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SUBJECT: EUROPEAN BRIEF [REDACTED] FOR 20 OCTOBER 1988.

[REDACTED] YUGOSLAVIA: MILOSEVIC SET BACK AT PLENUM

SERBIAN LEADER SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC SUFFERED A MAJOR SETBACK IN THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM THAT ENDED YESTERDAY; IN THE COMING WEEKS, HE PROBABLY WILL MODERATE HIS TACTICS BUT RETAIN HIS NATIONALIST AGENDA. [REDACTED]

MILOSEVIC FAILED TO ACHIEVE HIS MAIN GOAL AT THE PLENUM, THE WHOLESALE OUSTER OF HIS MANY OPPONENTS ON THE 23-MEMBER PRESIDUM AND 165-MEMBER CENTRAL COMMITTEE. ALTHOUGH THE PLENUM ACCEPTED THE RESIGNATIONS ALREADY OFFERED BY FOUR PRESIDUM MEMBERS--THREE ARE MILOSEVIC ADVERSARIES--THE ONLY PRESIDUM MEMBER WHO FAILED TO GAIN A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE WAS MILOSEVIC'S SERBIAN ALLY DUSAN CKREBIC. HE

~~SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

RESIGNED, BUT FINAL ACTION WILL NOT BE TAKEN UNTIL TODAY. [REDACTED]

THE ONLY CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER REMOVED WAS A BOSNIAN CAUGHT IN A FINANCIAL SCANDAL, DESPITE DEMANDS BY MILOSEVIC AND OTHERS FOR THE OUSTER OF UP TO ONE-THIRD OF ITS MEMBERS UNDER THE RUBRIC OF PARTY RENEWAL. SOME PLENUM SPEAKERS HAD EVEN URGED THAT ALL 34 MEMBERS WHO ALSO HOLD GOVERNMENT JOBS BE REMOVED. THE PLENUM SIDESTEPED MOST OTHER CONTROVERSIAL QUESTIONS. IT DEFERRED TO A STUDY COMMISSION MILOSEVIC'S CALLS FOR THE OUSTER OF SEVERAL ETHNIC ALBANIAN OFFICIALS FROM KOSOVO PROVINCE. THE PLENUM, HOWEVER, SUPPORTED SERBIA IN THE CONTROVERSY OVER RESPONSIBILITY FOR DISTURBANCES IN ITS VOJVODINA PROVINCE. [REDACTED]

MEDIA REPORTS SUGGEST THE PLENUM DID NOT BAN SERB DEMONSTRATIONS--AS SOME ANTI-MILOSEVIC SPEAKERS HAD DEMANDED--AND ONE SUCH DEMONSTRATION IN KOSOVO IS SCHEDULED FOR TODAY. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MASSIVE GATHERING PLANNED FOR SATURDAY IN BELGRADE WAS POSTPONED. ONE SLOVENE LEADER CAUTIONED MILOSEVIC AGAINST NEW PROVOCATIONS. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEADERS HAVE SENT A CLEAR SIGNAL THEY WILL NOT TOLERATE MILOSEVIC'S USE OF SERBIAN NATIONALISM TO UNDERMINE THE POLITICAL SYSTEM. THEY PROBABLY HOPE THAT THEIR SHOW OF RELATIVE UNITY WILL PROMPT HIM TO MODERATE HIS NATIONALIST DEMANDS. THESE LEADERS NOW MAY BE EVEN MORE INCLINED TO USE FEDERAL SECURITY FORCES AND THE ARMY TO QUELL NEW WAVES OF SERB DEMONSTRATIONS, ESPECIALLY IF THEY BECOME VIOLENT. [REDACTED]

MILOSEVIC PROBABLY WILL REIN IN HIS ACTIVITY AT LEAST TEMPORARILY. HE HAS DEFIED FEDERAL PRESSURES IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, AND THE PLENUM DEFEAT COULD SPUR HIM TO NEW PROVOCATIONS. [REDACTED]

A SECOND PLENUM IS ADDRESSING SLOVENE AND CROATIAN OBJECTIONS TO SEVERAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS. IF EFFORTS AT COMPROMISE FAIL AND THE AMENDMENTS ARE NOT PASSED BY THE END OF NEXT MONTH, THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE UNABLE TO IMPLEMENT MARKET-ORIENTED ECONOMIC REFORMS. [REDACTED]