



Auswärtiges Amt

C·A·P



Arbeitsgruppe Balkan

„Neuordnung von Staat und Nation in Jugoslawien“

Berlin, 26. Februar 2001

Gutachten

(Counter-) Elite Grouping in Montenegro

von Prof. Dr. Vesna Rakic-Vodinelic

Kooperationsveranstaltung:

Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gütersloh
Centrum für angewandte Politikforschung, München
Planungsstab des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin

I INTRODUCTION

After years of regional conflict, after Slobodan Milosevic, the head of an authoritarian regime was ousted, it seemed that the new Yugoslav Government had the serious opportunity to rebuild internal federal relations as well as relations with neighbors. It appeared that the "Montenegrin Question" would be just a matter of time and friendly negotiations between the new Serbian and old Montenegrin political elite. But, even immediately after the "Belgrade October Revolution" had removed Milosevic, some observers and experts were reminded of Montenegrin President Djukanovic's warnings, that contemporary relations between Serbia and Montenegro were not only troubled on account of the autocratic regime, but also due to constitutional, historical and national grounds.¹ The changes in the Yugoslav government and subsequent changes in Serbia after the elections in December 2000, have forced Montenegrin leadership to face the issue of future Montenegrin statehood and to redefine its relationship with Serbia. Shortly after the removal of parts of Milosevic's regime, President Djukanovic adopted a clearly pro-independent position. Therefore, internal relations in the Montenegro - Serbia -Yugoslavia triangle are threatening to turn themselves in external, due to the announced separation of Montenegro through referendum.

In the shadow of a trouble-making Milosevic regime, most of the problems of Serbia-Montenegro relations were attributed almost exclusively to that regime. Hence, (at least from early 1997) underlying controversial political interests were formulated or just implied, but were not given full weight because of the dominant issue - how to get rid of Milosevic. Now, the political scene in Montenegro is clear, but only in the sense that instead of simplified explanations that Milosevic is to be blamed for almost everything, some more sophisticated reasons are being offered in

¹ "A lot has changed, even the constitutional and legal foundations on which the FRY was created in 1992, so that this Yugoslavia exists on paper only. Based on the almost illegally adopted constitutional changes in the illegitimate Federal Parliament, Milosevic called federal presidential and parliamentary elections for September. He is in a hurry to be elected in a popular vote, thus hoping to avoid going to The Hague...In a referendum in the 1990s the citizens of Montenegro did not vote for this kind of state community with Serbia... The Montenegrin Government is helping and encouraging the democratic forces in Serbia in all kinds of ways because it sees democracy, reforms and opening up to the world as the only way of preserving its joint state with Serbia. This is how it will be in this election campaign. It is not up to Montenegro whether Serbia will take that path as soon as possible. A democratization of Serbia is possible only within Serbia, with the help of the democratic international community. The more uncertain the beginning of democratic change in Serbia, the more the people of Montenegro will favor independence. All the more so because as a result of its current legal status as a state Montenegro is not getting effective economic and financial support from the international community which it deserves today as a factor of peace and stability in the Balkans. That is why we should not rule out the constitutional possibility of calling a referendum because the citizens of Montenegro, as all other citizens, have the right to decide on their legal-state status." (Milo Djukanovic article published by SENSE news agency-Brussels, Aug. 15 2000)

arguing the most important political question in Montenegro today: whether to remain together with Serbia as one internationally recognized state or to separate and become a sovereign and internationally recognized Montenegro? On the other hand, there is no good ground to talk about clearness or transparency of the Montenegrin political landscape, because the process of political grouping still is not completed and all decisive genuine political arguments and explanations have not been publicly presented.

For the purpose of getting to know the different political and social organizations in Montenegro, here is a short political guide.

1. Political Parties and Leaders

Montenegro's Ruling Coalition

DPS- Democratic Party of Socialists (Milo Djukanovic, Montenegro's President)

SDP - Social Democratic Party of Montenegro (Zarko Rakcevic, president)

Other Political Parties

NS -People's Party, resigned from the Government (Dragan Soc, president)

DUA -Democratic Union of Albanians (Fuad Nimani, president)

DSS -Democratic Alliance of Albanians (Mehmet Bardhi, president)

LSCG -Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (Miodrag Zivkovic, president)

Montenegro's Opposition

SNP-Socialist People's Party of Montenegro (Momir Bulatovic, ex-FRY PM, resigned in January 2001 from presidency of the Party)

SNS-Serb People's Party (Zelidrag Nikcevic, president)

NKPJ-New Communist Party of Yugoslavia (Branko Kitanovic, president)

Serbia's Ruling Coalition

JUL - Yugoslav United Left (Mira Markovic, president)

SPS -Serbian Socialist Party (Slobodan Milosevic, FRY President)

SRS - Serbian Radical Party (Vojislav Seselj, Serbia's Deputy PM)

2. Political Elite,² Beside the Political Parties - Formation of Opposed Groups

According to Personalities:

Milo Djukanovic, President of the Republic of Montenegro, strongly supported not only by his political party DPS and the majority of citizens (he was elected in January 1997 by direct vote), but also explicitly or implicitly by:

- the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Art;
- the Duklja Academy of Sciences and Art;
- young commercial groups in Montenegro;
- some important cultural institutions, like the Montenegrin People's Theater;
- the Montenegrin Police
- the state-owned media and a significant number of independent media.

Key-people in his circle are not always high officials in his party. Anyway, the most influential are some of Djukanovic's personal advisers like Miodrag Vukovic and Milan Rocen.

Svetozar Marovic, President of the Montenegrin Parliament and prominent member of Djukanovic's DPS, occasionally supposed to be a kind of informal opponent to Milo Djukanovic, but mostly in indecisive political situations. Marovic is more moderate in pleading referendum, independence and eventual separation of Montenegro than Djukanovic, and supported by minority of DPS and some sophisticated cultural institutions like the Summer Theater in Budva, his home town.

Jevrem Brkovic, President of the Academy of Duklja (Duklja - the ancient Montenegrin State), till the middle of nineties refugee in Croatia as tough opponent to the Milosevic regime; well-known as a proponent of independence and separation of Montenegro;³ on the whole Montenegrin political scene, it was Brkovic to whom Montenegrin nationalism has been attributed; explicit and implicit support is given by:

- the Academy of Duklja;
- the LSCG political party;
- PEN Montenegro;
- some independent media (Brkovic has a column in "Monitor");
- part of the University of Montenegro.

² Defined and understood as in : *Eliten, Mobilisierungsmuster und Transitionspfade in Serbien*, by Wim van Meurs and Martin Brusic

³ In any case, separatists ask, why should Montenegro be required to remain part of a political corpse? 'Yugoslavia is dead. It really exists just in the minds of Serbia,' said Jevrem Brkovic, a prominent writer. Brkovic distrusts Kostunica and the Serbs who brought him to power. 'They voted him in because Milosevic failed to create a greater Serbia...They haven't repented for what was done in the name of Serbia.' Brkovic is a confidant of Djukanovic and has advised the president to hold a referendum. He believes 75 percent of voters would choose independence. (Washington Post, October 3 2000)

Predrag Bulatovic, vice-president of SNP, the strongest opposition political party in Montenegro; even during Milosevic's regime, while SNP and Momir Bulatovic were close and true allies to SPS and JUL, Predrag Bulatovic was viewed by public opinion as relatively independent from Milosevic and as much devoted to the political interests of Montenegro as to the interests of the Yugoslav Federation; since October 2000, Predrag Bulatovic is the real head of his party, one of the architects of coalition with Kostunica at the federal level, explicitly and implicitly supported, besides his political party and voters, by:

- the local governance in Northern Montenegro;
- the Serbian community in Montenegro;
- part of the University of Montenegro;
- the Yugoslav Army;
- the pro-Yugoslav media.

Dragan Soc, president of the People's Party; in Milosevic's time this party was strongly opposed to the regime, but at the same time pro-federal and pro-Yugoslav. In the Montenegrin Government, Dragan Soc was one of the most prominent ministers (Minister of Justice); he introduced massive judiciary reform, established some important new institutions; is viewed as a reformer, and at the same time as a politician devoted to federal legal institutions; he is supported by young pro-Yugoslav professionals, part of judiciary and anti-socialist Serbs in Montenegro. Currently, Soc is allied openly with the Federal President Kostunica and with some traditionalists' political parties such as Demo-Christian Party of Vladan Batic, New Serbia of Velimir Ilic, etc.

Slobodan Perovic, political leader of LSCG, the important opposition party of Montenegro, that is inclined to support a government coalition after the resignation of the People's party from the Government; besides his political party, Slobodan Perovic is supported mainly by the same institutions and social organizations as Jevrem Brkovic (see above).

Nebojsa Medojevic, an independent expert in economics and the political sciences, with a reputation as a highly critical observer of the Montenegrin economy; as an unconventional and unprejudiced younger expert, Medojevic is a member of G17, a pro-Yugoslav NGO (prominent members are Vice-PM in the Yugoslav Government Miroljub Labus, Governor of the National bank of Yugoslavia, Mladjan Dinkic), but at the same time a proponent of Montenegrin independence and economical sustainability in today's Europe. Medojevic is supported by urban professionals, especially economists, by some NGO he is cooperating with and his activities are widely covered by the media.

Dragisa Burzan, deputy Prime Minister, deputy President of SDP, known as one of the most media-cooperative officials and open-minded politicians who speaks simply, directly, without euphemisms.⁴ According to his political party ideology,

⁴ Memories are still fresh in Montenegrin democratic public that except for Serbian Renewal Movement, not a single Serbian opposition party has raised its voice against rash amendments of the Constitution of FRY and legal violence against Montenegro. But this does not prevent them from persistently persuading Montenegrin regime to participate in something that cannot be significantly affected by Montenegrin voters, but that can cause them to sacrifice democracy and future of Montenegro. That is why it is difficult to understand the intensive pressure of Serbian opposition to

Burzan is an agile independence proponent, informally supported not only by the members of SDP, but also by some impatient members of Djukanovic` DPS and by some companies` directors.

Serbian and Montenegrin Orthodox Church Bishops, Vladika Amfilohije Radovic and Vladika Mihailo, both tough and intolerant representatives of what they call the State-Church in Montenegro. Not centralized as, for example the Roman-Catholic Church, Orthodox Churches were supposed to be "National Churches" in the sense that having one`s own Church was a decisive proof that the national State had been built. The Church dispute in Montenegro is superfacelly religious. In fact, it is political argument on "original" statehood of Montenegro: if the Serbian Orthodox Church holds a position of State Church, that would mean that Montenegro was one of Serbian territories; on the contrary, if Montenegrin Orthodox Church "wins", it could mean that Montenegro is "genuinely Montenegrin" and has nothing to do with Serbian history. Montenegro Orthodox Church existed as *auto-cephallic* until 1918 and after that was suppressed by the Serbian Orthodox Church which also controlled religious properties such as monasteries`. Although the Church-dispute has nothing in common with modern theories of conceiving a sovereign and independent state, it is important to underline that some political parties while pleading their "modernity", are constantly taking part and taking positions in the dispute: SDP, in spite of its "social-democracy" is siding with the Montenegrin Church on the grounds that this Church is not "equal" to the Serbian Church; NS, on the contrary, favors the Serbian Church, stating that Montenegrin Church is simply a "heresy" of the only genuine Serbian Church. What is of significant importance is that Serbian Church is openly and strongly supported by Federal President Kostunica. In the meantime, both high-ranking bishops are trying to represent themselves as democrats.⁵

which Dragisa Burzan, member of presidency of Social Democrats, sent the following message after the talks in Podgorica: 'Because of their several-year long support to the traditional assimilative policy of official Serbia in relation to Montenegro, leaders of Serbian opposition will not have the support at least of those citizens who are in favour of sovereign Montenegro'. This is quite certain and their number is not at all negligible." (Alternative Information Network/AIM-Podgorica, Aug. 10 2000) The deputy Prime Minister of the Montenegrin government Dragisa Burzan said for the Croatian daily newspaper 'Slobodna Dalmacija' that Montenegro does not recognize the results of the recent elections in Serbia, both those for the president as well as for the federal parliament. 'Four fifths of the adult population of Montenegro boycotted the recent elections and by doing so they have clearly expressed their position with respect to the FRY constituted in 1992. This federation can no longer be renewed, so it's important to choose as soon as possible the new democratic government in Serbia', said Burzan. Burzan declared that no union, alliance or confederation can be established between Serbia and Montenegro before the states involved obtain their independence." (Pobjeda daily-MNNNews, Oct. 16 2000)

⁵ Addressing the press in front of the Cetinje Monastery after a meeting with Metropolitan Amfilohije, head of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, Kostunica said he was 'very satisfied' with talks with president Djukanovic and other Montenegrin officials...When asked whether he recognizes Montenegrin Orthodox Church, his terse answer was 'No'...Metropolitan Amfilohije said yesterday that he supports Kostunica's request that a referendum be organized in which citizens of Montenegro and Serbia would vote on whether they want independence or a joint state. Replying to a question by Vijesti on whether he would accept a decision by a majority of citizens of Montenegro in favour of independence he said: 'Certainly. If the people do vote for this, there is no reason why I should not accept organization of the state that the people demand.' (Vijesti daily, Oct. 18 2000) 'Whilst aware of the fact that the greater Serbian politics has permanently tried to appropriate and subordinate

According to Institutions:

- the Academy of Sciences and Art (see *above*);
- the Academy of Duklja (see *above*);
- the state-owned and independent media (see *above*);
- Political Parties - see *above*.
- University of Montenegro - proponent of the independence of Montenegro are prominent and very influential personalities: professor dr. Milan Popovic⁶, Faculty of Law, professor dr. Radovan Radonjic,⁷ Faculty of Law, professor dr. Nebojsa Vucinic, Faculty of Law, professor dr. Blagota Mitric,⁸ Faculty of Law and former president of the Constitutional Court of Montenegro, professor dr. Miodrag Perovic, Faculty of Natural Sciences. An informal group of University professors has called on the UN to send observers to monitor the activities of Federal State organs in Montenegro⁹ before Federal elections in September and after that has

Montenegro and deny the Montenegrin nation, language, culture and the church; Given that over the last century the experience of the joint states of Serbia and Montenegro were dangerous, bad and bitter with respect to Montenegro and its vital interests; whilst being convinced that the equal union of Montenegro and Serbia was not, is not and cannot be possible, the Montenegrin Orthodox Church believes that it would be best for Montenegro to be sovereign and independent once again', it was stated in a message issued by the Archbishop of Cetinje and the Montenegrin Metropolitan Mihailo. 'The time has come for Montenegro honorably and freely to embark on the road of state independence and achieving full international entity in the union of modern, educated and civilized nations in Europe and world-wide', said Metropolitan Mihailo." (Vijesti daily Oct. 9 2000)

⁶ At the heart of the conundrum of Montenegro lies what Professor Milan Popovic of Podgorica University calls a 'cultural schizophrenia'. Many Montenegrins, despite regarding Montenegro as home, owe their loyalty to Serbia. Montenegro is for them, in effect, no more than a postal address. Many of the most vocal and violent champions of Serb nationalism during the past decade were Montenegrin - men such as Radovan Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb leader, and Arkan, the paramilitary gangster who was gunned down in Belgrade. (The Independent, London, August 13, 2000)

⁷ Prominent Podgorica law professor Radovan Radonjic said that Vojislav Kostunica, who is the Serbian opposition's presidential candidate against Milosevic, is more anti-Montenegrin 'than even the regime in Belgrade,' Montena-fax reported. Radonjic was referring to some recent remarks by Kostunica in which he belittled Montenegro as an unequal partner of Serbia (August, 18 2000)

⁸ Professor of law and former president of the Montenegrin constitutional court, Blagota Mitric said that...Kostunica, would be acting against the law and the will of the majority of citizens of Montenegro, if the position of federal prime minister was given to an SNP candidate. The government would then be formed with a defeated party, which would mean that Kostunica 'conducted the most severe abuse of his constitutional authority, like his predecessor did'. 'If the president of FRY gives the mandate to the defeated party, it shall be clear that he is not acting according to law, but according to political revenge against 'some democrats in Montenegro who turned their back to him,' said Mitric ("Vijesti" daily, Oct. 17 2000)

⁹ A group of 55 prominent Montenegrin intellectuals have called on the United Nations to send observers to monitor what they claim are the 'destructive' activities of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in the republic, reports said Saturday. 'We appeal to the Security Council to urgently send UN observers with a mandate to monitor and speak up about destructive activities of Milosevic's army and paramilitary troops,' the group said in a letter, published in the dailies Vijesti and Pobjeda. The letter was addressed to Malaysia's ambassador to the United Nations, Agam Hasmy, who holds the rotating presidency of the council this month, the reports said. '(Milosevic) has been preparing to repeat the gallows of Srebrenica, Vukovar and Mostar,' the group said, referring to the brutal ethnic cleansing in Croatia and Bosnia that erupted after the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. The group includes some of Montenegro's most prominent intellectual figures, from Podgorica University and the

proposed prompt referendum leading to independence of Montenegro from FR Yugoslavia. University professors - opponents to the idea of an independent Montenegro and the proponents of the *status quo* are not so disposed; presumably, because some of them were compromised by collaboration with Milosevic.

- **NGOs:**

- Centar za demokratiju (Center for Democracy) – CEDEM; prominent and very influential personality **Srdjan Darmanovic**;
- Udruzenje sudija (Judges` Association);
- Helsinski komitet (Helsinki Committee), prominent personality **Slobodan Franovic**, president of the Committee
- Udruzenje pravnika (Lawyers` Association);
- Udruzenje novinara (Journalists` Association);
- SOS Linija (SOS Line);
- Forum zena (Female Forum);
- Institut za javnu upravu, pravosudje i lokalnu samoupravu (Institute for Public Administration, Judiciary and Local Governance);
- Advokatska komora (Bar Association);
- Udruzenje zena sudija i advokata (Femal Association of Judges and Attorneys)
- Centar za obuku sudija (Judges` Training Center).

Most of Montenegrin NGOs were developed within a framework of political opposition to the Milosevic regime in the early nineties and their operations were planned and directed towards civic society building. After Montenegrin socialists split into two different political parties, with opposing positions (pro-Milosevic and contra-Milosevic), Montenegrin NGOs began to support some of government activities with or without critical approach to the every-day government policy.

- **Extensions:**

- Serbian extension: Centar za humanitarno pravo (Humanitarian Law Center);
- foreign extensions: ABA/CEELI, OTI, Open Society Fund, World University Service (Austrian Committee), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Office, British Council, Conrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Temporary Office ; representatives of international organizations: OSCE, EU, UNHCR, OHCR, International Red Cross.

According to Another Criteria

" The idea that the Djukanovic reforms are merely creating a new elite is linked closely to the idea that Djukanovic`s own circle comprises a principal part of this elite. They are characterized as 'Those who are living better' which is a parody of the governing coalition slogan 'For a Better Life'."¹⁰ According to Montenegrin public opinion - not necessarily just that of SNP - the criteria of *nouveau rich* is to be taken into account as a decisive one. Although vague, because according to Montenegrin

Montenegrin Academy as well as several well-known writers and artists." (Agence France Presse, Aug. 12)

¹⁰ ICG Balkan Report No 92: Montenegro`s Socialist People`s Party: A Loyal Opposition?, Podgorica, Washington, Brussels, p. 10.

public opinion it is linked with still unproved corruption and involvement in organized crime, including the elite as a rich and immoral class of people, the notion of *nouveau riche* has become part of the political discussion, because of the obvious display of wealth by prominent officials. There have also been some criminal investigation in this regard. For example: Former foreign Minister Branko Perovic was indicted by an Italian court in 1999 for crimes he allegedly committed in 1993. Perovic resigned. But also, there were false accusations without valid proof. At the beginning of 2001 President Djukanovic was accused by Italian finance Minister that he has been not only involved in, but also controlled smuggling cigarettes in Southern Europe. After Italian press kept on stating that Montenegrin authorities provided safe shelter for Italian mafia, and the SNP daily "Dan" made maximum use of this highly scandalous affair, it became almost impossible to distinguish fact from speculation.¹¹ On the other hand, SNP leaders show no signs of luxury or consumerism. But, the line of division in Montenegrin society remains and both sides - rich and poor ones - are keeping previous genuine political split into DPS and SNP.

3. Basic Data and the Newest Decisive Political Issues

- a) The contemporary Republic of Montenegro is, according to the Federal Constitution, one of two constitutional Republics of FR Yugoslavia. The majority of Montenegrin inhabitants (60%) decided in 1992 referendum to unify Montenegro with Serbia into the Federal Republic Yugoslavia. The constitutional status of both federal Republics, in comparison to other European federations, could be described as highly independent of federal authorities in all three branches of State power. In fact, in the normative state organization confederate elements prevail. In the legislative branch, the degree of that independence is the lowest, as some important legislative acts (like Obligations, Civil and Criminal Procedure, General Part of Criminal Law, etc.), according to the Federal Constitution, are still in the competence of Federal Parliament. In administration, the most important Federal services are foreign affairs and Yugoslav Army. On the contrary, internal affairs are mostly within the competence of the Republics. Judiciary is almost completely within the competence of the Republics. The Federal Court with extremely narrow powers and the system of military courts are federal issues.
- b) Montenegro has about 630.000 inhabitants and could be described as a multiethnic entity. (According to the last census /1991/, 61,5 % inhabitants are Montenegrins, 9,29% are Serbs, 17,4% are Muslims (Bosniaks), 6,5% are Albanians, 1% are Croats and 4,3% are Yugoslavs.) It is to be underlined that the separate identity of Montenegrins and Serbs was and is acknowledged in the Yugoslav census, but that the question of ethnic self-identification is not always clear. An uncertain number of self-identified Montenegrins feel themselves in the same time as Serbs, seeing no contradiction in that feeling. Other Montenegrins are proponents of

¹¹ The Italian Embassy in Belgrade denied rumours that the Italian Justice Ministry would issue an international arrest warrant for Montenegrin President Milo Djukanovic, Belgrade daily Danas reported today. January 31, 2001.

separate Montenegrin ethnic identity. This line of division would be significant issue for forecast of future referendum results.

- c) Generally, Montenegrin society is a typical under-developed, patriarchal and hierarchy-based Balkan society, missing most of what is known as "civic societal institutions". Some traces of political impact of Montenegrin *clans* as a form of medieval societal organization, are still visible, but not decisive in every-day political life. (However, in the last few years, as Djukanovic's government was externally massive supported by the West and directed toward serious opposition to the Milosevic's federal regime, a nucleus of civic society has been growing through the number of non-governmental and similar organizations. NGO operations in general are: training and capacity-development; human rights monitoring and protection; supporting civic society projects and democracy; trade-union activities as a substitute to under-developed trade-unions movement; preparing law-drafts and law models; public opinion polls; humanitarian aid. NGOs' and civic society institutions in Montenegro represent a potential basis for introducing and performing peaceful conflict-resolution and, thereby is one of the societal focal points for crisis prevention. But – it has to be underlined – only a potential one. Namely, the NGOs' accomplishments were only used as an exemption (sometimes even abused) as to formulate some directions of the state-policy. Most of Montenegrin NGOs and another organizations are acting at present as open, sometimes highly engaged, proponents of independence and separation.
- d) One of potentially more serious political conflicts is the present lack of any relations between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Montenegrin Orthodox Church. The political relevance became obvious in recent months: pro-Yugoslav politicians "accept" the Serbian Church only, as "constitutional" and "legal" religion entity. Government politicians are trying to keep an equal distance from both. For Montenegrin Liberals and SDP, the Montenegrin Orthodox Church only has specific "Montenegrin" relevance. The political conflict over church legitimacy, has increased lately into a false-legal dispute over church property, like land, buildings, monasteries which, allegedly originally had been under the jurisdiction of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, and consequently, were "only" taken back from the Serbian Orthodox Church, by members of the Montenegrin Church religious community. Behind the legal actions, whole villages have been involved in disputes over church property.
- e) The first Montenegrin "Platform" 1999 (*The Basis for Defining the New relationship between Montenegro and Serbia, August 1999*) showed a clear preference for a negotiated settlement on future relationships between Montenegro and Serbia, in the framework of a confederation. For Montenegro such a proposal, provided that it be approved, would secure no fewer benefits than a full independent state. On the other hand, this option pleased the international community. Milosevic's Belgrade showed, unfortunately, but expectedly, no reaction. Second "Platform" 2000 (the main elements are going to be presented *infra* II/3), however, introducing the idea of two fully independent and internationally recognized states, does not please the international community, nor federal President Kostunica and the Serbian government at all, but enjoys the support of a significant number of voters in Montenegro and is strongly pushed by most prominent elite groups in Montenegro.

f) Local elections in Montenegro, held in June 2000, have once more demonstrated or even intensified a serious political splitting in Montenegrin society that, with recent political developments, has produced a social and political fragility to external and internal challenges. Although not stated openly, the election results were expected to be a test for a possible referendum on the Montenegrin separation. Having been not convincing enough, this test represented a significant political reason to expect that no unilateral act was going to be undertaken in the months after the latest local elections, which proved to be a correct forecast. Before Milosevic was shattered and definitely ousted, at least three "Montenegro question" scenarios dominated the Yugoslav political arena:

- The regime in Serbia had had an important (though not decisive) political reason to expect the victory of pro-Yugoslav parties and coalitions in the future parliamentary elections in Montenegro 2002, and therefore, there were no grounds to threaten war. According to this scenario, Milosevic's regime was supposed to intensify propaganda by (Serbia or Army controlled) media in Montenegro and to maintain low-profile pressure like temporary closing-up administrative boundaries, political murders, demonstrations of military power in Podgorica Airport. That was the experts' opinion, which proved to be a correct one.
- Notwithstanding the elections result, the regime in Serbia was supposed to introduce more serious provocation and violent escalation, making the state of war inevitable. In this scenario, long-lasting and not immediate massive escalation was more probable than a putsch as that was considered "Milosevic's style", according to the Bosnian experience. That was the official Montenegrin ruling coalition opinion after local elections in Montenegro in June 2000.
- Unilateral action (a putsch) from the side of Serbian regime was not to be excluded, but not as a follow-up or immediate consequence of the local elections result. That was the forecast of some political parties in Montenegro and Serbia in June 2000.

g) On July 6, 2000, the Federal Parliament controlled by Milosevic passed Amendments to the Federal Constitution, whose purpose was to end federalism and suspend the equality of Montenegro in the Yugoslav Federation. Amendments were passed by illegal and illegitimate means. That was the almost identical opinion of Serbian opposition parties and the Montenegrin Government. The Montenegrin Parliament passed immediately the Declaration denying any legal and political legitimacy of the federal legislation.

Montenegrin officials decided to take no part in the federal elections on September 24th 2000.¹² In spite of the unanimity in their opposition to Amendments to the

¹²As of today, officially, Montenegro will not be taking part in the federal elections set for the 24th of September...The question of taking part in such elections is, for Montenegro, a national issue and not an issue of anyone party because elections have been set on the basis of illegal constitutional changes by which the foundations of a legal and constitutional Yugoslav federation have been, for practical purposes, destroyed and the equality of Montenegro has been abruptly suspended. Taking part in such elections would mean that Montenegro would remain without statehood identity and subjectivity, and at the same time, it would give legitimacy to the efforts of the Belgrade dictatorship towards continuing its political rule. Also, for Montenegro it would mean stopping short in the direction of its political strategy which it has been successfully carrying out over the last years." statement, Milo Djukanovic, President of Montenegro, August 14 2000 Podgorica.

Constitution, Serbian opposition and Montenegrin Government had different views of forthcoming federal elections. But Serbian opposition differed in reactions.¹³

Few weeks prior to the federal elections on September 24th, Montenegrin government declared formally that Yugoslav diplomatic representatives (having allegedly represented interests of Milosevic's political oligarchy only) were no longer authorized to represent Montenegro. The Declaration was issued through the ambassador of the Republic Slovenia in the UN.

h) Just after the new Kostunica's office was only beginning to be established, the Montenegrin Government renewed the idea of a referendum,¹⁴ supposedly leading to the independence and consequently to the separation of Montenegro. At the same time, there was a proposal to the Serbian Government to establish a union of independent and internationally recognized States of Serbia and Montenegro.

II (BACK)GROUNDS OF ATTEMPTED MONTENEGRIN STATE INDEPENDENCE

A public debate on the future of Yugoslav the state, in the light of Montenegrin state-independence, although high-controversial, occasionally hostile and, as usual in the Balkans, emotional and irrational, deserves political analyses (if only as overview), because incendiary public speech in ex-Yugoslavia has always been a predecessor to later - at least - more disturbing developments. Memories of the Yugoslav wars are still fresh and, presumably some lesson have been learned. That is why early prevention, based on the lessons deriving from the public (hate)speech are the best possible Balkan-policy, but unfortunately recognized a little bit too late by some of the veterans of troubled Balkan experience.

What could be underlined as distinctive in the newest Serbo-Montenegrin debate?

¹³ "For such a decision they will be punished by their own supporters many of whom I believe will turn their back to it at the elections...These elections are a battle to preserve Yugoslavia. We will have to address and animate the citizens of Montenegro to vote for the right candidate and for [the] united and democratic state of Serbia and Montenegro." Vojislav Kostunica, Democratic Opposition of Serbia presidential candidate Quoted by Reuters, August 16, 2000 Belgrade

The conditions for the activities of DOS clearly no longer exist in Montenegro, because the governing Montenegrin parties have, from claiming they shall ignore the federal elections, radicalized their position and stated that they shall actively boycott these elections. In such a situation, any kind of participation of DOS would lead to a political confrontation with the government in Montenegro, which is what we do not want', said Djindjic to the Beta agency. 'Our concept was to have young, politically inactive people who live in Montenegro, but studied in Belgrade to stand as Montenegrin candidates for the Republican Assembly, and to have well known Montenegrins who partly live in Serbia and partly in Montenegro to stand as candidates for the Citizens Assembly. The development of political events is however leading to the conclusion that having such candidates would lead to a deterioration in the relations with the government in Montenegro', said Djindjic.(Vijesti-daily, August 28, 2000)

¹⁴ "The world probably wants us to strengthen the new regime. We do not wish to create problems, but we need to defend our interests. No one can impose a solution for us from the outside." Branko Lukovac, Montenegro's Foreign Minister Vijesti daily, October 12 -- Podgorica

- That is dispute between proponents of two different consolidations: Yugoslav and Montenegrin one, with an important addition: consolidation of Yugoslavia means at the same time consolidation of Serbia, as the question of status of Kosovo is (happily?) delayed. Discussion supporting consolidation of Yugoslavia is almost automatically understood as anti-Montenegrin and vice versa. That is to say, discussion is prejudiced even without analyzing the very substance of the argument or reason.
- Substantially, discussion could be roughly divided into historical (*see infra, no 1*) and current (*see infra, no 2*). In both types of approaches a rational discussion based on substance has very often failed.
- The reasons and grounds for an opinion (pro or contra independence) are rarely made clear; they are mostly given as key-words with implied specific contents and meaning.¹⁵ That is why they are sometimes misunderstood, especially by those out of Montenegro.

1. Historical background

In Montenegro a powerful belief in a separate national identity has existed for centuries parallel to a strong sense of Serbian national identity.

The country was recognized by the world as an independent and sovereign state for more than 40 years in the XIX th and at the beginning of the XXth century, until the end of the First World War. Then Montenegro was blotted off the map and a division based on national identity triggered a decade-long civil war; Montenegrin nationalists fought fellow Montenegrins who wanted union with Serbia. It frustrated this society, and the scars remain. The two sides resurfaced openly after the 1997 elections that brought Djukanovic to power, rekindling the division that had lain dormant since the Second World War. The implied division between "greens" (Montenegrin nationalists) and "whites" (Serbian nationalist in Montenegro), however, has existed all the time, but during communism, it was covered over by "brotherhood", "unity" and the proclaimed equality of all nations in ex-Yugoslavia.

The phenomenon of nationalism attributed in the last decade mostly to the "great" Balkan nations like Croats and Serbs, was seductive not only for them, but also for "smaller" nations like Montenegrins. Djukanovic dissented from Milosevic's oligarchy just in time to differ his political *credo* from Serbian nationalism. Whether Djukanovic himself is counting on Montenegrin nationalism in the referendum dispute and its future result or not, is not simple to prove, because his political vocabulary is a specific one. But being supported by pronounced Montenegrin nationalists like the academicians of Academy of Duklja, it is evident that an independent Montenegro, at least by some of the proponents, is projected as a national state in the classical sense and that all the key-players are aware of that fact, which does not necessarily means that an independent Montenegro would be a nationalist state. On the contrary, the present status of ethnic minorities in Montenegro shows a

¹⁵ That mannerism is specific for President Djukanovic and was introduced in public life in Montenegro by him. As for former president Milosevic hate-speech and military-order-style were characteristic, for President Djukanovic that is cool, well-balanced, cultivated, but in the same time unclear phrase.

careful balanced minorities policy. But, Montenegrin nationalism could raise not towards minorities, but towards Serb close connected to Kostunica, with unpredictable reaction. The nationalists' position, even not of great importance as a propaganda issue, could have a great impact on the fragile relations between citizens of Montenegrin and Serbian national roots.¹⁶ On the other hand, in Kostunica's not always cautious vocabulary,¹⁷ his Montenegrin political opponents have found the Great-Serbian nationalism, sometimes without analyses, just because he has portrayed himself as a nationalist.¹⁸ This time, instead from the Serbian political elite,

¹⁶ One of the citizens in historic capital Cetinje, known as the 'general' because of his involvement in a local militia committed to fight for Montenegrin independence claims: 'Montenegrins have clean blood, they are genetically clean, especially compared to Serbia.' The Serbian side has its men of committed belief and matching bravado, now organized by Milosevic in the traditional clans that knitted Montenegro together." (The Independent-London, Aug. 13 2000)

¹⁷ Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica ruled out chances of a breakup of greater Yugoslavia Monday, maintaining that Kosovo and the republic of Montenegro were integral parts of the federation, and Yugoslav law would not permit their secession. 'Our Yugoslav constitution does not allow...the independence of Montenegro,' the new Yugoslav leader told France's Channel 1 television in an evening interview." (UPI, Oct. 9) "The Council of People's Assemblies of Montenegro VNS today welcomed the statement of FRY President Vojislav Kostunica that 'Montenegrin secession will not and may not take place'...The VNS, which comprises approximately 20 Montenegrin clans, asked the newly formed FRY authorities to do everything so that 'true democracy takes root in these areas. We expect that the bearers of the democratic processes in the FRY will not permit themselves the luxury to let - at the very beginning - a shadow of doubt to be cast upon their work by possibly permitting the arsonists of the Federal Assembly building, the Serbian Radio-Television RTS building, the robbers of national property, and the bullies to go unpunished,' the Montenegrin VNS said." (BETA news agency, Oct. 11) "Dragan Djurovic, member of the DPS presidency stated yesterday that the new president of FRY, Vojislav Kostunica was mistaken when he said that Montenegro's independence is out of the question. 'The Montenegrin constitution allows the citizens to freely decide on what the state status of Montenegro shall be. Independence is no longer a taboo theme, rather it has been pushed into the forefront through the work of some political parties and non-government organizations. There is a clear constitutional-legal procedure for holding a referendum on independence', explained Djurovic. Djurovic stated that he believes Kostunica made this statement because he does not know the constitution of Montenegro, adding that the Constitution of FRY also, does not limit the right of the republics to independence. Serbia and Montenegro have transferred some of their authorities to the federal state, and in the same way they can renounce this." (Vijesti daily-quoted by MNNews, Oct. 11)

¹⁸ Some characteristic examples:

In response to the question of whether it is better for Montenegro that Milosevic wins or the Serbian opposition wins, Kilibarda said that the real question is what is worse for Montenegro. 'In any case there is nothing worse than Milosevic. Any solution is better than Milosevic, but the current opposition is not good... Vojislav Kostunica has unitary views with respect to Montenegro, just like Slobodan Milosevic, but Kostunica would no doubt be better', said Kilibarda." (Vijesti daily, Aug. 1, 2000). Kilibarda, has also stated that far more important for the presidential candidate of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) and Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) leader Vojislav Kostunica was to tie Montenegro into the knot of Belgrade's unitary hegemony, than to remove Slobodan Milosevic from power, report the Belgrade electronic media on Wednesday. Kilibarda reacted to Kostunica's statement in which he accused the ruling parties in Montenegro of actually supporting, with their stands, the fortification of the policy of incumbent FRY President Slobodan Milosevic. Commenting on the statements by Kostunica and Djindjic in regard to the decision of the main board of the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) of Montenegro to boycott the federal elections, Kilibarda told Wednesday's Podgorica daily Vijesti that the two of them would like to see voters in favor of Unitarianism in Montenegro." (V.I.P. Daily News Report, Aug. 17)

direct hate-speech towards Montenegrins is coming from self-proclaimed peoples' tribunes,¹⁹ including the remains of high-nationalistic political "elite" of Milosevic's Serbia. Anyway, by "throwing" the discussion based on the attributed national loyalty of the other side in dispute, players in the political arena have attracted attention and perhaps influenced some potential voters. For the sake of forecasting the future development or for early prevention, an analyses of this argument does not seem fruitful at all. Therefore, here should be presented decisive historical discussion only, based on the outcome of similar political situations in the past.

In the last two centuries Montenegro and Serbia were found themselves in the specific historical situation that demanded a mutual decision on whether to be a common state or full independent and separate states.

a) **Early Stage.** Intensive cooperation between two Turkish dominions Montenegro and Serbia was opened at the beginning of XIX century in the time of Petar I (Montenegro) and Karadjordje Petrovic (Serbia). One of the objectives was building the common independent state, and the main goal - joining all Christian territories at Balkan to that state. The plans died away with the end of the First Serbian Insurrection against the Turkish government.

b) **Developed Stage.** Montenegrin Duke Nikola Petrovic and Serbian Duke Mihailo Obrenovic concluded on October 5, 1866, under Russian auspices (and pressure) the first written treaty on "Alliance of Serbia and Montenegro". Treaty was kept secret from the Turks. The treaty-goal was "to cooperate in the liberation and unification of our peoples...". According to the treaty, Duke Nikola of Montenegro obliged himself to join the territory of Montenegro to the territory of Serbia and to recognize Duke Mihailo of Serbia as a common sovereign. The treaty was never enforced - both states enjoyed sovereignty and independence, they created independent foreign policies .

After Duke Mihailo was killed in outrage in 1868 and after Serbia turned to Austria, Montenegro became more important for Russian interests in the Balkans and the idea of a unified state temporarily disappeared. After insurrection in Herzegovina, strongly supported by both Serbia and Montenegro (in Venice on June 15, 1867) Montenegro and Serbia concluded a new secret treaty on cooperation in insurrection against Turkey. In the background lay territorial interests of both parties to the treaty: Montenegrin pretensions to the territory Herzegovina and Serbian pretensions to the territory of Bosnia.

In the Treaty concluded at the Berlin Congress, Montenegro and Serbia were fully internationally recognized, which presumably influenced Duke Nikola of Montenegro to accept an active role in the attempted unification of South Slavic nations. He developed close relationships with the powerful Karadjordjevic family, while the Obrenovics were ruling family in Serbia and a new attempt to unify failed again.

On May 1, 1891 the first Trade Agreement between Serbia and Montenegro was concluded, but had symbolic significance only.

c) **Modern Stage.** Perhaps, the most ambitious effort to build and consolidate a unified Serbo-Montenegrin state, before the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was created as an outcome of the First World War, was the Treaty Draft on "Federal

¹⁹ As an unpleasant *déjà vu*, rock-musician Bora Djordjevic has published his song "Separate Yourself, Milo", reminding the public on the similar song before Slovenian war.

Agreement of the Kingdom of Serbia and of the Dukedom of Montenegro", which provided some kind of confederation in common defense and foreign affairs. Montenegrin Government supported the Draft, but insisted upon conferring the role of arbitrator to the Russian *Tzar*. The cause of the failure of negotiations is not clear. On January 1, 1905 a new Trade Agreement was concluded, containing surprisingly liberal provisions on mutual legal status of the citizens in both countries: almost completely, the four basic freedoms of contemporary European Communities were enacted there!

Under the provisions of a treaty creating Alliance for Liberation, between Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia, Montenegro and Serbia concluded a separate arrangement on military and political cooperation, on September 23, 1912. After Balkan Wars of 1912 - 1914 and after the Ottoman Empire was defeated, Montenegro and Serbia became neighbors with a common border-line.

But, although Montenegro won territories in Sandzak, other territories near the Albanian border were lost. Russia has rejected Montenegro as principal ally on the Balkans and accepted the leading role of Serbia. Duke Nikola of Montenegro found himself in an extremely unfavorable political position and decided to redefine his political goals. From the promoter of unification with Serbs and Serbia, he made a turnabout and became a proponent of Montenegrin self-sustainability. In his famous speech on February 12, 1914 he fixed the framework and boundaries of prospective relations with Serbia: the relations should not trespass the union with common defense, customs and foreign affairs; the union assumed two independent, sovereign and internationally recognized states.

After the First World War, the Parliament of Podgorica (which was in the most works which promoted Montenegrin independence, designed as illegitimate and *vice versa*), declared joining of the State of Montenegro to Serbia, and later on - to Yugoslavia.²⁰

d) **Postmodern Stage.** Frustrations and confrontations as an outcome of the Podgorica-decision in 1914 have resurfaced together with Milosevic's nationalism, populism and the Yugoslav wars. Montenegro and Serbia were unified in Yugoslavia from 1918 till 1992, when the newest Yugoslavia - a Serbo-Montenegrin federation - was created. After Milosevic was ousted, the tendencies towards the separation of Montenegro and Serbia by both the Montenegrin government and popular opinion became stronger than ever since unification in 1918.

If history really teaches, what are the lessons deduced from this short overview?

- The approach of Montenegrin elite to unification and even an alliance with Serbia was always reserved and cautious.
- Decisive grounds for a closer relationship between Montenegro and Serbia have mostly occurred in some threatening pre-war situation or were inspired by neighboring insurrections; on the contrary, decisive reasons to keep a distance were tied to domestic issues.
- The Parliament of Podgorica and its decisions, despite being made so long ago, are a serious point of frustration and have provoked feelings of injustice to important elite groups of contemporary Montenegro.

²⁰ On historical development, see more in: "The Complex of Small Differences", by Radovan Popovic, Monitor, 526/2000, p. 22

- The great powers of that time (Austria, Russia) exercised pressure in order to either promote unification or create more distance, but that pressure was only relatively decisive.
- The Duke Nikola framework for Serbo-Montenegrin relations corresponds almost perfectly with the current "offer" of the Montenegrin government to Serbian authorities to re-design the Yugoslav federation into alliance of independent, sovereign and internationally recognized states.
- The relations between Montenegro and Serbia were most unprejudiced in the former Yugoslav Federation, which consisted of six federal republics, with a greater degree of autonomy.

2. Current Development

The most important benefit arising from the end of Milosevic's era, for Montenegro is that the military (and generally, security) threat has disappeared. That increases the chances that Montenegro will be able to decide its future status peacefully, without the threat of violence. But, the tense atmosphere in and around Montenegro has not disappeared. Together with these positive circumstances, some new important disadvantages for the Montenegrin government and its government-dominated political elite groups have appeared:

- The international community disapproves of changing Yugoslavia's internationally recognized state-borders, as implied in the new Montenegrin "Platform 2000";
- The removal of Milosevic's regime, according to the majority of prominent representatives of the international community, has at the same time removed the reason for the further dissolution of Yugoslavia.
- The Yugoslav federal government and DOS coalition have supported President Kostunica's proposal for future relationships between Serbia and Montenegro in a state-form of federation.

Since October 2000, these key-factors have principally changed the former political positions concerning state-status of Montenegro. Some of them have defined those interests clearly, others in a pretty vague way. Officially stated interest differ sometimes from the genuine ones.

Republic of Montenegro

Definition of Interests. The Montenegrin government wants to establish a fully independent sovereign state and to win international recognition. The subsequent union of independent states Montenegro and Serbia is not a principal, but only desirable political interest of Montenegrin government. On the other side, pro-Yugoslav and pro-Serb political parties and other political relevant groups in Montenegro have an interest in keeping Montenegro within the boundaries of one federal state together with Serbia.

How Interest Have Changed. As a basis for negotiating a new relationship with Serbia, the Montenegrin government adopted in August 1999 a "Platform", proposing the transformation of Yugoslavia into a loose federation (in fact *confederation*) of two

legally and politically equal members. According to that "Platform 1999", Yugoslavia was supposed to deal with foreign policy, defense, security and monetary issues; all other state powers should be within the competencies of member-republics. Milosevic's government reacted with hostility and, in fact, rejected the platform. After Kostunica's inauguration, the new Montenegrin approach was not quite as clearly announced,²¹ but on December 28, 2000 the *Platform for Talks with the Government of Serbia on New Relations between the Two States* (hereafter "Platform 2000") was completed and adopted by the Montenegrin Government. According to "Platform 2000", instead of Yugoslavia, "Montenegro and Serbia will be independent and internationally recognized states."²² After having obtained independence and international recognition, "Montenegro and Serbia will constitute the Union of two states by referendum vote of their citizens."²³ Prior to the adoption of "Platform 2000", the political scene, and especially the ruling coalition in Montenegro substantively changed. ²⁴NS, which speaks for the people who consider themselves Serbs, but opposed to Milosevic's notion of the role of Serbia and Serbs in modern Balkan history, has found itself in a very uncomfortable position. On one side, the removal of Milosevic gave them hope that a satisfactory settlement with Serbia could be reached and one common state (federation or confederation) could be preserved. On the other side, not only clearly pro-independence SDP, but also, always somewhat vague Djukanovic's DPS has pronounced openly the idea of a fully independent Montenegro. Therefore, there has been much speculation as to the tactics they may adopt. Formally, for a few weeks the NS stayed in the Government, as the Government adopted an official stance to enter into negotiations with Serbia on the basis of the previous "Platform 1999" (new Platform has still not been either published nor adopted), although Djukanovic has repeatedly and clearly stated that there was no constitutional review, but substantive change in states' sovereignty. After the Montenegrin Government formally adopted "Platform 2000", the NS resigned from the Government, and consequently, a couple of days later, from Parliamentary positions and local governance. LSCG decided to support the government minority in Parliament. The support proved insufficient and new Parliamentary elections were announced.

Basic Legitimizing Grounds.

Officially:

- Montenegro has been in the past an independent and sovereign state and the present process represented nothing but a re-establishment of the previous sovereignty (the position introduced by Liberals and SPD, adopted by President Djukanovic personally and after that by his party members; also, raises national

²¹ Resolving the constitutional issue of Montenegro and defining the future relationship with Serbia are tasks that can no longer be postponed, was the conclusion of a meeting of the ruling coalition in Podgorica. After a five-hour meeting behind closed doors, leaders of parties making up the coalition 'For a Better Life' - Milo Djukanovic, Zarko Rakcevic and Dragan Soc and their respective deputies - concluded that all options are open to Montenegro on its path towards crucial decisions - from referendum to early parliamentary election. Although 'everybody spoke of a referendum', according to the Vijesti source no time frame for its organization was mentioned. (Vijesti daily-quoted by MNNNews, Oct. 18)

²² See "Platform 2000", Sect. II

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Apart from DPS which holds 39 seats in Parliament, the Coalition included the pro-independence SDP, having 5 seats in Parliament and the pro-Serb, but opposed to Milosevic and in Milosevic's time clearly opposed to SNP - NS, with seven seats in parliament.

pride; in Djukanovic`s vocabulary it is identified by his favorite phrase "Montenegrin statehood and state-dignity"; this position as "minimalizing" has been well-accepted by the older population, because it suggests a minimum of change).

- According to the Constitution, Montenegro has a right to decide to separate itself from the federation ("The starting point for a new union of Montenegro and Serbia lies in the inalienable right of the citizens to decide upon their national and state destiny."²⁵)
- The federal Government has no sovereignty over Montenegrin territory (with the exception of Yugoslav military forces) and this *status quo* is to be constitutionally enforced (the position constantly and repeatedly stated by president Djukanovic and after he pronounced it, repeated not only by DPS members, but by all pro-independence politicians and public figures; psychologically this argument is highly acceptable, implying that no unpleasant surprises are to be expected).²⁶
- The concept of the present Yugoslav federation consisting of two member-states is not only untenable, but also unthinkable - if the political equality of both states is really meant to be preserved.
- "Federal institutions have been functioning and taking decisions in contravention to the legal order of FRY, carrying out undemocratic and unitary policies...and thus violating the individual and collective rights of the citizens and the Republic of Montenegro."²⁷

Unofficially:

- The Montenegrin government, after years of coping with Milosevic`s threatening regime and with having to find alternative sources due to the closing of the administrative border with Serbia, found that Montenegro was able to manage.²⁸
- Monetary independence, introducing Deutschmark as a domestic value, building the Central Bank from a Monetary Council, have strengthened the self-confidence of the Montenegrin pro-independence political elite and the peoples` confidence in the government, with regard to the economic self-sustainability of Montenegro.²⁹

²⁵ Montenegrin "Platform 2000", Sect. II

²⁶ "Without the declarative proclamation of independence Montenegro is, factually speaking, an independent state. Two clusters of facts prove this. First - the state of Montenegro is conducting all state functions on its territory, with two exceptions - it does not have state sovereignty over its air space and it does not manage the military activities conducted on its territory. Secondly - In the international community, through serious and hard work Montenegro has achieved the status of an independent respected and highly regarded entity capable of taking over rights and responsibilities.

It has acquired a position which make possible her independent presence in the United Nations, international financial institutions, regional and international associations of states." Vijesti daily, Editorial, October 16, 2000

²⁷ "Platform 2000", Sect. I, 1.

²⁸ See ICG, Balkans Briefing, Podgorica/Brussels, 30 November 2000, p. 4

²⁹ That was confirmed by some federal officials. Serbia and Montenegro will without any problems become full members of the International Monetary Fund should they choose independence and recognition as two separate states, Yugoslav National Bank Governor Mladjan Dinkic said in an interview for TV Montenegro last night. Dinkic said that if Serbia and Montenegro were to separate in a democratic way, the International Monetary Fund would simply calculate quotas for both republics just as they did for all former Yugoslavian republics. According to the Federal Bureau of Statistics (SZS), the average wage in June was 2,094 dinars in Serbia and 4,540 dinars in Montenegro, which is 120 percent more than in Serbia, FoNet reports on Tuesday. The same source says that the average wage in the FRY in June was 2,271 dinars. (V.I.P. Daily News Report, Aug. 9) According to

- Full independence has become a realistic option as security threats have ceased. In the political realm - complete independence has a good chance of being realized - Djukanovic understands that no Montenegrin government can win the major support of its citizens if it decides to return to Belgrade powers which Montenegro has been exercising by itself for a couple of years.³⁰
- There is no decisive difference between Milosevic and Kostunica in their relation to Montenegro and in their ideas of a unitary approach to the Montenegrin question.³¹

Basic In-Legitimizing Grounds:

The most important reasons for the opponents to the idea of full independence of Montenegro are:

- The new federal administration deserves a fair chance: Milosevic's government was offered a loose federation, but Kostunica, elected on the fair and democratic direct vote election, has no federation or confederation to govern (NS when resigned from ruling coalition).
- Patriotism is the basic idea linking Montenegro and Serbia in a common state, beside historical and international reasons. This principle is the basic for a system of partnership between Montenegro-Serbia for the modern Montenegrin state (SNP position).
- Adopting the new "Platform 2000" while the new Serbian government has had no opportunity to react to the previous one shows that the Montenegrin government is as "democratic" as Milosevic's rule (NS President).

data issued by the Montenegrin Ministry of Commerce, the basic consumer basket, consisting of 65 products necessary for feeding a four-member family, cost 429 deutschemarks in Podgorica, while in Kotor it cost 419 deutschemarks. In Berane, the basket cost about 323 deutschemarks, while in Bijelo Polje, the price was somewhat higher, 327 deutschemarks.

(BETA news agency, Aug. 10)

³⁰ Ibid., p. 4

³¹ 'What Yugoslavia is he ruling over--the one created by Milosevic based on organized chaos?' demanded Miodrag Vukovic, chief political advisor to Montenegrin President Milo Djukanovic. Los Angeles Times. Oct. 11, 2000

Vojislav Kostunica...has denied claims by certain Montenegrin officials that he has 'Greater Serbia pretensions', saying that his pretensions are 'for greater democracy'. He added that 'claims that he is a nationalist are not true' because, as he said, 'what is at issue here is a reflection of the current situation and the legitimate concern for the fate of one's people'. Kostunica, speaking about his election campaign, accused 'both...governments of doing everything to put party interests above state interests and of limiting the space for other political options'. He wondered 'whether Milosevic's attitude to Serbia can be applied to Milo Djukanovic in the sense that Montenegro only does what he [Djukanovic] tells it to'. 'It was difficult to understand the position of official Montenegro that it would not prevent the elections, but that it would not facilitate them either. Now, however, the meaning of what they said is clearer,' Kostunica said. Kostunica did not directly reply to the question of whether he would visit Montenegro as part of his election campaign, saying that he 'would find a way to address voters who are against Milosevic and for a joint state'. He explained that the control of elections in Montenegro by the DOS 'would take place through the presidential elections and in other ways'. According to him, ...'No one from the DOS will be against a referendum on Montenegrin independence, but I fear that a number of Montenegrin democrats are becoming increasingly like Milosevic, and they see a chance for independence in straining relations with Belgrade,' the DSS leader said." (SRNA news agency, Aug. 28)

- Not being threaten by the Yugoslav Army, Montenegro is no longer under the pressure and has enough time to negotiate with Serbian authorities as well as federal authorities about future settlements and state-arrangements and to think seriously about its destiny, because a decision concerning separation and full independence is crucial decision. But: "We are patient, but we are not stupid. We will wait for democracy to take hold in Serbia--but only as long as it doesn't damage our own interests."³²
- The major reason for separatism was the undemocratic and authoritarian regime in Belgrade. Now, democracy has won there and that reason is no longer decisive (NS, but also some foreign unofficial visitors).³³
- The unwelcome, unenthusiastic reception of Kostunica's victory in the federal presidential elections in Montenegro, especially in comparison to the reaction in Europe and Western countries, showed that Milosevic's regime fitted better with Djukanovic's pretension than did democracy in Serbia.³⁴

Proposed Methods

- DPS leaders have repeated that a referendum on Montenegro's future status will be held in the first half of 2001. While at the same time, understanding the lack of international enthusiasm towards the idea of full Montenegrin independence, the Montenegrin leadership keep on stressing the readiness to proceed by negotiations and to avoid - if possible - unilateral action.
- But, it was, at the same time, strongly stressed that the partner to the negotiations is the Serbian Government, not the federal one, although it is not *expressis verbis* excluded. Anyway, the failure of negotiations is implied as probable.
- After an expected failure of negotiations with the Yugoslav and Serbian government, the first step should be to hold extraordinary parliamentary elections, since a political crisis has been already provoked by the resignation of the NS from the government.

³² Dragisa Burzan, Deputy Prime Minister of Montenegro Quoted by Los Angeles Times, October 11

³³ The dramatic changes in Yugoslavia are being viewed with deep ambivalence here in the capital of Montenegro. There's relief over Slobodan Milosevic's departure, but fears that the triumph of democracy in Belgrade diminishes one of the main arguments for independence. 'What happened in Belgrade was good for Belgrade. What it means for us is very unclear,' said Eduard Miler, who is directing a play at the National Theater portraying life in Yugoslavia as hell. While Milosevic was in power, the case for Montenegro's eventual independence was easy to sustain; the West viewed him as the embodiment of evil, and Montenegro's stand against him was regarded as heroic. But now that there is democracy in Belgrade, what is the point of separation?. (Washington Post. Oct. 17 2000).

³⁴ The visit today was low-key with no crowds out to cheer Mr. Kostunica, and only a representative from the small People's Party at the airport to greet him. Because most Montenegrins followed their government's call to boycott the elections, few now regard him as carrying any legitimacy in Montenegro, although there is a general feeling of good will toward him.. Still, Mr. Djukanovic made it clear that he would not participate in a new federal government, and instead would hold out for more recognition of sovereignty for Montenegro, the last Yugoslav republic still joined with Serbia. (New York Times, Oct. 18)

- If proponents of separation win the elections, the referendum is to be held shortly thereafter. Referendum would be decisive for the future status of the Republic of Montenegro: should the majority choose to separate, Montenegro should constitute itself as a new sovereignty and should seek international recognition.
- A Union of independent states depends not only on Montenegro, but also on Serbia and it is to be negotiated.

Federal Republic Yugoslavia

Definition of Interest. The territorial integrity of FR Yugoslavia is to be preserved within the framework of a loose federation. The internal organization and distribution of state powers within the federation is negotiable.

Basic Legitimizing Grounds

- "Throughout their contemporary history, Serbia and Montenegro aspired to state unification. They deemed the creation of a joint state their natural objective and key precondition for realizing their interests and securing their internal and external freedoms."³⁵
- "Deep historic links between two peoples, their language and tradition, religion and culture, firm family and property ties"³⁶ are excellent reasons for a common state.
- The 1992 Yugoslav Constitution was generated by mutual agreement of the Serbian and Montenegrin political elite that had personal continuity in Montenegro (in the time when Constitution has been passed Djukanovic was Prime Minister; at present, he is President of the State).
- The amendments to the federal Constitution made under the Milosevic's regime in 2000, were going to be eliminated (without explanation why it has not still been done)
- The unilateral change of internationally recognized borders in the Balkans is not only excessive, but also highly dangerous; The internationally recognized sovereignty within the framework of an unconventional federation, even when it consists of only two members, could be successfully formulated.
- "What has always been pointed out as the major obstacle to a healthy federal balance is the existing difference in the size and population of the two federal units. For that reason, the system is expected to incline to the two extremes, both of them being equally dangerous to the operation of the system. Basically, we are talking about the tendency of centralization on the one hand, and the tendency of international blockade on the other. To tell the truth, the two tendencies had torn apart the present-day two-member federation indeed, up until they began to question its existence. However, this is not the consequence of the federal structure itself, as the advocates of Montenegro's secession are trying to prove, but rather the fact that the existing Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is the result of a party deal made by then ruling parties in Serbia and

³⁵ President Kostunica's Proposal for the Reconstruction of Yugoslavia (hereafter "Proposal"), endorsed by Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS), published on January 10, 2001, Pream.

³⁶ Ibid.

Montenegro which, with the passage of time, they themselves have ceased to comply with."³⁷

Proposed Methods

- The Federal Government is not going to contest the free expressed will of Montenegro's citizens, but if the referendum runs to counter to democratic standards, its results are not going to be recognized.
- The idea of obtaining state independence through a referendum is legal according to the Montenegrin Constitution,³⁸ but - in view of the present international interest of Yugoslavia and Serbia - is not altogether fair and therefore not clearly legitimate. Hence, it should be much more advisable to negotiate all dubious federal constitutional issues between representatives of Montenegro, Serbia and, unconditionally, the Federation.
- Constitutional amendments should specify the procedure by which the constitution is to be amended. But, when it comes to changing of the state status of members-republics to the federation, the citizens of both states should decide the final outcome.³⁹

The Republic of Serbia

Definition of Interest

(Due to the fact that the Serbian Government was elected by Parliament only a few days ago, no systematic official statement concerning the relations between member-republics, has been issued. In this paper I am taking down the most influential opinions of *ruling* coalition - Democratic Opposition of Serbia /DOS/, as an official Serbian attitude.) The political interest of the Republic of Serbia is to be united with Montenegro in the federation of Yugoslavia. As it was said above, DOS has accepted President Kostunica's Proposal. The definition and basic legitimizing interests are substantively the same as Yugoslav. *Infra*, only specific positions are exposed.

Basic Legitimizing Grounds

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ We, the Democratic Party of Serbia and myself in particular, have always argued that there is no better way to probe the authentic feeling in the joint state of Serbia and Montenegro but to leave the matter to the people through referendums that should be held in both federal units. I have to repeat what I have said thousands of times - if a referendum is held in one federal unit only, that is in Montenegro, and if the Montenegrin majority come out for an independent Montenegro, we will honour their will. The problem is that the present-day authorities in Montenegro won't accept it. They do not want parallel referendums in the two sister republics, nor in one of them. Referendum is a form of democracy, which makes it clear that the current authorities in Montenegro do not want democracy and that should be said loud and clear. All the time we have been listening to messages from Podgorica explaining what the Montenegrin authorities do not want, while there is not a word about what they do want...We maintain that no one from Serbia cannot oppose Montenegro's plebiscitary free will. At least we, who represent the democratic opposition of Serbia, will not object to its pro-independence stance. Presidential Candidate's Kostunica Statement, August 31, 2000

³⁹ Ibid.

- The right of Montenegro to separate is not contestable. But, at present the Republic of Serbia lacks the capacity of establishing its own sovereignty over all Serbian territory including the territory of Kosovo.⁴⁰ Therefore, the dissolution of Yugoslavia - as long as the status of Kosovo is not certain - contradicts the interests of Serbia (Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic).

Proposed Methods

- The referendum is legal, but it should be better to hold it over and to negotiate the future status of Yugoslavia. If citizens of Montenegro decide in a referendum to establish Montenegro as an independent and sovereign state, Serbia has no specific interest to negotiate a union of independent states with Montenegro.
- According to an (unsystematic examination) of public opinion in Serbia, the chances for successful negotiation were increased after Zoran Djindjic was elected as Prime Minister in Government of Serbia. There is a strong belief that his good personal relationship with Montenegrin President Djukanovic will have more impact on the negotiations than officially issued positions and statements of political interests.

"International Community" (EU and USA Specifically)

Definition of Interests. The unilateral change of state borders in Balkans is highly undesirable and is not supposed to be internationally recognized. But what is going to be understood as "unilateral action" is still uncertain.

Basic Legitimizing Grounds

- Changes of state borders in this case ultimately opens up unpleasant, provocative and uncontrollable issues of the Dayton-Paris Agreement and the territorial integrity of the Republic of Macedonia and threatens to the whole region by possibly introducing new conflicts, even war(s)⁴¹.
- Open Western support was and is directed towards sustainable reform in Montenegro, but not to an omnipotent party-state apparatus or to a network of nepotism and corruption that go with it.
- That should mean that the Djukanovic government is not necessarily the unique political option to be supported.⁴²

⁴⁰ Montenegrin independence could have "catastrophic consequences" for Kosovo and peace in the region, the Democratic Opposition of Serbia's Kosovo co-ordinator said today. Momcilo Trajkovic said that Montenegro's departure would spark further moves to independence from Kosovo, as there would no longer be a joint state to which it could belong. He was speaking after a meeting with the Montenegrin People's Party leader. Dragan Soc said that his party supported the new Serbian authorities, the international community and Trajkovic's search for a democratic solution to the Kosovo crisis. B92, February 5, 2001

⁴¹ ICG, Balkans Briefing, Podgorica/Brussels, 30 November 2000, p. 11

⁴² Very suggestive in the latest developments was US Secretary of State C. Powell's refusal to meet President Djukanovic: "Milo Djukanovic today dismissed suggestions that Colin Powell's failure to meet him signified a US rebuff for his plans for independence for Montenegro. The Montenegrin

Proposed Methods

- FR Yugoslavia is to be preserved even as loose federation within the present state-borders.
- An explicit priority of Western policy was to dissuade the Montenegrin government from moving towards independence. But, in a very late development there are some differences between the European and American approaches.⁴³ In American approach it was especially stressed that Montenegro should not make itself a hostage to the fate of others.⁴⁴ Close observers of the Montenegrin political scene have stated that, despite initial international reservations towards the idea of independence, in the final event, that should not prevent Montenegro from taking unilateral action such as holding referendum, to attain its goal. They keep on indicating parallel developments in Croatia and Slovenia in 1991.

3. Commentaries and Recommendations

a) Commentaries

president told American national radio that if the Secretary of State did indeed oppose Montenegrin independence, he could have said so publicly. He added that nothing he had heard from US politicians had yet discouraged him. Djukanovic told the radio that his message to the American public was that Montenegro is already on the road to independence, and that the process should continue in a peaceful and democratic fashion. Djukanovic will meet with Powell's second-in-command, Assistant Secretary of State James Dobbins, in his stead. Regarding Montenegro's initiative for independence, spokesman Phillip Reeker repeated the US position that Montenegro and Serbia should seek an equitable and democratic solution by amending the federal constitution. "We want a democratic Montenegro in a democratic Yugoslavia and we think it can be achieved," he said. (SRNA. February 2, 2001)

⁴³ The United States Administration is concerned by possible regional consequences if Montenegro secedes from Yugoslavia, the US ambassador to Belgrade, William Montgomery, said today. However, he added the US would not attempt to influence the way Montenegrins voted in a referendum on independence. Montgomery also said that this was the moment for Montenegro to reach the best possible agreement on relations with Serbia and Yugoslavia in a rewritten agreement on federation. B92, February 14, 2001

⁴⁴ "Certainly our support for Montenegro continues. We continue to work with the international community, not only to look at what can be done to aid Serbia in seeing the dividend of democratic change, but also to continue to working with all the neighbors and people in the region, in terms of continuing support for their efforts to build their democracies and their economies. We've kept in close touch with Montenegro all along. The secretary spoke by telephone with President Djukanovic over the weekend, if I remember correctly. So we've stayed in touch. And Mr. O'Brien will be there on Friday." (U.S. State Dept. Spokesman Richard Boucher, Oct. 11) "Djukanovic received James O'Brien...who visited Montenegro yesterday heading the high level American delegation...'O'Brien said that the USA should continue to support the pro-reform and pro-European course of Montenegro, which is confirmed by this visit to Podgorica. After the talks between O'Brien and government representatives in Belgrade, they (the US) expressed readiness for continuing talks on all issues relating to strengthening democratic processes in Montenegro and the consolidation of the democratic government in Serbia', it was stated by President Djukanovic's cabinet." (Pobjeda daily-MNNews, Oct. 16)

Prima facie some important reasons exposed *above* II/2 are highly argumentative and there are grounds to believe they were intended to be controversial. Let us focus only on some of them:

Montenegrin Approach

- The elaboration of historical background by pro-independence elite groups in Montenegro is missing the prospective of the status of Montenegro in Yugoslav state 1918 - 1991.
- The newest Montenegrin state-emancipation has been attributed to Milosevic's authoritarian style, and the same motivation after his dismissal is not convincing enough.
- The question(s) for referendum are not either prepared, nor publicly discussed. Even the number of questions is uncertain. The lack of public dispute over the referendum and other important issues, has left a bitter taste of half-serious preparations for such an important step, and therefore, enough room for speculations that the referendum is just a pre-text for undue negotiations not only with Serbia and the Federation, but also with the international community.⁴⁵
- The reforms in Montenegro (there are exceptions) have generally failed. The issue of a future referendum and full independence should be regarded as an excuse for that failure.

FRY Approach

- Without a clear conscience as to the importance of the legal equality of member-states in the Yugoslav federation, the federal Government (supported by a clear majority in Parliament) still has not derogated the amendments to the Constitution, passed by Milosevic's Parliament in July 2000, although that was one of the election issues prior to September 24th.
- In federal President communications, the right of Montenegrin citizens to decide over the sovereignty of the state is connected with a projection of illegitimate procedures and a lack of democratic standards (Who is going to decide upon those standards?), which implies denying the recognition of referendum's results. The consequences have not been publicly communicated.
- The Federal Government coalition between DOS and SNP Montenegro, which was supported by only 24% Montenegrin voters, has created a new dissatisfaction in a whole set of relations in the Yugoslav federation; President Kostunica's insisting on "legality" as a ground for the coalition, rather than on necessity, was not received well either by authorities, nor by the citizens of Montenegro.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The Montenegrin parliamentary referendum working group has accepted a proposal to let voters choose from more than two questions. The plan was submitted by the People's Party and the Socialist People's Party. They also suggested that whichever option won the support of more than half the registered electorate should be the one to be passed regardless of the actual voter turnout. However, this motion was rejected. B92, January 31, 2001

⁴⁶ Professor of law and former president of the Montenegrin constitutional court, Blagota Mitric said that...Kostunica, would be acting against the law and the will of the majority of citizens of Montenegro, if the position of federal prime minister was given to an SNP candidate. The government would then be formed with a defeated party, which would mean that Kostunica 'conducted the most severe abuse of

- Some moves, like the apparent efforts of the Federal government to exclude Montenegrin participation at international events (like EU summit in Zagreb in November 2000) has caused new offense and increased Montenegrin scepticism regarding the good will of new the federal administration.

Serbian Approach

- Being not definitely formulated, the Serbian approach is at least vague in some important points, e.g.: Whether the federal Government is included in negotiations or not?
- Is the position that Serbia has no interest in establishing a union with Montenegro as an independent state, too arrogant for someone willing to negotiate "equality" as a constitutional principle?
- In the measure in which the federal administration could be identified with the new Serbian government, the same objections as *supra* could be written down.

EU an USA Approach

- Basically, this approach is an attempt to prevent Montenegro's secession solely by verbal statements, with uncertain practical outcomes. But, what is missing is openly considering the reaction to the *fait accomplie*, e.g. possibility of the announced independence of Montenegro.

b) The Newest Polls

Preferred options for the status of Montenegro:

Continuation of the current Yugoslav federation: May 1999 - 38,8%; April 2000 - 25,3%; October 2000 - 19,0%.

Re-defined federation, according to the ideas of the "Platform 1999": May 1999 - 20,5%; April 2000 - 19, 8%; October 2000 - 26, 1%.

Full independence: May 1999 - 28,9%; April 2000 - 35,7%; October 2000 - 36,8%.

Unitary state: May 1999 - 2,2%; April 2000 - 4,5%; October 2000 - 10,2%

Undecided: May 1999 - 9,6%; April 2000 - 14,7%; October 2000 - 7,9%.

(In May 1999, the respondent were given the option of a confederal arrangement, as "Platform 1999" was not completed.)⁴⁷

Those polling data suggests that public opinion has been moving very quickly in the direction of independence. In the given period of time (18 months only) those opting

his constitutional authority, like his predecessor did'. 'If the president of FRY gives the mandate to the defeated party, it shall be clear that he is not acting according to law, but according to political revenge against 'some democrats in Montenegro who turned their back to him,' said Mitric...The member of the G-17+ Group Vladimir Goati judged that 'by boasting victory at the elections, the SNP has shown a high level of indifference to the political reality. Only 24.9 of voters participated in the elections which were poorly controlled. I think that the SNP must show discernment in the constitution of a new government. Even estimating that SNP's victory is 'Pir's victory' is optimistic, because the Romans didn't go out on the battlefield'." (Vijesti daily-quoted by MNNews, Oct. 17)

⁴⁷ Data for May 1999 and April 2000, "Javno mnjenje Crne Gore u 2000" ("Public Opinion in Montenegro 2000"), CEDEM, No 2. Data for October, CEDEM, Vijesti daily, November 3 2000.

for continuation of the Yugoslav federation have dropped from 39% to 19%. At the same time, those opting for independence increased from 29% to 37%. Those opting for independence and those opting for a redefined federation, after the latest development, of the "Platform" 2000 are almost unified. So, the possible total of those in favor of independence is at present about 53%. It is clear that the issue of Montenegrin future status remains highly divisive.

The Most Prominent Political Figures

Average rating:

Djukanovic - 3.59
Kostunica - 3.01
Predrag Bulatovic - 2.92
Slobodan Milosevic - 1.95
Momir Bulatovic - 1.73⁴⁸

Opinion poll evidence shows that Djukanovic is the most popular politician in Montenegro and his personal authority is very high. That derives not only from the state-media routinely presenting government officials and Djukanovic in the first place, in a positive light, but also from the history and tradition of Montenegro in which the ruler in turbulent times was supposed to be some kind of father figure rather than a simple politician. His role in Montenegro's future status is definitely going to be a decisive one.

c) Recommendations

- The international community should first define its genuine political interest on the future status of FR Yugoslavia, in the case of changing state-boundaries on the Balkans. That is a necessary pre-condition to defining particular interests such as the policy of supporting the current administration in Montenegro only.
- In defining its political interests, international community has to find a balance between the need for developing democracy both in Serbia and Montenegro and the need for supporting a particular elite group or political party or administration, presumably the one most corresponding with the interests of international community
- The international community should comprehend that excessive pressure is counterproductive. Consequently, imposing particular solutions is also most undesirable.
- The EU and the USA should define their common interests on the Balkans in general and on FR Yugoslavia status in particular - if possible.
- Montenegro and Serbia (rather than the Federation) should approach *real* (not putative) negotiations under the auspices of the international community. Encouraging direct Djukanovic - Djindjic negotiations is most advisable.
- If the negotiations fail, international community should have the clear-cut opinion on:

⁴⁸ CEDEM, October 2000

- standards for a fair referendum on the full independence of Montenegro (in particular: citizens having the right to vote; international monitoring; reliable majority for obtaining the full independence);⁴⁹
- if the citizens of Montenegro decide by direct vote in a fair referendum, to vote for full independence, what should the reaction of international community be (on the issue of international recognition of Montenegro; on future aid, support and investment to the Montenegrin economy).
- A high probable outcome of the current political situation in the Montenegro - Serbia - Yugoslavia triangle is a referendum resulting in a vote favorable to full independence, because international reservations towards this idea have (till now) no decisive impact on the most influential elite groups and their move towards full independence. Potential decisions such as an eventual refusal of international recognition are going to be only a question of buying time.⁵⁰ There is no decisive reasons to believe that this time could be any different from previous experience in Yugoslav crisis, if the international community is expecting to react in its inefficient Balkan-manner.

⁴⁹ The Montenegrin Parliament's working party in charge of drafting the Referendum Bill decided yesterday that the future act should include a constitutional definition that only Montenegrin citizens living in Montenegro could decide on the issues of changing the country's status, form of rule and change of borders. This would exclude Montenegrin citizens who are not resident within the republic from voting in the referendum. The Socialist People's Party and the People's Party had submitted a request that the Referendum Act allow all Montenegrin citizens to participate in the referendum. The Democratic Party of Socialists, the Social Democratic Party, the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro and the Democratic Alliance of Albanians remained consistent in their claim that the Montenegrin Constitution allows this right only to Montenegrin citizens living in Montenegro, which was supported by the OSCE representatives as well. The said parties agreed, with reserves from the Socialist People's Party and the People's Party, that the referendum could not be held in less than 45 and in no more than 90 days from its announcement. The Socialist People's Party's proposed that the Act include a constitutional decree that the referendum has to be called by the majority of all MPs in the Montenegrin Parliament, based on a suggestion from OSCE representative. This proposal was accepted. The working party, whose members include representatives of all the caucuses in the Parliament and Montenegrin government, as well as the OSCE representatives, will resume work today. B92, January 30 2001

⁵⁰ President Djukanovic's advisor said that Vojislav Kostunica's platform on redefining federal relations "should be dismissed without a second thought". Steve Henke, also a University of Baltimore professor, told Podgorica daily Pobjeda that the proposals "should not be taken seriously". He also rejected Kostunica's offer of a joint monetary system under federal jurisdiction, saying that Montenegro had a far healthier currency than Yugoslavia. He added that if Montenegrins voted to become a separate state, the international community would accept the decision just as it had accepted the independence of all the former Yugoslav republics. B92, January 18, 2001