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YUGOSLAVIA: Disturbance in Kosovo

*The post-Tito leadership is moving quickly to deal with the most serious crisis it has faced to date as a result of violent demonstrations by the country's large Albanian minority.*

A joint meeting of the Yugoslav state and party leaderships yesterday endorsed the strong measures taken by regional leaders in the largely Albanian-inhabited Kosovo province to suppress recent disturbances there. These measures include:

- A limited form of martial law around Pristina, the capital of Kosovo.
- Additional security forces deployed to Kosovo.
- As a precaution, forbidding foreign journalists from traveling to the province.

The unrest, which began at Pristina University a little over a month ago because of continued poor economic conditions in the region, has resulted in armed clashes. The demonstrations have taken on political overtones and threaten to ignite latent hostility between the Albanian and Serbian communities in Kosovo. This, in turn, could touch off a chain reaction with Yugoslavia's other highly volatile nationalities siding with either the Serbs or Albanians. The net result would be the undermining of the delicate balance in the collective leadership system Tito left.

Following yesterday's meeting in Belgrade, the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug carried a statement accusing unspecified hostile internal and foreign elements of working to undermine Yugoslav unity. Belgrade appears to be pointing an accusing finger at both Tirane, for harboring irredentist claims on Kosovo, and at Moscow.

Fadil Hodza, the most prominent Albanian politician in Yugoslavia, has come the closest to accusing the Soviets of being involved. In a speech in Pristina yesterday, he denounced those behind the events in Kosovo by drawing a parallel between their activity and the worst excesses of the Cominformists following the Tito-Stalin break in 1948.

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