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From the IBPP Research Associates. Yugoslavia.

Slobodan Milosevic

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The following is an English translation of a statement by the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, to Yugoslav citizens. The statement has been posted on the worldwide web at <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/yuembassy/> by the Yugoslav Embassy in Washington, DC, and was sent to IBPP by a reader. IBPP suggests that readers analyze this statement in the context of the objectives publicly ventured by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as rationale for its ongoing attacks on Yugoslav military assets that began on March 24, 1999.

STATEMENT

Dear citizens, I consider that the National Assembly has acted in a very proper manner when it made the decision not to accept the presence of foreign military troops on our territory. The National Assembly adopted this decision by a unanimous vote, thus expressing the unity of all citizens of our country and their unified commitment to independence and freedom as well as the free development of our country and all its citizens. It is not only Kosovo that is at stake here, although Kosovo is of great importance to us, the freedom of the entire country is at stake, whereas Kosovo would represent only a door through which foreign troops would enter and jeopardize these highest values. They have chosen this door because they assumed that the Albanian separatist movement would stand in the doorstep rather than the Army of Yugoslavia or the citizens of this country as a whole, and that in this way our country would step by step, but very quickly lose its independence and its freedom. The only right decision was to refuse to accept foreign troops on our territory. However, despite this, we would like to continue our consistent commitment to the peaceful resolution of problems in Kosovo and Metohija. We sincerely believe that the long-term solution of problems in Kosovo and Metohija may be achieved only by peaceful and political means. We insist on the crucial issue to which our delegation in Rambouillet has been committed as we have been in all our contacts with the representatives of international community. This crucial issue is our commitment to the equality of all national communities. The political agreement which ensures the equality of all national communities in Kosovo and Metohija - Albanians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Muslims, Turks, Goranians, Roma and Egyptians, has the chance of being successful and stabilizing our southern Province, of ensuring peace and stability in the entire country. In an effort to reach the political solution and continue the political process, we will remain committed to this. In that context, I wish to emphasize that I fully support the actions of our delegation in Rambouillet and Paris as well as those of President Milutinovic [President of Serbia] and his positions on these crucial issues, on which the entire future of Kosovo and Metohija, and I would say, the entire Serbia, depends, because the whole country is at stake here, and not only Kosovo and Metohija, regardless of how important it is to us and how important it actually is to all the citizens of our country as a whole.

At this time, when we are facing threats and the danger of NATO strikes, everyone should do their jobs. All citizens will contribute to the defense of the country if they successfully perform their regular duties in production, health, education and culture institutions. In this way they will be of the most assistance to the forces of State defense, the Army of Yugoslavia and to the forces of the Interior Ministry in the fulfillment of their tasks in the defense of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

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Namely, we have two major commitments: to continue the political process fully committed, because I think that the truth and justice are on our side, but also to defend our country by all available means corresponding to the extent of the attack. All of us should make our full contribution to this, above all through our work. Thank you. (Keywords: Milosevic, NATO, Yugoslavia.)