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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PHUM, YO
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS INQUIRY: RADMIR VELJKOVIC

REF: (A) 85 STATE 342364, (B) 85 STATE 306393

1. C-ENTIRE TEXT.

2. IN RESPONSE TO INQUIRY BY SENATOR FRANK MURKOWSKI (R-ALASKA) PASSED ON BY DEPARTMENT (RETELS) ABOUT THE CASE OF RADMIR VELJKOVIC, ALLEGEDLY HELD IN A YUGOSLAV MILITARY PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL SINCE 1973, EMBASSY HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER HAS ASKED OUR NORMAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONTACTS IN BELGRADE ABOUT THIS CASE. SEVERAL OF THEM REMEMBER THE CASE, ALTHOUGH NONE OF EMBASSY'S REGULAR CONTACTS HAVE RECENT INFORMATION ABOUT IT OR KNOW WHICH LAWYER, IF ANY, IS NOW REPRESENTING VELJKOVIC AND HIS FAMILY.

3. ACCORDING TO WHAT OUR CONTACTS HAVE HEARD, VELJKOVIC IS STILL IN AN INSANE ASYLUM. THE CONSENSUS AMONG THOSE WHO REMEMBER THE CASE IS THAT VELJKOVIC REALLY IS MENTALLY UNBALANCED. ALTHOUGH NOT A DANGER TO SOCIETY.

4. VELJKOVIC HAS A LONG HISTORY OF DIFFICULTIES WITH MILITARY AUTHORITIES, BEGINNING WITH A DISPUTE IN 1959 OVER DISTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT APARTMENTS ALLOCATED TO HIS MILITARY UNIT. HE WAS DISCHARGED INVOLUNTARILY FROM ACTIVE SERVICE IN 1967, AND IN 1973 WAS COMMITTED TO A PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL REPORTEDLY BECAUSE HE WILDLY ACCUSED PRESIDENT TITO OF ALLEGED CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE YUGOSLAV STATE. ONE BELGRADE CRIMINAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS ATTORNEY WHO WAS APPROACHED BY THE FAMILY TO SEEK VELJKOVIC'S RELEASE ABOUT FOUR YEARS AGO OFFERED THE OPINION THAT VELJKOVIC'S WRITINGS CLEARLY SHOW THAT HE IS OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY. THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY JUSTIFY HIS INCARCERATION, THE ATTORNEY CONTINUED, BECAUSE HE IS NOT A DANGER TO THOSE AROUND HIM. FAMILY MEMBERS SEEK HIS RELEASE FROM THE HOSPITAL AND ARE APPARENTLY WILLING TO TAKE CARE OF HIM AT HOME, IF SUCH CARE IS NEEDED.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY IS NOT OF COURSE IN ANY POSITION TO PASS PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT ON VELJKOVIC'S MENTAL HEALTH. VELJKOVIC MAY WELL NOT NEED TO BE INSTITUTIONALIZED, BUT EMBASSY IS RELUCTANT TO RAISE HIS CASE WITH THE GOV, SINCE THERE ARE APPARENTLY SUFFICIENT MEDICAL GROUNDS TO

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86 9474773 SCR

PAGE 002
TOR: 031624Z JAN 86

NC 9474773
BELGRA 00023

RAISE DOUBTS ABOUT HIS ABILITY TO FUNCTION IN SOCIETY.
OUR HUMAN RIGHTS CONTACTS HAVE UNDERLINED THAT THIS CASE
DOES NOT INVOLVE STATE USE OF INVOLUNTARY PSYCHIATRIC
TREATMENT AGAINST AN OTHERWISE NORMAL PERSON BECAUSE OF
HIS/HER POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OR BELIEFS, WHICH FLATLY
CONTRADICTS THE ASSERTIONS OF THE VELJKOVIC FAMILY. THERE
IS CLEARLY ENOUGH LEGITIMATE DOUBT ABOUT THE CASE TO MAKE
ANY USG APPROACH TO THE YUGOSLAVS AN UNCERTAIN PROPOSI-
TION. END COMMENT. SCANLAN
END OF MESSAGE

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