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Serbs Paid Heavily

But the Serbs paid heavily for coming out on the side of the Allies for the second time. They were forced out of their home - Kosovo - by the Axis forces, and were not allowed to return there during the Axis occupation, or during the rule of Broz Tito's communist government, which wanted to assist Albania, and also reduce the Serbian majority, both in Kosovo, and throughout Yugoslavia.

Americans must understand - and that includes this Congress - that this was the price the Serbians paid for being an ally of the Allies, an ally of the United States - our ally.

Historically, between the wars, the native Kosovo Albanians and the Serbs lived in comparative harmony. That peace resulted from normal migrations and integrations of society. There, of course, were differences, but no extremes of desecration of property, loss of life, or harassment.

There is no doubt in the minds of the Serbians that the Twentieth Century battle of Kosovo has resulted from Marshall Tito's high-handed manner, not only in forcing the Serbians out of their homes there, but also in encouraging the Albanians from Albania to flock into Kosovo in droves - by the thousands.

In fact, early in his reign, Tito's government passed a law which forbade any Serbians who had left Kosovo during the war or after, from returning to their home sites or anywhere in Kosovo.

Where the province once was 75% Serbian and 25% Albanian, the proportions now not only are reversed, but the Serbian share is said to be down to less than 10%.

As that proportion was turned around, the feeling in Yugoslavia is that many of the agitators of Kosovo have come from the strongest communist country in Eastern Europe - Albania. The general feeling of all the Serbians is that it is a move to separate Kosovo altogether from Serbia and Yugoslavia, and to make it greater Albania.

Only this past week Albania has indicated that it is interested in establishing any dialogue with the outside world... the first time in 45 years.



weekend that President Marković of Yugoslavia said there would be multi-party elections on a federal or national basis of that country before the end of this year - or at least, early next year. The republics of Slovenia and Croatia already have had multi-party elections for their areas and hopefully the other republics, including Serbia, will be doing so in the forthcoming months as well.

These are positive moves, along with the turnaround of the economy of Yugoslavia under the programme of President Marković, which he outlined to those of us who visited him as part of the Helsinki Commission earlier this month.

Is there room for improvement on human rights? You bet there is throughout Yugoslavia, in every way.

Has any progress been made? Yes, it has. As we heard from the letter from the Embassy earlier today, in recent weeks some 108 political prisoners were released. Undoubtedly, they should have been released earlier and perhaps it was the combination of the pressure from the combination of the Helsinki Commission's visit and this Human Rights Caucus hearing that finally brought their release about. And, of course, the good news today was the release of Mr. Vlast, who has been going through a lengthy trial and apparently, he and his colleagues were found not guilty today.

As I noted earlier, Mr. Chairman,

And yet, Yugoslavia has been just the opposite the most open of the East European countries - open since it went its own communistic way in 1948 to open its borders to visitors from throughout the world as it had before World War II. However, with all that openness it has only been within the past year or two that the Serbs themselves have been able to have any pride about their heritage because they had been so downgraded throughout Yugoslavia by their enemy, Marshall Tito.

It was pointed out to me by a top official of the U.S. embassy last year, that it has only been since Slobodan Milošević came to power in Serbia that all of Yugoslavia recognises, finally, that Tito is dead, that many of Tito's henchmen have been put out of office, and that the Serbians have been able to hold their heads high.

It is ironic that the communist country which has had the first open door, and the longest, is one of the slowest in moving towards open multi-party elections on a nationwide basis - but again, this can be blamed on the fragmented ethnic complexion of this small country.

It was my privilege to be invited to go with members of the Helsinki Commission to Yugoslavia the first week of this month to investigate human rights violations there and, in Romania and Bulgaria. While I applaud their efforts, the short two and a half days spent in Belgrade and Kosovo can barely brush a thousand years of the history of those nations - the complexity of the ethnic mix of that area of the world.

I was very pleased to read over the

our purpose here this afternoon is to explain this ethnic diversity which between the world wars gave a pluralism to Yugoslavian society not seen anywhere else in the Balkan states. It is our hope that this model can once again be explored - with a recognition of ancient "rights to Jerusalem" - "rights to Kosovo," in this instance - rights which cannot be denied without great risk to the people of all of the Balkan states.

There is no right, no claim, as strong as one of history and heritage.

It must be recognised today that occupation of a state does not have to be heralded by the movement of armies, but rather can occur - as happened in ancient days - by a mere movement of a people. The reasons for this in-migration can be either political or economic, or both, but the reasons do not address the problems created by the fact of occupation. We need to present the problem. To force recognition of the problem by this country. And, finally, to work with all other involved parties toward some pluralistic solution which will accommodate the best interests of the nation of Yugoslavia, the nation most threatened by this occupation.

It is very timely - on this, the official day of recognition of the Holocaust - to be discussing the fate of the nation of Yugoslavia, a small country which lost 1 million 700,000 Jews and Serbs to the Nazi terror.

It is a tragic history we are discussing here this afternoon. Our deepest wish is to avert another tragedy.

Thank you,
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