

EDITA KRUNIC, MEMBER OF THE SCC BUSINESS COUNCIL FROM AMERICA
OUR OWN FORCES, A CHANCE FOR SERBIA
 Establishment of Confidence

We have exceptional experts, but we do not rely on them sufficiently, we always seek salvation in foreigners. The Serbian Government should turn to the Diaspora as one of the most valuable resources. My goal is to inform and educate about the business possibilities and reforms in Serbia and not only Serbs in America but Americans as well, says the tourist expert from New York.

I am very please that the Serbian Chamber of Commerce (SCC) has decided to organize the Business Council of the Diaspora. I believe the structure is properly set, that it has enabled us to have a positive impact, through our work, experience, ties and knowledge, on the development of small and medium sized business in Serbia and on the general improvement of the economic conditions in the mother country, said **Edita Krunic** from New York, who will represent Serbian business people for the US in the Business Council.

- The essence of our program is close cooperation with people in the fatherland and the inclusion of as many Serb experts and business people for the Diaspora in the development of Serbia as possible. We have exceptional experts in the sphere of medicine, electronics, law, finances, tourism, agriculture, machine-building, trade... We do not rely on them sufficiently. We always seek salvation in foreigners. Serbs should help Serbs and they should always have confidence in one another.

Our interlocutor believes that the Business Council of the Diaspora of the SCC, expected to be constituted in Belgrade July 22 and 23, can do a lot through organized and team work even though, in her opinion, "people in Serbia do not have much confidence in the Diaspora".

- Generally speaking, we who are outside the country are also not overly inclined to invest the knowhow, patience and money in long-term development programs. We must no longer view one another with mistrust. We belong to the same nation. True, we have not traditionally cherished close and warm relations between Serbs outside the country and in the country., However, just as the time has come for many other changes, so the perception we have of one another should be changed as well, assesses **Edita Krunic**.
What does this mean from the viewpoint of the SCC

Business Council of the Diaspora?

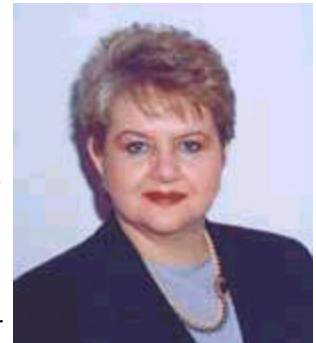
- If our initiatives are welcomed and accepted in Serbia, if a climate for joint work is created, if crucial people and institutions offer assistance, our work will be far more fruitful. A large number of our people living in America wish to return to their homeland, to raise their children in Serbia, to start business there and begin working. Th Serbian Government should turn to the Diaspora and our people living abroad as one of the most valuable resources it has.

According to **Edita Krunic**, "Serbia has an enormous potential to become a socially sound and economically progressive community.

- Our people are diligent, intelligent and very resourceful. Serbs outside the country always prove to be among the most successful and most productive workers. Efforts should be made to have these talents express themselves at home as well. And this can be done only when, in a legal system, people occupy positions because of their knowledge, work and qualifications, and when the law enables promotion through honest work.

What kind of obstacles will you be facing and how do you intend to overcome them?

- A journalist of the *New York Times* recently called Serbia "a state of a constant catastrophe." It is crucial to create an atmosphere in the country that will guarantees to foreign



institutions and investors. For the renewal and reconstruction of Serbia, for positive changes in the economy and standard of living, it is necessary to invest considerable capital, both financial and intellectual. A banking, legal and business atmosphere enabling the launching and efficient realization of key projects should be created.

What is your priority goal in the Business Council of the Diaspora?

- Just as Serbia needs a political lobby, we also need an economic lobby in America, both among the Diaspora and for American businessmen. My goal is to provide information and educate about the possibilities and reforms in Serbia, through work with the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, not only Serbs, but Americans as well. I am afraid that everything will boil down to visiting and examining the market until the political situation in the country calms down, even though we have quite a few important projects from the Diaspora, including the construction of the multi-purpose "Diaspora Center", a multi-million project in the vicinity of Belgrade, which has been halted until the political situation stabilizes, and until numerous laws are passed.

Are our people in the Diaspora truly willing seriously to invest their hard earned money and who can be counted on?

- Our work in the Business Council is yet to begin. I am for positive thinking and I am optimistic that this time the Serbs will manage to persevere, that a realistic and thorough vision would be created which will strengthen Serbia and lead it towards prosperity and a better future. Our people in the Diaspora wish to help, and they have helped substantially. However, my stand, and the stand of the Serbian Unity Congress which I belong to, is that the times of "helping" are

over. If we truly want lasting cooperation and investments from the Diaspora, we have to create conditions for joint cooperation, where the motivation will be profit and business efficiency. Actually, it is necessary to develop in Serbia the concept that the only real and long-term cooperation is the one in which all the sides win and jointly benefit.

Since you are a well-known expert in tourism, what are, in your opinion, Serbia's prospects in this respect?

-I believe that Serbia has excellent tourist potential, although I am afraid that, if the planned and long-term strategy of tourism development is not applied, we will not be able to make use of the potentials that we have. For over 15 years now, I have been the owner of several tour-operated companies in America, dealing with business tourism, the organization of fairs, congresses, business meetings, as well as organizing tours of special interest, such as religious tours, cruises, wine-gourmet tours, sports tourism etc. Prior to the disintegration of SFRY, my company "Select International" was one of the leading American companies on the Yugoslav tourist scene. We had a branch office in Dubrovnik and used to bring over 10,000 Americans annually. True, our clients rarely visited Serbia and Belgrade, but we are now trying to change this. And we are once again the first tourist company that will be present in Serbia and will offer foreign guests services of receptive tourism in a new manner. We have already created a tourist program for Serbia, and we brought several smaller groups of Americans to Belgrade this spring. We are now opening a branch office in Belgrade. Coming in the autumn are the first groups of Serbs born in America, who mostly do not speak Serbian, but who are very excited about finally being able to visit the country of their ancestors.

Radmila Loncar - "Vreme" 07/03.02

MEASUREMENTS OF POWER		
<i>(Source: The Economist, June 29, 2002)</i>		
	<u>UNITED STATES</u>	<u>THE WORLD</u>
	<u>PERCENT</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Global Population 6 Billion	4.7	95.3
Global GDP \$31.4 Trillion	31.2	68.8
Global Defense Spending \$811.5 Billion	36.3	63.7
Global Spending on R&D \$652.7 Billion	40.6	59.4
Global Cinema Box-Office Revenues \$18.2 Billion	83.1	16.9

EDITORIAL

IS EUROPE A CHRISTIAN CONTINENT?

Europe's Christian heritage is being questioned again. According to Associated Press report (June 22, 2002) "a debate is brewing over whether any reference to religion should be part of European new Constitution." The report goes on to state that "even though more than three out of four Europeans consider still themselves Christian" various humanistic and atheistic groups insist it would be inappropriate to single out Christianity in "a modern pluralistic society." According to Keith Wood, executive director of Britain's National Secular Society, "promoting any one faith as pre-eminent will inevitably lead sooner or later to resentment."

How further can Europe and her Western culture be debased?

Christianity for Europe has obviously been more than a system of views and beliefs; it has been her way of life and her mainspring of political, civil and economic liberties. Historically, Europe's ascendancy was derived from the basic Christian creed, which has set limits on all authoritarian human institutions and leaders. This creed has acknowledged that only God is the source of true human freedom and purpose. Thus, all human power, whether centered in a leader, or state, or church, or school, or courts, is derivative and subject to God's laws. However, these European core values have been steadily emasculated by the insidious advent of scientific materialism and modern statism. These forces have captured her major institutions and intellectual elites. Hence, the European Union is but an instrument of statism disguised as the "rule of law" which in a secular culture means the rule of those who determine and administer the law.

Cultures or societies which neglect or refuse to defend and further their religious base are ultimately dying. Europe and her Western Culture stand now upon the verge of physical destruction, having already been metaphysically debased.

EUROPE'S RELIGIONS 1991 STATISTICS BASED ON TOTAL EUROPEAN POPULATION OF 730 MILLION INCLUDING RUSSIA

	NUMBER (in millions)	PERCENT
CHRISTIANITY	558.7	76.5
NON-RELIGIOUS	108.0	14.8
ISLAM	31.4	4.3
ATHEISM	23.4	3.2
OTHER	3.1	0.4
JUDAISM	2.5	0.3
BUDDHISM	1.5	0.2
HINDUISM	1.4	0.2

Awards of Blago fund presented to graduates of the Faculty of applied arts



Dositejeva 12

Report from the Belgrade Office of the Serbian Unity Congress



On Monday, July 8, 2002, an exhibition, staged by the graduates of the Faculty of Applied Arts, was opened in the Belgrade Museum. For the fourth time in a row, the fund BLAGO of the Serbian Unity

The jury which decided on the prizes included Professor Mirjana Isakovic, Professor Ratko Lalic, Assistant Professor Aleksandar Mijatovic (staff of the Faculty of Applied Arts) and Mrs Slavka Draskovic, Director of the SUC Belgrade Office. Mrs Draskovic presented the prizes to these young artists in the name of the Fund BLAGO at a suitable celebration prepared for the graduation of another generation of students and for the opening of the exhibition of their degree pieces. Prof. Srbijanka Turajlic, Deputy of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Serbia, opened the festivity attended by several thousands people and presented in media.

Congress presented pecuniary awards to the best students among the graduates. This year, the awarded students were:

- First Prize amounting to \$500 - **Aleksandar Vac** (ceramics/pottery),
- Second Prize amounting to \$300 – **Jelena Crncevic** (painting), and
- Third Prize amounting to \$200 – **Ivan Gracner** (applied sculpture).

The Serbian Unity Congress established the Fund BLAGO with the aim to preserve, archive and nourish great Serbian spiritual and cultural heritage, and it considers the young artist - who should continue that heritage in the future - to be one of its best investments.

"Nikola Tesla Day" on July 10th

www.teslasociety.com



NIKOLA TESLA DAY

Tesla Memorial Society of New York and its General Secretary Dr. Ljubo Vujovic has initiated a procedure in FR Yugoslavia to recognize July 10, the day when Nikola Tesla was born 146 years ago, as the Nikola Tesla Day. This is the first step in the final goal to have July 10 recognized by the United Nations as the World's Day of Science, Prosperity, and

Peace among the nations and religions.

that he "invented the twentieth century" or "the twenty first century", or even that he "invented the future".

Dr. James Corum, one of the scientists continuing Tesla's work, summarizes poetically Tesla's contributions: "The electrical power flowing from our great generators, illuminating our vast cities, dispelling the inky blackness of the night, and the telecommunications cohesively linking the homes and businesses of our civilization, across continents, around the globe and through the distant reaches of space - these are all monuments testifying to the successful life of this little known, but uniquely admirable, scientist, inventor, engineer, futurist, and citizen of the world."

Tesla invented and created the polyphase alternating current energy transmission system of motors and generators that powers the world. He also invented apparatus for radio transmission based on the use of resonance and a kind of spread-technique. Among the more than 700 of Tesla's other inventions/patents are the rotating magnetic field principle, polyphase alternating-current system, induction motor, wireless communication, fluorescent lights, use of high-frequency (h.f.) currents in medicine and remote control.

Nikola Tesla was born in 1856 in Smiljane, Lika. His father Milutin was a Serbian Orthodox priest, and mother Djuka a self-taught inventor of many household items. Tesla was a visionary genius whose sometimes radical ideas established the basis for everything that now powers our world with energy and information. Without his inventions the widespread electrification that touched the majority of people on the planet would not have been possible. In writings about Tesla, one often finds statements such as

Tesla was also a visionary thinker, who conceived

many ideas, some controversial, which are related to several of today's mainstream technologies ranging from wireless communication systems, radar, television broadcasting, robotics, computers, faxes, and even the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative.

Recognized by his peers and neglected by his modern successors, Tesla's life illustrates a working definition of the word success. However, he is still not recognized for many of his fundamental inventions. Such is the case of radio for which even the U.S. Supreme Court in 1943 determined Tesla as inventor. Tesla is one of only two Americans to have a unit of electrical measurement named in his honor. In 1956, Tesla's peers at the Electrotechnical Conference in Munich acknowledged his monumental contributions to science by designating his name to represent a unit of magnetic measurement. Thus, the "tesla" (T) became the Unit of Magnetic Flux Density in the MKS system. Throughout the entire history of electrical science only fifteen men worldwide have received this honor. The IEEE, which considers Tesla one of the 12 "apostles" of electrical science, continues to offer an annual prize in the field of power engineering in his name.

The initiative by the Tesla Memorial Society of New York to recognize July 10 as the Nikola Tesla Day, was widely supported. Many organizations sent the letters of support to the President of the FR Yugoslavia Dr Vojislav Kostunica and Federal Prime Minister Dragisa Pesic: the ETF Belgrade Alumni and Friends Association of USA, the

Serbian Unity Congress, S.P.A.S.S. International Foundation, Inc., Yugoslav Association of Engineers and Technicians, Yugoslav Society for Microwave Theory and Technique, the University of Nis Faculty of Electronic Engineering, Nikola Tesla Museum in Belgrade, and others.

The Diaspora Council, an advisory body of the Federal Government of FR Yugoslavia, has decided on its 3rd meeting held in Belgrade from July 5 - 6, 2002, to support this initiative, and sent a letter to the Federal Prime Minister Dragisa Pesic asking that the Federal Government recognizes July 10 as the Nikola Tesla Day. Both, President Kostunica and Federal Prime Minister Pesic have supported this initiative, and the Federal Government will consider this question on its next regular meeting to be held on July 18, 2002.

Many manifestations were held in Belgrade on July 10, 2002, in honor of Nikola Tesla. The Nikola Tesla Museum held an Open House and showed several documentaries: "Nikola Tesla - The Genius Who Lit the World" by Dr Ljuba Vujovic, and "Tesla - Master of Lightning" by Robert Uth. The Pedagogical Museum has opened an exhibition "Nikola Tesla in Belgrade in 1892". Radio Belgrade 1 emitted "Teslino poselo - Tesla Gathering" from 9 - 10 am. The host was Miodrag Novakovic with participation of Prof. Dr Jasmina Vujic from University of California at Berkeley, professors Bozidar Radenkovic and Gordana Milosavljevic from Faculty of Organizational Sciences in Belgrade, and Dr Marija Sesic, Director of Nikola Tesla Museum.

Reported by **Jasmina Vujic**, July 14, 2002



FUND BLAGO CONTINUES TO FINANCE RESTORATION OF MILESEVA MONASTERY FRESCOES

Fund Blago of the Serbian Unity Congress continues its work on the preservation and restoration of the most beautiful frescoes of our medieval art. The financial aid provided last year, allowed for the urgent restoration of the renowned frescos White Angel and the Last Supper. The next valuable item to be preserved is part of a unique wall fresco known as The Nemanjics Procession which is composed of several pictures. The Procession is located above the main external entrance in the Mileseva Monastery and comprises historical portraits of the rulers of the Nemanjic family, starting from Nemanja through Saint Sava, Stefan the First-Crowned, King Radoslav, and finally to the very endower of the Mileseva Monastery, King Vladislav.

The Mileseva Monastery, located some 7km from Prijepolje, is thought to have some of the world's most beautiful and most famous frescoes. First examinations in the summer of 1995 indicated that urgent work was needed on the frescoes which were badly deteriorating. Another serious problem apparently was that the frescoes were below a dark, half-transparent centuries-old layer-patina which now adheres to their surface together with hard atmosphere dust. That thin layer completely changes the actual appearance and real value of the images and paintings, concealing the intensity and proportions of the colors, some of which have darkened or disappeared completely. Also, the value

of the glaze could not be seen at all. In such circumstances, only the most experienced connoisseurs can "see" the original creation of the master-painter. After renovation, these frescoes will glow in their true colors

The extraordinarily beautiful frescoes had been left deteriorating until 2002 mainly because of Serbia's limited financial circumstances. That year, Mr. Nenad Vukicevic, Vice-President of the Serbian Unity Congress and President of the Fund Blago while making a CD on the Mileseva Monastery learned of the predicament affecting the wall frescoes The Last Supper and White Angel. Since then, the SUC Fund Blago became the sponsors of these pieces of the Serbian culture and art. Continuation of the preservation and restoration efforts now underway is of great importance for our cultural heritage.

NEW EXPEDITION OF FUND BLAGO FILMING OF THE KING'S CHURCH AT STUDENICA

In the past three years, the Serbian Unity Congress made, through its Fund Blago, the best electronic archives of two Serbian monasteries: Mileseva and Ravanica. These presentations comprise virtual tours through the interior and vicinity of these monasteries, and the exhibition of the entire body of frescos from the dome to the floor with all the

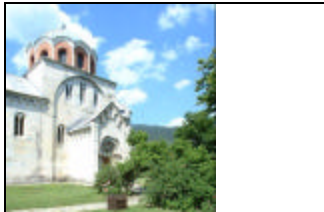
details.

In June of 2002, the Fund Blago team continued its work by archiving the King's Church at Studenica. Material is right now being processed and the presentation is expected to be available on the Serbian Unity Congress' Internet site by the end of July.



It was a real pleasure being the guest of the fraternity of the Studenica Monastery. The monks were extraordinary hosts, going out of their way and routine to accommodate different set-ups in the church. The overall impression was that everyone participated in something very important in the protection of the heritage of the one of the oldest Serbian monasteries and its presentation to the world.

Presentations of the Mileseva and Ravanica Monasteries respectively could be found at the BLAGO site <http://blago.serbianunity.net/>



YOU CAN HELP
SERBIAN UNITY CONGRESS
BY APPLYING FOR THE

SERBIAN HERITAGE CREDIT CARD



The Serbian Unity Congress is pleased to announce that it has formed an agreement with MBNA Bank to produce a Master credit card directed specifically at Serbian people. The card will be known as the **Serbian Heritage** credit card.

EASY WAY TO DONATE AND SUPPORT OUR PROJECTS!

For every account that is opened and charged at least once, Serbian Unity Congress will get \$15.00.

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Subsequently, for each purchase on the card the Bank will give to our organization approximately 1% of the order.

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2003 St. Sava Essay Competition

- I Muska - Belgrade - Mike Djordjevich
- II Muska - Belgrade - Boba Stefanovich
- III Muska - Belgrade - Dr. Mihailo Petrovich
- IX Beogradska - Dr. R. Pantovich
- Srem Karlovci - George Kolarovich
- Becej - Alex Dzigurski
- Srbobran - Jelena Kolarovich

(2002)

Mionica - Dragoslav Georgevic

When Will the Diaspora Obtain the Right to Vote



One of the leading projects of the Serbian Unity Congress is the endeavor to have the Law on Elections regulate the rights of Serbs living abroad.

Jasmina Vujic, SUC vice-president, in her capacity as the vice-president of the Diaspora Council, has requested that the diaspora participate in the work of the Constitutional Commission. Even though there are over 3.5 million Yugoslav citizens living abroad, the Constitutional Commission did not allow representatives of the diaspora to participate in the writing of the Constitutional Charter which is also to regulate the electoral rights for the Upper and Lower Houses of the Federal Parliament. Mr. Gavrilovic, a Commission member, proposed that the Diaspora Council present its proposals in written form, so that issues such as the problem of citizenship, the right to vote and other rights would be incorporated into the Charter.

As part of these activities, Jasmina Vujic and Slavka Draskovic, director of the SUC Belgrade office, had meet

ings with jurists and experts for the purpose of formulating the problem and finding a road to the resolution of one of Serbia's acute issues.

The Belgrade office was also visited by Mr. Miloš Todorovic, member of the administrative board of CESID (Center for Democracy and Free Elections), who spoke of previous experiences, problems and possible solutions in this regard. CESID is a non-governmental organization that played a major role in monitoring the elections of 2000. This organization has also prepared a proposal of the law on elections which was promoted in April this year and forwarded to all relevant political factors in Serbia. This proposal is the basis for drafting the Republic of Serbia's new law on elections, being worked on by the Republican Legislation Secretariat in charge of presenting this draft law to the Serbian Government.

At the end of last year, while the drafting of the law was under way, the Serbian Unity Congress offered CESID its comments and proposals and part of these proposals were included in the draft law.

SERBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CREATES A DIASPORA BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD - Web address: www.pks.co.yu

ON JULY 22 AND 23 THE SERBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN BELGRADE CREATED A FORMAL BODY CALLED DIASPORA BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD. THE IDEA TO CREATE A GROUP OF 10 REPRESENTATIVES FROM SERBIA AND TEN FROM COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE THE GREATEST REPRESENTATION OF SERBS WAS BORN A YEAR AGO, AND APPROVED BY THE SERBIAN GOVERNMENT THIS PAST SPRING. THE DIASPORA BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD WILL HAVE A BROAD MANDATE AND WILL REPRESENT THE SERBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ABROAD, WITH ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION ON BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, NEW LAWS AND REFORMS IN SERBIA. COUNCIL MEMBERS WILL ALSO ADVISE THE SERBIAN GOVERNMENT IN TERMS OF ALL RELEVANT NEW LAWS AND REFORMS WHICH EFFECT FOREIGN BUSINESS INVESTMENTS. THE ADVISORY COUNCIL HAS ADOPTED A DETAILED PROGRAM AND CREATED A PLATFORM WHICH CAN BE ACCESSED THROUGH THE SERBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WEB SITE: www.pks.co.yu

THE USA IS REPRESENTED BY SERBIAN UNITY CONGRESS BOARD MEMBER **EDITA KRUNIC** FROM NEW JERSEY.

OTHER MEMBERS ARE: Miroљub Taric, Australia; Miodrag Simic, Austria; Bratislav Zivanovic, France; Radisa Jeftovic, Italy; Nik Anicic, Republic of South Africa; Mile Maric, Canada; Nikola Stankovic, Germany; Veselin Cesarov, Switzerland; Dusan Radic, Sweden.

The Members from Homeland are: Milan Kljajevic, ASSISTANT FEDERAL MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS; Dragan Domazet, MINISTRY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SCIENCE, Aleksandar Gracanac, ACTION FUND DIRECTOR; Gordana Dostanic, BELGRADE STOCK EXCHANGE; Dusan Zivkovic, AGENCY FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENTS AND EXPORT PROMOTION; Nenad Penezic, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES AGENCY SECRETARY; Slobodan Radulovic, PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE FOR THE DIASPORA; Ljubomir Mihajlovic, gen. MANAGER OF KOMERCIJALNA BANKA; Marko Stojanovic, DIRECTOR, BELGRADE FREE ZONE; Mr Goran Vlaovic, SERBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

FOR ALL INFORMATION REGARDING SERBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THE USA PLEASE CONTACT **EDITA KRUNIC** BY EMAIL AT sales@select-intl.com

Members of S.U.C. in Yugoslavia and Diaspora Organize Professional Women to Build Yugoslavia's Future

VIZIJA I AKCIJA
(Vision and Action)

SUC members and other professional women in Yugoslavia have joined to organize women of Yugoslavia on a national level in order to increase and improve the way women contribute to the betterment of their nation. On July 12, 2001 the non-governmental organization, NGO, **Vizija I Akcija, VIA**, was born. VIA is operating with S.U.C. support and other donors.

VIA plans to put to work the most concentrated sources of women's capabilities, the professional women of Serbia via an organizational infrastructure designed to maximize results during Serbia's transition. To achieve its mission, VIA will establish women's professional associations, create networking mechanisms and multidisciplinary inter-association approaches to problem solving, and build a broad base of support among women with its own publications and web site as well as its members' own PR channels.

Organization - Its organization will have headquarters in Belgrade with regional centers in major cities of Serbia.

- Membership -- VIA's membership will span the globe
- A Diaspora Network - Diaspora membership will serve as a bridge to international organizations and
- Women's Association Council - The inter-association council will prioritize issues and approaches to resolving them.
- An International Advisory Board -- This body will guide and mentor the organization.
- A VIA Professional Resource Center - The Center will provide a library of professional journals, books, etc, work shop and conference facilities, Internet access, and employment resources to VIA members.

YOU CAN JOIN TOO and be a part of this great project to increase the impact of every person's effort in the progress of their nation. We are looking for Diaspora women who want to be involved by participating, donating or simple membership.



INTERESTING TIMES, INTERESTING CHALLENGES

The SERBIAN UNITY CONGRESS 12th ANNUAL CONVENTION (October 4-6, Chicago)

PRESENTS: "NEW BEGINNING "

After Serbia's October 5 Belgrade Revolution hopes ran unrealistically high that all would be well in very short order. Things are getting better but all is not well. International aid is dribbling in, too little and too late while international pressures persist in many unconstructive ways. The situation of Serbs West of the River Drina and in Kosovo remains unsettled. There are many new very intelligent players in the leadership but the leadership is not united, and the disunity is hindering progress. The new government has yet to make the right overtures to enlist the Diaspora to help the country and that help is indispensable for many obvious reasons. The people are frustrated and exhausted. **What can we do?** The Serbian Unity Congress is responding to the new challenges like no other organization. Your ideas and comments will have an impact on our new role.

JOIN US at the CONVENTION!

You have an important role! Our people still need us. Let us find new ways to build new bridges to our homeland.

IDEAS, DIALOGUE, CONSTRUCTIVE PLANNING, NETWORKING, MUSIC, FUN!!!

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Al-Qaeda's Links in the Balkans

By Jamie Dettmer

Since Sept. 11 the U.S. intelligence services have been working hard to uncover links between Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist network and other Islamic groups throughout the world. And the Bush administration has not been slow to advertise connections once discovered or to demand cooperation from local authorities in order to disrupt the links.

According to President George W. Bush, the war on terror should be seamless and Washington expects all countries to assist in fighting the scourge of terrorism. In return, Bush has promised the United States will "support and reward governments" that, in his words, "make the right choices."

But when it comes to Kosovo and Macedonia the seamless approach appears to be at risk of unraveling. The Balkans is one area where the United States apparently would prefer to step lightly for fear of upsetting the tenuous peace. U.S. and NATO intervention was required to establish — and now to enforce — that peace in the republics of the former Yugoslavia.

Or so claim Macedonian officials, who argue they are not receiving the rewards they deserve. They maintain that the United States and the European Union (EU) were wrong to push for concessions to be granted last year to ethnic Albanians and their guerrilla army, which mainly is composed of fighters from the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

The Macedonians say the Bush administration has shown little interest in pursuing links they have uncovered between al-Qaeda and groups allied with Albanian separatists, who continue to foment trouble in northern Macedonia with frequent incursions from neighboring Kosovo. Macedonian intelligence has been in regular contact with the CIA and the FBI. Both have been supplied with details of the al-Qaeda relationship with militant Albanian nationalist groups in neighboring Kosovo, which is under U.N.

protection, and Macedonia, which was spared a civil war last year following NATO brokering a peace agreement between the majority Macedonians and minority ethnic Albanians.

Intertwined Albanian groups in the region, most of them closely aligned with organized-crime syndicates, have as their objective the carving out of what they call "Greater Albania" — an area that includes 90,000 square kilometers (36,000 square miles) of Kosovo, Greece, Macedonia, Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro.

In the spring, Macedonian officials provided U.S. National Security Council (NSC) aides with a 79-page report on al-Qaeda activity in the area. The report, which was compiled by Macedonia's Ministry of the Interior, lists the names of al-Qaeda-linked fighters and outlines the roles of two units, one numbering 120 and the other 250, in northern Macedonia.

The Macedonians say the units are based in the Kumanovo-Lipkovo region of their country. As well as being composed of Macedonian and Kosovar Albanians, they say the units also number fighters from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Jordan and Chechnya, some of whom were trained in al-Qaeda-run camps in Afghanistan. The Macedonians seized a video made by one of the so-called "mujahideen," a Turk named Ramzi Adem, showing the activities of the foreign fighters. The 120-man unit is led by Selimi Ferit, an Albanian born in the Macedonian capital of Skopje.

Macedonian sources say the presence of dozens of al-Qaeda fighters in the region should be viewed with alarm by Washington and the EU. Private security experts concur that they could pose a threat to U.S. and NATO forces stationed in Kosovo and Macedonia and even in Bosnia, where Afghan veterans are believed to have sought safe haven.

Copies of the Macedonian report, which was leaked to Insight, also were

supplied to the FBI and the CIA. "Officials at the NSC and CIA were polite and received the information with thanks, but little else has happened," says a Macedonian official who requested anonymity. There also has been little action on terror-linked money-laundering schemes the Macedonians say they have monitored involving bank accounts in Switzerland and Germany.

U.S. government sources dispute the Macedonian characterization, arguing that indeed they have followed up any information supplied by Skopje, with the names being run through Immigration and Naturalization Service computers to see if any of the listed fighters ever had entered the United States. Some administration officials caution that Macedonian Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski, a former student revolutionary, and Interior Minister Ljube Boskovski are overplaying the al-Qaeda links with the aim of persuading the West to drop pressure on the Macedonians to implement political reforms agreed to in last year's NATO-brokered cease-fire.

They also worry that the Macedonian prime minister, who heads a coalition government made up of Macedonians and Albanians, risks losing a parliamentary election set for the autumn and is intent on inflaming nationalist sentiments on both sides. One fear is that Georgievski will stoke inter-Albanian rivalries — there recently have been shoot-outs between rival Albanian groups in the town of Tetovo — and use that feuding as a reason for postponing the vote.

Nonetheless, whatever the motives of the current Macedonian government for pushing the al-Qaeda ties now, U.S. and Western intelligence sources acknowledge privately that Albania and Kosovo attracted interest from bin Laden in the late 1990s and that Albania continues to serve as a money-raising center for al-Qaeda.

Apart from sending fighters to aid the KLA during the struggle in Kosovo with

the Serbs, al-Qaeda is believed to have contributed funds to Albanian separatists and to have established strong links with Albanian Mafia leaders, who aid the formally disbanded but still existing KLA in schemes to raise money through narco-trafficking, prostitution and gun-running [see "Heroin and Sex Trade Fuel Albanian Nationalism," Aug. 13, 2001].

The Albanian Mafia controls the major Balkans narcotics-smuggling route that runs through Turkey, Bulgaria, Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. Although evidence remains sketchy of al-Qaeda involvement in narcotics, that isn't the case for the former Taliban regime in Afghanistan that profited from the heroin trade.

According to Fatos Klosi, the head of Albanian intelligence, a major network of bin Laden supporters was established in 1998 in Albania under the cover of various Muslim charities. The network served as a springboard for operations in Europe. Klosi claimed the network had "already infiltrated other parts of Europe from bases in Albania through traffic in illegal immigrants, who

have been smuggled by speedboat across the Mediterranean to Italy in large numbers."

Yossef Bodansky, director of the House Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, claimed in his book, *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America*, that the Albanian network was headed by Muhammad al-Zawahiri, the engineer brother of Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Egyptian who mentored bin Laden and, according to the United States, was the brains behind Sept. 11 and other attacks.

U.S. intelligence sources have confirmed to *Insight* that dozens of KLA fighters trained in bin Laden camps in Afghanistan and that some of them returned to fight with al-Qaeda and the Taliban after the Sept. 11 terror attacks against New York City and Washington.

So why the cautious approach in the Balkans? "The murky complexity of Balkan politics makes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict look simple," confides a private-sector security expert influential with the Bush administration.

"We backed the KLA in the fight against Serbia and we have to take care not to open up a can of worms."

Macedonian officials maintain that Western governments, including the United States, appear determined to downplay the al-Qaeda links with Albanian separatists because to highlight the ties could provoke public disaffection with NATO's continued presence in Kosovo. It also might prompt questions about why the West isn't taking a harder line with militant Albanians.

James Phillips, a research fellow at the Washington-based Heritage Foundation, takes a more benign view. "Al-Qaeda has a modus operandi of helping Islamic groups such as the KLA and of infiltrating to become a major influence within them. The Bush administration may well not be ignoring the Macedonian information, but it is much more concerned about al-Qaeda threats in the U.S. than in the Balkans. In short, the White House may have opted for the tactical approach of laying off in the short term."

UN in Kosovo trampling on basic rights - watchdog

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia, July 12 (Reuters) - A watchdog set up by Kosovo's United Nations administration has savaged its creator, warning that the Yugoslav province is in danger of becoming "a human rights black hole."

Kosovo's Ombudsperson Institution, an independent body headed by a Polish lawyer, said in a report that the U.N. mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) neither respects fundamental human rights nor conforms to democratic principles.

The annual report by the agency, which has a mandate to investigate rights abuses and monitor U.N. work, says Kosovo faces an unenviable future if the mission does not take action to address the problems it has identified.

"This future looks bleak indeed, as Kosovo must prepare itself to be a 'human rights black hole' in Europe and in the world," concludes the report, published this week.

Although legally still part of Serb-dominated Yugoslavia, Kosovo was placed under an interim U.N. administration in June 1999 after NATO's March-to-June air war to end Serb repression of the province's ethnic Albanian majority.

Ombudsman Marek Nowicki's report says UNMIK's mission chief, currently German diplomat Michael Steiner, has removed candidates from electoral lists and overruled international judges to keep people in jail.

The report says international civilians and peace-keeping soldiers have been given immunity from local legal

action.

"UNMIK is not structured according to democratic principles, does not function in accordance with the rule of law, and does not respect important international human rights norms," it says.

"The people of Kosovo are therefore deprived of protection of their basic rights and freedoms three years after the end of the conflict by the very entity set up to guarantee them."

The report describes life as "very difficult" for minorities such as Kosovo's Serbs, the targets of numerous acts of violence and intimidation since June 1999.

U.N. officials were muted in their public reaction to the report but made clear they believed it was unfair to criticise them for not having turned an underdeveloped, divided, postwar society into a beacon of human rights standards in three years.

"It is a place in a state of transition," UNMIK's director of public information, Simon Haselock, said. "Some would say that Kosovo is analogous to somewhere... still in a state of emergency."

Eager to show it can tolerate criticism, the United Nations said it had extended Nowicki's mandate for another two years.

Bosnia's new colonial governor

Paddy Ashdown is turning its elected leaders into his ciphers

David Chandler

The Guardian - July 9, 2002

At the end of May, Paddy Ashdown assumed his new post as Bosnia's international high representative. It is a powerful job, very similar to that of a colonial governor, with the authority to sack elected presidents and prime ministers and to impose legislation by decree.

Ashdown is the fourth incumbent since the "temporary" international protectorate was established at the end of the war in 1995. No Bosnians were involved in the selection process. The appointment was decided by a group of western governments - our own lobbied for Ashdown. Thus a British politician who never managed to win power in his own country is now in charge of a foreign state. He has little experience of government responsibility and faces very different problems from those he encountered as the MP for Yeovil.

What Ashdown lacks in experience he makes up for in passion. He has adopted a fresh, media-friendly approach in his first month in office, and has been widely seen as taking a new broom to the political problems of the divided Bosnian state. In his inaugural speech he stressed the theme of "partnership": "I want the office of the high representative to be open and accessible... So, starting today, I will be spending more time out of Sarajevo, meeting people from across the country, and listening to their views."

This is exactly what Ashdown has done, holding "town hall" meetings around the country and spending hours in discussions with local dignitaries. He argues that "we need to do more to give citizens a real voice". Ashdown doesn't want to be seen as a meddling outsider, but as a true popular tribune. "I see myself not just

as a representative of the international community," he says. "I am also a servant of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

But what is the role of Bosnia's democratically elected politicians?

Ashdown alluded to this at his inauguration: "I have concluded that there are two ways I can make my decisions. One is with a tape measure, measuring the precise equidistant position between three sides. The other is by doing what I think is right for the country as a whole. I prefer the second of these."

Ashdown argues that while political parties represent the interests of the ethnic groups, it is his job to put forward the public interest, the interests of "all" Bosnians. From Ashdown's perspective, Bosnian politicians are a barrier to the pursuit of the public interest because of their allegiances. He argues that the problems of Bosnia are in large part down to there being too many politicians and too much "politics". Speaking at a press conference in Mostar recently he stressed: "We need to worry less about constitutions... we need to spend less time talking to politicians, and more time talking to teachers, judges, businessmen and returnees."

Certain that he is a better "listener" to the concerns of the people and a better judge of their interests than elected politicians, Ashdown has wasted little time imposing himself. He sacked the deputy prime minister of the Muslim-Croat Federation, Nikola Grabovac, and forced the resignation of the Republika Srpska finance minister, Milenko Vracar, leaving the local media to speculate that more dismissals are to come.

The desire to impose the "public interest" is also reflected in more direct

forms of policy-making. Ashdown's spokesperson, Oleg Milisik, described

the new legislative process: "The high representative expects all responsible political parties to support these proposals. He reminds the parliamentary assembly that any attempt by deputies to dilute this legislation's capacity... or to delay this legislation needlessly is unacceptable."

The narrow view of legitimate politics held by Ashdown and his office risks reducing Bosnian politicians to the role of administrators of international policy decrees. Bosnian institutions are being drained of their political role because Bosnian officials are judged to be representing and negotiating on behalf of their particular ethnic constituencies, interests which are defined as conflicting with the public interest. Yet in this highly segmented society it is inevitable that elected representatives will reflect this social division. The international community is calling for a Bosnian political class that is apolitical and which therefore is disconnected from Bosnian society.

Politicians who have little representational legitimacy are unlikely to build bridges within society and lack the capacity to resolve conflicts. If there is any lesson from six years of international rule over Bosnia, it is that high-handed intervention in the political sphere has done little to help overcome insecurities and divisions, while undermining collective political bodies in which Serb, Croat and Muslim representatives can negotiate solutions.

Dr David Chandler is the author of Faking Democracy after Dayton and From Kosovo to Kabul: Human Rights and International Intervention (Pluto Press)

RELIGIOUS ARTIFACTS FROM KOSOVO AND METOHIIJA APPEAR ON EUROPEAN BLACK MARKET PLUNDER OF THE SPIRIT

Looters offer medieval Serbian treasures such as old manuscripts and icons - We have made several attempts to go out in the field and assess the situation but have been prevented by UNMIK, says Aleksandra Fulgosi-Stojanovic of the Coordinating Center for Kosovo and Metohija

By Radmila Loncar

Following three years of systemic destruction of every centuries-old testimonial of Serbian Orthodox existence in Kosovo and Metohija, in the past few months, religious artifacts have begun to surface on the European black market. Old manuscripts and other rare items, as well as priceless Serbian medieval treasures originating from Kosovo and Metohija, are being illegally sold. The first instances of such crimes have already been registered in Greece, Germany and Slovenia.

"Instead of performing the duties with which he was charged and protecting the Orthodox bishop's palace and the Orthodox cathedral in Prizren, as well as the church treasures entrusted to him, a professional soldier betrayed the trust of KFOR international peacekeeping forces and behaved like a common criminal. He stole an extremely valuable icon from the church and several other items of lesser value. As a result he was sentenced to one year of probation by the court in Cottbus near Berlin." Thus reported the "Berliner Morgen Post" on 15 March 2002; however, the article entitled "Professional soldier loots church" failed to name the thief who was sentenced. Nikola Zivkovic, our well-known historian from Germany, informed "Vesti" of this news.

Smugglers in Greece

In December of last year, in the south of Europe, more precisely, in Thessaloniki, Greece, local press wrote that "four smugglers of Serbian religious and art objects" were arrested. According to the Greek police statement, "the leader of the group, Kostas Nano, and his wife had in their possession 17 engraved books dating from the 19th century and icons dating from the 18th century, as well as other precious objects from the Roman age. The criminals confessed that they bought the items in Albania from local dealers and that all originated in Kosovo and Metohija."

A third similar crime, "Vesti" learned from the Office for Combat against Organized Crime of the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs, was recently uncovered in Slovenia when local police arrested several Albanians and found them in possession of dozens of icons. Interpol was informed of the matter and later informed the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs of the case.

"The Department for the Protection of Cultural Treasures within the Coordinating Center for Kosovo and Metohija has received absolutely no official information. We know that, according to UN Security Council Resolution 1244, the UN civil authority in the Province is UNMIK, while Annex 2

states that the protection of cultural monuments and Orthodox churches is the exclusive responsibility of KFOR. We have made several attempts to go out in the field and assess the situation but have been prevented by UNMIK," says Aleksandra Fulgosi-Stojanovic of the Coordinating Center.

Unprotected treasures

In the last month relations have been improving, she adds, and now they are in the phase of attempting to form a joint task force of UNMIK and the Coordinating Center for culture and cultural treasures; issues such as plunder of religious artifacts could also be addressed within this framework.

"Since there is an international protectorate in Kosovo and Metohija, which is guided by its own rules with respect to crimes relating to the devastation of cultural goods, as well as theft and illegal export of art and archeological objects, the situation appears very serious in several respects because UNMIK lacks good mechanisms to protect the cultural treasures in Kosovo and Metohija," explains Zeljko Jez, advisor to the head of the Office for Combat against Organized Crime in the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs, for "Vesti".

He adds: "As a result of the lack of documentation, the failure by UNMIK police to develop procedures for crimes in this area and what I can only call their complete lack of engagement, there has been an increase in the illegal export of art and cultural goods from Kosovo and Metohija. We learned of this indirectly, through our cooperation with police in neighboring countries and through Interpol because, of course, the Serbian police have no authority in the region of Kosovo and Metohija."

Another serious problem, Jez notes, is "the extremely porous border with Albania and Macedonia which no one really controls."

The Coordinating Center for Kosovo and Metohija of Serbia and Yugoslavia addressed letters to approximately fifteen foreign ambassadors in Belgrade asking them for their opinion regarding the destruction of the cultural treasures in Kosovo and Metohija. They were also called upon to assist in preventing the destruction, devastation and looting of these treasures.

"So far Italy, Greece, France, Russia and Bulgaria have shown goodwill, and we are still negotiating with Great Britain and the USA, to create joint expert teams which

would visit cultural monuments, as well as that these countries provide funding for a protection program with the assistance of our country," says Aleksandra Fulgosi-Stojanovic.

Restoration of the Pec Patriarchate

With the mediation of the Italian NGO Intersos and through the efforts of the Coordinating Center, the Serbian Ministry of Culture, and the Serbian NGO Memosina from Belgrade, which is specialized in the treasures of Kosovo and Metohija, says Aleksandra Fulgosi-Stojanovic, a project of emergency restoration for part of the frescoes in the Pec Patriarchate is already being realized. A joint team of Serbian and Italian painters is working on this, with the intent of conducting all necessary assessments in order to

propose a comprehensive program of restoration in this monastery, too.

Difficult to collect information

"The information we have about the condition of cultural monuments in Kosovo and Metohija has been provided primarily by NGO's, such as, for example, Memosina from Belgrade. The other source of information is the Serbian Orthodox Church. We are in touch with priests who are also visiting churches outside the Serb enclaves, and consequently they also inform us of the condition of those churches," says Aleksandra Fulgosi-Stojanovic.

Vesti - June 28, 2002

Yugoslavia gets money laundering law

A Yugoslav law against money laundering came into force Monday after a 10-month delay designed to give the booming grey economy time to adjust.

Banks, firms, insurance companies and stock operators now have to register details of any transaction worth more than 600,000 dinars (roughly 10,000 dollars).

"It suppresses cash business and forces easy-to-control electronic payments," Esad Zaimovic, assistant director of the Nova Banka Belgrade, told *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* dpa.

A federal committee in charge of money laundering has the authority to look into dubious transactions and order the police to investigate them.

The law sets sentences of between six months and eight years in prison for the laundering of money stemming from the grey economy or criminal trade in drugs, weapons and the like.

It was postponed in the interest of the conversion of billions of dollars' worth of foreign currency into the euro and to give businesses time to prepare for full legalization.

The Serbian grey economy accounts for more than a third of the country's gross domestic product.

Serbs have converted a total of around 3.9 billion dollars' worth of expired European currencies into the euro, 2.7 billion of it in cash, almost without controls.

Zaimovic acknowledged that organized crime might have taken advantage of the conversion period.

"The 10-month delay gave time to businesses to adjust and move from grey into legal channels," he said. "On the other hand, organized crime will want to continue working, but will now face many more problems."

Deutsche Presse-Agentur, July 1, 2002

Illinois charity suspected of bin Laden links

Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina - Benevolence International Foundation, an Illinois-based charity with broad activities in Bosnia, has emerged as a central focus of the investigation into the finances of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda terrorist network. Enaam N. Arnaout, the head of the charity, is being held without bond on the basis of newly discovered evidence that seems to link him with bin Laden, and the charity's possible role in moving money and people for al-Qaeda has comunder growing scrutiny from American investigators.

Bosnian officials said in interviews that whenever Arnaout came to Sarajevo in recent years, he would withdraw up to \$100,000 in cash from a local bank account of the charity. How the money was used is unclear.

Among the evidence discovered in police raids on March 19 of eight officers and homes associated with Benevolent International in Bosnia was a computer with its contents deleted, investigators said.

Marin Independent Journal - June 14, 2002

Admit terrorism's Islamic link

By Michael Medved

Why does the popular culture - including the movie industry - place such a powerful premium on downplaying the obvious connection between international terrorism and fanatic Islam?

Just 10 days before the government announced the detention of Jose Padilla (also known as Abdullah Al Muhhajir) on charges of plotting a "dirty bomb" explosion on American soil, Hollywood unleashed *Bad Company*, its second thriller in two weeks about nuclear terrorism in the United States.

But in the Anthony Hopkins-Chris Rock box-office dud - as in its high-profile predecessor, *The Sum of All Fears* - Islamic extremists bear no responsibility for the deadly designs against our country.

The Bad Company bad guys hail from Yugoslavia and wear colored scarves and nasty scowls to make them identifiable as they plan to explode a nuclear device under New York's Grand Central Station.

In a feeble attempt to describe the terrorist mastermind he plays, actor Matthew Marsh declares: "Dragan is a deeply troubled and very disaffected man. There were problems in his homeland during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia" - there's a classic understatement - "and some of his family was destroyed, and this fueled his psychopathic nature. He has become a freelance troublemaker and has allied himself with misfits from other countries, all crusading to cause some trouble for Uncle Sam."

Nothing trivial about real threats

Writing off terrorist threats as the work of ill-assorted "misfits" and "freelance troublemakers" trivializes the real dangers we face. The ruthless, dedicated and well-organized killers who slaughtered 3,000 Americans on Sept. 11 deserves more respect and should inspire more fear - especially when they boldly announce their intentions to kill millions more.

It makes no sense for Hollywood to create cartoonish images of terrorist villains when real-life villains are an ever-present concern.

The Sum of all Fears is an even more ridiculous distortion of reality. Its producers changed the identity of the nuclear terrorists specifically to avoid any imagery that might show Muslims in an unflattering light. In Tom Clancy's best-selling novel, on which this film is based, Palestinian fanatics lead an elaborate conspiracy; but the movie version's laughably caricatured Nazis, complete with accents and overacting reminiscent of *Hogan's Heroes*, take over the plot and make it look ridiculous.

The same pattern applies to earlier movies about terrorist schemes against the USA. In 1997's *The Peacemaker*, George Clooney and Nicole Kidman battle a chilling attempt to blow up New York with a nuclear weapon. Again the plotter came from the former Yugoslavia. *The Siege* (1998), one of the few movies to show Islamic terror attacks against America, suggests that the U.S. military represents a greater danger to the republic than any foreign enemy. The armed services impose martial law, suspend the Constitution, herd law-abiding Arab-Americans into concentration camps and display precisely the sort of racist, xenophobic over-reaction so strikingly absent since Sept. 11.

All of these films, including the most recent two, were shot before the Sept. 11 attacks, so entertainment-industry apologists claim that the de-emphasis on the Islamic nature of the terrorist threat remains more excusable.

Yet a long series of attacks before 9/11 - Beirut, Lockerbie, Khobar Towers, Somalia, the East African embassies, the USS Cole, the 1993 World Trade Center bombing - showed the single-minded determination of Muslim fanatics to murder Americans.

Young but observant

Even some schoolchildren understand the danger, but in today's climate be careful describing it. A friend of my eight-grade daughter got into trouble at their public school when a teacher asked why al-Qaeda hates us so ferociously. The 14-year-old girl accurately observed that some Muslims have always interpreted messages in the Islamic holy book, the Koran, to demand that believers conquer or kill infidels who refuse to follow the prophet. Her observation produced gasps of horror from fellow students and a stern reprimand from the teacher for her indulgence in "hate speech."

Why is it hateful for a bright teenager to speak the truth about a religious faith that was first revealed by a brilliant and successful warrior and has always thrived on violence? As Piers Paul Read, historian of the Crusaders, recently observed in *The Women's Quarterly*: "Islam, from its inception, had espoused the use of force. Where Jesus had died for his beliefs, the Prophet Mohammed had wielded a sword."

Among all major faiths, Islam stands alone in the 21st century for its frequent imposition of rigid theocratic rule - as in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, parts of Nigeria and other nations. All religions occasionally produce monstrous killers, but in Islam those monsters receive encouragement and inspiration from some prominent mainstream leaders, and thousands of the faithful openly celebrate the random slaughter of innocent civilians. It is impossible to find Christian, Jewish or Buddhist equivalents to the recent Saudi telethon that raised millions for the families of homicide bombers.

Such statements make many uncomfortable. They worry that these observations will encourage the persecution of Muslim Americans, the overwhelming majority of whom obey the law and honor our flag. But another even more powerful factor inhibits the honest discussion of Islamic ideas and helps explain Hollywood's reluctance to inden-

tify movie terrorists and Muslims.

All good, or all bad

The secular worldview that dominates American elites, including leaders of the entertainment industry, insist that all religions deserve identical respect - or similar dismissal. Conventional wisdom holds that all faiths are comparably valid, beautiful paths to the same God. Or, if the commentator feels ill-disposed toward religion, then all faiths manifest similar violent, anti-intellectual, intolerant tendencies.

The idea that any one religious approach might be especially dangerous or dysfunctional leads to unacceptable conclusions: If some religions are worse than others, then some are better than others - and perhaps even more true.

Such reasoning is a greater threat to secular relativism than any terrorist. The politically correct position therefore suggests that it's merely coincidence that most Islamic societies oppose Western ideals of liberty and progress, and it's only an accident that nearly all

mass-murdering conspirators pledge to kill Americans take their inspiration from the Koran.

Ideas - including religious ones - have consequences, and examining these consequences is the best way to judge them. Americans are mature enough to handle the inescapable truth that our daily dangers come not, as Hollywood would have it, from freelance misfits and nostalgic Nazis, but from a serious and frightening Islamic mass movement implacably devoted to our destruction.

Yugoslavia goes peacekeeping

By Douglas Hamilton

BELGRADE, June 21 (Reuters) - Three air force pilots set off for East Timor this weekend on Yugoslavia's first United Nations peacekeeping assignment in years, closing a dark chapter in which their country's military was better known for war-making.

The mission is symbolic of the gradual rehabilitation of a force that just three years ago was vilified in the West for its tactics in Kosovo, which ultimately provoked NATO's first war in over 50 years of existence.

The three flyers say they are proud to be ending their country's long exclusion from international military missions under the regime of ex-president Slobodan Milosevic.

"When was the last time Yugoslavia took part in a U.N. peace mission? I can't remember. I was too young," joked 34-year-old Captain Igor Scepanovic. "I think it was Angola in 1990," he told Reuters.

Along with Major Predrag Vladislavjevic and Major Zvonimir Stankovic, both 38, Scepanovic is a career officer who witnessed the violent breakup of the Yugoslav federation from 1991 and the U.S.-led bombing campaign over Kosovo for 11 weeks in 1999.

They coyly deflected questions about their recent combat experience. They did not, however, deny that they may have seen action in Kosovo against ethnic Albanian insurgents in 1998 or against NATO pilots in 1999.

COMBAT EXPERIENCE

The Yugoslav pilots underwent training earlier this year for their tasks in the U.N. Mission of Support in newly independent East Timor, attending a three-week U.N. course for military observers and civilian police held in Tehran.

"As a matter of fact, most of the participants at the Tehran course had combat experience," Stankovic said. "There were Sri Lankans who'd fought against the Tamil Tigers for example. It's good experience for peacekeeping."

"The main problem we learned we would encounter as UNMOs (U.N. military observers) will be to act without force or using weapons. That requires quite a change of mentality."

The officers, all volunteers selected by the Defence Ministry, agreed that it was unusual for pilots to be UNMOs -- a role usually assigned to army officers.

The choice may have more to do with political sensitivities than any special needs in East Timor: unlike Yugoslav ground forces thrown into fighting in Kosovo with paramilitary police, the air force is not tainted with allegations of war crimes.

Exasperated by a fresh Albanian insurgency in southern Serbia, NATO did give the Yugoslav army the benefit of the doubt last year and let it re-enter a border buffer zone next to Kosovo. But it was a tightly restricted operation on home soil.

Western diplomats say the Yugoslav military still has a considerable way to go before it can be considered fully reformed. They want Milosevic-era generals retired and the armed forces under full democratic civilian control.

Then the former enemy will be considered for membership of the Partnership for Peace -- an outer circle of friendly military powers grouped around the 19-member NATO and in some cases an ante-chamber for admission to the alliance itself.

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.

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Jelena Kolarovich, Director

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E-mail: jknapa@pacbell.net - visit SUC Home Page: <http://www.serbianunity.net>

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Serbian Unity Congress
PMB 352 - 17216 Saticoy Street
Van Nuys, CA 91406