



The Serbian Unity Congress strongly denounces Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence as well as America's subsequent recognition of it.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

This act is in direct contravention to the United Nations Charter, the OSCE Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and UN Security Council Resolution 1244. After the cessation of the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia the United Nations took the step of reaffirming the territorial sovereignty of Serbia by declaring in UN Resolution 1244 that Kosovo would remain a part of Serbia unless otherwise determined by that body.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have repeatedly reported on the failure of Kosovo's government and UNMIK to meet basic international standards for the protection and safeguarding of the rights of non-Albanian Kosovo minorities. Throughout the period since 1999 Kosovo's Albanian majority has perpetrated political violence, common and political crimes, intimidation and discrimination, rape and murder with impunity against the minorities. Its Albanian-dominated government has provided a safe haven center for the by far largest trafficking of illegal drugs, arms and sex slaves in Europe. Under its watch over 150 Christian Orthodox religious sites and monuments have been destroyed, dozens of villages and towns burned to the ground and more than one-half of the Serb population driven out. The necessity to continue to have foreign troops in control of Kosovo after independence (be they UN or European), in order to protect its minorities from violence at the hands of the Albanian majority is full proof that the Albanian majority cannot be trusted not to burn, murder and pillage and that they are in fact by no means deserving of such independence. Unconditionally rewarding independence to an entity with a consistent record of such abuse of human rights of its minorities is equivalent to aiding and abetting such practices.

The Bush administration has repeatedly undermined and intentionally doomed negotiations between Pristina and Belgrade by publicly stating that it would recognize Kosovo's call for independence regardless of what happened. With this one-sided role it has assured an imposed rather than a negotiated settlement further eroding its already debilitated international image and credibility as an honest broker.

It is clear that the threat of violence by Albanians as a recourse if recognition is not granted is blackmail that the US and other nations recognizing independence have buckled to.

By condoning the severing of a nation's territory with total disregard for international law or guarantees the US agreed to as a signatory to Resolution 1244, this administration has set a dangerous precedent whose repercussions are being felt already. It has given a green light to the Serbs of Bosnia, the Basques of Spain, Nagorno Karabakh and many others to declare independence and secede from their current nations. It has surrendered its moral authority and right to challenge future calls for independence from other disgruntled groups. Given

Kosovo's dismal human rights record, unconditional recognition by the United States effectively condones the continuation of criminal behavior with impunity by Kosovo's majority and its leaders.

We call on the US Congress to restore respect for democratic values and respond responsibly, exercise its control of the purse and prevent any future damage by making any future assistance to Kosovo conditional on the fulfillment of human rights and other rule of law standards by its Albanian majority.