Barack Obama

March 1, 2008

Mirjana Samardzija
President
Serbian Unity Congress
2311 M Street, Suite 402
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Ms. Samardzija,

Thank you very much for your letter of February 28. I share your concerns about the situation in the Balkans and, in particular, about the need to protect minority rights in that region. For that reason, within hours of Kosovo's declaration of independence, I issued a statement that insisted that all the people of Kosovo, of whatever ethnic origin, must be able to live in a free, tolerant and prosperous society where minority rights and religious sites are fully protected. I also noted in my statement that Serbia and its people have suffered terribly over the past two decades and that Serbs deserve a more peaceful, prosperous, and hopeful future. I strongly support the goal of fully integrating Serbia into the democratic West, including membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions like the EU.

Regarding Kosovo, the United States has a continuing responsibility to encourage all parties to seek a peaceful resolution of remaining disputes. As part of that responsibility, I support and will assist in any way possible dialogue among the parties in Kosovo because I believe that peace and stability there can only truly be ensured by solutions that are acceptable to all sides. Even in the absence of mutual agreement, the rights of minorities and the need to protect the historic religious sites to which you refer are non-negotiable issues.

In response to your question on the Dayton Accords, I can assure you that as President, I will continue the U.S. government's support for the Dayton Accords, and in particular for their provisions relating to the rights and responsibilities of the two entities within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Similarly, I would continue support for the Erdut Agreement guarantees and will make clear that I expect all parties to that agreement, including Croatia, to honor their commitments.

Let me reiterate my strong belief that Serbia is an integral part of modern Europe. It belongs in Western institutions like the European Union, which will help bring the stability and prosperity that the Serbian people deserve.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama

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