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Honorable Dana Rohrabacher  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rohrabacher:

As a member of the United States Congress and a first generation Serbian-American, I have a keen interest in Yugoslavia. I ~~to~~ carefully monitor the Yugoslavia crisis and sincerely hope a peaceful solution can be reached soon.

Although, I am well aware of your support for Croat and Slovene independence, I thought you might be interested in some information that offers an alternative viewpoint.

While turmoil in Slovenia appears to have subsided, the possibility of civil war remains real in Croatia. Animosity runs very deep between Serbs and Croats, the two largest ethnic groups in Yugoslavia.

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Although conditions in Croatia fifty years after the Ustase regime ~~are~~ have changed, the large Serbian minority remains wary of Croatian independence. The new Croatian flag closely resembles the Ustase flag. Numerous reports have also confirmed that Serbs have been ~~forced~~ forced to sign loyalty oaths ~~to remain~~ to remain in their public sector jobs. Additionally, the government of Croatia Prime Minister Frango Tudjman now controls the republic's largest newspaper publishing house and has sought to ban independent television programs viewed as anti-Croatian.

Many Serbs strongly oppose the government of Serbia led by Slobodan Milosevic who has been an antagonizing force in the current conflict. Fortunately, support for Milosevic appears to be waning, and momentum is with Serbian democratic forces.

(2)

The Serb population in Croatia has resided there for more than 400 years. To protect the southern frontier of the Hapsburg Empire from the Turks, the Austrian emperor offered land grants to Serbs living in Montenegro and Serbia. As a result, present-day Croatia has ~~many~~ towns within 50 miles of Zagreb which have a Serb majority.

The opposition to Croat independence, without guaranteed human rights protection for the Serb minority, can be placed in a historical context dating back to World War II.

In 1941 when the Axis Powers abolished Yugoslavia, Ante Pavelic and his fascist Ustase seized control of Croatia. Between 1941-45, ~~the~~ 350,000-700,000 Serbs were exterminated by the Ustase in Croatia. Somewhat surprisingly, <sup>even</sup> the Nazis expressed shock at the Ustase genocide which included indiscriminate killing of Serbian women and children.

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Yugoslavs must put cultural, ethnic, and religious differences aside.

As Abraham Lincoln once said, "A house divided among itself cannot stand."

War is certainly not the answer, but I believe that a newly-organized Confederation of democratic republics is.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts with you and would be pleased to discuss the Yugoslav crisis at a mutually suitable time.

Sincerely,

Helen Delich Bentley

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corporation

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MESSAGE: A draft of the Rohrbacher  
letter is attached. Thanks for  
your help & friendship.