



September 6, 2004

The Honorable John Kerry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 25015

Dear Senator Kerry:

As a leading Serbian American organization, the Serbian Unity Congress (SUC) represents a wide cross-section of the Serbian American community - the largest of the former Yugoslav ethnic groups both in the US and in general. As a non-partisan organization, our membership represents a broad political spectrum of American society, which is regularly apprised of US politics and policy from our Washington, DC headquarters.

This November, the Serbian American community will go to the polls to vote for the candidate who best addresses both their domestic and foreign policy concerns. After a decade of isolation and alienation, this constituency is increasingly better organized and more politically active. The election of Rod Blagojevich as Governor of Illinois gave the community a moral and psychological boost. A new generation of Americans of Serbian heritage are running for local and state offices and are well aware of the political process.

In light of these facts, the SUC would like to take this opportunity to inform both major candidates about the Serbian American constituency and the pivotal issues that will influence their vote in November (enclosure.) We urge you to seriously consider the enclosed information on these issues. These are not special-interest issues; rather, they embody core American values that our membership feels strongly about, both because of their own ethnic roots and because they are simply loyal Americans. Without true even-handedness and respect for international agreements, American credibility and thus effectiveness gets seriously compromised. Without acknowledging terror as terror regardless of where it strikes – whether in Manhattan, Madrid, Moscow or Mitrovica – our ability to effectively eradicate it is weakened. Our ability to effectively focus our limited resources on our own most serious national problems is tied to stabilization of key volatile regions such as the Balkans. Serbia is the linchpin of stability in Southeastern Europe and requires our evenhanded treatment.

Our membership is present throughout the US and we will be happy to discuss how to reach out to the Serbian American community anywhere in the country. Mr. Andy Verich, SUC Washington Office Director, will contact you within a week as a follow up to this letter to try and schedule a meeting. We look forward to meeting with you.

Very truly yours,

Nenad Vukicevic
President

SERBIAN UNITY CONGRESS
KONGRES SRPSKOG UJEDINJENJA

THE SERBIAN AMERICAN CONSTITUENCY
AND THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS

Who They Are

People of Serbian descent are the largest ethnic group from former Yugoslavia, both there and in the US. The estimated numbers of Serbian-Americans is over 1.2 million.

They represent several waves of immigration going back to the 19th century and the Gold Rush, with the oldest Serbian Orthodox church in Jackson, California, dating back to that period. Later immigration included blue collar labor within the turn-of-century great European wave, the political immigration fleeing communist Yugoslavia following World War II, the influx of top academics, scientists, etc. in the 70s and 80s, the exodus related to the 90's wars comprising the displaced and disenfranchised, and most recently the "brain drain" of the intellectual elite – the best and the brightest, seeking a better life, now an asset to our country.

Throughout this period there have been notable and prominent citizens of this country and contributors to this society in the arts, science, business, academia, etc: from notable Texas pioneering statesman George Fisher, to scientific giants Nikola Tesla and Michael Pupin, to acclaimed Pulitzer and Oscar prize winners and celebrated military veterans.

Where They Are

Large numbers are in the "rust belt" states -- Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan. New immigration patterns have resulted in new flourishing settlements in North Carolina, Florida and Nevada. On the West Coast, Serbian-Americans are most numerous in California and Arizona.

What They Will Vote For:

Strong position on the following issues:

1. **Human rights** - Promote and protect human rights uniformly in the Balkans, particularly those of Serbs which remain severely violated – in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and most notably, UN-administered Kosovo-Metohija
2. **International agreements** – Enforce strict adherence to terms and conditions governing the resolution of previous conflicts, and block any attempted revisions:
 - *The Dayton Accords* in Bosnia & Herzegovina,
 - *The Erdut Agreement* in Croatia
 - *UN SC Resolution 1244* regarding the Serbian province of Kosovo-Metohija
3. **War crimes and accountability** -- Impose an even-handed treatment of all parties to the former conflicts – Croatians, Bosnian Muslims and Croats, and Kosovo Albanians, as well as Serbs. Prosecute those contributing to the ongoing persecution and human rights violation of Serbs in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo – perpetrators as well as instigators; particular focus on Kosovo, where a lack of accountability under UN administration breeds terrorism and has undermined all Western civilized values.
4. **Depoliticization** – Remove political obstacles to US efforts to assist sustainable economic progress (including environmental and other war-related cleanup) of Serbia & Montenegro, uphold its territorial integrity, and restore it to a position of US partner providing regional stability and anti-terrorist cooperation.
5. **Refugees** -- Promote a real solution to the problem of ethnic Serb refugees and IDPs, who remain the most displaced of all ethnic groups of the former Yugoslavia:
 - Reconstruction/return of destroyed/usurped properties
 - Safeguard of returns and continuous security of the returned refugees
 - Implementation of the rule of law, eliminate ethnic discrimination
 - Economic programs that allow for permanent, sustainable returns