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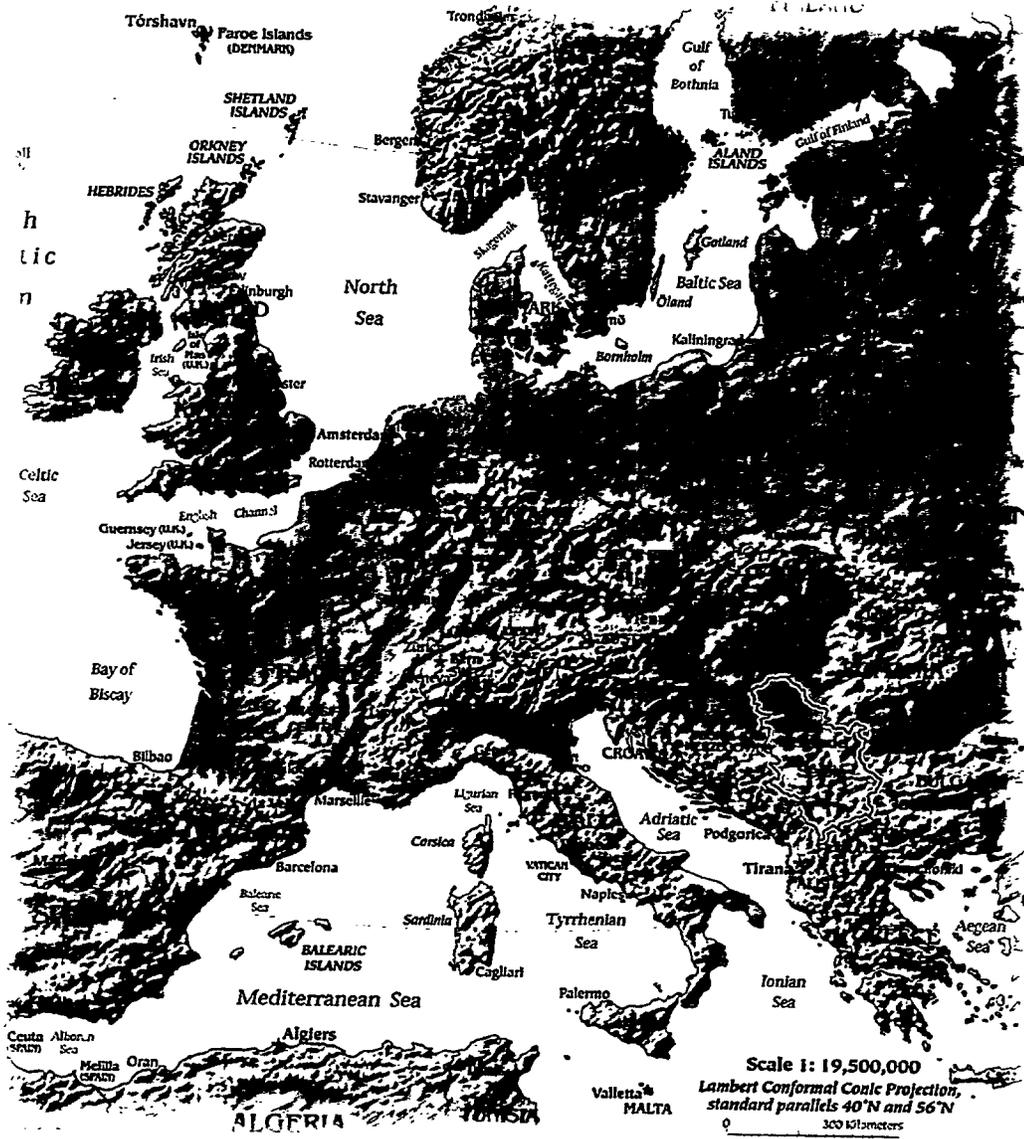
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Europe Facing Protracted Kosovar Migration Problem

Office of Transnational Issues
DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force

21 May 1999



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This report was prepared by analysts in the [redacted] Office of Transnational Issues. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, [redacted]

OTI-IR-1999-102
CL BY: [redacted]
CL REASON: 1.5 (c)
DECL ON: XI
DRV FROM: Multiple Sources
368142PM 5-99

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: SEP 2001

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Europe Facing Protracted Kosovar Migration Problem

To date, over 1.5 million people—three quarters of Kosovo's total population—have fled their homes, forced out by fighting between Serb forces and local insurgents since early 1998 and Serb expulsions of ethnic Albanians this year. Some 540,000 remain displaced within the province. [REDACTED] the demographics of the refugee population have changed since the war began. Before 1998 the refugees were mostly young men seeking economic opportunity; recent refugees, however, are mostly elderly, women, and children and require more assistance from host countries.

- Although most of the refugees are in the "frontline" areas of Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro, migration, including illegal flows, of Kosovo Albanians in 1998 and 1999 to other parts of Europe—especially Germany and Switzerland—increased as fighting intensified.
- Albania and Macedonia are already saturated, with a total of 650,000 refugees. Continued expulsions from Kosovo or protracted hostilities will force additional refugees in the frontline states to move elsewhere in Europe.
- Illegal migration is likely to increase as displaced Kosovo Albanians migrate toward established Albanian communities throughout Europe. [REDACTED]

Migration in 1998-99 Linked to Fighting

The record flight of Kosovo Albanians has filled frontline states to capacity and has created new pressure on other countries—especially those with sizable Kosovo Albanian minorities, like Germany and Switzerland.

- Kosovo Albanians coming to Albania directly from the province or through Montenegro have deluged host families and camps along Albania's northern borders. The less crowded southern areas of Albania are receiving refugees from the north and from Macedonia.
- In Macedonia, inflows from Kosovo have greatly exceeded outflows since late March, even though local host-family accommodations are saturated and camps are filled beyond capacity, according to relief groups. [REDACTED]

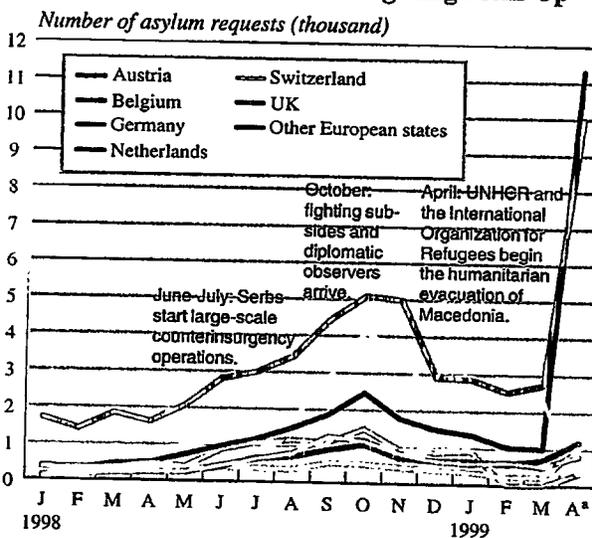
The Macedonian government—vulnerable to ethnic tension resulting from the influx of Kosovo Albanians—in early April spirited 7,500 refugees out of the country, doing so without international or non-governmental organization assistance. Under pressure from Skopje, international organizations subsequently began a humanitarian evacuation program and, to date, have relocated about 51,000 refugees to countries outside the region. [REDACTED]

Unenthusiastic European Response

Although European countries fear refugee inflows on the massive scale caused by the Bosnian war, they nevertheless have pledged—along with some non-European countries—to relieve pressure on Macedonia by accepting about 130,000 refugees. Apart from Germany, Turkey, and the US, participating states have agreed to accept no more than 10,000 refugees each.

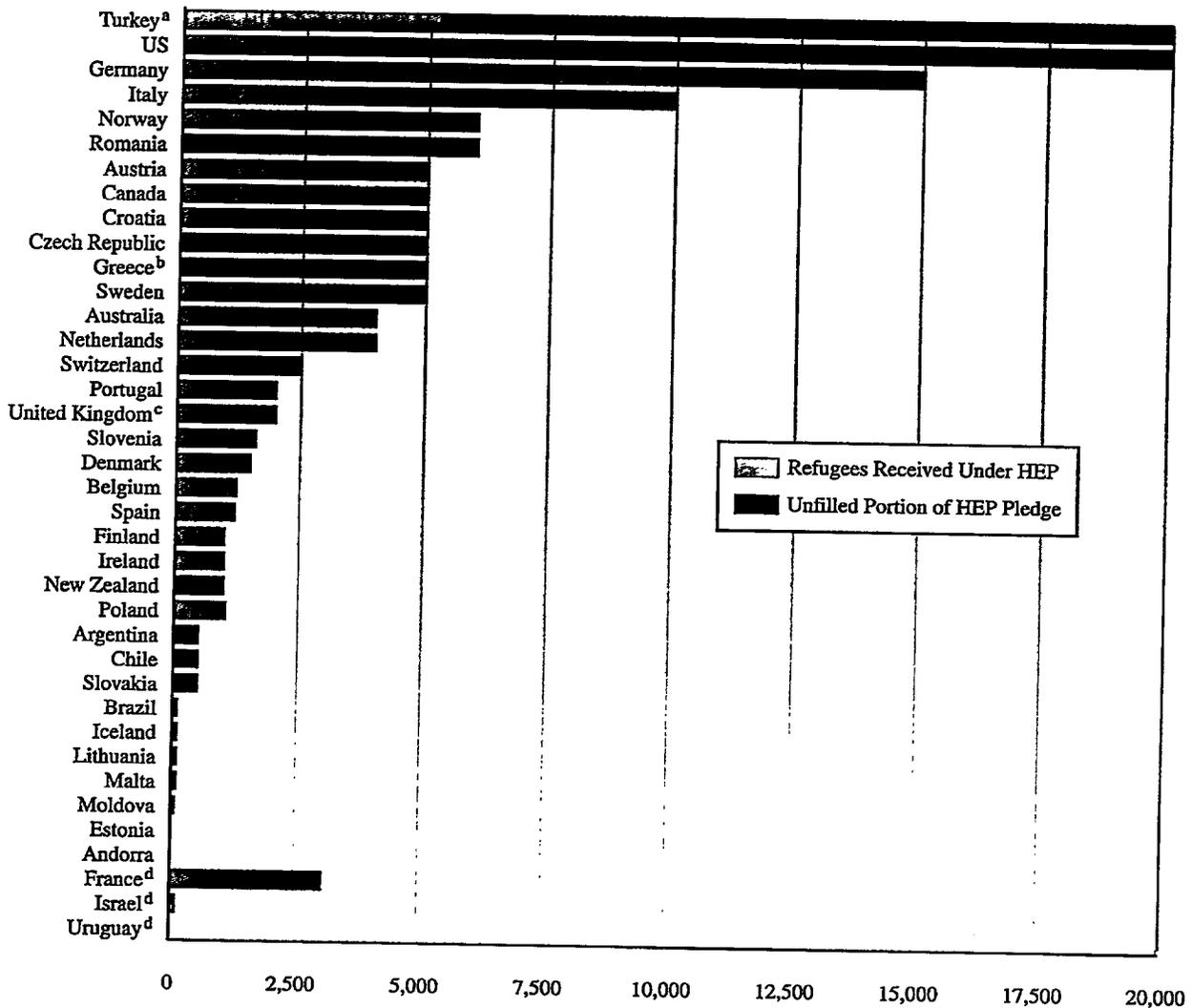
- Germany fulfilled its initial commitment of 10,000 in mid-April and indicated in early May that it was ready to take another 10,000 in two tranches of 5,000, although the second tranche would be accepted only when other EU countries have taken a "fair share," according to press reporting.
- Turkey—also looking to other states to share the refugee burden—has pledged to take 20,000 refugees but has only received 7,000 via airlifts so far and, as compared with western Europe, is disliked as a destination by refugees, despite good camp conditions. [REDACTED]

Asylum Requests Increase as Fighting Picks Up



Information as of 19 May was used to prepare this report. [REDACTED]

Countries Offering To Receive Refugees Through the Humanitarian Evacuation Program (HEP)



^a Turkey would take up to 50,000 refugees.

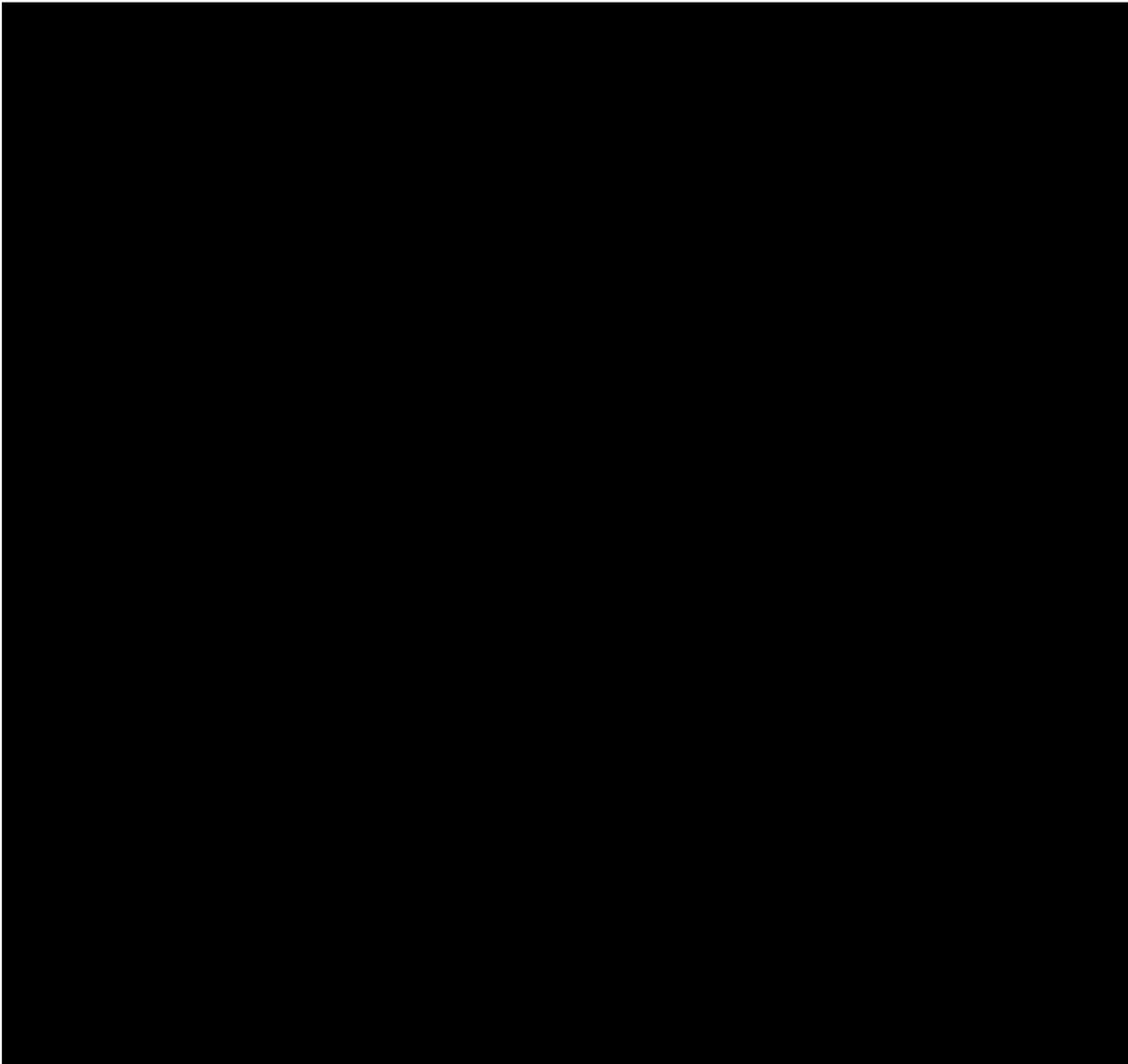
^b Greece will accept 5,000 refugees, but the government has yet to make an official pledge.

^c UK has pledged to take "thousands,"

^d France, Israel, and Uruguay have agreed to accept refugees but have not given a number.

Unfilled refugee quotas are small in comparison with the 1.24 million ethnic Albanians who are subject to Serb expulsion from Kosovo or who are overburdening frontline areas. Most European states continue to stress the importance of keeping refugees in the Balkans to enable their quick return to Kosovo and are reluctant to increase pledges before other states out of fear of attracting more refugees.

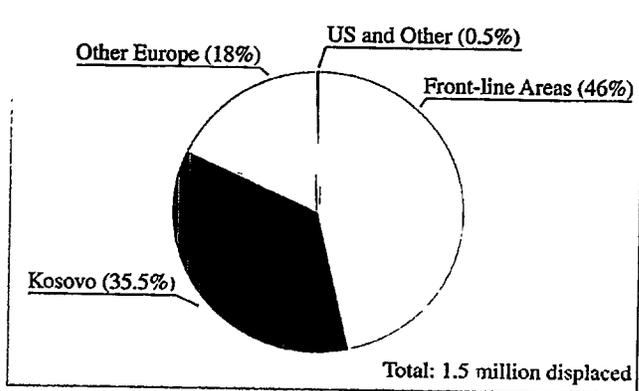
- The internationally sponsored Humanitarian Transfer Program—to relocate up to 60,000 refugees from Macedonia to Albania—is also helping to relieve pressure on Macedonia while keeping refugees close to Kosovo but has been undersubscribed.

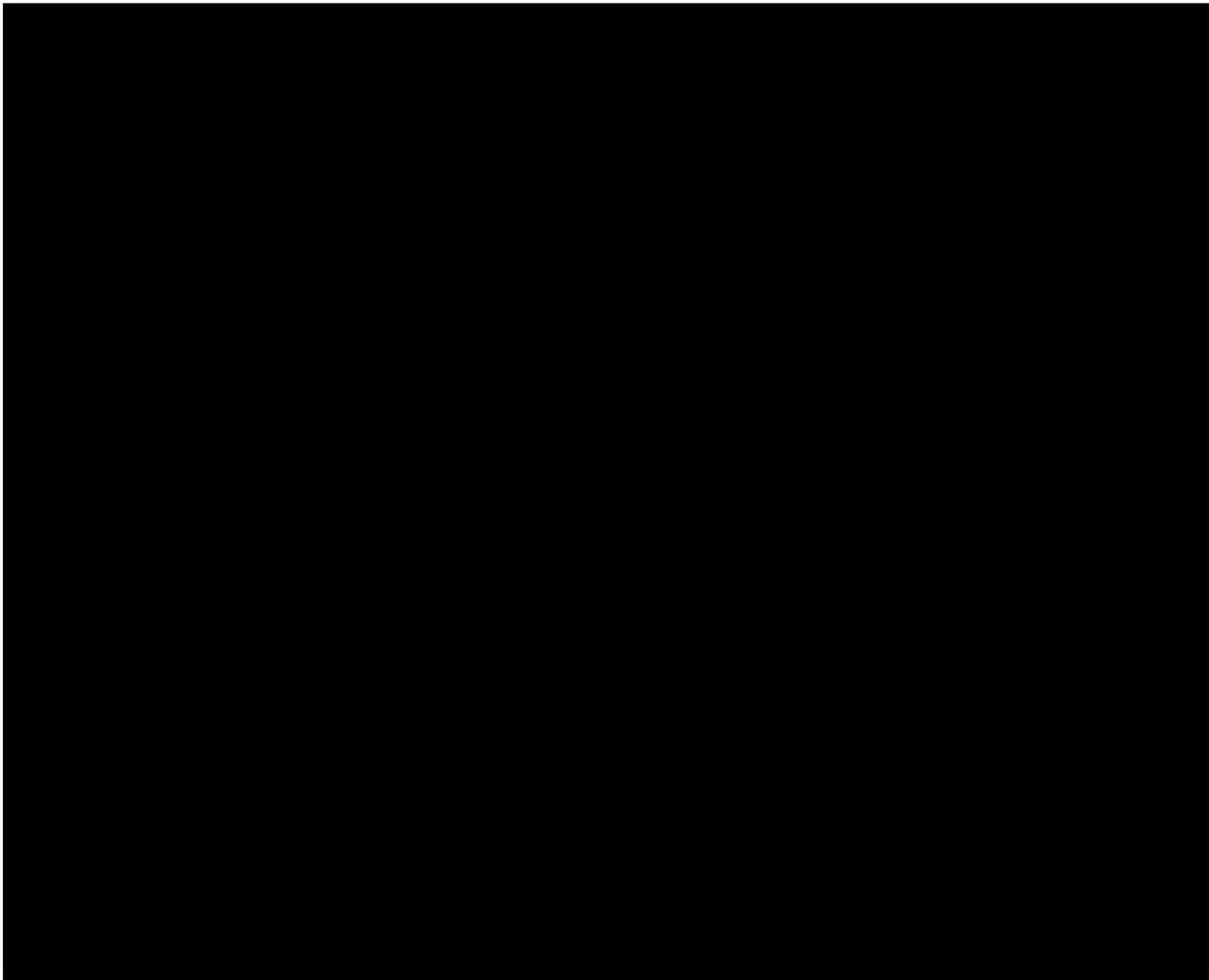


Major Receiving Countries Struggling To Relieve the Bosnian Refugee Burden

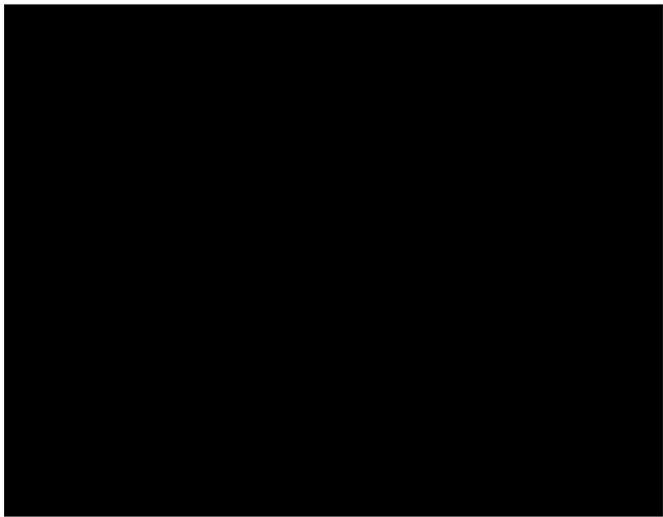
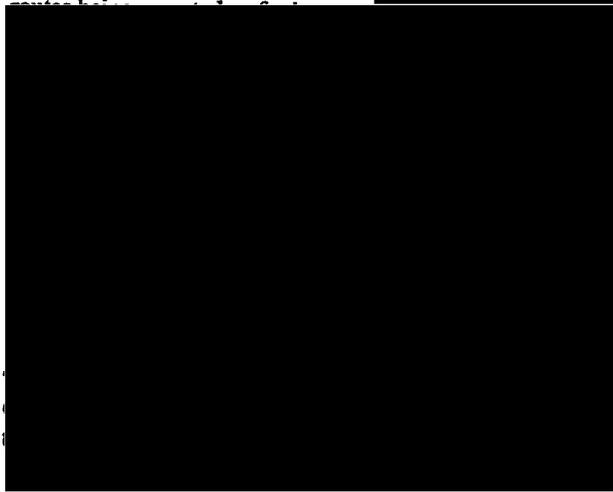
	Bosnian Refugees December 1995 (Dayton peace accords end the fighting)	Bosnian Refugees End of 1998	Average Annual Rate of Decline (percent)
Austria	90,000	5,700	60
Germany	350,000	100,000	34
Switzerland	15,500	7,000	23

Most Displaced Remain in the Region





Many thousands more are likely to continue soliciting the services of smugglers to penetrate foreign borders, evade detection, and work in the underground economy in the hope of eventually legalizing their status. [REDACTED]



Ethnic Albanians Not the Only Ones Displaced

few of the people displaced by the Kosovo crisis—we estimate only 85,000—are not ethnic Albanians from Kosovo:

- Almost all of the 20,000 people from Kosovo now in other parts of Serbia are Serbs, including refugees from Bosnia and Croatia who fled Kosovo last year because of the deteriorating security situation there.
- More than 17,000 Serbs and Montenegrins have fled the FRY for the Republika Srpska in Bosnia, mostly after NATO airstrikes began at the end of March.
- Over half of the 57,000 displaced people in Montenegro at the end of March were Montenegrins, Serbs, and small numbers of Muslim Slavs and Roma gypsies who left Kosovo over the last year.
- Some 20,000 refugees now in the Federation entity in Bosnia are Muslims who have mainly fled the Sandzak region of the FRY since the onset of NATO airstrikes.

More Pledges Probably Needed

International organizations will probably call for deepened commitments from third countries, as Albania and Macedonia groan under the pressure of the 650,000 refugees already there and additional outflows from Kosovo.

- At the very least, European states will collectively have to answer additional distress signals from Macedonia and Albania, which face political instability or humanitarian disaster unless Europe accepts larger numbers of refugees.

West European states will probably resist the call in part because of the likely increase in unorganized flows—those not facilitated by relief organizations—which account for almost 80 percent of the movements of Kosovo refugees to Europe since January 1998.

- As the Kosovo crisis drags on and refugee camps become more established—relief providers' plans for telecommunications and banking links will facilitate connections with the Kosovar Albanian diaspora—more refugees will abandon immediate hopes of return to Kosovo and seek resettlement opportunities in western Europe.

- A significant incentive for refugees to relocate outside the region is the low standard of living there—GDP per capita income in Albania is only \$550 and \$1,900 in Macedonia—which is even lower than in Kosovo and offers families few prospects for rebuilding their lives.

Illicit Migration on the Rise

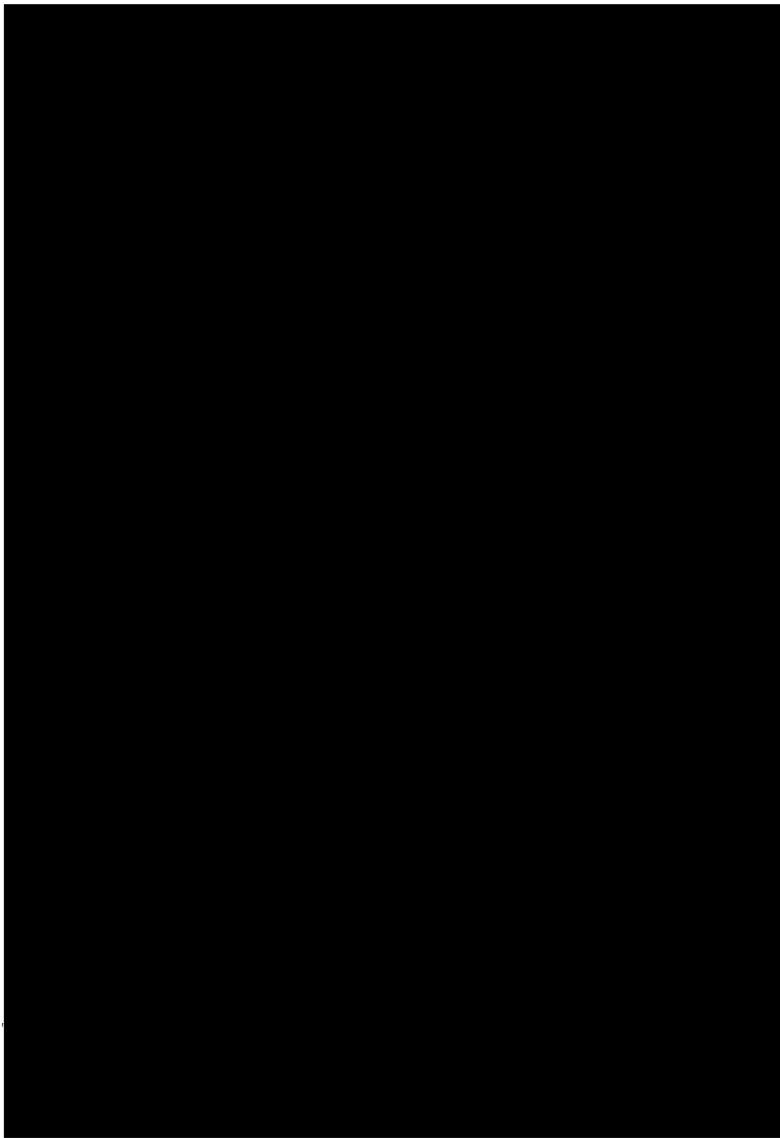
Many Kosovo refugees—living in overcrowded camps and facing uncertain relocation prospects—are likely to take flight on their own in numbers that could easily surpass quota levels. Given illegal departures already occurring and the mass migration that occurred during the Bosnian conflict, we expect these illicit flows to reach tens of thousands more in the months ahead.

- These flows could be substantially higher if the conflict intensifies, is protracted, or if hope for an eventual return to Kosovo diminishes.
- During the Bosnia crisis in the early 1990s—which resulted in about the same overall number of refugees as the current Kosovo situation—hundreds of thousands of refugees with little hope of returning to the homeland poured across western European borders.

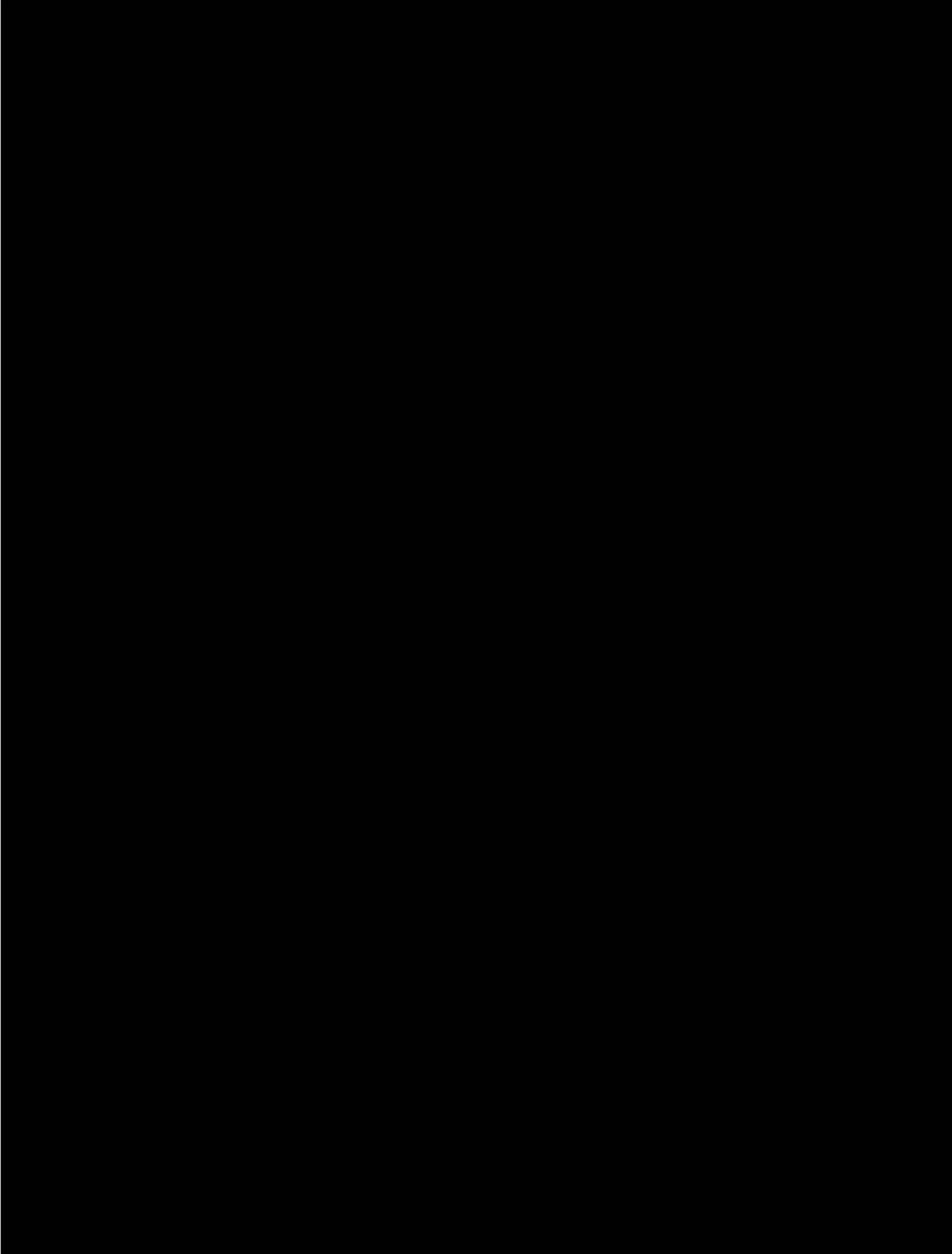
The bulk of the illicit migration will be by those intending to apply for asylum. These flows could severely strain the border control and detention regimes of many countries.

- Most of this flow is likely to affect Germany, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Slovenia and, to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom and Greece, where sizable Kosovar and other Albanian communities exist or where refugees interviewed believe they will achieve protected status.

The flow of illegals will also present problems for countries used as transit routes—especially the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Slovenia—already beset with large global flows of illegal migrants taking advantage of porous borders.



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