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**CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT IN POST-WAR KOSOVO
AND IN POST-WAR SERBIA**

Pavol Demes

August - September 1999

Pavol Demes was a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center from July - November, 1999 and is currently the Director for Central and Eastern Europe for the German Marshall Fund of the United States(GMFUS). The author wishes to thank Sabina Crisen of the Wilson Center's East European Studies program for her invaluable editorial and layout help with this document. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Woodrow Wilson Center.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
A. Civil Society Development in Post-War Kosovo	5
I. Executive Summary	7
II. Background	8
III. Assessment Mission, August 1999	10
IV. Major Findings	11
V. Recommendations	15
B. Civil Society Development in Post-War Serbia	19
I. Executive Summary	21
II. Background	21
III. Major Findings	24
IV. Conclusions	29
V. Appendix 1 - The Future of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Conference, July 1999	31
VI. Appendix 2 - Press Release from Gradanske Inicijative, September 1999	45

SECTION A:
CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT IN POST-WAR KOSOVO*
Key Findings & Recommendations
August 1999

An Assessment Report
By Pavol Demes

*At the time of this report, Pavol Demes was a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington DC, and Executive Director of the Slovak Academic Information Agency-Service for the Third Sector, Slovakia. This section of the larger, **Freedom House Assessment Report**, represents Pavol Demes' portion, focusing on the status of the post-war Kosovo civil society and NGO development and includes inputs from Lisa Davis and Douglas Rutzen.

CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT IN POST-WAR KOSOVO

Pavol Demes

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I. Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the August 1999, *Freedom House* assessment mission to Kosovo. It will focus on the status of civil society, specifically non-governmental organizations, development. A broader report covering media, human rights and governance issues is under preparation by *Freedom House*. The overall goal of the four person assessment team was to determine the conditions, status, and potential for development of civil society and democratic governance in the war-torn province and to formulate recommendations to strengthen Kosovo's transition to a democratic society based on the rule of law.

Despite the grave post-war conditions, we found cause for optimism. The local population is eager to rebuild Kosovo. With a decade strong tradition of self-organization through 'parallel' institutions, the estranged population has rushed back to the province to rebuild, embracing the opportunity to start a new life. Nevertheless, the complicated system of governance in these transitional societies and the demand for justice present within the post-war environment leave at risk human rights protections, a functioning rule of law, citizen participation in decision-making, and a long-term vision of peace and tolerance in the region. Democratic institution building and practices must be adopted. The enthusiasm and energy of the Kosovo population will need to be channeled towards long-term development with the recognition that Kosovo is passing through multiple, simultaneous transitions.

II. Background

In the aftermath of the Kosovo peace agreement, the people of Kosovo and the international community face the difficult tasks of building democratic institutions, reconstructing economic and social structures, establishing genuine rule of law and human rights protections in Kosovo, and bringing about peace and stability in the region.

Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) vested interim civil administration authority over the territory and people of Kosovo to the *United Nations Interim Administration Mission (UNMIK)*. *UNMIK* possesses exclusive legislative and executive powers, including the administration of the judiciary, the appointment of local administrators, and the supervision of the international police force and creation of a local police force.¹

Due to the previous Serb dominated regime, Kosovo citizens have no previous experience in providing input to established laws and policy decisions, and thus no experience in standard democratic participation. The overall goal of the *UNMIK* mission is to set up an interim administration and prepare a provisional local administration for self-governance. In this regard, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), Dr. Bernard Kouchner, supports the involvement of the Kosovar public in the UN decision-making process. The SRSG foresees the participation of local leaders and representatives of ethnic groups in a Kosovo Transitional Council² as well as sectoral joint consultative committees as means for providing direct input into *UNMIK*'s decisions on civil reconstruction and democratic development.

According to *UNMIK* Regulation No. 1, the laws applicable in the territory of Kosovo prior to March 24, 1999, continue to apply in Kosovo insofar as they do not conflict with international human rights standards or the fulfillment of *UNMIK*'s mandate. For the review of existing legislation and drafting new laws, *UNMIK* recently formed a Joint Advisory Council on Legislative Matters ("Legal Advisory Council") composed of Kosovar and international legal representatives.³ The Legal Advisory Council will advise *UNMIK* by identifying areas in need of legal reform and identifying discriminatory laws for their immediate suspension. The Legal Advisory

¹ Regulation No. 1999/1 outlines the full authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Bernard Kouchner, who heads *UNMIK*, and provides a legislative basis for the exercise of government powers foreseen in Sec. Council Res. 1244.

² The Kosovo Transitional Council serves as the highest political body under *UNMIK* and provides local political parties and ethnic groups a means for direct input into *UNMIK*'s decisions on civil reconstruction and democratic development.

³ At *UNMIK*'s request, legal experts from the Council of Europe are reviewing four major bodies of existing law : the criminal code, the criminal procedure code, the law on public peace and order and the penal law of Serbia.

Council working with *UNMIK* legal experts will also draft new laws.⁴ *UNMIK* will establish two additional commissions with participation of local experts:

- , a technical advisory commission on the structure of the judiciary and public prosecutor's office;
- , and a commission on the appointment of judges and public prosecutors.

The SRSG has also stated that it will seek Kosovar opinion and views on the reconstruction of the health and education sectors in addition to legal reform.

Isolation due to political repression and Kosovo's status as a provincial outpost have left it devoid of leaders and managers capable of assuming the new tasks. As *UNMIK* appoints provisional local administrators, the OSCE intends to help in training new civil servants through the creation of a school for civil administrators. Excluded from the previous governing administration, ethnic Kosovo Albanians lack the capacity, knowledge, and skills to administer a democratic government with the necessary transparency and accountability to the public it serves. The same applies for managers and leaders in all sectors of business, government, media and NGOs.

As several ethnic Kosovo Albanians pointed out, Kosovo is experiencing a number of transitions, all at once. These are:

- , from a province to "independence";
- , from communism (Yugoslav/Milosevic style) to a democratic society and market economy;
- , from a divided Europe to an ongoing process of an integrated Europe;
- , from "apartheid" to free society;
- , from war to peace;
- , from "old" to "new" economics - not just to the free market, but specifically information age economics.

It is in these transitions that the international community can share lessons learned from the transitional democracies of Central and Eastern Europe and the post-conflict societies of the former Yugoslavia. As the Western allies prepare for an ambitious restoration program to repair war damage and bring stability to Kosovo and the surrounding region, NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are also strategizing their role. A regional approach will further the goal of regional reconciliation and promote a shared respect for human rights and rule of law. Thus, a strategic and coordinated effort must be developed to build civil society, reassert and strengthen rule of law and protection of human rights, form local democratic institutions, and develop fair justice sector institutions in both Kosovo and throughout the former republics of Yugoslavia.

⁴ The Legal Advisory Council will have 5 working committees focused in the following areas: criminal law; property and housing law; administrative law and local administration; and civil law and related matters; and other matters.

III. Assessment Mission, August 1999

In the middle of August 1999, a *Freedom House* team conducted an assessment mission to Kosovo to examine the current local conditions for democratic development and identify appropriate assistance by CEE NGOs and *Freedom House*. The assessment had the following specific objectives:

1. to assess the development of the NGO sector, independent media, and the leadership class in Kosovo and identify ways in which program intervention by CEE NGOs and Western assistance programs may contribute to their development;
2. to assess local conditions and capacity of human rights activists and human rights organizations to promote and protect human rights; and to identify necessary support to strengthen their role;
3. to assess the potential and/or future needs for democratic assistance and promoting rule of law and human rights within the broader Southeastern European region.

The assessment team was comprised of:

1. Lisa Davis, Director of the *Rule of Law Initiatives/ Human Rights Training and Support (RIGHTS) Program*, Washington, DC.
2. Pavol Demes, Executive Director, *Slovak Academic Information Agency- Service Center for the Third Sector*, Bratislava (currently a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars)
3. Peter Wiebler, Director of *Freedom House's Regional Networking Program*, Budapest.
4. Mike Staresinic, *Freedom House* Field Representative, *US-Bosnia Business Exchange Program*, Sarajevo

The team was joined by the Vice President of the *International Center for Not-for-Profit Law*, Mr. Doug Rutzen, who explored options for resolving NGO legal registration issues and other problems associated with the existing NGO legal framework in Kosovo.

The team interviewed representatives from local civic groups, independent media academia, the legal profession, donors, international organizations and the *United Nations Interim Administration Mission*, the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*, the European Union and the *UN High Commission for Refugees in Kosovo*.

IV. Major Findings

It is generally recognized that a vital civil society is of crucial importance to rebuilding post-war Kosovo. Based on the discussions with local NGO representatives and published data by international organizations⁵ only 25 to 30 local, mostly informal, non-governmental organizations are currently active in Kosovo. As seen in other recent post-war examples in the former Yugoslavia, and due to massive international assistance, this is likely to change with the mushrooming of many new NGOs addressing humanitarian relief and other needs.

Currently, there are approximately 180 international, mostly humanitarian, organizations active in Kosovo, employing hundreds of local, mostly technical and support staff. Coordination between indigenous and international NGOs is in the preliminary stage and some local civic activists are indicating a lack of consultation and partnership between the two groups.

The breadth of the local NGO sector, which started to develop after 1990, is quite narrow. Some of the oldest and more established, such as the *Mother Theresa Society* and the *Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedom*, are engaged in human rights or the humanitarian and social fields. Their activities over the last decade stem from the needs and the development of the Kosovo Albanian 'parallel institutions' which provided health services, education, protection of human rights etc.

Student and women organizations are also quite active (e.g. *Independent Student Union*, *Youth League Alternativa*, *Postpessimists*, *Center for Protection of Women and Children*, the *Women's Forum*, *Aureola*, *Motrat Quiriazi*). Several NGOs focus on the protection and promotion of ethnic Albanian culture (e.g. the Dodona theatre and gallery), but Kosovo still lacks a strong environmental movement like the other CEE countries. *Rinvest* is an example of a young (established in 1995) successful think-tank.

New NGOs have emerged during the humanitarian crisis. Some of the newest groups developed out of the collaborative efforts of NGOs with Kosovar refugees in Macedonia and Albania. Examples include, the *Kosovo Youth Council* and the *Association for Democratic Initiatives*. Other initiatives are developing as Albanian organizations like the *Albanian Women's Center* and the *Albanian Professional and Business Women's Association* to strengthen their relationships with women refugees returning from Albania to their hometowns in Kosovo. Impressive efforts by human rights NGOs to document and report war crimes data resulted in widespread cross-border and international collaboration.

As of these findings, there was no visible Serb NGO activity.

A. Return to Damaged Offices and Devastated Country

During the war, all NGOs lost their equipment and office supplies. Moreover, there are no functioning telecommunications, postal services or banks. There are also problems with electricity and water supplies.

B. Lack of Formal Structures

Most NGOs operate without legal status. With the exception of a few established NGOs, such as the policy research group, *Riinvest*, and the human rights organization, the *Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedom*, organizations lack formal structures. Most organizations are run by volunteers or by 1 or 2 highly motivated individuals and lack a governing board of directors, transparent decision-making processes, or developed objectives of membership or staff recruitment.

C. NGO Legal Framework is Non-Functional

Both Yugoslav and Serbian laws continue to apply to Kosovo. However, in the case of NGO regulations, the legal framework proves unworkable. Under the existing law, NGOs can register with the Yugoslav Ministry of Justice, the Serb Ministry of Culture, or the Serb Ministry of Interior (specifically, the local police department). For obvious reasons, it is practically impossible to register an NGO in Kosovo.

As a result, some Kosovars have decided not to set up NGOs. Others have set up "informal," unregistered organizations. It is difficult for international donors and multilateral institutions to make grants to unregistered organizations. Founders are exposed to legal liability if they operate with an unregistered NGO.

During the assessment, we found that institutions ranging from the European Union to the World Bank would like to develop civil society and economic development programs involving NGOs. They are hampered, however, by the lack of framework enabling the creation and operation of NGOs. *UNMIK* is keenly aware of this issue and is currently discussing potential solutions with the *International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL)*.

D. Previous 'Parallel' Institutions Provide Precedence and Some Experience

Over the last decade, the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo have gained experience in self-organization through the development of a 'parallel' system for education and health services and for political representation. They developed a rather remarkable associative capacity and self-help mechanisms as reactions to the oppressive environment. These mechanisms included collecting taxes and organizing parallel structures in the political, educational, health, cultural and other fields. Most of the contemporary functioning NGOs addressed the immediate needs of society in hopes of more systematic change in the future. However, civil society organizations developed in isolation from both the rest of Yugoslavia, the region and the West. Thus, while the parallel system has served as a basis for the development of civil society in Kosovo, it will be interesting to observe how it will contribute to the development of a standard democratic civil society.

Due to its nature, the system allowed for close cooperation between political parties, government, educational and health parallel structures and NGOs. With the international community's efforts to promote an open and formal democratic system in Kosovo, NGOs will need to create independent and non-partisan relationships vis-à-vis governmental bodies and political parties.

The relationship between Kosovars and UN structures is quite ambiguous, which is likely to cause frictions in the future. *UNMIK* has organized some consultative bodies (such as the Joint Advisory Committee), but additional mechanisms should be developed to ensure broader public participation in the decision-making process. The challenge, of course is to figure out the best way to reach the public outside of Pristina.

E. Lack of Support Infrastructure

Information sharing, networking and collaboration among civic activists and NGOs is weak. NGO leaders identified the need for coordination within the sector as well as support and resources for NGO start-up and development. There is no identified NGO resource or coordination center. Currently, there is only one local grant-making foundation in Kosovo – the *Kosovo Foundation for Open Society* (formerly the branch office of the Belgrade-based *Fund for an Open Society, Yugoslavia*). Since 1993, this foundation has supported numerous projects in the field of education, culture, humanitarian assistance, protection of human rights and other areas. The *Center for Development of Civil Society*, Pristina expects to play an early role in grant making through the management of EU funding for the NGO sector.

The *USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI)* is supporting local community initiatives and the formation of local community councils in Kosovo. The community councils are town meetings in which citizens receive information on humanitarian relief efforts as well as provide input for defining the priority needs of the community. *USAID/OTI* funds community projects that are identified and supported by volunteer contributions of citizens (e.g., farm machinery upgrades; community school reconstruction; community clean-up efforts).

While some of the human rights organizations share information informally with each other, no formal or routine information sharing and collaboration has been established.⁶ A recent effort by three NGOs (*Riinvest, KACI, Research and Engineering Institute, Pristina*) formed a *Center for Reconstruction of Kosova*. The Center is intended to serve as an umbrella

⁶ The OSCE, whose mandate is institutional building (democracy, rule of law, media, and civil society) has begun to play an initial coordinating role for international and local NGOs. The OSCE hosted the first introductory meeting of Kosov and international NGOs on August 4 in Pristina. Subsequently, on August 12, the OSCE hosted a meeting of 10 local organizations active in the field of protection of human rights. The participants discussed areas of common concerns, ways of cooperation, and the local training and support needs which could be addressed by donors.

for local groups to develop a strategic approach to the reconstruction of Kosovar society. Other NGOs were unaware of this initiative.

F. Lack of Strategic Planning

NGO leaders describe broad missions and envision large tasks and projects for their organizations. While their leaders possess a strong commitment to active participation in the rebuilding of society and addressing urgent post war needs, they lack strategic planning, human resources development, and working implementation plans.

G. Initial Advocacy Roles Emerging

NGOs and civic activists show interest and, in some cases, are engaged in advocacy. Human rights NGOs and associations of families of missing persons are particularly active in representing and advocating their concerns. Through petitions, meetings, and demonstrations before international organizations and with Serbian government officials, these activists are requesting information on the whereabouts of family members and the right to access detention centers, prisons, and juvenile centers in Serbia to determine the condition of their family members detained during the war.

An economic and social policy research NGO, *Riinvest*, is currently compiling data from its recent survey on the economic, social, and political outlook for the future; the results will be used to support the policy advocacy recommendations of NGOs. *Kosova Action for Civic Initiatives (KACI)*, working with local independent experts to review Yugoslav and Serbian legislation, is lobbying for the abrogation of 47 legal provisions which they believe violate international human rights standards. *KACI* intends to open an office to take on policy advocacy work in the areas of ownership rights and citizenship issues, and to provide ongoing independent input to the Kosovo policy-making community.

H. Human Rights Rule of Law and NGOs Play Important Role

Human rights NGOs have one of the longest histories in Kosovo. Approximately ten NGOs are currently working with the human rights. Over the last decade, defending human rights (primarily of ethnic Kosovo Albanians) has been the mainstay of their work, including monitoring, documenting, and reporting violations, and defending human rights defenders in pre-trial detention and in court. During the conflict and post-conflict period, human rights activists and organizations have investigated and documented alleged human rights atrocities and war crimes, assisted in locating missing persons, lobbied for access to detained persons in Serbian jails and prisons, and provided information to the public on the dead and the detained. Several NGOs have quite extensive experience and outreach capacity. For instance, the *Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedom* reported that they were associated with 2000 volunteers and activists through the province, and they have developed sophisticated monitoring and documenting techniques to preserve testimony on incidents of human rights violations. As such, the Council was the first human rights groups to present its investigation files of alleged human rights atrocities to the International War Crimes Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia. The *Humanitarian Law Center's* Belgrade-based office works closely

with its Pristina office (and new coordinators in Pec and Gjakova) and partners in the field to monitor and document human rights violations across multi-ethnic lines. The *Association for the Protection of Women and Children's Rights* and the association, *NORMA*, promote women's legal rights and protections.

The most pressing human rights issues in Kosovo are protecting the rights of minorities (particularly Serb and Roma minorities), locating missing persons / return of prisoners, detainees, documenting war crimes and assistance to female victims of war crimes. Other human rights issues involve the status of citizenship, including citizenship documentation from Yugoslav Embassies abroad and the issue of "stateless" children (reportedly around 75,000) who were born outside Kosovo.

While these groups continue to take on the most urgent human right issues in the post-conflict period, none cited plans to address any longer-term development concerns such as human rights education, multi-ethnic reconciliation, advocacy, monitoring or participating in the development of new justice sector institutions. Nevertheless, they all supported international assistance efforts to help develop these longer-term issues of human rights work and support the institutional capacity building and outreach of their organizations.

In a democratic society, both human rights and rule of law NGOs will need to develop an open relations vis-à-vis the new rule of law institutions: the police, judiciary, prosecutors office, and human rights institutions such as the human rights ombudsman created under the supervision of *UNMIK* and *OSCE* .

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the difficulties outlined above, enthusiasm, courage and hope are predominant among most ethnic Kosovo Albanians. The challenges of preserving a multi-ethnic society are immense in the short-term, but may be eventually solved with the development of a democratic society based on the rule of law. The circumstances surrounding the reconstruction of post-conflict Kosovo provide an unprecedented opportunity for building a democratic society. Several of our recommendations attempt to address the larger societal issues that have an impact on civil society building. They include:

A. Building a Cadre of New and Future Leaders and Managers

Exposure to democracies and training in democratic governance prepare new and future leaders for self-governance in Kosovo. With approximately 70% of the society under the age of 30, the focus must be on developing future leaders of Kosovo.

B. Creating Conditions for a Vibrant NGO Sector

1. Introduction of a legal framework and a process for registration and enabling the operation of NGOs in Kosovo.

2. Infrastructure support for NGOs: Financial and material assistance for restoring damaged offices of NGOs, purchasing equipment, and providing operational funding. There should be support for and special emphasis on regional development for NGOs outside of Pristina.
3. Technical assistance and training for NGOs in strategic planning, organizational development, project design, recruiting staff and volunteers. Technical assistance and training provided by Central and Eastern European NGO counterparts can be extremely valuable to transfer transitional experiences. In addition, strategic planning by local NGOs can help them avoid the problems faced by Bosnian and Croatian NGOs in transforming from humanitarian relief NGOs to longer-term development NGOs.
4. Basic skills training for NGO personnel (using computers, grant proposal writing, fundraising, reporting, financial management, staff management, English-language training, etc.).
5. Training, technical assistance and support to policy advocacy NGOs.
6. Support for cross-border initiatives and exchanges within the region to gain comparative views and share experience and lessons learned in transitional society.
7. Educational and training opportunities in CEE countries and the Western democracies to gain a comparative experience in a functional democracy.
8. Development of a local resource center for NGOs (information collection, processing and dissemination; networking and capacity building) which would also facilitate cooperation of local civic groups with international organizations and donors.
9. Self-regulation, through a code of conduct or other mechanisms is very important, particularly in a place like Kosovo, where there is a sudden influx of both organizations and funding. This is important for strengthening individual NGOs and the sector as a whole.
10. Special attention should be paid to monitoring the relationship between indigenous civic groups and NGOs with the numerous international organizations presently involved in rebuilding Kosovo.

C. Need for Continuing Evaluation of Assistance Programs

Previously, we had the opportunity to learn about the emergence and development of civil society in numerous Central and Eastern European countries. It is obvious that Kosovo is completely different from any transitional society in the region. Development of a stable,

democratic society in Kosovo will be the test not only for Kosovars but also for the international community.

This assessment was done in a situation of enormous flux. The whole of society in Kosovo, not only the civic sector, is going through rapid and very complex changes. If the international community wants to be effective in helping transform Kosovo into a democratic nation, it is necessary to continuously evaluate and monitor effectiveness of the assistance programs, including those in the area of civil society building.

SECTION B:
CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT IN POST-WAR SERBIA*
Key Findings & Observations
September 1999

A Preliminary Field Report
By Pavol Demes

* At the time of this report, Pavol Demes was a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington DC, and Executive Director of the Slovak Academic Information Agency-Service for the Third Sector, Slovakia. Sponsored by *Freedom House*, Pavol Demes was able to conduct a parallel survey (the **Post-War Kosovo Assessment Report** presented earlier in this occasional paper) of the status of civil society development in post-war Serbia.

I. Executive Summary

Civil Society or Civil War

There is one country in Europe at the end of 21st century, where the term "civil" is used simultaneously in two completely opposite ways. Civil society or civil war. These are the terms often found in the contemporary vocabulary of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including both Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro.

This is not the only paradox found in the country which was introduced by the authoritarian political leader Slobodan Milosevic into the current tragic situation. In spite of 10 year of oppression, a series of wars, international isolation and economic hardship, Serbia is not a "civic dead zone." On the contrary. Over the last three years there was a remarkable growth of civic organizations and movements throughout the country. A recent conference of Yugoslav non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Belgrade, demonstrated the surprising vitality of the civic sector and its readiness to act in the public policy arena as one of the main actors in the democratization process. During and after the recent war with NATO, civic organizations were even more active and publicly visible. They are creating broad coalitions and entering into partnerships with other pro-democratic players.

By focusing too much on the persona of Slobodan Milosevic, we tend to overlook other trends in this Southeast European country. In my recent visit to Belgrade I saw the other face of Serbia, and in this report I want to share it with those who are genuinely interested in assisting Serbia and the rest of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in its transition to a stable and democratic country.

II. Background

In early September 1999, I had the opportunity to visit Belgrade, the capital city of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). I was invited by the Belgrade-based NGO, *Civic Initiative (Gradanske Inicijative)*, to attend and address a conference of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of Yugoslavia. This was the first large-scale gathering of Serb and Montenegrin NGOs to take place after the end of the devastating NATO air strikes. It was an excellent opportunity to meet numerous civic leaders, listen to their evaluation of the difficult Yugoslav situation and observe firsthand how they perceive their role in addressing pressing humanitarian needs, economic hardship, political oppression, international isolation and other issues. The conference, which took place in the Hotel Putnik from September 3 to September 5 and included 206 participants from 144 Yugoslav NGOs and from 38 different towns, was also a review of the Yugoslav NGO sector's current strength and position within society. Attendance of the conference by 20 foreign participants from Central and Eastern Europe as well as some from the West, was an important means to start communication between domestic and international NGOs.

Exposure to the regional, European and Central East European, view of the current status of the FRY was gained at a reception hosted by the Slovak Embassy on September 2 on the occasion of the Slovak national holiday Constitution Day. At this reception, I met with several members of the diplomatic community, political representatives, academics and ethnic Slovaks from Vojvodina.

General Observations

The consequences of war are everywhere. On the one hand, there is significant damage to government and military buildings as well as infrastructure, destroyed by NATO bombs and missiles. Then there are the cultural centers and embassies of Western nations demolished by angry Serbs. American buildings and symbols have been mostly targeted, leaving only McDonald and Coca-Cola billboards as visible testimonies to American influence.

The train from Hungary now terminates at Novi Sad (almost 100 km from Belgrade). The railroad bridge connecting Novi Sad to Belgrade was destroyed and still awaits repair. The bridge for auto traffic however, has been repaired.

Scenes from the consequences of the "NATO aggression" are constantly repeated by the local newspapers and national news on government-controlled TV. (The term "NATO aggression" is used widely not only by the government propaganda but also by the opposition activists).

Unlike during my recent visit to Kosovo, where the spirit of optimism prevailed among the general population, I was struck by the very deep frustration and uncertainty the Serbian people exhibit in their daily lives. Feelings of victimization and isolation were also apparent. Serbs are deeply concerned with their personal and national future and they are full of doubts about their political elites' capacity (both the governmental coalition and the opposition leaders) to resolve the complex problems of their homeland. There were no reliable public opinion polls available, documenting the population's biggest concerns or indicating the public's sympathies with any political leader. Although the government and its apparatus remain powerful, the Serbian population feels the severe consequences of Milosevic's rule over the last decade in its everyday life and would desperately like to see real change and begin to live the life typifying other nations in the region. However, for the time being they do not know how to achieve the needed changes.

Attitude towards the international community. Due to their policies in the last decade Serbia and the FRY were practically excluded from normal international relations. As a consequence and an example, the main news in the international section of newspapers during my stay in Belgrade was a greeting sent by President Milosevic to the Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, on the occasion of the national holiday.

The recent war against Serbia not only deepened diplomatic isolation but created an enigmatic situation for many people who oppose the regime. These people desperately want peace, stability and cooperation with other countries. At the same time they feel isolated, misunderstood and punished.

During my visit, I did not speak with a single Serb, including democracy advocates, who justified the NATO bombing. Even the critics of the regime claim that the results of the bombing are hurting the people and their future, not Milosevic, who must be politically defeated. It seemed to me that many Serbs do not make the obvious connection between NATO bombing and the Serb-enforced ethnic cleansing of Kosovo. In general, the Kosovo tragedy was not often brought up during my informal meetings or at the NGO conference itself. Several NGOs however, maintained contacts with Kosovo civic groups and tried to re-establish these contacts after the war. On the other hand, the main TV channel and other media were reporting daily about atrocities in Kosovo, committed, under the "umbrella" of the international community, by Kosovar Albanians against ethnic Serbs. It is interesting to note that despite wide-spread, anti-American feelings and propaganda, Serbs still regularly watch American movies, breaking copy rights in the process since international sanctions are still in place.

Anger against Western nations has been expressed not only by breaking diplomatic relations and temporarily expelling their diplomats but also, as mentioned above, by devastating their empty embassies. Some missions are defaced by vulgar or humiliating signs and graffiti. Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the FRY recently published the **White Book on NATO Aggression**, focusing on the civilian targets and casualties of the bombing campaign.

Economic and political conditions in the FRY are deteriorating rapidly. NATO bombing devastated large parts of the infrastructure and industry in this otherwise impoverished country, and experts from an independent think tanks predict rather catastrophic consequences. Recently, *G-17* did an assessment of the "Economic consequences of NATO bombing" and a prognosis for future trends. They also suggested a "Stability Pact for Serbia," which was not accepted by political parties. Documents and various initiatives of this prominent group can be found on their web site: www.g17.org.yu

The political scene is still dominated by the three-party, red and black coalition, an alliance of socialists, communists and extreme nationalists all led by the authoritarian leader Slobodan Milosevic.

During my stay in Belgrade, I made the following three basic observations on Serb political life.

- 1) Even if the political opposition remains weak for the time being, the citizens of Serbia are not, and Milosevic would loose in free and fair elections.

2) Even though they blame Milosevic, Serb politicians tend to believe, due to the consequences of isolation, sanctions and war, that the world does not like the Serb nation and wants to punish it.

3) Serb political life as a whole is overwhelmed by the obsession with the concept of the “Serb Nation” and its interests, with little to no attention given to national minorities. On the other hand, the NGO sector is cultivating a multiethnic culture, promoting tolerance and cooperation with minorities.

III. Major Findings

Based on the political, social, economic and international position of the FRY one would expect a very weak and underdeveloped community of non-governmental organizations. Surprisingly, I discovered the exact opposite. Before my recent visit to Belgrade, I had met only a few sophisticated, dedicated and brave civic activists, among them Sonja Licht and Miljenko Dereta. I considered them to be a "rare species" in Serbia. The Belgrade-based NGO conference, attended by a wide range of participants from all regions of the country, proved that there are numerous very capable civic activists in this rather tragic country. Moreover, I considered this conference, the first large-scale gathering of Yugoslav NGOs after the Kosovo war, one of the best NGO conferences I have attended in Central and Eastern Europe, in the sense of organization, content, quality of participants as well as overall collaborative and working atmosphere. This opinion was shared by other participants from Central and Eastern Europe.

A. Characteristics of NGOs and Civic Movements

In general, the NGO scene is quite similar to transitional societies in the region — displaying a mixture of older organizations which survived from the previous communist regime (National Front-type of NGOs) and newly created, truly independent NGOs.¹

According to the *Center for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector*, there are about 1200 NGOs in the FRY which emerged after 1990, of which probably about half are active organizations. Their birth and expansion was predominantly a result of armed conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia. These organizations or *ad hoc* groups focused primarily on anti-war activities, assisting victims of the war and protection of human rights.

¹ An extensive report, **The Situation of NGOs in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**, depicting the pre-war NGO scene, was published in English by the *Civic Initiatives* (a member of the *Centers for Pluralism Network*, coordinated by the Washington-based *Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe (IDEE)*). This paper deals with the political context, legal framework, financial situation, human resources, organization development, cooperation with other partners and strategic priorities of the NGO sector. It can be obtained from *Civic Initiatives* in Belgrade by writing to: civin@EUnet.yu.

The emergence of significant numbers of visible and active NGOs appeared during and after the period of mass civic protests, in 1996-97, in reaction to the government's refusal to recognize the results of local elections in Serbia. A characteristic feature of these groups is that they are wide-spread and active mostly in civic and community development and less in humanitarian assistance projects. Their commitment and level of organizational development was observed at the first Forum of Yugoslav NGOs which took place in June 1998, attended by 140 participants from 116 NGOs.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is among the few countries in Central and Eastern Europe in which the not-for-profit sector still operates predominantly under the laws enacted during the former communist regime. The general legal framework of NGOs contains a number of serious shortcomings. Currently, the following types of non-governmental organizations are defined and categorized by the laws of the FRY: citizens associations, foundations, social organizations, trade unions, chamber of commerce, religious committees, and sport associations. The tax law framework for NGOs largely complies with international standards. However, due to the closed atmosphere of the current political situation, there is a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the role and purpose of NGOs. This factor renders any possibility for open discussion and dialogue for development of a favorable legislation for NGOs exceedingly difficult. NGOs are widely perceived as "anti-governmental" while civic activists are often exposed to government oppression.²

Despite the discouraging legal framework and political atmosphere, the self-awareness and networking capacity of NGOs is developing rapidly. In 1996 the *Center for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector, Belgrade* began to provide information and training as well as publishing, legal and other services to the NGO sector. It published the first **Directory of Non-Governmental, Non-Profit Organizations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia** (also in English), and organized numerous workshops as well as the first nationwide NGO conference in June, last year. The Center has a professional staff, a board of directors and is supported by various Western donors. Zarko Paunovic serves as Executive Director. The Center even boasts its own web site (www.crnps.org.yu), which contains the **Directory of NGOs** mentioned above as well as announcements of recent initiatives and an excellent analytical report, **Serbian Third Sector at a Crossroad**, covering the historical background, size and scope of the NGO sector, legal and financial conditions and current developmental needs and trends (also available in English).

² The unfavorable legal context within which non-governmental, not-for-profit organizations operate in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was recently described by Dragan Golubovic, of the *International Center for Not-for-Profit Law*, in his **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Country Report**. It is available at infoicnl@icnl.org.

An important role in developing civic skills and promoting values of civil society throughout the country is played by *Civic Initiatives* under the leadership of Miljenko Dereta, established in 1996 by activists known for their antiwar activities. In cooperation with the Washington-based *IDEE*, *Civic Initiatives* started the project "Braking Barriers, Building Bridges" in Autumn 1997, with the aim to assist in the civic and democratic development of Yugoslavia. *Civic Initiatives* organized numerous meetings for citizens and collaborates with over 120 NGOs, trade unions and other organizations. It also published five books related to democracy seminars and small grant programs for local NGOs.

Attached to *Civic Initiatives* is the training group *TIM TRI*. This training group has well-respected, domestic NGO trainers who developed their skills with the assistance of *Charities Evaluation Services*, UK. *TIM TRI* has trained over 200 NGO activists and 25 trade union leaders in basic management.

The recent Belgrade conference of NGOs was organized by the professional staff and volunteers of *Civic Initiatives*. Standard modern techniques of successful international conferences, including broad participation in facilitated workshops, reporting and final evaluation were applied.

The use of computers and electronic communication is relatively well developed. Most participants of the NGO conference made use of an e-mail address as a means of contact. Additionally, communicating with the conference organizers was efficient and easy.

Significant contributions to the development of NGO networking and organizational skills were due to the activities of *Subotica Open University* and *Open Society Foundation, Yugoslavia*. For the time being, *Open Society Foundation, Yugoslavia* is the only grant-making entity present in the country.

NGOs even have their own periodical, *NVO Glasnik (NGO Messenger)*. This is a very important tool for sharing information about issues related to the development of civil society. Special issues (e.g. June, July, 1999) are published in both, Serbian and English versions (e-mail contact: foscode@merkur.bis.net).

B. NGOs and the Kosovo War

The recent war with NATO created new sets of challenges for the NGO community. Unlike previous conflicts among the former Yugoslav republics, this was an attack on Serbia from the outside, following the failure to find a diplomatic solution to the Kosovo crisis. NGO activists had enormous operational difficulties during the bombing due to technological breakdowns caused by the air strikes. Moreover, even before the start of the bombing many activists were accused of being Western agents and paid traitors. During the air strikes, the government increased pressures

on the NGO sector through public threats, fines and even arrests. Some civic leaders left (temporarily or permanently) the country.

Despite all of these difficulties, the NGO sector remained active during the 78-days bombing campaign of their country. The most significant step in strengthening NGO cooperation, solidarity and involvement in the public policy arena during the war was the creation of a coalition called the *Yugoslav Action Group (YAG)*. It was formed in the first days of the Kosovo War, in March 1999, “with the aim of helping NGOs survive, to protect members against regime oppression, and to act as an organized voice against ethnic cleansing, war and bombing.” Including the five founding members, the coalition now has about 60 members. It is a broad coalition between well-known and respected NGOs and the trade union, *Confederation Nezavisnost* (see www.yuactiongroup.opennet.org). The trade union leader, Branislav Canak, was elected Chairman of the Coordinating Body of YAG and civic activist, Biljana Kovacevic-Vuco, was chosen as Deputy Chairman.

During the war, YAG succeeded, despite very difficult conditions including imprisonment of some of its activists, in issuing public statements against the regime. It was able to establish international contacts with partners in Central and Eastern as well as Western Europe. The task of mobilizing the NGO network is carried out by the *European Movement* and *Civic Initiatives*. In the short period of its existence, YAG became a domestically- and internationally-recognized actor for democratic changes in Serbia and the FRY.

Two special issues of the periodical *NGO Messenger* were published in English. Among other articles, these issues contain the Protocol on Cooperation Between Partners, the Program of Activities, and various statements of the NGO community. Very significant and moving is the “Letter to Our Albanian Friends from Non-government Organizations,” written on April 30 1999, at the height of enormous suffering inflicted on Kosovar Albanians forced to leave their homes.

C. Political Activism

A specific form of non-partisan, NGO political activity in post-war Serbia is the growth of civic parliament movements — a process which started in the city of Cacak and later spread to numerous communities. According to the spokesperson for the Cacak parliament and a leading personality of this movement, Verica Barac, the civic parliament is a specific form of NGO activity “which differs from other non-governmental organizations in that it is more politically active, and from political parties, in that it is not involved in the power struggle. The civic parliaments are fighting for the democratization and decentralization of Serbia, for an overall change of the Serbian constitutional and legal system, and the creation of conditions for change in the system which will form legal and responsible authorities.”³ The first session of the Serbian People’s Parliament took

³ Verica Barac speaking for Radio B2-92 on September 4, 1999.

place in Cacak on September 4 and was attended by representatives of civic parliaments from eight different cities.

With the growing influence of NGOs in addressing pressing societal needs, including fostering democratic changes, the attitude of political elites and the general public towards civic organizations is changing. In an atmosphere of fragmented and non-consensual political opposition, NGOs and civic movements are developing the organizational capacity and sophistication necessary to mobilize the citizens of Serbia to bring changes to their homeland, which is isolated from the international community and is facing a general collapse.

Recognition of NGOs as important agents for addressing the public however, also brings with it the danger that political parties may try to use existing, and possibly create new NGOs, to serve their party purposes. Maintaining non-partisanship, while working in broad coalitions and developing partnerships with various actors, including trade unions, local governments, church and political parties, will be one of the biggest challenges for the successfully evolving NGO movement in the FRY.

D. Future Trends and Needs

The future of Serbia and the FRY is rather dire and problematic, rendering the entire Southeast European region very volatile. With the impending arrival of a winter without sufficient gas and fuel supplies, the already tense political, economic and social situation will become even more critical. In numerous forums and discussions, decision-makers, diplomats, donors and representatives of various non-governmental organizations are trying to find ways to resolve the Yugoslav crisis. One of the most important events, with broad participation of FRY representatives from democratic political parties, NGOs and the media, took place from July 21 to July 22 in Bratislava, Slovakia. The conference entitled "The Future of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the Context of Post-War Reconstruction" was organized by the *East-West Institute, Prague* (www.jews.org) and was co-sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia. The draft of the conference summary, which deals with broad political, economic and international issues, is included as an appendix to this report (please see *Appendix 1*).

A detailed analysis of the needs and range of activities of Yugoslav NGOs was presented in the above mentioned papers prepared by the *Center for the Development of Non-Profit Sector* and by *Civic Initiatives*. A very recent NGO conference in Belgrade (please see *Appendix 2*) conducted an analysis based on a relatively broad questionnaire distributed to all participants. The questionnaire sought to represent various geographic regions and areas of activity. A typical questions included the following:

“What is currently the most urgent need of your NGO?,” to which participants replied:

1. Finances (77.7 %) - for salaries, space, projects, material etc.
2. Contacts with funders (66.6 %)

3. Equipment (55.5 %) - (computer, telephone, fax etc.)
4. Education and training (40.7 %) - NGO management, using computers, English language, networking etc.
5. Contacts with other organizations (25 %) - study tours, literature etc.

The staff of *Civic Initiatives* has analyzed the responses of 80 NGO representatives and continues its efforts to finalize this survey. The full report of the detailed needs assessment of the FRY NGOs will be published by *Civic Initiatives* in the near future.

IV. Conclusions

The crisis in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has reached the stage where it can be solved, only with enormous difficulties and only with massive international assistance. Even if President Milosevic would spontaneously resign tomorrow (which does not seem very likely today), Serbia is facing decades of very painful transition towards a normal European state. Most people would agree that without a stable and democratic Serbia, there can not be peace and stability in Southeast Europe and probably even in the larger territory of the Old Continent of Europe.

The most immediate task in Serbia is to achieve democratic reforms, which would open the doors for broad international communication and assistance. Even though FRY's oppressive regime is still in power, the responsibility remains with the international community to help existing opposition leaders and assist in developing a new cadre of democratic-minded leaders, including civic leaders, serving as a core group to advance democratic development in Serbia, as well as to advance Serbia's integration into democratic Europe. It is of utmost importance to break down the political and psychological isolation of Serbia's general population and democratic elites and to support the cooperation of Serbia with the democratic world.

Within this context I would stress the great importance and responsibility of Central and Eastern European countries, which in the last decade developed useful transitional skills, learned important lessons and enjoyed incomparable higher attention and help from Western nations. Serbia deserves a better future.

Appendix 1



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**THE FUTURE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION**

**A Conference Organized by the EastWest Institute
&
Co-sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia
Bratislava – July 21-22, 1999**

DRAFT

SUMMARY

Following a flurry of international conferences and meetings on the question of Kosovo, the EWI conference in Bratislava was one of the first to raise the issue of the future of Yugoslavia, one of the main players in South Eastern Europe.

1. Isolation vs. engagement

The situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is expected to remain critical over the coming months, with Slobodan Milosevic not being likely to loosen his grip on power. Many voices from within Yugoslavia even speak of a serious risk of either **civil war** or of a **'fascist' coup** by forces close to V. Seselj. The upcoming winter and expected shortages of gas and fuel are likewise going to pose tough challenges.

Although the international community still insists on isolating the Yugoslav regime by maintaining sanctions, representatives of the democratic forces from within Yugoslavia are virtually unanimous in speaking out in favor of **easing the embargo**, stressing that the embargo only serves to strengthen Mr. Milosevic's grip on power.

Maintaining the embargo is therefore gradually becoming indefensible and an acceptable way has to be found to overcome the current situation which unduly penalizes both the population and the democratic opposition.

It is therefore important to re-engage Yugoslavia. Members of the Yugoslav democratic forces at the conference made several proposals of how to effectively do this, such as by including the FRY, at least on paper, in fora like the Stability Pact for South East Europe, SECI, and by including observers and representatives of the democratic forces in the regional working tables.

2. Whom to work with ?

If one of the major results of the conference was a consensus on the need to re-engage Yugoslavia, the question of whom to engage seems more difficult. While representatives of the **democratic forces** would seem the logical partners, reform-minded representatives of the **establishment** should not be completely shut off, possibly by including them in discussion fora and other institutions⁴. Members of the **private business community** should likewise be included in order to discuss issues concerning not only Serbia, but also Vojvodina, Montenegro and Kosovo.

3. How to assist the forces of change ?

In order to support the development of democratic forces of change within Yugoslavia, it is necessary to provide them urgently not only with moral and political support, but also with **financial assistance**. This assistance has to be **quick and unbureaucratic** in order to have an immediate effect.

Another option would be to enlarge the role of the **EU Agency** for the Reconstruction of Kosovo, by extending its mandate to the whole FRY.

An independent **foundation** modelled on the example of the Carpathian Foundation could be set up with the assistance of institutions like the Mott Foundation, the EU PHARE and Obnova programmes etc. with the aim to provide small grants to the peaceful forces of change in the FRY.

Moreover, active **Private Sector Development** has to be undertaken to prevent the economy from total collapse.

4. Next steps

At the Bratislava conference it was decided to set up a **Task Force**, one of whose leading members will be Sonja Licht of the Fund for an Open Society Yugoslavia in Belgrade. The task force will be composed of 15 people, of which 10 will be from within Yugoslavia. It will be in charge of guiding the development of a partnership between Yugoslavia and the outside world by drawing the attention of the international community to the situation in Yugoslavia while at the same time assisting the forces of change within the country. Its first meeting is scheduled for the first week of December either in Bled (Slovenia) or Budapest.

5. Outlook

After years of conflict and isolation, Yugoslavia is today on the brink of collapse. Both the regime of Slobodan Milosevic and international sanctions have considerably reduced its role and influence in the region, although it remains still one of the major players in South Eastern Europe. There can be no serious long-term reconstruction and stabilisation of this volatile part of Europe without the active participation of Yugoslavia. The only way of solving the current deadlock is by engaging the country in regional cooperation and by encouraging democratic forces within the country to lead Yugoslavia to peace and prosperity.

⁴ NB : Milo Djukanovic, president of Montenegro, originally led a breakaway faction of Milosevic's Socialist Party.

CONCLUSIONS:

“A New International Partnership with the People of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY)”

The goal of this new international partnership is to end the isolation of the people of the FRY and Serbia and to promote full engagement with the diversity of international institutions and actors that have an interest in the future of FRY, including governmental, multi-lateral and private organizations. This partnership will build democracy, civil society, prosperity, peace, good neighbourly relations, and European integration of the Balkans.

I. Core Principles for both International and FRY/Serbian Partners

This new international partnership must begin immediately. There is little time to waste as winter approaches and general discontent grows within Serbia. The partnership should be **open, transparent, inclusive and welcoming**. It should be founded on a **long-term** vision for a SEE that is peaceful, democratic, prosperous and European. The parties to the partnership should recognise the central importance of culture, education, a change of mentality and the role of youth in the future of society.

This vision of partnership cannot be effectively realised unless it includes The Republic of Serbia. The actions of the partners must be responsive to the perspectives, needs and priorities of the FRY, Serbia and the wider region of SEE – not based on preconceptions imposed from outside.

Overall, the partnership must recognise the realities on the ground in the FRY/Serbia and the realities of the international community. Both sides must remain undaunted by the extraordinary speed of events and maintain momentum for meaningful change.

II. Action Steps for the New Partnership

It is essential that this new partnership begin to act immediately. It is appropriate to consider two phases in the near-to-mid term:

- **Phase One: Transition to a New Regime**
- **Phase Two: Working with A New Regime to Consolidate Democracy**

A. Phase One: Transition to a New Regime

1. Provision of immediate and varied types of humanitarian assistance to FRY, including Serbia.
2. Direct support (moral, intellectual, *and financial*) to the forces of change in FRY/Serbia. This can be provided through a number of international channels to the following groups in FRY/Serbia:
 - nongovernmental organisations
 - political parties
 - local governments and cities (through twinning)
 - free media
 - the private sector, small and medium size entrepreneurs
 - trade unions
3. Support for economic development – here this means, in particular,

support for SMEs, which will be the engines of growth over the long term (the current small number of private enterprises (5%) provide over 30% of GDP).

4. A new instrument for the provision of financial support to the forces of change. This instrument must be flexible and quick.

The conference imagined three possible options:

- a. amend the mandate of the EU Agency for Reconstruction of Kosovo to include certain kinds of support to the peaceful forces of change in Serbia.
- b. set up a new Agency for the Reconstruction of Serbia.
- c. set up a Foundation for Change in Serbia with capital donations provided by governments, the EU, World Bank (and other IFIs) and major international foundations – to be re-granted to local NGOs, local governments, etc. by an independent board of directors and staff⁵.

Whatever their interim form, the end result should be a unified program for the reconstruction of the whole Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

5. Representation of the legitimate democratic forces of Serbia in all international and sub-regional organisations with appropriate status as “observers,” or “participants,” including: The Tables of the Stability Pact, OSCE, SECI and other appropriate bodies.
6. Parallel to the action steps above, planning (identification of needs, priorities and costs) must take place for the second phase.

B. Phase Two: Working With A New Regime in Serbia

1. Immediate provision of official reconstruction assistance to Serbia (to the extent that it has not yet been provided) according to plans developed during Phase One.
2. Economic integration and the full lifting of the international embargo.
3. Official membership in all relevant international and sub-regional organisations, including early negotiations of an EU Stability & Association Agreement.
4. Support for economic reforms and growth, including assistance for:
 - Macroeconomic stabilisation
 - Banking and financial sector reform
 - Trade liberalisation
 - Privatisation
 - Continued support for SME development
5. Establishment of an Agency for the Reconstruction of Serbia

⁵ One useful model may be the Carpathian Foundation based in Kosice, Slovakia.

It should be emphasised that, considering the potentially explosive pace of change in FRY, planning for Phase Two must begin immediately.

III. Communication and Reconciliation

True partnership requires change and actions by both parties.

A. Points addressed to FRY/Serb Partners:

1. While it is essential to face up to the past and attribute responsibility for the brutal actions taken in the name of the Serbian nation, the people of Serbia must also focus on building a better future.
2. There is a need for a “community of change” in Serbia – Although common ground should be the basis of change, pluralism is a necessity for democracy in Serbia to work.
3. Develop a comprehensive program for the transformation of Yugoslav society. Moving beyond Milosevic is imperative, but not the sole objective.
4. A comprehensive program must include a plan for Serbia’s future relations with Kosovo and Montenegro, a plan for the future of the Federal Republic based on decentralisation, full respect for human rights, and tolerance.
5. NGOs should take the lead in coalescing the community for change. Experience from other Central and Eastern European countries, especially Slovakia, may be relevant in this respect.
6. Act now. Do not wait for the international community to bring change. The future of FRY and Serbia is in the hands of Yugoslav citizens.

B. Points addressed to Partners in the International Community:

1. Act now to support the forces of change in FRY and Serbia. Assistance must be immediate, flexible and decentralised. More streamlined and responsive programs need to be developed. Traditional bureaucratic assistance channels such as PHARE, TACIS and USAID are not sufficient to the need.
2. Move quickly to develop a comprehensive program for the future, not simply a regime change movement.
3. Reconsider rigid positions with regard to the economic sanctions/embargo and the current narrow definition of humanitarian assistance.
4. Encourage, seek out and welcome participation by Serbs in international and sub-regional structures. There is a large community of legitimate leaders in NGOs, local governments, trade unions and citizens initiatives, which can represent the forces for change. Their voices must be heard.
5. Maintain a long-term commitment to change in South Eastern Europe.



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Organized by the East-West Institute, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia

**Hotel Suza, Conference Hall
Bratislava, Slovakia
21 – 22 July 1999**

PROGRAM

Wednesday, July 21, 1999

9:00 – 9:30 **Welcome**

Eduard Kukan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Slovakia and UN Secretary –
General's Envoy for the Balkans
Stephen B. Heintz, Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer,
EastWest Institute

9:30 – 11:00 PANEL 1

**Post – War Reconstruction of SEE and the Involvement of the Federal Republic
Yugoslavia**

Chairman: Eduard Kukan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Slovakia

Panelists:

Jiri Dienstbier, UN Special Representative for Human Rights for former
Yugoslavia

Zoran Batic, Alliance for change, Belgrade

Slobodan Vuksanovic, Democratic Party, Vice-president

Zarko Jokanovic, MP, New Democracy, Belgrade

Erhard Busek, Coordinator, Southeast European Cooperative Initiative
(SECI)

Stevan Lilic, Democratic Center of Belgrade, Vice-President

Walter Rochel, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in
Slovakia

Discussion

11:30 – 13:00 PANEL 2

Needs and Priorities for FRY in Post-War Reconstruction

Chairman: Vasil Hudák, Vice President, EastWest Institute

Panelists:

Branislav Canak, President of Yugoslav Action Group, Trade Union
"Nezavisnost",

Sonja Licht, Fund for an Open Society Yugoslavia

Goran Pitic, Economic Institute of Belgrade

Biljana Kovacevic Vuco, Yugoslav Action Group, Trade Union
"Nezavisnost",

Vice-President

Mijat Damjanovic, Chairman of teams of experts for "Aid for
Reconstruction

and Development Project".

Discussion

13:00 – 15:00 Lunch

Speaker: *Erhard Busek*, Southeast European Cooperative Initiative

15:00 – 17:00 PANEL 3

The Complexities of Post – War Assistance to FRY

The Need for a Regional Approach in Dealing with FRY

Chairman: *Erhard Busek*, Southeast European Cooperative Initiative,
Coordinator

Panelists:

Jozef Kasa, MP, Union of Vojvodina Hungarians, President

Igor Sevastianov, Head of the Russian Mission to OSCE in Vienna

Dusan Mihajlovic, New Democracy, Belgrade, President,
Lutra d.d., Belgrade, President

Dusan Janjic, Forum for Ethnical Relations, Belgrade, President

Srdjan Zivkovic, Center for Development and Democracy, NIS, President

Discussion

Thursday, July 22, 1999

9:00 – 10:30 **WORKING GROUPS**

1. How to Support Democratization in FRY

Chairman: *Hans Peter Furrer*, Council of Europe

Panelists:

Miljenko Dereta, Civic Initiatives, Belgrade, Chairman

Aleksandar Lojpur, Yugoslav Lawyers Committee for Human Rights,

ABA/CEELI

Gordana Susa, Chairperson of Media Committee of group of NGOs
“Yugoslav Action Group”, Nezavisnost
Jelica Minic, European Movement in Serbia

2. How to Support Private Sector Development in FRY

Chairman: *Michael Gold*, Crimson Capital, Czech Republic

Vassili Takas, Federation of Industries of Northern Greece, President
Dusan Mihajlovic, Lutra Group, President
Dragan Niksic, IBI d.d., Manager
Milko Stimac, Group 17, Belgrade

11:00 – 11:30 **Reports from the Working Groups**

11:30 – 12:00 **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Chairman: Stephen B. Heintz, Executive Vice President and Chief
Operating Officer, EastWest Institute



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Organized by the East-West Institute, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia

***BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA
21 – 22 JULY 1999***

List of Participants

From the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

On political reform in FRY:

1. **Zarko Jokanovic**, MP New Democracy, Belgrade
2. **Stevan Lilic**, Democratic Center, Belgrade, Vice-President
3. **Obrad Kesic**, Political Director for Milan Panic in Washington, DC
4. **Slobodan Vuksanovic**, Democratic Party, Vice-president
5. **Djordje Stojiljkovic**, Demo-Christian party of Serbia
6. **Svetlana Nahod**, Demo-Christian party of Serbia
7. **Mr. Pribisevic**, Serbian Renewal Movement

On Economy, Reconstruction and Private Sector Development in FRY:

8. **Vladan Batic**, Demo-Christian party of Serbia, President
9. **Branislav Canak**, President of Yugoslav Action Group of Nongovernmental Organizations and Association of Independent Trade Unions "Nezavisnost"
10. **Dusan Mihajlovic**, New Democracy, Belgrade, President; President of Lutra Group Inc.
11. **Milko Stimac**, Group 17, Belgrade
12. **Dragan Niksic**, IBI d.d., Belgrade, Manager
13. **Petar Stankovic**, International Chamber of Commerce, Secretary General, Belgrade
14. **Goran Pitic**, Economic Institute Belgrade

On Civic Society, Non-profit sector and NGO's

15. **Biljana Kovacevic Vuco**, Yugoslav Action of Non Governmental Organizations

- "Nezavisnost", Vice President, and Yugoslav Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, President
16. **Milan Vukomanovic**, Center for Development of Non Profit Sector, Belgrade
 17. **Miljenko Dereta**, Civic Initiatives, Belgrade, Chairman
 18. **Daniel Stoyanovich**, Alliance for Change

On Rule of Law, Independence of the Judiciary

19. **Aleksandar Lojpur**, Yugoslav Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, ABA/CEELI

On Freedom of Media

20. **Gordana Susa**, Chairman Media Committee of Yugoslav Action of Non Governmental Organizations 'Nezavisnost', and Editor in Chief of VIN (Video Information News) a bi-weekly TV magazine
21. **Dragan Bisenic**, journalist
22. **Zoran Jelcic**, Media Center of Belgrade, Manager

On Transfrontier Cooperation

23. **Dusan Janjic**, Forum for Ethnic Relations of Belgrade
24. **Srdjan Zivkovic**, Centre for Democracy (CERID) of NIS, Chairman
25. **Jozef Kazsa**, Union of Vojvodina Hungarians, President, MP
26. **Sinisa Nikolin**, Fund for an Open Society Novi Sad
27. **Alpar Losonc**, Center for Multiculturalism Novi Sad

On Cooperation with the EU, OSCE and Donors

28. **Jelica Minic**, European Movement in Serbia, EU Law Specialist
29. **Mijat Damjanovic**, Expert Team Member of "Aid for Reconstruction and Transition Project"
30. **Dusan Bogdanovic**, Representative of Group of NGO's "Yugoslav Action Group, Trade Union "Nezavisnost"
31. **Ivan Djordjevic**, New Democracy, Chief of Staff
32. **Sonja Licht**, Fund for Open Society Yugoslavia, President

International Participants

1. **Andrew Bair**, United States Department of State, Office of the Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State for Implementation of the

Dayton Peace Accords

2. **Pierre Boiraud**, Civil Works, International Commercial Manager
3. **Sandra Breka**, Aspen Institute, Berlin
4. **David Buchan**, Financial Times
5. **Vera M. Budway**, SECI-OSCE, Assistant Coordinator
6. **Erhard Busek**, SECI, Coordinator
7. **Marian Coblentz**, OSCE Mission in B&H, Senior Political Advisor
8. **Jiri Dienstbier**, United Nations, Special Representative for Human Rights in Former Yugoslavia
9. **Giorgio Dominese**, Centro Studi Nord Est, President
10. **Jozef Drogenik**, Slovenian Embassy in Slovakia, Charge d'Affairs
11. **Miroslav Frick**, World Bank
12. **Hans Peter Furrer**, Council of Europe, Director of Political Affairs
13. **Dominique Gazal**, AKA RT, Hungary
14. **Michael Gold**, Crimson Capital, Managing Director
15. **Stephen Heintz**, EastWest Institute
16. **Doug Hengel**, US Embassy in Bratislava, Charge d'Affairs
17. **Janos Hovari**, Head of Secretariat, Office of the State Secretary, Hungary
18. **Vasil Hudak**, EastWest Institute
19. **Gerald Knaus**, International Crisis Group
20. **Eduard Kukan**, Foreign Minister of Slovakia and UN Secretary General's Envoy for the Balkans
21. **Hans-Gunter Loffler**, German Embassy in Slovakia, Charge d'Affairs
22. **Nicholas Mansfield**, ABA/CEELI, Regional Director for the Balkans
23. **Lubica Masarova**, Slovenske Iodenice Komarno
24. **Radoslav Petkov**, EastWest Institute
25. **Tanja Petovar**, Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Senior Executive
26. **Elizabeth Rasmusson**, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Hercegovina, Deputy Head
27. **Walter Rochel**, European Commission, Ambassador, Head of Delegation to the Slovak Republic
28. **Jean Daniel Ruch**, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
29. **Igor Sevastianov**, Russian Mission to the OSCE, Senior Counselor
30. **Sasa Slavec**, Entrepreneur, Slovenia
31. **Daniel Stojanovic**, Alliance for Change
32. **Kilian Strauss**, EastWest Institute
33. **Vassili Takas**, Federation of Industries Northern Greece, President
34. **Milada Anna Vachudova**, Center for European Studies, Harvard University
35. **Walter Veirs**, C.S. Mott Foundation, Prague
36. **Alexander Voznyuk**, Russian Embassy in Slovakia, Charge d'Affairs

Appendix 2

LOOKING AT THE FUTURE
A FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA NGO CONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 3-5, 1999

A conference of the non-governmental organizations of Yugoslavia took place in Belgrade, September 3 to September 5, 1999. The conference was organized by the Belgrade-based NGO, Civic Initiatives, in the framework of the project "Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges" coordinated in cooperation with the Washington-based Institute for Democracy in East Europe.

The conference included 206 participants from 144 non-governmental organizations from 38 of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's towns and 20 international and Central and Eastern Europe non-governmental organizations. It was also the first time the representatives of Citizen's Parliaments attended such a gathering.

The conference assessed the conditions under which NGOs functioned in the post-war period and discussed topics for future priority. It was concluded that relations between the state and non-governmental organizations were negative. Partnership relations, characteristic of developed democracy, should be established through a drastic alteration of existing legal regulations. This will be feasible only with widespread political change.

NGOs play a decisive role in the process of change and the promotion of civic activism for democratic governance. In that context, the example of Slovakia's *OK 98 Campaign*, [presented to the participants by keynote speaker, Pavol Demes,] was extremely useful.

The tragic humanitarian situation of both refugees as well as the local population, requires urgent and efficient resolution. Non-governmental organizations are ready and capable to provide and distribute needed humanitarian aid, yet a state-established monopoly prevents the implementation of this effort. Consequently, this conference resulted in the creation of a coordinating body of NGOs for humanitarian issues and in the launching of an initiative for the urgent change of the current law.

Inter-ethnic relations were highlighted as one of the causes of the current social crisis. Apart from resolving the impending crisis situation, it was also suggested that future conflicts could be prevented by more and better education advocating tolerance and inter-ethnic dialogue. This discussion also focused on the question of responsibility for:

- , the start of the war
- , the ethnic cleansing campaign; and
- , the complete exclusion of Yugoslavia from the international community.

NGOs consider the establishment of intensive local and regional networks as the only means for the efficient functioning of civil society. The first concrete moves in that direction were made at the conference - intensified cooperation between women's organizations from Subotica, Ulcinj (an Albanian organization), Novi Pazar, Nis and Kraljevo was agreed on, with the final goal of establishing a Forum of women's organizations. In addition, the Vrsac-based (in Serbia) NGO, The Urban Workshop together with the Society for Education in Malopolska, Poland agreed on a joint project on alternative education.

The conference also discussed the current financial and staff situation in the Yugoslav NGO sector. It was underlined that significant changes would take time and that the strategy of patient incremental development was the only way to ensure stable results.