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## A Subversion of Democracy in Yugoslavia?

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**Abstract.** This article describes how a recent change in United States Government (USG) policy towards Yugoslavia may contribute to subverting the USG professed goal of spreading representative democracy throughout the region and even beyond.

A Title such as A "Subversion of Democracy in Yugoslavia" would suggest an article on another undemocratic initiative or ploy against democracy effected by the President of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic. However, this article describes a recent change in policy towards Yugoslavia--primarily the non-Kosovo section of Serbia--by the United States Government (USG) that may contribute to subverting the goal of spreading representative democracy throughout the region and even beyond.

The Clinton Administration has stated it will ease its restrictions on commerce and travel in the region as soon as there are free and fair elections in Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, the Administration's criteria for identifying such elections seem anything but free and fair. These criteria subsume the usual caveats concerning monopolizing of the mass media, buying of votes, intimidation of voters, stuffing and stealing of ballot boxes, and so on. However, the primary criterion by far seems to be the elections' results. If a generation of "more democratic" leaders are elected, then the elections will have been free and fair. If the results point to Mr. Milosevic and his supporters remaining in office, then the elections will be ipso facto anything but free and fair.

Thus, by the calculations of the Clinton Administration, the ends not only justify the means but - in an interesting version of the effect effecting the nature of the cause - election results dictate the nature of the electoral process. Unfortunately, such a bent is similar to, for example, the occasionally overt USG insistence that United Nations (UN) sanctions remain in place in Iraq until Saddam Hussein is no longer in office--beyond the stipulations approved by the UN Security Council in 1991 that Iraq must only meet various requirements concerning weapons of mass destruction. In essence, the primary criterion for the meeting of these requirements is Saddam no longer being in office.

By acting as if democracy is not a process but only something that engenders certain desired consequences, the USG cheapens, demeans, and ultimately subverts a professed core value. The USG policy change towards Yugoslavia--taken largely to satisfy humanitarian needs and remove several political advantages of Milosevic even as it also removes several pressures that could increase opposition towards him--too facetly suggests that the USG is too similar to its nondemocratic adversaries. When the chips are down, the ends justify the means, and in an Orwellian manner, the ends dictate the history of the means. (See A challenge to Yugoslavia. (November 4, 1999). *The New York Times*, p. A26; Bennett, D.S., & Stam, A. C., III. (1998). The declining advantages of democracy: A combined model of war outcomes and duration. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 42, 344-366; Erlanger, S. (November 6, 1999). Yugoslavs reject U.S. proposal for lifting sanctions. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Ringmar, E. (1998). Nationalism: The idiocy of intimacy. *British Journal of Sociology*, 49, 534-549; Sekulic, D., & Sporer, Z. (1998). Toward democracy or to the new authoritarianism? The case of Croatia. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 24, 129-169; Sullivan, J.L., & Transue, J.E. (1999). The psychological underpinnings of democracy: A selective review of research on

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political tolerance, interpersonal trust, and social capital. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 50, 625-650.)(Keywords: Democracy, Serbia, Yugoslavia.)