

~~Top Secret~~

Special Analysis

YUGOSLAVIA: More Centrifugal Elections in Store

The strong win by the Demos opposition over the Communists in Slovenia's recent assembly election almost certainly will be repeated by nationalist parties in elections in Croatia that begin on Sunday. The establishment of anti-Belgrade governments in the two northern republics would further threaten Yugoslavia's shaky unity and increase the possibility of military intervention.

Final election results in Slovenia will not be available until after the runoffs there on Sunday, but the Demos coalition has captured a majority in one chamber of the assembly and probably will dominate the other two. The Communist candidate for the Slovene presidency, the popular Milan Kucan, had a strong lead over Demos opponent Joze Pucnik in the primary, but the runoff is likely to be close. Pucnik almost certainly will pick up most of the votes that went initially to an anti-Communist independent candidate; criticism of Pucnik by the Yugoslav military is likely to add to his support.

In Croatia, it now seems the ultranationalist Croatian Democratic Union will win a majority of the 240 assembly seats in balloting that begins Sunday and runs until 7 May. A poll last month indicated Communists trailed both the CDU and the center-right Coalition for National Accord. the CDU's lead may be even greater than shown in the polls. Both the CDU and the Coalition want more independence for Croatia from the national federation.

[REDACTED]

National and Serbian leaders have been cautious in reacting to the Slovene elections. Premier Markovic has praised their democratic nature. A daily newspaper controlled by Serbian strongman Milosevic has characterized the elections as democratic and free but did not comment on the outcome.

Federation Threatened

Chances are growing that political and military leaders in Belgrade will be confronted with a major challenge to the political and

continued

~~Top Secret~~

constitutional order. Croatia's movement down the path blazed by the Slovenes would greatly raise the stakes for Belgrade. It could spark violence between the two largest ethnic groups—Serbs and Croats—and spill over into other regions, such as Bosnia, which has a mixed population of Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. An election victory would give Slovene and Croat opposition groups a strong mandate to push for a status tantamount to total independence from Belgrade. Failing approval, threats of secession are probable [REDACTED]

Ethnic violence accompanying a CDU victory in Croatia could give Belgrade a reason to intervene militarily on the pretext of restoring order, although there is no sign that federal leaders are preparing for such action. [REDACTED]