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SPOT COMMENTARY

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A Breather for Both Sides

Milosevic followed his television appearances Thursday with further moves designed to reassert his authority. The Federal Election Commission—minus a deputy chairman who resigned Thursday—took away four seats in the federal parliament from the DOS coalition on dubious technical grounds.

- *In part, this maneuver could be designed to prepare the ground in case Milosevic is forced to cede the federal presidency to Kostunica and then moves to become Prime Minister.* FRY Ambassador to Moscow, Milosevic's brother, said in an interview today that FRY President Milosevic could become federal prime minister if the opposition gains the presidency.

Opposition leaders promised a "massive civil disobedience movement" to dislodge Milosevic from power, but the lack of a follow-up to Wednesday's rally and Milosevic's reappearance on television dampened the momentum against the regime. Democratic party leader Djindjic called for a rally on Friday at which he promised to explain the opposition's tactics.

- Spontaneous demonstrations took place in several cities despite the lack of opposition leadership. According to press reports, about 10,000 protested in Novi Sad, 3,000 in Leskovac, and 1,000 gathered before Democratic Party headquarters in Belgrade. The independent media claimed a total of 50,000 demonstrated throughout Serbia.



Prepared by: DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force. Comments and Questions can be addressed to

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- The diplomats claim Moscow is pushing Kostunica to accept a second round. The opposition has shown Russian officials their vote registers, possibly in response to Moscow's request for an accurate vote count and to convince Moscow that Kostunica won a majority in the first round, according to press reporting.
- *The opposition's initial, strident rejection of a second round would make accepting one now look like a sign of weakness. In addition, any Kostunica about-face on this issue likely would reopen divisions between Kostunica and Djindjic, whose rhetoric has been especially confrontational since the election.*

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- *Predrag Bulatovic has expressed open opposition to regime policies and has been seeking a dialogue with Montenegrin President Djukanovic since Belgrade forced the SNP into coalition with the Radicals and with Mira Markovic's JUL in local elections earlier this year.*
- A spokesman for Draskovic's Serbian Renewal Movement publicly called Seselj "hypocritical" and demanded that he clearly remove his party from the ruling coalition. [redacted]

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