



Serbian Unity Congress Opens New Office In Washington, D.C.

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SUC OPENS WASHINGTON D.C. OFFICE



It's been said that through adversity comes opportunity, and if that's true, we Serbs in the Diaspora will most certainly have plenty of chances ahead to make things better for our homeland. One such opportunity that the SUC has thankfully seized upon is the ability to at last open an office in Washington, D.C.

of the Serbian people in our nation's capital, and I'm certain we've got a winning combination.

Our members have made it clear that a presence in Washington is a top priority. Now, we've got it. Looking ahead, the challenge will be to raise the monies necessary to both maintain it and grow it, hopefully by partnering with the other Serb Diaspora organizations in the U.S., as well as those who also care deeply about our homeland. More on that in future issues of the newsletter... In the meantime, if you're planning on traveling to Washington, feel free to call our office at 202-463-8643 to arrange a visit. Steve will be glad to show our new office to you.

Steve Katich
Executive Vice President

Steve Katich wrote the President's column this month while SUC President Nenad Vukicevic worked and traveled in Kosovo.

Through the generosity of Denver member Boro Vukovich, I had the chance to travel to Washington at the end of June to assist in the transition of the Serbian Orthodox Church's Office of External Affairs to an office run by the SUC. Thankfully, the OEA's Director, Fr. Irinej Dobrijevic, had not only done a great job leading the office for three years, he had also prepared Steven Cupic to take it over for the SUC as its Interim Director. As you will read, Steve is wonderfully talented on his own - young, smart and utterly dedicated. Add to his skills the offer by Fr. Irinej to continue to collaborate on strategies to most effectively champion the cause

WASHINGTON NEWS

OUTGOING:

A Serbian Voice In Washington

By Fr. Irinej Dobrijevic, Director, OEA



Understanding Washington and our need for institutional presence is straightforward. In our Nation's Capital, meetings transpire on a daily basis among established institutions. We Serbs have a clear choice: either to interact and have our consistent, proactive voice heard, or merely react and suffer repercussions.

Essentially, are we part of the solution, or in absentia do we revert to being part of the problem?

The Office of External Affairs of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada (OEA) was opened in June 1999 in response to the overwhelming reaction of our Serbian faithful and secular organizations to the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. In the absence of diplomatic representation, the Church was deemed a most credible witness for the silenced Serbian voice. The Church, in traditional Orthodox nations, assumes representation of its people until political solutions are restored. With the Embassy of Serbia and Montenegro now functional in Washington, the voice of Serbian American citizens must serve to augment our cause.

Over the span of four years, the OEA carried out many functions: liaised with key Serbian organizations here and in the Fatherland and convened Serbian American

Leadership Conferences, putting a "face to a cause"; interacted with human rights watch groups, and institutions monitoring international religious freedom; affected vital changes in diplomatic language; secured funding for repatriation, humanitarian aid and media assistance in Kosovo; fostered awareness of ecclesiastical issues in Montenegro; and helped pass a resolution on post-NATO environmental degradation. By opening lines of communication with governments, think tanks, non-governmental and faith-based organizations, the OEA secured a solid and effective operational base in Washington.

Two successor representations will now evolve the work of the OEA to its next logical level: The Standing Conference of Canonical Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) will open a public policy office in Washington. Whereas the OEA voiced the concerns of 1.2 million Serbian Americans, SCOBA will sound the voice of 6 million Orthodox Christians in the United States. And, as a distinct Serbian presence must continue uninterrupted, the Serbian Unity Congress will facilitate the seamless re-opening of an office in Washington. The Serbian Unity Congress, together with the Serbian National Defense and the Serb National Federation, is a member of the newly created Serbian-American Congress, bearing in common the unified voice of the Serbian Diaspora.

INCOMING:

A Word From Washington

By Steven Cupic, Interim Director, SUC Washington Office

There are two lessons that the SUC Washington Office can learn from the work of the OEA. First, even a finely tuned Serbian message simply cannot stand alone; development of lasting relationships with Congressional representatives on an organized community level is absolutely critical. Second, these relationships, as they are established, provide insight into learning similar tactics that have brought previously muted voices to the forefront of advocacy initiatives.

One example is the well orchestrated and highly mobilized Albanian campaign that has firmly rooted itself in Washington through two representative organs: The Albanian American Civic League (AACL), founded by former Representative Joseph DioGuardi, is the official (and only registered) lobbying organization of the Albanian community; and the National Albanian American Council (NAAC) a not-for-profit group that advocates for Albanians through educational, economic, developmental and various other programs.

Working for the mutual benefit of Albanians both domestic and abroad, the AACL and the NAAC have activated a standing Albanian Issues Caucus in the US House of Representatives, maintained in part by Albanian American voters' participation in local politics. Recalling the convening of the House International Relations Committee hearing on House Resolution 28, calling for the independence of

Kosovo, stresses that they have developed a clear position and call on forces to back it.

This Albanian Issues Caucus, consisting of approximately 20 Representatives and chaired by Representatives Eliot Engel and Sue Kelly, is an entity that aims to advance Albanian issues on the legislative schedule. Quick demographic research shows that over half of the caucus members come from states such as New York and New Jersey, both known for large Albanian constituencies. This statistic indicates that legislators are keen on courting influential organizations in their districts. Albanian Americans therefore mobilize themselves, educate officials on Albanian positions and rally wide voter support on their behalf.

Our own positions must be equally as defined regarding Kosovo. Streamlining multiple views is paramount to informing public opinion and policymakers in a manner consistent with the many issues they confront daily. Involving the SUC membership to develop and deliver a coherent and contemporary position moves us closer to resolution of this enduring crisis. Paving the road to an impressionable reintegration into the national and international policy forum, must mark the beginning of the SUC's extensive work from our Nation's Capital.



First Official SAC Leadership Visit to Washington, D.C.

June 19, 2003

The leadership of the Serbian-American Congress, SAC, completed two days (June 17-18, 2003) of intensive meetings with the officials of the USA Government, members of Congress, Balkan experts, and non-governmental institutions. The SAC was represented by Slavko Panovic, current chairperson of the SAC and the president of Serb National Defense, Dusan Ljubenko, president of Serb National Federation, and Michael Djordjevich, Chairman of the Board of the Serbian Unity Congress. They were accompanied by Dr. Jasmina Vujic, member of the SAC Executive Board. Snezana Radjen, a journalist for *Sloboda (Liberty)* was also present at some meetings.

The purpose of these meetings was to ascertain the current position of the USA Government toward the Balkans in general, and Serbia and Montenegro in particular. Although there were some differences in points of view the discussions were constructive and friendly with a consensus that future contacts of this kind would be beneficial.



The SAC delegation met with: Paul Jones, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State; Lisa L. Tepper, Director for Southeast Europe 'National Security Council'; George V. Voinovich, US Senator from Ohio; Dr. Michael H.

Haltzel, Senior Staff Member (Senator Joe Biden), Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Dan Burton, US Congressman from Indiana; Jacques Paul Klein, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Coordinator of the UN Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNMIBH; Dr. Martin Sletzinger, Director, and Nida M. Gelazis, Program Associate and Editor, East European Studies (Woodrow Wilson Center); Daniel Serwer, Director, Peace Operations, US Institute of Peace; and Nina Bang-Jensen, Executive Director, Stephanie Frease, Director of Programs, and Eric. A. White, Analyst, Coalition for International Justice.

The group also attended receptions at the Embassy of Serbia and Montenegro, and the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Linking Diaspora and Homeland



On June 16 the SUC Belgrade Office sponsored a special business luncheon at Belgrade's Aero Club that was attended by many prominent business, association and media representatives in Serbia. Several SUC members from the U.S. also attended.

SUC President, Nenad Vukicevic made a special presentation in which he introduced the guests to SUC's mission, programs and activities and informed them of the upcoming convention. The event provided all participants with an excellent opportunity to network.

SUC invited the attending business representatives to establish ties and cooperation links with the business community in the Diaspora. Other SUC members from the U.S. participating in the luncheon



were: Mr. Djordje Jovanovic, Washington, Dr. Milovan Rakic, New York, Mrs. Dana Jekic, Washington, Dr. Jelena Vukicevic, Mrs. Ljiljana Pantovic and Ms. Ana Vrska, California. Some of the prominent guests attending were representatives from businesses Intermezzo, Simpo, Mona, Srce, HabitPharm, Alm Group, Eki Transfers, Legat, Novosadska Banka, from organizations Association of Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the International Republican Institute, Project Serbs Worldwide - Who Is Who, Projekt Rastko, and from the media Politika, Frankfurtske Vesti, Srpska Dijaspورا.

Diaspora Role in Democratic Serbia

During June, the Belgrade Office continued its active role in lobbying the New Constitution Commission for an active Diaspora expert role in the process. Agreement has been received from Mr. Vladan Batic, the Commission chairman. The Belgrade Office awaits a written confirmation of this consent and upon its receipt will invite experts in constitutional law from the Diaspora to assist in formulating concrete comments on the draft Constitution and the amendment by which the Diaspora would be included in the Constitution as a constituent part of the Serbian nation.

The Belgrade office has continued to work toward the establishment of a Ministry of the Diaspora. SUC presented the cabinet of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Zivkovic with a letter from SUC vice-president Edita Krunic, together with about a dozen press releases and published comments of

different organizations in America, Europe and Australia protesting the establishment of a Diaspora Agency, advocating instead the formation of a Ministry. A response from the prime minister stated that the issue is outside of his official role. SUC will continue to work with the Prime Minister and to pursue this issue further.

Blago Fund: Project Gracanica

The Belgrade Office finalized arrangements for a 10-member SUC-sponsored team from the U.S., Serbia and Kosovo to carry out the Blago Project Gracanica - development of a computerized virtual tour of this major Serbian monastery in Kosovo. The project will be available to all visitors to the SUC web site and will be promoted to cultural and academic centers, museums, etc. The Belgrade Office succeeded in finalizing travel arrangements -- permits and other logistical requirements - in face of challenges presented by today's political and security situation in Kosovo. Our team members traveled with many computers, digital and film cameras, other larger equipment, and massive scaffolding (bought in Belgrade) as well as a special truck obtained for its transport. The Office successfully organized the purchase and transport of the equipment to the Monastery of Gracanica. Local logistical arrangements were made possible with the assistance of the Serbia's Coordination Center for Kosovo and Metohija, headed by Dr. Nebojsa Covic. We wish to take this opportunity once again to thank Dr. Covic and the wonderful team of the Coordination Center for their assistance. Other logistics and security arrangements were made possible with the support of the U.S. State Department.



Studnica Foundation Donates Computer Center



Mr. Miroslav Djordjevich, a former student of the First Belgrade High School, formerly the First Male High School, donated a computer center to his former school through the Studnica Foundation. This computer room now makes available to the school's students 15 of the most modern computers, a laptop and a state-of-the-art projector that works with the computer equipment. The Belgrade Office coordinated the realization of this project. The future of Serbia lies in its schools, and helping them represents one of the most important tasks. We thank the Studnica Foundation and Mr. Djordjevich.

Slavka Draskovic
Director
SUC Belgrade Office

The Future Of Kosovo In the Making

The Kosovo question remains unresolved. The Albanian lobby is currently implementing a well orchestrated and financed campaign and strategy with a clear and simple objective - independence of Kosovo, with similar solutions for Albanian-populated areas of Macedonia and Greece toward the creation of a greater Albania. Nations, international bodies, and various institutions are reacting to this push trying to preempt further bloodshed and destabilization of the region. Below you will find related news excerpts, and Albanian lobby information. In the following pages you will also find two differing viewpoints on the best resolution for the Kosovo issue. What is the Serbia and Montenegro government doing to counter the campaign? We will continue coverage of Kosovo in future issues and at the Convention.



COUNCIL OF EUROPE Special Autonomy For Kosovo (Within Serbia & Montenegro)



STRASBOURG, June 23 - (Beta News) The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe proposed today that Kosovo be given the status of special autonomy with guarantees by the international community that this would not

bring into question the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro. Such a status would enable respect for minority rights within both Serbia and Kosovo. The Assembly assessed that this solution would be "possible and recommended," under the circumstances of the new situation in Serbia and Montenegro, considering the existence of numerous examples of special autonomy in Europe.

The resolution states that "Numerous European states have been successful in reducing internal tensions... by creating cultural or territorial autonomy, thus taking advantage of a wide selection of concrete measures whose purpose is the resolution of internal conflicts". It recommends that the Council of Ministers create a "legal instrument" at the European level to be based on the draft European charter on regional autonomy that would enable citizens confronted with interethnic conflicts to discover constitutional and leg-

islative solutions preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state with simultaneous respect for the rights of minorities.

US and EU Support Talks on Splitting Serbia, Kosovo

Thessaloniki, June 23 (Financial Times) The European Union and the US will back direct talks between Serbia and Kosovo that could help end one of the last outstanding disputes to dog stability and security in the Balkans. It is hoped that talks could lead to Serbia and Kosovo (Albanians) agreeing on how to eventually peacefully separate from each other, with internationally recognized borders. The talks, expected to take place next month outside the region, were agreed in principle at the recent EU-western Balkan summit in Thessaloniki, where European leaders promised the countries integration and eventual membership under stringent conditions.

The attitude at the summit reflected a growing consensus by the EU and US that any stable, long-term integration into Europe by the western Balkans will not be possible until the territorial and border disputes are resolved. Constitutionally, Kosovo is still part of Serbia. In practice, since 1999 it has been under a United Nations-sanctioned international protectorate.

ALBANIAN LOBBY And Congressional Support

The Albanian lobby is organized, strong with clear objectives. The willingness of the Albanian community to support the goals of an independent Albanian Kosovo has produced a well-financed lobby machine and a powerful group of U.S. politicians who support the Albanian objectives to such an extent that they have become members of the U.S. House of Representatives Albanian Issues Caucus. The members of the Caucus are: Judy Biggert (R-IL), Joseph Crowley (D-NY), Eliot Engel (D-NY) Co-Chair, Vito Fosella (R-NY), Luis Gutierrez (D-IL), Sue Kelly (R-NY) Co-Chair, Peter King (R-NY), Mark Steven Kirk (R-IL) Vice-Chair, Tom Lantos (D-CA), Sander Levin (D-MI), Nita Lowey (D-NY), James McGovern (D-MA), Michael McNulty (D-NY), James Moran (D-VA), Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), Donald Payne (D-NJ), Steven Rothman (D-NJ), Jose Serrano (D-NY), Edolphus Towns (D-NY).

Is your Representative a member of the Albanian Issues Caucus?

SUC DIALOGUE: The Future of Kosovo

In the June issue of the SUC Bulletin our readers were asked to select the best one of four possible solution scenarios for Kosovo and explain the reasons for their selection. SUC also solicited a viewpoint from a former U.S. Government official. The scenarios included: I. Independence for Kosovo; II. Self-Determination with Border Adjustments; III. Partition of Kosovo; and IV. Full Reintegration of Kosovo into Serbia. We are including here the views of SUC member Daniel Christy and that of U.S. Government official John Zavales.

Option III - Partition of Kosovo

by Daniel Christy

Alternative #1. INDEPENDENCE for Kosovo. This is the least desirable alternative. In essence it separates all of Kosovo from Serbia and places the remaining Serbian population into a foreign country and the rule of a hostile government. There are no political, economic or ethnic advantages to this option.

Alternative #2. SELF DETERMINATION WITH BORDER ADJUSTMENTS. A somewhat more advantageous option. In reality trading some or all of the losses in Kosovo for possible gains in the Serbian part of Bosnia. However, this is a gamble, contingent on the EU and the USA agreeing to the final outcome. Should one or both of these disagree, everything is back to square one.

Alternative #4. FULL REINTEGRATION OF KOSOVO INTO SERBIA. This is by far the worst possible scenario. It is a recipe for another Israel/Palestinian conflict. After fifty years Israel is still in a state of siege in spite of huge financial aid by the world's Jewry and military and financial aid by the USA.

And, what would really change in Kosovo? Without UN administration and UN military in the region, who will enforce law and order? The local police? It will be 90% Shiptar ¹. Imported police sent from Serbia could do it, but at enormous cost and sacrifice of funds that could be used more beneficially elsewhere. The Serbian military? Ditto. It cannot be expected that this situation would be acceptable to the Shiptars and Albanians ², so unrest and terrorism will continue. Under these conditions the economic output of the area will be negligible and require continuous infusion of economic assistance from Serbia and possibly the UN.

Exiled Serbs would not return. Attempts of settlement by Bosnian Serbs have failed in the past. The net result will be that Serbia will be saddled with an unproductive territory, rife with unrest and terrorism, and an ever expanding and at this point legal minority in the Republic of Serbia, which will rightfully demand civil rights. They will participate fully in the political life of Serbia, exercise their right to vote and elect their own candidates. Some Serbian statisticians have forecast that the Shiptar/Albanian minority at present birth rates will become a majority in the Republic within 45

years. The Serbs will become a minority in the Republic of Serbia.

Alternative #3. PARTITION of Kosovo. As unacceptable as this solution may appear to be, it is the ONLY pragmatic and realistic solution at the present time. However, there are many objections to this, such as:

Kosovo is the cradle of the Serbian nation

This falls under the heading of "fact and legend". A great number of churches and monasteries have been built by Serbian rulers in the area. However, since 1389 (First Battle of Kosovo) the Serb population of the area has been steadily migrating north and west. The Ottoman pressure on the Serbs never relented. About 180,000 Serbs led by the Patriarch Carnojevic migrated from Kosovo in 1690. A similar number exiled again in 1737. The rich and fertile land was quickly settled by Albanians from the south. In fact, the Serbs abandoned their own shrines. This is not unique in Europe ³.

In three decades after the Berlin Congress, 1878-1912, some additional 400,000 Serbs left Kosovo and Metohija ⁴.

Sites of special historical importance like Pecka Patrijarsija, Gračanica, Visoki Decani could be worked into the Serbian part of Kosovo or dismantled and moved north ⁵.

Division of the Serbian "Holy Land"

Many holy shrines have been abandoned through history. Borders change, nations shift. Serbian Hilendar monastery built by Stevan Nemanja is now a part of Greece ⁶.

Serbian Refugees

Once a portion of Kosovo becomes an integral part of Serbia it can be safely expected that many more Serbian exiles from Kosovo will be willing to return, even if not to their very own locale or home. Also, many displaced Serbs from Bosnia and the Krajina region now living in camps throughout Serbia will be willing to settle Kosovo if offered the right incentives. These should be land deeds and low interest loans for housing construction.

Economy

A good portion of the UN aid presently allocated to refugee camps could be channeled into creating jobs and housing in the newly added southern part of Serbia. Serbs in dispersal should be offered economic opportunities for development. The UN, EU and USA all would benefit from a stable Balkan and will offer support to this end. It is reported that the Albanian worldwide lobby is amassing a \$2,5 billion (with a B) fortune to finance the independence of Kosovo ⁷. Shrewd negotiating should result in at least a part of this fortune to be paid to Serbia in return for agreeing to a partition of Kosovo.

Politics

A Serbian government decisive and swift resolution of the Kosovo situation would stabilize the Balkans and the center of Europe. It would be applauded and rewarded by the EU, UN and the USA. It would not only radically cut off the "gangrene" of Kosovo before it infects all of Serbia, but it would also provide relief for the remaining Serbs in Kosovo, the exiles, and new homes for other displaced Serb refugees presently in Serbia. It would also be an enormous PR coup for Serbia.

It is by far the best resolution of a centuries old problem.

- 1 Kosovo natives of Albanian descent, aka Kosovars
- 2 Illegal immigrants from Albania and their descendants
- 3 The Franks (built) between the 9th and 14th centuries hundreds of castles, imposing fortresses, monasteries and new towns which remain the most important romanesque buildings in Switzerland.....German tribes slowly forced out the Franks
<http://www.genealogientz.de/reg/CH/history.html#kap3>
- 4 <http://www.cosc.canterbury.ac.nz/~dmi24/kosovo/history.htm>
- 5 <http://witcombe.sbc.edu/sacredplaces/abusimbel.html>
Pharaoh Ramses II built two temples in 1257 BCE south of Aswan. The facade is 119 feet wide, and 100 feet high. Due to construction of the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s, the temples were between 1964 and 1966 disassembled and reconstructed in a joint UNESCO/Egypt project. A total of 13 temples were moved,
- 6 <http://www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/cmrs/rcmss/>
The present Hilandar monastery was built in 1198 by Stefan Nemanja (1166-1196), the former ruler of Rashka (Serbia), later St. Simeon, and his son, Saint Sava, (1175-1236).
- 7 <http://www.nedeljnitelegraf.co.yu/novi/lobi.html>

MEMBERS' DIALOGUE: The Future Of Kosovo

We are sharing with our readers two of the submissions we received in response to the request in the last issue of the Bulletin asking for your opinions on which of four possible scenarios for the solution of the Kosovo problem you thought was the most realistic and preferable. We will continue to publish other submissions in future issues. The scenarios are:

- 1) Independence;
- 2) Self determination/border adjustment;
- 3) Partition; and
- 4) Full reintegration of Kosovo into Serbia

Tell Us What You Think
(Please submit in English)

Which scenario makes the most sense to you as a long-term solution and why? What are the pros and cons of that scenario? Tell us in 800 words or less. The best articulated commentaries will be published.

Largest European Refugee Group Finds Home in Serbia

June 10 (Voice of America) - Four years after the wars of Yugoslav succession ended, the U.S. Committee for Refugees says Serbia continues to host the largest number of refugees in Europe. Statistics show there are about 600,000 refugees in Serbia. More than half are ethnic Serbs who fled or were forced out of Croatia or Bosnia. The remainder are Serbs forced out of Kosovo in 1999.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees says 235,000 of the refugees in Serbia are from Kosovo. Marianna Obradovic, a refugee specialist at Belgrade's Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, says there has been almost no progress toward repatriating the Kosovo Serbs. "For example, in Kosovo it is the most difficult situation," she said. "You know the security problem is not solved yet. So it is not just property or jobs that is a problem, the biggest issue is security."

Option IV - Full Reintegration of Kosovo into Serbia

By John Zavales

Commentators are asked to select the most successful and desirable solution for the future of Kosovo, out of four alternative scenarios. The most desirable scenario may not necessarily be the most plausible, and may be difficult to ultimately achieve. As such, I believe the best approach is for the SUC to establish Scenario 4 (Reintegration of Kosovo into Serbia, with significant local autonomy) as its preferred outcome, while preparing to reach a compromise solution, depending on the actions of the Kosovo Albanian side and the international community, that would entail elements of Scenarios 2 (Self-Determination/Border Adjustments) and 3 (Partition). Scenario 1 (Independence, presumably including all territory now in the province of Kosovo-Metohija) would represent a complete defeat for Serbian interests, as well as for regional stability. It would require unilateral imposition by international authorities, ignoring all input from Belgrade and the Kosovo Serb community.

The pros of Scenario 4

Reintegration would improve conditions for Serbs and other minorities to continue living in Kosovo, and encourage the return of those who have fled since 1999. This solution would enhance regional stability, since a reestablished Serbian police and military presence would counter the efforts of extremists to destabilize Presevo, Macedonia, and perhaps even Albania. Hopefully this approach would also reduce the trafficking of arms, drugs, and people from or through Kosovo. Reintegration would unambiguously satisfy the conditions of UN Resolution 1244, and reassure the world that NATO's intervention really was for humanitarian reasons, and not to support the KLA nationalist agenda. Finally, reintegration with Serbia-Montenegro would provide a better economic basis, an improved climate for investment, and would facilitate eventual integration with the European Union.

The cons of Scenario 4

Kosovo Albanians remain overwhelmingly opposed to any return to Serbia. Persuading them to abandon independence would be difficult, and would require a delicate combination of reassurances and pressure from the international community. The UN, US, and Europe would have to be in full agreement on this approach, since any wavering would encourage independence forces to hold out for more. Four years of separation from Serbia have increased de facto independence, and the transfer of authorities would have to be carefully evaluated and in some cases reversed. Reintegration would probably require a larger long-term international presence than other scenarios, which might make some countries impatient. It is likely that violence would increase in the short term, probably including attacks

on KFOR as well as Serbian forces. Some pro-independence hardliners would not agree to disarm, and would have to be defeated militarily.

It is critical that the position taken by the SUC be carefully presented. First, the point must be made to the Administration and UNMIK that consistency and fairness are expected. It is important to determine what principles motivate the international interlocutors involved in the process, and what concept of a nation they prefer. If inviolability of borders is most important, Scenario 4 should follow naturally. If self-determination by ethnicity is preferable, then those favoring Kosovo independence must accept the concept of Republika Srpska (and probably the Herzegovina Croats) seceding from Bosnia, as well as localized voting to allow the Serbs of Mitrovica and other areas to separate from Kosovo and remain a part of Serbia. The SUC needs to be polite but firm, in insisting that different standards cannot be applied to the Serbs than to other nations. Milosevic is gone and there is no justification now for double standards. The message should be that the Kosovo Albanians may demand independence, but that this act would have repercussions throughout the region.

To complement the insistence on fairness, the SUC position should emphasize human rights for all. An attempt to simply match Albanian nationalism with Serb nationalism will fail, since the independence forces enjoy far greater funding and political access in Washington. It is critical to take the moral high ground, and try to change the minds of those who favored NATO intervention for humanitarian reasons. A certain segment of the opposition will remain wedded to Greater Albania goals, and deaf to all appeals, but a careful approach will help to marginalize them. It is important that criticism focus on criminal behavior among certain Kosovars, and the destabilizing threat of the ex-KLA and similar groups. Any rhetoric blaming the Albanians as a people, or suggesting a Christian-Muslim clash of civilizations, should be scrupulously avoided. The general success of ending violence in the Presevo valley should be emphasized, as well as the continued improvement of bilateral relations between Serbia-Montenegro and Albania. Statements should stress that Serbia-Montenegro is now the most multiethnic nation in the Balkans, and that hundreds of thousands of Albanians, Roma, Slavic Muslims, and Hungarians continue to live peacefully as full citizens.

----John Zavales

John Zavales, served in the Office of Secretary of Defense 1991-2001, most recently in the Office of European Policy. During the Kosovo crisis, he was based in Albania as part of Operation Shining Hope, the relief operation in support of Kosovar refugees.

Pope Begs Forgiveness for Crimes Against Serbs

Banja Luka, June 22 (B92) Pope John Paul visited Banja Luka yesterday, asking forgiveness for crimes committed in the region. Addressing the forty-thousand strong crowd, Banja Luka's Catholic Bishop Franjo Komarica forgave all injustices done to Catholics throughout history and then sought forgiveness on behalf of all Catholics who had unjustly treated members of other faiths in the region in all the wars of the past. The Mass was celebrated on the spot where more than two thousand Serbs were executed in 1942 after being forced to take communion.

After reiterating Bishop Komarica's message, the Pope sent a message of greeting to the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Pavle, and members of the Synod, none of whom were present. The pontiff was welcomed to Banja Luka on Sunday morning by all three members of Bosnia's tripartite presidency, telling them he hoped the country would resolve its problems and take its place in a united Europe.

The main reason for the Pope's visit to predominantly Serbian Orthodox Banja Luka was to beatify Catholic layman Ivan Merz, who was raised in the town before moving to Zagreb. While there the Pope met with local Jewish, Muslim and other leaders.



SUC Response To Papal Visit To Petricevac

The official twin visits of Pope John Paul II to parts of former Yugoslavia - one in early June to Croatia and another on June 22 to Republika Srpska - were naturally important but controversial events. Specifically, Vatican's decision to have the head of the Catholic Church serve mass at the Petricevac monastery by Banja Luka - the site of a particularly egregious and well-documented WWII crime perpetrated by local Franciscan-led Ustashe of pro-Nazi Independent State of Croatia (NDH) - was widely deemed questionable or inappropriate, and it additionally highlighted some of the broader obstacles to true interethnic and interconfessional reconciliation in this area.

SUC issued an official press release on the subject prior to the RS visit. The integral text can be found at our web site, along with the cover letter accompanying the published statement as sent to the official Vatican representative in the US, the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Montalvo. Copies of this letter were also forwarded to the Embassy of B-H in Washington and Vatican's Permanent Observer to the UN in New York. The statement's purpose was to point out key issues, and above all to seek a constructive but realistic approach to the existing problem. Some key excerpts from the statement:

"Having visited Croatia for the third time now, we believe the Pope has a deep - yet unfulfilled - moral obligation to

visit this locale and pay appropriate respects to its victims. The words uttered by the Pope at the Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem on 23 March 2000 (as those from an earlier visit to Auschwitz) would ring just as powerfully, be as timely, and heal as effectively if they were to be uttered at Jasenovac: "Men, women and children cry out to us from the depths of the horror that they knew. How can we fail to heed their cry? No one can forget or ignore what happened. No one can diminish its scale".

"A visit by the head of the Roman Catholic Church to Petricevac without the clear and unequivocal acknowledgment of this gruesome event objectively threatens to incense large constituencies and halt the much-needed reconciliation."

The SUC thus joined a number of other organizations' public focus on this issue, which cumulatively had an apparent effect, as remarks made by Bishop Komarica and the Pontiff himself did seek forgiveness for crimes committed, forgiveness on behalf of all Catholics who had unjustly treated members of other faiths in the region in the wars of the past. While admittedly a modest step towards true reconciliation, this focus and awareness, further echoed in mass media coverage, reflect certain results achieved in this direction.

WEB SITE OF THE MONTH – Work with an on-line dictionary

cruiser

English-Serbian Dictionary

internet cruiser dictionary

[Serbian-English](#) | [English-Serbian](#) | [German-Serbian](#) | [Serbian-German](#)

<http://www.krstarica.com/dictionary>

Sabor Of Serbs From Croatia, Bosnia And Herzegovina

George Kolarovich, SUC International Advisory Board coordinator, represented Serbian Unity Congress at the Sabor of the Federation of Serbs from Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina held in Srem Karlovci on June 18, 2003



The second Sabor of the Federation of Serbs from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina was held in Srem Karlovci on June 18th. Special guests who attended were His Eminence Bishop Vasilije of Srem, Mr. Vojislav Kostunica, President of DSS, Mr. Veljo Ilic, President of New Serbia, Mr. Mirko Sarovic, former President of RS, Mrs. Sandra Raskovic-Ivic, daughter of the former President of Krajina, Academic Nikola Milosevic and Cedomir Popovic, Mrs. Mila Aleckovic from France and George Kolarovich from California. The Federation was formed only a year ago and today it has the full support of 170,000 members.

In his opening remarks Bishop Vasilije emphasized the historical importance of the selection of Srem Karlovci as the location of the 2nd annual Sabor of the Federation of all Serbs displaced in Serbia and Montenegro from Croatia, BiH, Kosovo and Metohija. Federation President Mr. Branislav Svonja confirmed "From this city came the idea for the full integration of all Serbs spread across the Balkans, from the North to the South, from the East to the West" and added that there is no other option but for the Federation to take an important political role in in order to protect the interests of all Serbs in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Kosovo and Metohija.

Mr. Kolarovich addressed the gathering of about 50,000 guests, bringing greetings and well wishes from SUC mem-

bers from USA, Canada, Australia, South America and Europe, who for the last 13 years have been working on the unity of all Serbs, wherever they may reside. He briefly mentioned SUC hard work on the unity of the Churches, recent formation of the Serbian American Congress (joining three largest organizations in America) on the recent attempt by the Albanian lobby to get the US Congress to support the drive for independence of Kosovo (soundly defeated to in large part to the efforts of SUC), and on the opening of SUC's Washington office.

President Vojislav Kostunica recognized the importance of this effort by bestowing special medals of Honor to the Chairman of the Board of SUC, Mr. Michael Djordjevich, to Mr. Slavko Panovic, President of SNO, and Mr. Dusan Ljubenko, President of SNF. These remarks were enthusiastically greeted by the audience.



Dr. V. Kostunica, President of DSS, His Grace Bishop Vasilije of Srem, Mr. Veljo Ilic, President of New Serbia

62nd Annual Congress Of Serbian National Defense



Jasmina Vujic

The Serbian National Defense held its 62nd Annual Congress and Vidovdan Academy on June 28 in Chicago, IL. Greetings from many organizations, institutions and officials were read, including the letters from former president Kostunica and the SUC Chairman of the Board Michael Djordjevich.

The 62nd SND Congress passed a resolution to support (1) continuing democratic revival of Serbia, (2) Defense of Serbian name and position in the USA, (3) Preservation and strengthening of its identity, and (4) supporting the

needy through the establishment of Michael Pupin Foundation and other means.

The Vidovdan Academy was attended by a large number of delegates and guests, including Dr Ivan Vujacich, Ambassador SCG and his wife, and Mr Desko Nikitovic, Consul SCG in Chicago. Speakers included Vladimir Bozovic, from Coordinating Centre for Kosovo and Metohija, Dr Slavomir Gvozdenovic from Romania, the Serbian delegate in the Romanian Parliament, Dr Srdja Trifkovich - Editor of Rockford Institute and Feature Writer of SND Liberty News, and Jasmina Vujic, Vice-President of SUC, and the member of Executive Board of Serbian-American Congress (SAC).

Danube Clear Of Debris



BUDAPEST, June 25 (Reuters) - Clearance experts have finished removing debris blocking the Danube river since NATO attacks on Yugoslavia but shipping on the European waterway remains low-scale after it came to a halt in 1999 when NATO warplanes bombed three bridges in Novi Sad. The 26 million euros (\$30 million), Danube Clearance Project, was financed by the European Union, 11 other European states and Canada. A temporary route opened in late 2001 and removal of the last debris ended this month. Six unexploded bombs were also recovered from the river.

Only seven percent of the river's shipping capacity is being used compared to an average of 70 percent on other European waterways. Two of the three destroyed bridges had been rebuilt, but Novi Sad also needs the third bridge to be restored. A pontoon bridge has been erected temporarily until the third bridge is rebuilt.

For more go to: <http://www.dunacom.org/clearance/>

EU Peacekeeping Mission In Bosnia Blocked By US



Washington - June 5 - (Seeurope.net) Washington believes summer 2004 is too early for EU troops to take over peacekeeping operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and is blocking NATO moves in that direction, it emerged on Tuesday. At a meeting of NATO and EU foreign ministers in Madrid, US officials effectively scuppered this plan saying it was "premature" to talk about an EU takeover citing security reasons and problems with war criminals.

The EU had hoped to take over the NATO-led stabilisation force 'SFOR' in Bosnia-Herzegovina by 2004 a deadline set in a Franco-British paper that was presented to Brussels in February this year. NATO secretary general Lord Robertson, however, said the EU plan was under consideration, reported EU Observer.

Microsoft To Offer Windows In Serbian (€ĚĚĚĚÖÀ)

The initial introduction of Windows computer systems in Serbia was not originally being developed to accommodate the Cyrillic alphabet. Following much protest Microsoft Corporation has decided to format Windows in Serbian with the option of either Latin or Cyrillic-based versions.

Microsoft in Serbia and Montenegro is offering its legal users the option of replacing their originally purchased Latin versions with the Cyrillic, and in the process bringing the debate to a close.

Visas For US Citizens Abolished By Serbia And Montenegro

The Council of Ministers of Serbia and Montenegro decided to abolish visas for entering and stay in Serbia and Montenegro for citizens of United States of America as of June 1, 2003. The Council's decision is in keeping with policy of Serbia and Montenegro encouraging friendly relations and cooperation, as well as openness towards the United States, present and future member-countries of the European Union (EU), and other developed countries.

The visas are also not required for a 90-day stay in Serbia and Montenegro for citizens of United States, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Great Britain, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Monaco, Liechtenstein, Vatican, Andorra, San Marino, Israel, Cyprus, Malta, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Croatia, Singapore, Republic Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

U.S. Approves Aid To Serbia

WASHINGTON - June 16 (Reuters) - The United States announced Monday Serbia has cooperated with the war crimes tribunal in The Hague and is eligible for the balance from \$110 million in U.S. aid allocated to Belgrade this year. The Serbian authorities swayed the United States when they arrested top war crimes suspect Veselin Sljivancanin in the capital last week, U.S. officials said. The ruling, known as a "certification," required the signature of Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Congress had set June 15 as the date for the administration to certify whether or not the authorities in Belgrade were cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, which tries people accused of war crimes in the Balkan wars of the 1990s. "The arrest may make it easier for Powell to certify this weekend." one U.S. official said Friday. Officials said it was difficult to calculate how much of the \$110 million had been disbursed but it would probably amount to about half of the total.

Sljivancanin was indicted in 1995 for the massacre of 200 civilians when Yugoslav troops captured Vukovar, Croatia, in 1991. He went underground when former President Slobodan Milosevic was toppled in 2000 and vowed death before surrender.



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