

~~Top Secret~~

YUGOSLAVIA:

Emergency Measures Still Possible

The political situation has eased somewhat since the recent setback to Serbian leader Milosevic, but renewed ethnic or labor unrest in the next few months might still force Belgrade to impose limited emergency measures, and, although the potential for ethnic trouble is greatest in Kosovo and other southern regions, worker unrest might erupt anywhere in the country.

[redacted] State President Dizdarevic, during the recent crisis over Serbian nationalism last month, threatened to use all legal means available to put down unrest. The Constitution gives national leaders broad powers but does not spell out specific measures. The leadership made widespread use of police and military forces to suppress Croatian and Albanian nationalists in 1971 and 1981 but were more constrained in Montenegro last month. In any new crisis, government actions may include restrictions on public gatherings, curfews, and jailing of instigators. Various sources indicate the military was on partial alert last month and was ready to back up security forces if necessary. [redacted]

[redacted] Further ethnic unrest is most likely to occur in regions where ethnic Albanians are a majority—Kosovo Province, western Macedonia, and southern Serbia. Trouble might be started by the Albanians or by Serbs and Macedonians. Authorities probably would act quickly with security forces and, if needed, troops. New mass demonstrations in Serbia and in Montenegro that turn violent would also be reason for emergency measures. Despite rebuffing Milosevic last month, however, national leaders probably would be reluctant to use force against peaceful Serb demonstrations because they fear that the heavily Serb officer corps and Serb conscripts would not respond. [redacted]

Yugoslav leaders probably are counting on wage concessions and regional and ethnic rivalries to keep any new outbursts of the labor unrest sporadic and isolated. Authorities probably do not want to use force to suppress strikes and protests for fear of losing even more credibility with workers. But if widespread labor or other ethnic violence erupts, the government would have little choice. [redacted]

Emergency measures would probably achieve stability for a while but would also entail at least temporary curbs on freedoms of speech and assembly and possibly more general setbacks to political liberalization. Yugoslav leaders recognize that such measures would only be a stopgap solution and that promoting long-term stability and reducing ethnic disputes require a much improved economy. [redacted]

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