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May 13, 1993

The Honorable Bill Clinton  
President  
White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Clinton:

We are writing to call your attention to the authoritarian tendencies of President of Croatia Franjo Tudjman, who has exhibited an intolerance toward free press and political expression in Croatia.

As you may know, after Tudjman and his party, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) came to power in 1990, the government took control of all electronic media in Croatia, television and radio combined. Alternative electronic media continued to be banned under an outdated communist law.

In May 1992, indictments for "verbal crimes" were brought against Croatian journalists Tanja Torbarina, Jelena Lovric and Denis Kuljis. Ms. Torbarina is a widely-read political satirist who ridiculed Tudjman as "Miss Croatia" for his habit of being photographed wearing a colorful silk sash in an effort to make himself appear more presidential.

In addition, prior to the August 1992 elections in Croatia, Tudjman took administrative steps to eliminate all independent print media. He drove one of the most respected weeklies, Demas, out of business and turned two Zagreb dailies Vjesnik and Vocemji list into government mouthpieces. Since those same elections, Tudjman and his government have attempted to take control of Novi list, a publication which never criticized him, and successfully seized editorial control and fired journalists of the independent Slobodna Dalmacija.

There were frequent charges made against Tudjman during the August 1992 elections that he was using the media, especially television, as an instrument of propaganda. Considering his record, you must consider the validity of the charge and question the legitimacy of any election where only one party has widespread access to the general public. Despite European standards which require multiparty control of the election process, only Tudjman's party monitored the last two Croatian elections and counted ballots.

Since coming to power, Tudjman has also demonstrated an intolerance toward different opinions and political opponents. Despite the fact that his party controls 70% of the Croatian Parliament so that he literally rules by decree, he harasses and persecutes members of Parliament that belong to opposition parties, even though they are democratically-elected members of Parliament.

For example, he has stripped three members of an opposition party in Parliament of parliamentary immunity, despite the opposition of all parties in Parliament except his own party. He is trying to ban that same party from the Parliament all together by making wild accusations against its leader and two of his deputies, even though the former President of the Supreme Court dismissed similar charges against those same individuals at an earlier date for lack of evidence. Tudjman later forced that judge to resign for his dissension.

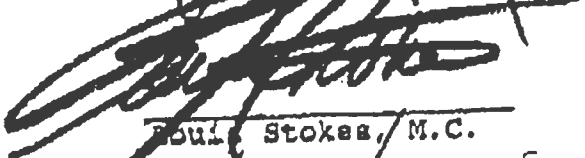
Acts of violence resulting in death have befallen leaders of opposition parties. Ante Paradzik, vice-president of the Croatian Party of Rights, and Marina Nuic, President of the Croatian Democratic Party in Kraljevica, have both died under mysterious circumstances. Incomplete investigations and subsequent lack of court proceedings have resulted into the accused being released. In addition, there have been numerous attempted assassinations of opposition leaders.

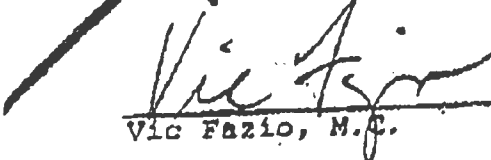
Mr. President, we believe that there should be a fair and objective investigation into the murders and attempted assassinations of opposition leaders in Croatia. In addition, we urge you to encourage Tudjman to allow the establishment of independent television and radio stations in Croatia and to stop his campaign against the free press. After an independent media is established, we also urge you to encourage Tudjman to hold a new free and democratic election with multiparty control of the election process.

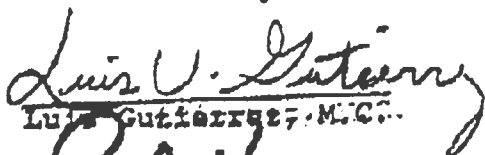
Respectfully,

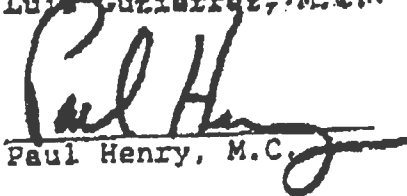
  
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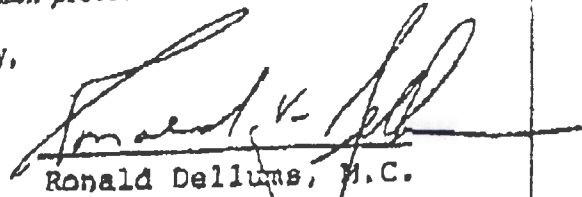
  
Joel Keller, M.C.

  
Paul Stokes, M.C.

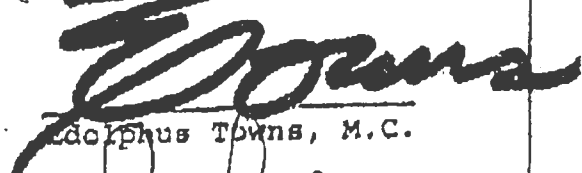
  
Vic Fazio, M.C.

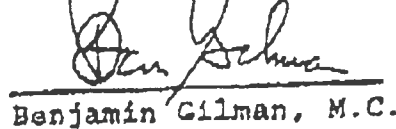
  
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