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NR Record

YUGOSLAVIA: Party Endorses End to Political Monopoly

A Yugoslav Communist party Central Committee plenum preparing for a national party congress next month has approved draft stands that would eliminate the party's political monopoly, lift restrictions on political activity, and allow direct secret ballot elections. The plenum stopped short of advocating a multiparty system, probably because of opposition from the Army and strongman Milosevic in Serbia. The five other republics have called for multiparty elections, and at least Slovenia and Croatia are planning free elections in the spring. [redacted]

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Comment: The party's draft positions are a compromise. Party leaders probably fear that a more explicit stand on the multiparty system would encourage new conflict by Serbia against Slovenia and Croatia and possibly precipitate a breakup of the national party. The congress probably will adopt the compromise, opening the door for free elections in most of Yugoslavia by the end of 1991. Milosevic's refusal to keep pace with growing reform sentiment may further isolate him in the federation and erode his power base in Serbia. Milosevic probably would answer any challenge to his authority with purges or a crackdown. [redacted]

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