

IN THIS ISSUE

CSIS U.S.-Montenegrin Policy Forum
NGO Working Group
Foreign Minister Lukovac
Pages 1 and 2

Albania Forum Series
Ambassador Tarifa
Ambassador Limprecht
address the Forum
Pages 2 and 3

U.S.-Slovak Security and Foreign Policy Working Group
CSIS-SFPA Policy
Paper Released
Page 3

CSIS Statesmen's Forum
Prime Minister Ilir Meta
addresses the Washington
Policymaking Community
Page 3

Setting the Balkan Agenda Conference
Brief Summary
Page 4

Political Parties in Eastern Europe
New Publication to be
Published in December
Page 4

CSIS U.S. - MONTENEGRIN POLICY FORUM

At the conclusion of the CSIS conference on the future status of Montenegro in February 2001, attended by President Milo Djukanović, the Eastern Europe Project launched the CSIS U.S.-Montenegrin Policy Forum. Its first meeting in April focused on the role of NGOs in Montenegro, and the second meeting, held in July at the U.S. Senate, convened a number of congressional representatives.

NGO Working Group Meeting

The Eastern Europe Project held an NGO (nongovernmental organization) Working Group meeting on April 20, 2001, as part of its ongoing U.S.-Montenegrin Policy Forum. Attended by regional specialists, journalists, and government officials, the meeting addressed the future role of NGOs in Montenegro, particularly during this historic period as Montenegro faces the prospect of a referendum on regaining its independence. According to Janusz Bugajski, director of the Eastern Europe Project, "NGOs can play an important role in promoting pluralism, multi-ethnicity, rule of law, and a market economy in Montenegro and should be intensifying their involvement in helping to construct a democratic state and a civil society as Montenegro moves toward statehood."

The mere fact that war and ethnic conflict have not divided or decimated Montenegrin society in the last 10 years should give an impetus and provide a basis for future development and NGO inputs. The key areas for future NGO involvement in Montenegro include public administration, the educational system, media, development of local NGOs, interethnic and interregional programs, anticrime and anticorruption initiatives, and law enforcement. Western governments and NGOs should be intensifying their involvement to help construct a democratic state and a civil society regardless of the future of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Montenegro's Status on the Agenda at the U.S. Senate

The CSIS U.S.-Montenegrin Policy Forum addressed the question of the current status of Montenegro within the framework of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) at the U.S. Senate on July 20. Keynote speaker, Montenegrin foreign minister Branko Lukovac, discussed the current political situation in the republic of Montenegro, the new government's priorities, Montenegro's relations with Serbia, and the republic's desire for self-determination.

Lukovac asserted that the present political and social circumstances favor the commencement of a political dialogue between officials from Serbia on the structural relationship between the two republics. Montenegro has submitted a formal proposal to Serbia, and the solution should be found through negotiations that would lead the two republics to become sovereign, and eventually, if agreed by both parties, to form a loose union of two independent states.

Referring to regional cooperation, Lukovac stressed the fact that Montenegro has maintained excellent relations with all of its neighbors. The province remains a model of multiethnic

coexistence, and is willing to share its positive experiences with neighboring countries.

Regarding organized criminal activities within its territory, the Montenegrin government is aware of the negative images that have been created in Western Europe. Lukovac explained that the policy of sanctions and isolation that were arbitrarily forced on Montenegro from the early 1990s due to its ties with Serbia, contributed to the development of organized crime. Since the sanctions have ended, Podgorica has made positive strides in the fight against crime. Montenegro has joined the Southeast European Stability Pact initiatives and various regional programs of the European Union (EU) and the United Nations.

The current mantra among Western diplomats who would like to see a “democratic Montenegro within a democratic Yugoslavia” should be adjusted to read a “democratic Montenegro and a democratic Serbia regardless of Yugoslavia”.

Speaker Steve J. Woehrel, specialist in European affairs at the Congressional Research Service, outlined Washington’s perspective on Montenegrin independence, and pointed out that Montenegro’s status should be resolved in a democratic and transparent way. He also discussed the financial and political support that the U.S. Congress has provided to Montenegro thus far.

Chairman Janusz Bugajski, director of the CSIS Eastern Europe Project, presented 27 points for consideration by policymakers regarding the prospects for Montenegro’s independent status. Bugajski asserted that Montenegro could not afford to be a passive bystander toward dynamic developments in Southeast Europe, and that a stagnant status quo, through the indefinite postponement of its decision on independence, might heighten the republic’s susceptibility to potentially destabilizing pressures from the federal structures in Belgrade.

Bugajski emphasized that an alliance or loose confederation would require two legitimate states to agree to share some government functions, and that a more intensive birepublican union between two such demographically unequal countries might result in domination by the larger member. A loose association coordinating some aspects of defense, foreign, and economic policy might engender fruitful bilateral cooperation between Belgrade and Podgorica and contribute to security in the Balkans.

In his concluding remarks, Bugajski emphasized that the current mantra among Western diplomats, who would like to see “a democratic Montenegro within a democratic Yugoslavia”, should be adjusted to read “a democratic Montenegro and a democratic Serbia regardless of Yugoslavia.” The United States and its allies should

intensify their assistance on behalf of the political and economic transformations in Montenegro having in focus the building of a secure, multiethnic, and civil society.

For full remarks by keynote speakers, please visit the U.S.-Montenegrin Policy Forum at <http://www.csis.org/ee>.

ALBANIA FORUM

The CSIS Eastern Europe Project, together with the National Albanian American Council (NAAC), hosted two meetings of its Albania Forum series in the spring. The new Albanian ambassador to the United States, Fatos Tarifa, addressed the forum in June, and U.S. ambassador to Albania, Joseph Limprecht, spoke to the forum at the Embassy of Albania in July.

Fifth Meeting, June 28, 2001

His Excellency Fatos Tarifa, Albania’s ambassador to the United States, gave his first public address in Washington at the CSIS Albania Forum on June 28, 2001. The CSIS Eastern Europe Project and the National Albanian American Council (NAAC) jointly hosted the event. The ambassador addressed several significant issues facing Albania, including the country’s priorities in the areas of crime-fighting, institutional development, foreign investment, and the negative impact of the brain drain. The ambassador spoke in detail about the recent general elections held on June 24. He discussed the polarized political environment and the possible results of the subsequent rounds of voting. He noted the international community’s praise for a successful election process. Tarifa commented that the “elections were held in the most peaceful and calm atmosphere; Albania has passed the test of maturity.”

Albania has the opportunity to become a factor of stability for the region once a new government is installed and the opposition recognizes the legitimacy of the democratic process.

Excerpt from Ambassador Tarifa’s speech: *Albania is going in the right direction, both in terms of domestic political and economic development, as well as regarding its role and active participation in a joint effort to build peace and stability in the Balkans. Through its public condemnation of extremist violence in Macedonia and support for interethnic dialogue, as well as through its commendable efforts to build bridges of regional cooperation and integration within the framework of the Stability Pact, Albania continues to promote peace and*

stability in Southeast Europe. Significant progress has been made in the fields of economic and administrative reform. Economic progress is obvious: 7 percent economic growth annually for 1999 and 2000; an inflation rate of less than 2 percent (compared to 42 percent in 1997); 70 percent of the former command economy is now in private hands; foreign direct investments in 2000 increased threefold compared to the previous year (from 50 to 150 million USD); etc. International financial institutions generally regard these achievements as remarkable and refer to Albania's accomplishments in the past couple of years as a success story. President George W. Bush noted in his remarks upon the occasion of the presentation of my letter of accreditation that, "Despite a tumultuous past and tremendous suffering under communism, Albania has come a very long way in a very short amount of time." For the full text of the speech, please visit the CSIS website at www.csis.org/ee.

There is positive news from Albania, but a great deal of work remains to be accomplished. The country held two peaceful parliamentary elections this summer that were legitimized as free and fair by the international community. Progress has been consistent in the implementation of reforms. Albania has the opportunity to become a factor of stability for the region once a new government is installed and the opposition recognizes the legitimacy of the democratic process.

Sixth Meeting, July 23, 2001

U.S. ambassador to Albania, Joseph Limprecht, addressed the sixth meeting of the CSIS Albania Forum series at the Albanian Embassy on July 23, 2001. Albanian ambassador Fatos Tarifa hosted the meeting. The National Albanian American Council (NAAC), as a part of the CSIS Albania Forum, organized the event.

Ambassador Limprecht spoke about the current state of affairs in Albania, the recent general election, and the crisis in neighboring Macedonia. He addressed specific issues of salience for foreign investment in the country, such as regional instability, the lack of rule of law, and trafficking in human beings. The ambassador emphasized that the

country needs a government that is capable of undertaking initiatives to continue to stabilize the country, to fight crime, and to strengthen the rule of law. Indeed, the goal of the U.S. presence in Albania is to assist in all of these areas. The United States has played a positive role in Albania's transition process to date especially in the areas of democracy building and the development of a civil society. The full meeting report can be found on the CSIS Web site at www.csis.org/ee.

U.S.-SLOVAK SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY POLICY PAPER RELEASED

The CSIS Eastern Europe Project, in cooperation with the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, released a CSIS Policy Paper entitled *Slovakia's Security and Foreign Policy Strategy* in June 2001. The paper is a report of the CSIS U.S.-Slovakia Action Commission's Security and Foreign Policy Working Group.

The report outlines a strategic plan for Slovakia's security. As a member of the regional Visegrád Four initiative and as a Central European state neighboring Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, Slovakia has both the opportunity and obligation in its strategic position to play a significant role in the security of the region. The CSIS report emphasizes why Slovakia is now poised, politically, economically, and militarily, to become a member of NATO in the second round of enlargement scheduled for the fall of 2002.

The report received great attention due to its early release in Bratislava in May at a conference on NATO expansion where nine central and East European countries reaffirmed their intentions for NATO membership. The government of Slovakia organized the conference and representatives of current NATO member countries attended it as well. Much of the discussion at the conference surrounded Russia's desire to "veto" the enlargement process. The CSIS Policy paper became a significant part of the debate when the Russian Embassy in Bratislava refuted its contents, specifically a section written about Russian organized criminality and efforts to subvert the NATO expansion process. The Russian embassy placed letters at every desk at the conference repudiating the paper's statements. The story was covered in *The Washington Post* on May 12, 2001. The paper can be downloaded from www.csis.org/ee.

PRIME MINISTER META OF ALBANIA ADDRESSES THE CSIS STATESMEN'S FORUM

On May 3, 2001, the CSIS Eastern Europe Project hosted Prime Minister Ilir Meta of Albania. In his speech, Prime Minister Meta addressed issues of security and stability in the war-torn Balkan region, the importance of a resolution to the region's conflicts, and the continued development of democracy and free-market economies in Southeast Europe. Prime Minister Meta focused on Albania's recent progress

toward developing a strong market economy, establishing rule of law and democratic institutions, and combating corruption and organized crime. He also stressed the importance of continued U.S. involvement in the region and emphasized the desire for peace and stability throughout the Balkans.

The full conference program may be downloaded from the CSIS Web site at www.csis.org/ee.

SETTING THE BALKAN AGENDA CONFERENCE

On May 31, 2001, the CSIS Eastern Europe Project, in cooperation with the Dayton Peace Accords Project (DPAP) of the University of Dayton, Ohio, hosted a landmark conference on the Balkans, entitled *Setting the Balkan Agenda*. Janusz Bugajski, director of the East Europe Project, and Dr. R. Bruce Hitchner, director of DPAP, cochaired the conference. Conference panelists and participants assessed the stability of the ex-Yugoslav Balkan region, including the past and future U.S. and West European roles, and prescribed concrete policy recommendations for parties on both sides of the Atlantic.

The three-session conference featured prominent government officials and scholars from the United States, Western Europe, and the Balkan region. Greg Schulte, senior director for Southeastern European Affairs in the European and Eurasian Affairs Directorate at the National Security Council gave the keynote luncheon address.

Recommendations included 1) *Economic Reconstruction*: Policies must be devised with international assistance to make the process of privatization and investment transparent in order to build credible market economies and implement necessary legal reforms; 2) *Civic Democracy*: The international community must work together with each Balkan country and its respective NGO sector in the development of civil society as a watch-dog and advisor to government actors. The international community should work outside of the capitals at the grassroots level. The media must be trained to provide unbiased news and information and to understand its educational role within society and to help promote multiethnic coexistence; 3) *Bosnia-Herzegovina*: NATO and the Europeans should consider moving Bosnia-Herzegovina closer to the Alliance through the Partnership for Peace program. Such a prospect will encourage the creation of one multiethnic Bosnian military. Bosnia-Herzegovina must also join the Council of Europe and have an Association and Stability Agreement with the European Union. This can be accomplished during the coming year; and 4) *Macedonia*: U.S. involvement is needed especially at high political levels in order to ensure that all sectors of Macedonian society are committed to necessary reform. NATO itself must be prepared for a long-term presence to deter and discourage extremism and violence.

NEW BOOK ON EAST EUROPEAN POLITICS

M.E. Sharpe, Inc., and CSIS will publish a political encyclopedia of Eastern Europe entitled *Political Parties in Eastern Europe: A Guide to Politics in the Post-Communist Era*. This comprehensive volume analyzes political developments throughout the region, describes all of the major organizations and players, and supplies comprehensive election data. Written by Janusz Bugajski, director of the Eastern Europe Project, the book will be available in December 2001.

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