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**YUGOSLAVIA:**

**Serbian Militia to Kosovo Province Today**

*The Serbian republic's statement that it is sending a police detachment to its autonomous Kosovo Province today may provoke ethnic violence and a major political confrontation.*

Yesterday's announcement stated that an unspecified number of Serbian police would be moved to a town in Kosovo to protect local Serbs allegedly endangered by the province's Albanian majority. While justifying the action broadly on the basis of past party decisions, the statement did not explicitly claim either the central government's authority for the deployment or Kosovo's consent.

Serbia this week also boldly defied Belgrade by supporting the right of Kosovo Serbs to continue staging massive demonstrations throughout Yugoslavia. Shortly thereafter, an organizing committee of Kosovo Serbs announced plans to demonstrate in Bosnia next Saturday despite Bosnian objections.

Bosnian officials have stepped up their attacks on Serbian party chief Milosevic and publicly threaten to arrest any Serb who tries to demonstrate. Belgrade is attempting to build opposition to Milosevic in key local party committees, probably to support a move against him.

The move of Serbian police into Kosovo may prove to be one of the most divisive, potentially explosive actions in Yugoslavia since President Tito's death in 1980. If, as seems likely, it is being made unilaterally, it would present the weak national leadership with a key test of its authority. Federal and Kosovo authorities may attempt to hinder the deployment—through political pressure if not force—or at least to supervise closely the Serbian police once they are on the scene.

If the police detachment is large or acts harshly, it could escalate the already serious ethnic tensions and provoke Albanian violence. There may also be violence in Bosnia next weekend.

Politically, the deployment may further consolidate regional opposition to Milosevic in his increasingly aggressive bid to establish greater control over Kosovo. A major political confrontation over his tactics probably will develop soon, possibly surfacing at the national Central Committee plenum on stability scheduled for the end of this month.

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