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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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*Handwritten initials and date: JW 1023*

The following is presented as the point of view of certain officials in the Serbian Patriarchate in Belgrade in reference to two major politico-religious problems. The Holy Synod was scheduled to meet this summer in Belgrade.

1. The Holy Synod has as one of its tasks the problem of normalizing relations between the Serbian Church and the State, and also promoting the Church's support of the regime. To this end, the Holy Synod should put forth a resolution to establish a new church law, for insertion in the constitution of the Church, to the effect that the Church will assist the State's programs and development. It would be pointed out that the Communist character of the State will in no way interfere with the canons and the constitution of the Serbian Church. Supporters of the resolution would present the following arguments:

- a. Even though, according to the constitution of the Yugoslav Republic, the Church has been separated from the State, the Serbian Church does not exist outside the State, but on the contrary it lives and works within the State and must support it.

All members of the Serbian Orthodox Church are also members of the State and they are bound to fulfill all the obligations of a citizen. They must all conform to the laws and the constitution of the State.

The State, on the other hand, is under obligation to establish appropriate laws to provide for the safety of its citizens and their property. The State must also provide its citizens with the means and assistance to develop culturally, morally and economically. In this respect, the State must support the religious education of its citizens and should not interfere with the desire of its citizens to fulfill their religious obligations.

This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1978 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Archivist of the United States.  
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

- 2 -

2. The second main problem to be discussed at the forthcoming convention is a delicate one concerning the Orthodox Church and the Peoples Republic of Macedonia. A decision of some kind will be made to effect the separation and insure the independence of the Macedonian Orthodox Church from the Serbian Orthodox Church. Clergymen in Macedonia who are supporters of the regime-sponsored Brotherhood of Orthodox Clergymen of Macedonia are seeking, at the suggestion of the regime, the following:
  - a. The recognition of the Ohrid archbishopric as the seat of an autonomous orthodox church for the territory of Macedonia.
  - b. The establishment of the Ohrid archbishopric with four episcopates at Bitolj, Skoplje, Debar and Strumica. The Ohrid archbishop would hold the episcopate in Skoplje and establish a vicarial bishop in Ohrid.
  - c. The institution of the Ohrid archbishopric's own, independent Holy Synod which would be completely administered by the Orthodox Church of Macedonia.
3. If Macedonian wishes are met, then the only link between the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate in Belgrade and the Ohrid archbishopric would stem from the Ohrid archbishop's recognition of the Serb Patriarch and the citation of his name in the archbishopric's religious services.
4. The Holy Synod of a Macedonian Orthodox Church would open, as soon as possible, a seminary in Ohrid or in Sv. Naum, to which it would send its Macedonian clergymen. Furthermore, the Government of the Peoples Republic of Macedonia would immediately open a theological faculty in Skoplje which would be conducted in the Macedonian language.

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Comment:

background information on the Serbian Patriarch Vikentije Prodancv and his relations with the Yugoslav Government.

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