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Central Intelligence Agency

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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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Yugoslavia: Emergency Measures Still Possible [redacted]

Summary

Although we do not anticipate major nationwide unrest in the next several months, we believe there is about a **one in three** chance of localized ethnic or labor unrest serious enough that Yugoslav authorities would impose at least limited emergency measures. The measures would probably include restrictions on public gatherings, imposition of curfews, and jailing of instigators. The prime potential troublespots are areas inhabited by Albanian majorities (Kosovo Province and parts of western Macedonia and southern Serbia) where either Albanians or their antagonists (Serbs and Macedonians) may provoke inter-ethnic violence. Repression is also possible if mass rallies get out of hand in Serbia or Montenegro, if major labor or other ethnic violence were to break out somewhere, or if serious antimilitary demonstrations resurface in Slovenia. Retribution would probably be swift if, as in Montenegro last month, protests turn violent or are aimed at overturning regional or national leaderships. Any imposition of emergency measures would promote short-term stability, but would likely include some infringements on human rights. [redacted]

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Office of European Analysis. Information available as of 28 October 1987 was used in its preparation. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to [redacted]

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Discussion

Threat of Repressive Measures

State President Raif Dizdarevic, in his speech to the nation on 9 October at the height of the recent crisis over Serbian nationalism, threatened to do "all that the constitution and laws permit" if disorders create "extraordinary conditions." Dizdarevic's comments followed the overthrow of the leadership of Serbia's Vojvodina Province by supporters of Serbian party chief Slobodan Milosevic and subsequent clashes in the Republic of Montenegro between militant pro-Milosevic demonstrators and security forces. Dizdarevic provided no specifics as to what he had in mind, and since then the crisis has at least temporarily abated.

The national leadership restrained Milosevic by removing one of his key allies on the Communist Party Presidium and, [redacted] implicit threats. Military leaders publicly signaled support for the nine-man State Presidency, which Dizdarevic now heads, and their readiness to carry out orders. Several speakers at the national Communist Party plenum on 17-19 October, including Dizdarevic, implied that such measures were not imminent, but it is also clear that they were being considered. The option of using repression may revive if major ethnic or labor unrest resumes.

Broad But Vague Constitutional Authority

The constitution of 1974 that Dizdarevic referred to does not explicitly authorize the declaration of a state of emergency, but it does provide national civilian and military leaders with broad, if vague, power to employ repressive measures. For example:

- o Article 240 sweepingly authorizes the armed forces to protect not only the country's unity and territorial integrity but also its "social system" as defined by the constitution.
- o Article 281 charges the national government broadly with "protecting constitutionality...and legality."
- o Article 316 authorizes the State Presidency to "order the use of the armed forces in peacetime."

Precedents Indicate Wideranging Measures

Yugoslav authorities in Tito's day and shortly after his death demonstrated that they could use these constitutional powers to employ a wide range of repressive measures to subdue perceived threats to stability. The last two of these crises were in 1971 against the Croatian nationalist movement and in 1981 against rioting by Albanian youths in Serbia's Kosovo Province.

In both cases, the leadership deployed military and federal police units to reinforce local authorities, ordered institutions of higher education closed, imposed controls on movement, banned public gatherings, arrested and sentenced the ringleaders of protests, denied access to

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foreign visitors and journalists, curtailed press freedom, and began a crackdown on journalists and intellectuals. The Croatian crackdown was so sweeping that a period of political orthodoxy followed--including tight press controls and official attacks on the Catholic Church--that is only now beginning to ease. The Kosovo authorities since 1981 have maintained order by imprisoning hundreds of real and alleged Albanian nationalists. [REDACTED]

In the early stages of the latest crisis, national and regional leaderships showed hesitancy and disarray in stemming potentially disruptive street protests by Milosevic supporters. This reflects their lack of confidence and the authority Tito had as well as the fact that nationalist disruptions were coming not from Croats or Albanians but from Serbs, the country's largest (36.3 percent in the 1981 census) and historically most powerful ethnic group. During the virtual siege of the capital of Serbia's Vojvodina Province on 6 October by some 100,000 Milosevic backers, the national Party Presidium ignored the Vojvodina leadership's pleas for help and then lamely endorsed its overthrow. [REDACTED]

Only afterwards, when similar demonstrations spread outside of Serbia to Montenegro, did local and national authorities act decisively and effectively to control what they termed an attempted pro-Milosevic "putsch." Montenegrin officials issued prior warnings to demonstrators, ordered security forces into the fray when they became violent, and imposed limited controls on movement and public gatherings. The national Party Presidium sided with the Montenegrin leadership, and military units in several areas of the country were also placed on at least a precautionary alert, although they evidently were not deployed. [REDACTED]

Renewed Unrest: Localized Emergency More Likely

We believe that there is about a one in three chance of renewed serious unrest in the next several months that would lead to the imposition of at least limited emergency measures. The main variables will be the actions of Milosevic following his setback at the recent plenum and the reaction of workers nationwide to government-sponsored austerity measures. If unrest develops, we believe it is much more likely to be localized than the kind of nationwide disturbances that we believe would prompt a countrywide state of emergency or imposition of martial law. Official retribution would be swift if, as in Montenegro, demonstrators became violent or sought to overturn local or national leaderships. Measures could include at least short term restrictions on movement and public gatherings, imposition of curfews, and arrest and jailing of unrest instigators. [REDACTED]

The following are the most likely areas where unrest might occur, in descending order of probability:

- o Unrest is most likely in regions where ethnic Albanians are a majority--Kosovo Province and parts of western Macedonia and southern Serbia. Albanians and local Slavic groups (Serbs and Macedonians) are about equally likely to start it. Local authorities, backed by federal special police and military units, would probably stage prompt, overwhelming shows of force to bring any inter-ethnic strife under control. Federal police now stationed in Kosovo are particularly well-trained, motivated, and experienced in crowd control.
- o Emergency measures against Serbs in Serbia proper or Montenegrins in Montenegro are conceivable, either to forestall violence against Albanians or to enforce any bans on Milosevic-orchestrated or spontaneous rallies. Elite police or military units of mixed ethnic origins would probably be used first. Such actions would become more likely if Milosevic resumes his defiance of federal authorities and tries to use public protests to intimidate national leaders.

- o Selective repressive measures are possible anywhere in the country if serious, violent labor or other ethnic unrest breaks out. Inter-ethnic conflict is possible, but for now unlikely, in the ethnically mixed republics of Bosnia and Croatia.
- o Comparable repressive measures are also possible, but less likely, in Slovenia if youth groups organize major new protests against the military in the wake of the recent sentencing of several Slovene journalists. Slovene leaders are now calling for calm on this issue.

Authorities probably would quell Albanian-Slav violence quickly and without hesitation, but they would be more constrained in several other contingencies:

- o **In moving against Serbs**, national leaders recognize that vigorous efforts might provoke a new, more serious resurgence of Serb nationalism and political alienation. Although military commanders have reaffirmed support for and loyalty to the present political leadership, political and military leaders almost certainly are concerned about potential unresponsiveness by the heavily Serb officer corps, at least some elements of which may be sympathetic to Milosevic. Similarly, there may be concern that Serb troops would be reluctant to use force against peaceful Serb demonstrators. In the event of a major crisis, maintaining control over Serb nationalists would be difficult without a thorough crackdown on Serbian leaders, journalists, and intellectuals comparable to actions taken in Croatia in 1971-72.
- o **In any moves against Slovenes**, federal leaders almost certainly would expect to encounter massive civil disobedience and passive resistance, as evidenced by the large, well-organized rallies staged by Slovene youth earlier this year. National leaders would also have to expect Slovene appeals in Western media and actions by Western human rights groups that could damage Yugoslavia's relations with the West.
- o Yugoslav leaders will probably continue to be reluctant to forcibly suppress labor unrest for fear of losing further credibility with workers. They are likely to issue broad prior warnings, such as implied threats made by Premier Mikulic last year, if worker protests gradually build. They would probably react harshly and more precipitously if major labor violence suddenly erupts.

Mixed Impact on US Interests

US interests in Yugoslav stability and observance of human rights are likely to be at odds if repressive measures are used. At least in the short term, such measures would likely help maintain stability. But while the national leadership ultimately may be unable to delimit disruptive Serbian nationalism without resorting to some repression, this would invariably mean infringements on human rights. These infringements could range from short-lived curbs on freedoms of speech and movement to more serious setbacks to political liberalization and democratization, such as occurred in Croatia after the 1971 events.

To promote the longer-term stability supported by the West, even Yugoslav leaders recognize that emergency measures are only stopgaps and that more serious political and economic changes are needed. National leaders will have to be more prompt and effective in mediating inter-ethnic disputes, such as in Kosovo Province, if they want to prevent ambitious politicians like Milosevic from exploiting such developments. The national leadership also will have to more successfully implement economic reforms needed to improve longer-term economic performance and ultimately relieve economic sources of public discontent.