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STATEMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONCERNING THE
DECLARATION OF THE EC MINISTERS ON YUGOSLAVIA

Deeply convinced that the establishment of truth about the events in Yugoslavia can in no way damage interests of the Serbian people, and that a new state order in this part of the Balkans must be based on compromise and agreement of political representatives of the people living there, we support the presence of unbiased unarmed observers at hotbeds of crisis in present Yugoslavia.

But two conditions have to be fulfilled before political negotiations could lead to a durable and stable solution of the state and inter-ethnic crisis: an absolute stop to all armed conflicts and physical hostilities, and participation of all relevant factors in negotiations for the establishment of a stable order.

We support the EC request, made in the Declaration on Yugoslavia, concerning the cease-fire under the control of unbiased foreign observers.

However, we do not support the tone of the request, nor the proposed list of participants in future negotiations, nor the idea about the way of convening a peace conference for the solution of Yugoslav problems. We can understand the interest of EC members for the elimination of all critical hotbeds from the European continent, but the self-election of the EC Ministerial Meeting as a supreme arbitrator is completely unintelligible. Yugoslavia is neither a member of the European Community, nor the EC represents all European countries relevant to the stability of this continent. Arbitrary assimilation of all competences concerning internationalisation of the Yugoslav crisis is unjustified and does not promise success in spite of good intentions. The Yugoslav crisis is a European problem, but the European Community is not the political representative of Europe. The peace conference on Yugoslavia must have among its participants representatives of those states which took part in its establishment and recognition in 1918, i.e. 1945 (USA, USSR), while Germany could not have a leading role at this conference, for due to the well known reasons she had not been present at the establishment and recognition of Yugoslavia.

The Declaration on Yugoslavia is overfilled with contradictions and ambiguities. The question of 'changing frontiers' has been raised as if internal frontiers in Yugoslavia are state frontiers, and as if relations between Yugoslav republics could be considered as relations among independent sovereign states.

But, it is certain that as a state exists only Yugoslavia, with her internationally recognised frontiers. If this state ceases to exist, which is quite possible after a nearly certain succession of Slovenia and the announced intention of secession of Croatia, international institutions would have then to determine that the state established in 1918 does not exist any more, and that the question of the creation of new states on the territory of the defunct one has to be taken into consideration. The constitution of these new states, or a possible unique one, is by no means prejudiced by the fact that Yugoslav republics exist. Certainly, the easiest way to solve the problem would be for foreign factors to simply proclaim republics as sovereign states, but this would not solve the problem. What would be the state order in the political space of the present Yugoslavia, what states could be created there, and within what frontiers, are questions which have to be the subject of inter-Yugoslav and European conferences on state reorganization of the present Yugoslavia. It is quite certain that the possibility of simply transforming republics into states at these conferences is absolutely out of question, due to a very simple reason, namely it would be contrary to the higher principle of self-determination of ethnic collectives (Yugoslav peoples) as basic factors of the Yugoslav state crisis.

Although the EC Declaration speaks about the 'new Yugoslavia', we consider that the final decision on the state order in this part of the Balkans should be left to the afore mentioned conferences, which should be organized as soon as possible. The intention of the EC ministers to hold a conference on Yugoslavia even in the case that one of the conflicting parties is not present is unacceptable and contrary to international law. Such a meeting would not and could not be any peace conference.

We fully support the opinion of the EC that the situation in Yugoslavia 'must be sufficiently stabilized to enable purposeful negotiations'. We call upon relevant authorities in Serbia to accept without reserve the part of the Declaration concerning the stabilization of truce under the control of unbiased observers, as well as to agree with the convening of a peace conference on Yugoslavia. Who shall participate at this conference, from the present Yugoslavia and from Europe, and how it shall work, are questions which have to be discussed in detail. If EC institutions would like to initiate such a conference, it would be a step which should be acclaimed.

On several occasions, the Democratic Party has pointed out to incorrect steps of Serbian political representatives, who had created by their behaviour a strong impression that Serbia is against institutional solutions, and for the policy of chaos and *fait accompli*. The resignation of Jovic as President of the Presidency, non-election of Mesic followed by his election under foreign patronage, refusal to the expansion of observer activities from Slovenia to Croatia - they were all steps leading to the decrease of sympathy for the interests of Serbia and the Serbian people among the international public. By its unfounded self-confidence, the Serbian regime has often acted in an extreme way, leading, as we have repeatedly warned, to the situation in which

Serbia has become an object of ultimatums, even those professed not from the highest centres of political and economic power. We expect that this time the Serbian regime will behave politically wise, in the interest of a peaceful and definite solution of the Yugoslav crisis.

The Democratic Party

Belgrade, August 30, 1991