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YUGOSLAVIA:

Milosevic Forces Hit Setback

Events in Montenegro and the State Presidency's threat of emergency measures to quell unrest suggest that Serbian party boss Milosevic has hit at least a temporary snag in his drive for power.

The Montenegrin leadership on Saturday resisted calls to resign from some 30,000 pro-Milosevic demonstrators. It ordered security forces into clashes with protesters and charged Milosevic with stirring up the unrest. Local security forces, aided by small detachments of federal police, yesterday appeared to be gaining the upper hand against demonstrators.

The national party Presidium, which supported the Milosevic-inspired move against the leadership of Serbia's Vojvodina Province last week, issued a statement backing the Montenegrin leadership against the "coup" attempt. The four other non-Serb republics issued separate statements giving Montenegro strong support. The State Presidency on Sunday signaled alarm over the unrest and threatened unspecified emergency measures if it continued.

The latest actions represent a serious setback for Milosevic, but the struggle between pro- and anti-Milosevic forces is far from over and could even sharpen in the next few days. The State Presidency's statement is the clearest indication to date that the national leadership believes it can count on military backing in a showdown with pro-Milosevic demonstrators. Most republics seem determined to draw the line on Serbian provocations instigated outside Serbia and its provinces.

Milosevic is unlikely to lay low, however, and his supporters may launch new inflammatory actions by exploiting popular discontent with deepening austerity and leadership ineffectiveness. He is unlikely to get much support in non-Serb areas, where he is distrusted. Milosevic's next major aim probably is to engineer the ouster of many of his national-level opponents at a party Central Committee plenum in Belgrade next Monday. He may move against the ethnic Albanian leadership in Serbia's Kosovo Province before the plenum.

In Montenegro, repressive measures and some concessions on protesters' economic demands are likely to defuse tensions in the coming days. If not, more federal police and even Army units may be sent in.

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