olga Danilovic, Vice President



Bachelor of Law, University of Belgrade, now living in Vienna, Austria. Co-author for *Interpretation of the Serbian Governmental Administration Law*; wrote a number of articles on Public Administration and the Constitutional System which appeared in professional publications (1984-1994). Affiliations: *Yugoslav Legal Association, Serbian Legal Association; Forum Iuris*; Member of editorial boards for "Commune", "Legal Life", "Court Practice"; Co-founder and secretary of the editorial board of the periodical *Administration*; Since 1997 member of Serbian Unity Congress.

Steven Katich, Vice President

An attorney by trade, Steven Katich is a public relations and public affairs specialist. He is a partner at GBSM, a Denver-based firm with national, regional and local clients. He graduated from the George Washington University School of Law and worked for a time on Capitol Hill and for ACTION, the federal agency that oversees the Peace Corps and VISTA. He is a relative newcomer to the Serbian Unity Congress, getting involved in the organization during the NATO attack on Yugoslavia. He has since traveled to Budapest and Belgrade on behalf of the SUC and the American business community. His father's family moved to America at the turn of the century from a small village outside Novi Sad.



Edita Kronic, Vice President

Edita Kronic was born in Sarajevo and came with her parents to United States in 1971. She lives in New Jersey with her family, and is an active member of St. George Orthodox Church in Elizabeth. An economist by profession, she is the President of several tourism companies, including Select International Tours and Epicurean Journeys. She has been an active member of SUC New York Chapter since its inception in 1991. As a new member of SUC board of directors, Edita intends to concentrate on developing educational programs for Serbian children living in USA and Canada, which will focus on learning the Serbian language and culture through participation in exchange programs, North American based Serbian schools and summer camps in Serbia. She will also be working closely with organizations in Serbia on economic programs designed to stimulate growth of Serbian economy through increased involvement of Serbs from Diaspora. Edita was a member of the SUC Convention Organizing Committee, and looks forward to a great 2002 Convention in Belgrade.

Michael Bozic, Vice President

(Due to time constraints we will publish the biographies and photos later)



Nenad Janicijevic, Vice President



Kosta Papich, Vice President



Milosh Milenkovich, Past President



Vojin Joksimovich, Past President



Ljubisa Stankovich, Vice President

ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT
CANCELLED CONVENTION

The Board of Directors plans to meet on the 8th of December. At that time, definitive procedures will be established how to treat all registration, donations, payments for advertisement and the like. The next issue of the Bulletin will then announce this information.

We appreciate your understanding and patience about this problem and issue."

Organizing Committee

We wish to extend our apologies to Mr. and Mrs. Djordje Jovanovich ad Mr. and Mrs. Mihajlo Budjevac, from Washington, D.C. Their names were omitted in our Convention Report from Belgrade. The two couples were present at the SUC meetings. Mrs. Mira Jovanovich is SUC Washington Chapter President.

S.U.C. SOUTHER CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

The chapter will celebrate Slava, St. Archangel Michael, on Saturday, November 24, 2001, at 7:00 pm at St. George Serbian Orthodox Church
3025 Denver Street in San Diego.

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Jelena Kolarovich, Director

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