

Kosovo remains scene of violence

◆ Americans arrested by Serbian police as the controversy surrounding Milosevic continues

BY GREGORY RINALDI
Staff Writer

Last week Serbian police arrested six American aid workers. These Americans (five men and one woman) were sentenced to 10 days in jail for disobeying travel regulations.

"Their arrest is a clear indication of the police state mentality of the Milosevic [the Serbian President's] regime," said Jim Moran, a Virginia congressman.

These workers intended to reach the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Amidst the deteriorating peace of the Balkan Peninsula they have become just another item of worldwide concern.

In the past few weeks, the Yugoslavian province of Kosovo has been the target of an internal crackdown by Serbian government police. Over 80 people have died in these crackdowns that Serbia claims are to combat "terrorists." But, some, including leaders of the international community, are hinting at eth-

nic cleansing.

Yugoslavia is located in southeastern Europe and is made up of the two provinces of Serbia and Montenegro. Kosovo is located

in the westernmost part of the Serbian province. It is just east of Albania, and north of Macedonia and Greece. (see map)

Kosovo's population is 90% ethnic Albanian; it is this majority that has been the target of Serbian police forces.

The International Community has recognized the deteriorating situation in Kosovo and has urged the Serbian government to take initiatives against such violence in the future. Yugoslavia has assured the United States and other countries that the crackdowns have been halted.

Some world leaders adamantly oppose Serbia's police actions. Earlier this month, the United Nations called for a resolution to the conflict. Suggested actions under this resolution include a comprehensive arms embargo of Serbia, a ban on supplies or equipment that

could be used to repress Albanian separatists, and a denial of travel visas to Serbian officials.

"Only immediate and decisive action in Kosovo on the part of the international community can stop an acceleration of the negative developments and human right violations," said Ljerka Mintas-Hodak, Croatia's deputy prime minister.

The European Union, N.A.T.O. and the U.S. have all expressed concern, but are hoping for an internal solution. So far Western countries have not supported a settlement reminiscent of the Bosnian action six years ago. Then, Bosnia was supported in becoming an independent nation. Kosovo, on the other hand, has been considered widely

as an internal Yugoslavian conflict.

"Our view is that we support a special status for Kosovo with the goal of autonomy, but no independent Kosovo State or separation," said Klaus Kinkel, German foreign minister, on behalf of the European Union.

Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece, and Turkey all have vital interests in the region that could lead to an international conflict. A possible escalation of the situation has influenced leaders like U. S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright to consider wider use of peacekeeping troops in the area. Currently, the United States has 800 peacekeeping troops stationed in Macedonia, a former Yugoslavian province, to the southeast.



Kosovo is the site of the most recent conflict in an area historically plagued by ethnic violence.

www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/europe/kosovo_93.jpg

International community should oust Milosevic

BY JACK SHULER
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Since initial attacks on ethnic Albanians living in Kosovo, a province of Yugoslavia, the United States, along with Russia, France, Germany, Britain and Italy, has taken a tougher stance on the actions of the national government of Yugoslavia. At this point, though, there is division amongst this action group as to whether or not Belgrade is acting swiftly enough to remove special police forces stationed in Kosovo and begin serious talks with Kosovo Albanian leaders.

According to German Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, the Yugoslav government is working to meet the conditions, citing Yugoslav president, Slobadon Milosevic's announced commitment to open dialogue.

The United States, among others, feels this is not enough, and says that the police forces do not appear to be engaging in any sort of movement towards leaving the Kosovo region. The U.S. has stated repeatedly within the last few days that swift action must be taken or serious embargos will be put into effect. The first of such embargos was set by the European Union, creating a ban against the trade of weapons with Yugoslavia.

Now, the greatest stumbling block appears to be the wavering position of Russia. Just this week, Boris Yeltsin invited Milosevic to meet with him in Moscow, apparently to discuss the embargos, which the Russians oppose. They feel that the embargos are unnecessary as the situation appears to be stabilizing.

It seems this would be the point when the U.S. and the rest of the international community would take serious action and do something that should have been done years before, that is attempt to press charges against Milosevic for his crimes against humanity. It is the only route possible towards real peace in this region.

Just last week a Serb soldier was convicted of rape as a crime against humanity during the conflict in Bosnia. If the rank and file can be sentenced before an international tribunal at the Hague, why can't Milosevic? He is just as guilty.

Peace may come to this region and the Kosovo Albanians will most likely gain more autonomy. It does not, however, appear that they will gain their independence.

And even though Milosevic will most likely sit down at a table with Kosovo leaders, it is not likely that he will come to any sort of personal change. This is the guy that was partly responsible for ethnic cleansing in the early 1990's. How can the international community allow this criminal to stay in power?



Slobadon Milosevic
WWW.GEOCITIES.COM/WALLSTREET/6735/MILOSEVIC.JPG



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