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# **Presidential Elections in Montenegro**



**A Report Prepared by the Staff of  
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## SUMMARY

Montenegro, which along with much larger Serbia comprises the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, held presidential elections on October 5, 1997. These were not regularly scheduled elections, and reflected a major split within the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists pitting the incumbent, Momir Bulatovic, against his former ally and Prime Minister, Milo Djukanovic, in a battle for control over the republic's affairs. Eight candidates ran for president, but the race was really between Bulatovic and Djukanovic. The race was so close that neither received a majority of the votes cast in the first round, forcing a second round two weeks later, on October 19, when Djukanovic emerged victorious by a modest margin.

There was, generally, sufficient openness for the candidates to make their positions known during the campaign and for voters to feel they could make a free choice on election day. To the extent that conditions were not ideal, the fact that the ruling party was effectively split between two of the candidates made it difficult for either of their followers to manipulate the electoral system completely to their advantage. In addition, there has been growth in independent activity in Montenegrin society in recent years, including in the critical area of the media.

On election day itself, polling committees and election officials behaved professionally. The main problem with the polling was the apparent inaccuracy of voter registration lists, which frequently excluded people claiming the right to vote in the first round. Some, especially Djukanovic supporters, alleged that they were specifically targeted for removal from the list. The inaccuracies were not necessarily intentional, and the lists were opened for correction between the first and second rounds.

For his victory, Djukanovic relied heavily on those in Montenegro who want to see more rapid democratic development and less of Belgrade's interference in the republic's affairs. If the election results indeed reflect the will of the people of Montenegro, that will seems divided ethnically, regionally and generationally. The uncertain political situation in neighboring Serbia and the prospects for increased federal powers in Yugoslavia also influence Montenegro's political development, and those in power in Belgrade clearly backed Bulatovic and dislike Montenegro's independent course. As Montenegro prepares for new parliamentary elections in 1998, Djukanovic will likely take advantage of the momentum he has but will also avoid risking a major confrontation with Belgrade.

## BACKGROUND

Montenegro is located on the south Adriatic coast in South-Central Europe, bordering Croatian and Bosnia-Herzegovina to the northwest, Serbia along with Kosovo to the northeast, and Albania to the southeast. The republic is very mountainous, especially in its interior, and its territory represents 13.6 percent of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to which it and the Republic of Serbia belong. Its 630,000 inhabitants, on the other hand, comprise just over six percent of the Federation's population. The de facto Montenegrin capital is Podgorica, formerly called Titograd, although nearby Centinje is the historic and constitutionally designated capital of the republic.

Though small, the population is ethnically diverse; in 1991, under 62 percent considered themselves to be Montenegrin. Like Serbs, Montenegrins are predominantly of Eastern Orthodox faith or cultural background and speak the same South Slavic language. Indeed, actual ethnic differences—based mostly on history, geography and the influences they have on culture—are blurred, and almost 10 percent of the population actually consider themselves to be ethnic Serbs, especially in the north. Almost 15 percent of the population are Bosniacs, also speakers of the language shared by Montenegrins and Serbs but of the Islamic faith or cultural background. Most Bosniacs also live in the north of Montenegro in a region which extends equally into neighboring Serbia and is known as the Sandzak, with the Serbian city of Novi Pazar as its principal center.<sup>1</sup> Ethnic Albanians comprise almost 7 percent of the population, located along the southern Montenegrin coastline around Ulcinj and inland around Plav. The remaining population consists of a small Croat community, Roma and persons of mixed nationality who consider themselves to be “Yugoslavs.” At the height of the conflict in neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1993, about 60,000 refugees—almost 10 percent of the population—were in Montenegro, and they included both Bosnian Serbs and Bosniacs.

During the course of Yugoslavia's violent disintegration, Montenegro generally sided with Serbia, in part because Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's regime, through an “anti-bureaucratic revolution” in 1989, had been able to help bring into power in Montenegro those more supportive of Serbian interests. Further, the Communists, who renamed their party the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), held onto power in multiparty elections in 1990, 1992 and 1996. A sizable portion of the population, however, genuinely embraced the extreme nationalist fervor of their Serb brethren. Others may later have had difficulties with the consequences of this fervor but remained neutral due to a perception that Montenegro could not successfully distance itself from Serbia. The ethnic minority groups were the most vocal opponents of Belgrade's policies, but they hardly were in position to influence events and, especially for the Bosniacs in the Sandzak region,

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<sup>1</sup> In the former Yugoslavia, “Muslim” was used as an ethnic term for those South Slavs, located primarily in Bosnia-Herzegovina but extending through the Sandzak region into Kosovo, of Islamic faith or tradition. With the dissolution of the old Yugoslav federation, this population has increasingly identified itself as “Bosniac,” even outside of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The term has a distinct ethnic meaning, differing from “Bosnian” which can refer to anyone from Bosnia-Herzegovina in a civic or territorial sense. As far as the common language, Serbs, Croats, Bosniacs and Montenegrins were said in the former Yugoslavia to have spoken the same Serbo-Croatian language, but Yugoslavia's demise has led its native speakers to commonly believe that they have three, possibly four, distinct yet mutually intelligible languages.

occasionally became the victims of those policies.<sup>2</sup> As a result, Montenegrin voters chose, in a strangely worded referendum in early 1992, to remain affiliated with Yugoslavia and joined Serbia in the formation of a new federation in April of that year, just as the Bosnian conflict broke out.<sup>3</sup> As part of the federation, Montenegro faced the same, strong economic and political sanctions Serbia faced during the conflict. This caused Montenegrin authorities to occasionally distance themselves from Belgrade's policies, but, as the conflict progressed to what seemed Bosnia's destruction, Podgorica saw few advantages in taking such a course. Ultimately, Montenegro proclaimed its own sovereignty with its constitution while it acquiesced or supported violations of the sovereignty of other former Yugoslav republics.

With the Dayton Agreement signed in December 1995, however, Montenegro became more inclined to assert its own interests. In particular, the Government of Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic defended Montenegro's sovereignty within the federation, and sought to be exempted from those few but important international sanctions—the so-called “outer wall”—which remained in place. In a visit to the United States in April 1996, Djukanovic expressed a surprising degree of criticism of the Serbian regime. Montenegrin television became sufficiently critical that it was no longer rebroadcast on Serbian television. At about the same time, Montenegro's two international airports—Podgorica and Tivat – were placed under federal control. As international pressure to make some gesture towards the Kosovar Albanians combined with a desire to bring Montenegrins back into line, rumors began to circulate in Belgrade about some restructuring of the Federation which would elevate Kosovo while diluting Montenegro's influence and sovereignty.<sup>4</sup> Montenegrin President Momir Bulatovic, the DPS leader to whom Djukanovic previously seemed to be loyal, remained more inclined to maintain the close ties to Serbia. As Slobodan Milosevic, who was ending what constitutionally was his last term as Serbian President, moved to become President of Yugoslavia in June and July 1997, opposition in Montenegro developed from within the Djukanovic camp of the DPS out of concern that Milosevic would gain greater influence in the republic's affairs. In the end, Milosevic was elected in a vote that was rushed through the Yugoslav Parlia-

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<sup>2</sup> During the latter years of the Bosnian conflict, several leaders of the Bosnia-based Party for Democratic Action (SDA) in the Sandzak – on both the Serbian and Montenegrin side—were incarcerated for their activities, during which time they were tortured and held under inhumane conditions. In municipalities like Rozaje or Ulcinj, where Bosniacs and Albanians won majorities in local elections, officials have claimed that, in practice, they had no real power to control events in areas under their jurisdiction.

<sup>3</sup> In contrast to referenda elsewhere, in Montenegro a “yes” vote signaled support for remaining part of the Federation, not proclaiming independence. Another Montenegrin oddity was its proclamation as “Ecological State” in 1991.

<sup>4</sup> See: SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO: THE PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE, prepared by the staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, August 1996.

ment, but Montenegrin deputies made clear they would block any attempt to change the federal constitution and permit a direct, popular election of the Yugoslav President.<sup>5</sup>

During 1997, tensions between Serbia and Montenegro became the basis for a open split within the ruling party, as President Bulatovic and Prime Minister Djukanovic, who previously teamed together to defeat even stronger supporters of Belgrade within their ranks. On July 11, Djukanovic supporters on the DPS Steering Committee moved to oust Bulatovic as head of the party, but the subsequent walkout by Bulatovic supporters effectively split the party in two. It was in this context that, on July 23, Montenegrin Parliament Speaker Svetozar Marovic, a Djukanovic supporter, called new presidential elections to be held in October 1997, almost three months before the expiration of Bulatovic's mandate. The date chosen, October 5, was the closest Sunday to the midpoint between the minimum and maximum time legally permitting from the time of calling the election and the day of polling.

## THE ELECTION CONTEST

The election itself was fairly straightforward. The contest was for a single office, the President of Montenegro, which has a five-year term. Eight candidates for that office were listed on the ballot. In reality, however, the contest was between Momir Bulatovic and Milo Djukanovic, both from the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists. A prohibition on fielding two candidates from the same political party almost led to Bulatovic's disqualification. Election officials supported having both names on grounds that Djukanovic's faction of the DPS was recognized solely within Montenegro while Bulatovic's faction was federally recognized, effectively making them two separate parties. The Montenegrin Constitutional Court overruled the decision on grounds that only parties recognized within the republic could nominate candidates. The federal Constitutional Court did not support a Bulatovic appeal against this ruling but instead struck down the relevant provision of the Montenegrin law which was prohibiting him from being placed on the ballot. Montenegrin authorities could have ignored the ruling on grounds that federal courts did not have jurisdiction, but, perhaps due to confidence in a Djukanovic victory, they chose to allow Bulatovic to run rather than risk the consequences of making him a political martyr.

Of the remaining six candidates, the Homeland Party, the Natural Law Party and the Serbian Democratic Party—none a major force in Montenegrin politics—each had three candidates, and three were independent candidates. The main opposition parties, namely the Liberal Alliance and the People's Party, agreed to support Djukanovic in return for his pledge to undertake democratic

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<sup>5</sup> While Milosevic was President of Serbia, the Yugoslav Presidency was a largely ceremonial post. A direct, popular election would enhance the authority of the office as Milosevic sought to transfer his republic-held power to the federal level. Montenegro has opposed such efforts because a stronger federal president could claim greater right to intervene in the republic's affairs. In addition, the voters of the republic would be outnumbered greatly by those in Serbia. As a result, Montenegro has sought to preserve the powers of the Yugoslav Parliament, in the upper chamber of which it holds a number of seats equal to Serbia, as a bulwark against Serbian efforts to whittle away at the republic's constitutionally declared sovereignty.

reforms prior to parliamentary elections scheduled for 1998. Previously, these two parties had differed greatly regarding Montenegro's relationship with Serbia, but the traditionally pro-Serb People's Party has joined forces with the pro-independence Liberal Alliance in pressuring the ruling party to establish democratic practices, including a completely free media, as a first priority. A faction of this party, however, remained loyal to Bulatovic. Ethnically based parties, particularly the Bosniac-oriented Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and the Democratic League of Albanians, did not endorse Djukanovic overwhelmingly, but the absence of a SDA candidate in particular signaled implicit support for Djukanovic as the lesser of two evils. All of these parties, along with the Democratic League of Montenegro and the Social Democratic Party, signed a Charter in late August 1997 in which they agreed not to put forward candidates from their own ranks, which would simply have taken votes away from Djukanovic to the benefit of Bulatovic.

The campaign period was highly active, with "Momo" and "Milo" posters plastered everywhere. Bulatovic supporters were reported to distribute candy to children chanting "MO-MO! MO-MO!" His campaign received considerable financial support from Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia and the allied Montenegrin branch of the Communist-oriented Movement for Yugoslavia (YUL). Several large rallies were held by both candidates, along with rock concerts which turned a time of potential tension into one of celebration. There were reports that police officers were involved in the campaign, some supporting Bulatovic and others Djukanovic. The media covered these activities with, at best, relative objectivity. There was bias in the state-run media favoring Djukanovic. However, Bulatovic had the advantage of Serbian media outlets next door, which were not under any legal obligation to report on the Montenegrin elections with objectivity. In addition, independent media outlets, both radio and print, were allowed to cover the campaign and election without significant hindrance. In recent years, these media outlets have grown in Montenegro, including a new daily, VIJESTI, which became available in September. All eight candidates were permitted to participate in two televised presidential debates just prior to election day.

During the campaign, Djukanovic portrayed himself as the young<sup>6</sup> champion of the republic in its struggle against Serbian domination and its effort to be integrated into Europe. A poster hanging over a restaurant in the center of Podgorica encapsulated the image. The national hero of Montenegro, the 19th century bishop-prince and poet Petar II Petrovic Njegos, was depicted as a referee in a boxing match between a tall Djukanovic, arm held up in victory, and a crying, diminutive Bulatovic sitting on the shoulders of Slobodan Milosevic. Bulatovic, on the other hand, attacked Djukanovic on charges of corruption and profiteering through smuggling activity during the period of economic sanctions. Bulatovic's simple slogan—"istina" (truth)—was evident throughout the republic, and public opinion polls leading up to election day indicated that popular concern over corruption was working to Bulatovic's favor. While Djukanovic seemed more popular, Bulatovic had taken away much of the commanding lead Djukanovic had earlier in the year.

Montenegro's electoral law stipulates that the leading candidate must receive more than 50 percent of the votes cast with at least a 50 percent voter turnout in order to win. If no single candidate receives the majority of the votes cast, a second round is held between the two leading candi-

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<sup>6</sup> Djukanovic is 35 years old. Bulatovic is 41 years old.

dates two weeks later which must also have a 50 percent turnout to be valid. If turnout is below 50 percent, the entire election process must be repeated. This system is similar to that used in direct presidential elections in Europe, including in Serbia.

## **FIRST-ROUND BALLOTING**

For the first round of the elections, 461,738 residents of Montenegro were registered to vote. One-quarter of these voters were registered in Podgorica municipality. Two other municipalities—Niksic and Bijelo Polje – accounted for another 20 percent. The remaining voters were scattered among the 18 other municipalities.

Eight hundred seventy-eight polling stations were established. Each had a polling committee consisting of three permanent members, who were theoretically neutral and chosen by election officials at the municipal level, and the possibility of one extended member representing each candidate. While the extended members were incorporated into the work of the committee, usually the key persons processing the voters were the permanent members. The true objectivity of these persons was in doubt at times, but there was little evidence that they did not perform their duties correctly. Had the polling committees integrated the extended members into their work more fully, however, the integrity of the committees could have been enhanced. With deputies to the permanent members also playing a role, moreover, the structure and lines of authority of the polling committees were not at all clear.

Supervising the work of the polling committees were 21 Municipal Electoral Commissions, and above them was the Republic Electoral Commission. The Republic Electoral Commission had seven permanent members, the municipal commissions five each, and all included extended members who were more fully incorporated into the work than at the polling committee level. Foreign observers were welcomed at all levels,<sup>7</sup> and Montenegro was significantly more amenable to allowing domestic civic organizations like the Montenegrin Helsinki Committee to observe the voting in polling stations than in Serbia and some neighboring countries, especially Croatian.

While most of the polling stations, which were opened from 07:00 a.m. to 08:00 p.m. on election day, had adequate room for voting, some were too small, and the number of voters registered at some stations was excessive, leading to overcrowding. The polling stations were given adequate supplies, including materials in order to set up voting booths, and the polling committees universally carried out their tasks professionally. There were numerous incidents of group voting, although usually this involved a voter who was illiterate or the traditional practice of family voting which has shown little sign of abating anywhere in the region despite the existence of more pluralistic elections. International observers, while welcoming efforts to facilitate voting by persons unable to visit a polling station to vote due to age or illness, expressed concern that it was possible for

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<sup>7</sup> The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) deployed a mission in Montenegro to observe the elections. In addition to three elections experts and a logistics officer, seven long-term observers and 54 short-term observers were deployed during the first round. The seven long-term observers and 25 short-term-observers were retained for the second round. Together, 23 countries were represented in the observer effort. Embassies in Belgrade, including the U.S. Embassy, also participated in election observation but not under OSCE auspices.

only one polling committee member to visit these persons so that they could vote. Similar concern was expressed regarding the transparency of the balloting which took place at military barracks and prisons, where voter turnout was very low.

By far the most egregious problem on election day was the voter registration lists, which did not always include the names of persons entering polling stations and wishing to vote. In many cases, names were omitted entirely or had previous addresses listed. Similar names were sometimes on the lists, most likely the result of spelling mistakes, but polling committees seemed instructed to refuse to process individuals unless the identification was an exact match. Their vigilance caused some observers to admire their sense of civic duty but also to be slightly suspicious of their motivation. While the overall number of persons not registered was relatively small, the race was very close, and the outcome could have been affected by a small, intentional effort to disenfranchise voters supporting a particular candidate. Though there was little concrete evidence that this was happening, such accusations spread quickly, especially in the north, where Bulatovic supporters in local government allegedly did not register properly young voters who were more inclined to support Djukanovic.

In response to a recommendation by OSCE observers, the voter registration lists were opened between the first round and what became a necessary second round, allowing those denied the right to vote in the first round a new chance to participate.

Given the simplicity of the elections—one race with only eight candidates—the counting was conducted without incident. The results from two polling stations in Bar, however, were invalidated because the numbers of ballots cast exceeded the number of voters registered at those stations. The first round was repeated in these two stations on October 9.

### **Second-Round Balloting**

The results of the first round were inconclusive. Voter turnout was 68 percent, but no candidate received more than 50 percent of the votes cast. To the surprise of many, Bulatovic, with 47.25 percent of the vote, won more votes than Djukanovic, with 46.72 percent, a difference of only 2,267 votes. While a second round became necessary, the first-round results seemed like a victory for Bulatovic, who had been considerably behind early in the campaign and suddenly had momentum on his side. Bulatovic won in two thirds of the 21 municipalities, including Podgorica and Niksic, indicating that his support was not only in the northern reaches of the republic.

With the race so close, the issue of inaccurate voter registration lists immediately drew suspicions that some voters were intentionally disenfranchised. There is no concrete proof that this was the case, but those most affected were younger voters, some who registered for the first time, and they were believed to be more supportive of Djukanovic. The decision to update the lists was therefore important in maintaining public confidence in the electoral process and the integrity of the final results. Somewhere between 9,000 and 13,000 people appealed to the Supreme Court to add or correct their name on the list, and most were accepted. The OSCE also suggested the removal of the names of deceased persons. The new list, finished in time for the second round, had 469,543 eligible voters on it, a net increase of 7,805 voters.

A more definite factor in the first-round results, however, was that those assumed to support

Djukanovic, especially among young voters and members of minority communities, might more accurately be described as being opposed to Bulatovic. Many may have decided not to vote at all. Indeed, many observers noted that younger voters seemed not to have made a strong appearance at the polls. In contrast, Bulatovic apparently found strong support among Montenegro's new voters coming from the refugee population—mostly Serbs who fled Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia between 1991 and 1995. Their presence was evident in the support for Bulatovic in some towns along the coast, which were assumed to be natural Djukanovic strongholds.

The two weeks between the rounds saw an increase in tensions. On October 16, just days before the run-off vote, Montenegrin police arrested 11 men allegedly members of the Yugoslav secret police who were deployed by Belgrade to disrupt the elections or influence the results to the advantage of Bulatovic. In a televised presidential debate for the second round, Djukanovic played upon Montenegrin sensitivities regarding Serbian domination by accusing Bulatovic of bringing these people into Montenegro. Bulatovic supporters, in turn, sought recourse to internal ethnic sensitivities, claiming that Djukanovic depended on Bosniac and Albanian votes to the detriment of the interests of the Montenegrin nationality. Despite the more confrontational atmosphere, second-round balloting went smoothly. In fact, it went better due to the addition of names of eligible voters who were not permitted to vote in the first round.

The second round gave the final victory to Milo Djukanovic, who received 50.80 percent of the vote compared to Bulatovic's 49.20 percent, a difference of 5,488 votes.. The turnaround can be explained by several possible factors. First, those who did not vote in the first round saw as unacceptable the possibility of a Bulatovic reelection; voter turnout for the second round was 73 percent. The Djukanovic camp, apparently over-confident going into the first round, made greater efforts to encourage people to go to the polls. Montenegrin students in Belgrade, for example, organized their joint return to Montenegro to vote on election day. Ethnic Bosniac and Albanian political leaders also more strongly expressed their support for Djukanovic, despite Bulatovic's effort to use such support against his opponent, in order to encourage their supporters to turn out on election day. Second, the new voter registration lists may have included a greater number of Djukanovic supporters, especially if there was some truth to the allegation that some pro-Bulatovic local officials fraudulently kept those voters off the list during the first round. Bijelo Polje, a Bulatovic stronghold where this easily could have happened, in fact had the greatest number of voters added to its registration list, accounting for more than one quarter of the net gain in voters for the second round. Third, the voters who initially supported the other six candidates in the first round may have been more inclined to support Djukanovic in the second. Finally, some fraud by Djukanovic supporters within the electoral apparatus cannot be completely ruled out. However, complaints of irregularities lodged by Bulatovic, including the alleged "theft" of 35,000 votes, were rejected on October 25 by Montenegro's Constitutional Court.

Tensions grew in the immediate aftermath of the elections. Pro-Bulatovic protests in Podgorica numbered in the thousands, and police had to intervene to prevent an inflammatory rally from taking place in the Albanian-inhabited town of Tuzi, not far outside Podgorica. According to Bosniac activists, Bulatovic supporters from Berane and Pljevlja harassed local Bosniacs by telling them to leave for Turkey and shooting automatic weapons into the air. In addition, the Serbian media immediately came out criticizing the election, and hinting that there could be some federal intervention to invalidate the results. In October, electric power cuts from the neighboring Bosnian

entity of Republika Srpska, allegedly due to Montenegrin failure to pay its bills, entered into the polemics of possible outside intervention and Montenegrin sovereignty. Intensive Montenegrin parliamentary debate over the elections, full of recriminations, eventually led to the rejection of a resolution calling for new elections and the passage of one endorsing the Djukanovic victory. One Yugoslav official was actually arrested for allegedly suggesting that either Djukanovic would not be in power for long or the northern Montenegrin municipalities might separate and unite with Serbia.

By the end of 1997, the situation had stabilized somewhat. President-elect Djukanovic indicated his desire to develop a cooperative relationship with his newly elected Serbian counterpart, Milan Milutinovic, and played down concerns that federal authorities might intervene by declaring a state of emergency prior to his January 15, 1998, assumption of office. Bulatovic acknowledged he was leaving office, albeit refusing to acknowledge that Djukanovic was succeeding him as President. He continued to call for new presidential elections as early as March and, after the Montenegrin Supreme Court ruled the Djukanovic faction the only legal successor of the DPS, formed a new party with its own daily, ISTINA (based on Bulatovic's campaign slogan, "truth"). Supporters of either Djukanovic or Bulatovic on municipal councils have attempted, sometimes successfully, to remove from executive power those loyal to the opposing side. Ultimately, while Bulatovic has again gone on the defensive, the true test of the Bulatovic and Djukanovic camps, as well as of the opposition parties which have temporarily supported Djukanovic, will be the parliamentary elections that will most likely occur in May 1998.

## CONCLUSION

The October 1997 presidential election in Montenegro was conducted in a manner that allowed the will of the people to be reflected in the result. Those shortcomings that did exist, both during the campaign and on the two days of balloting, were magnified mostly by the fact that the race between the two leading candidates was, in fact, so close. The supporters of both, coming from the ruling party, had the ability to engage in some manipulation, but it is likely that the net effect was to neutralize each side.

Internally, the elections were a small step forward in Montenegro's democratic development. At the same time, the democratic credentials of the newly elected president are not beyond doubt. Djukanovic has, in fact, come from the ranks of the former Communist Party which still holds the strings of power in the republic, and the Montenegrin tradition of family and clan influence in politics, compounded by corruption, may have only further entrenched those already in power.

The true test of Djukanovic's commitment to democratic development will come in new parliamentary elections probably scheduled for 1998, due to the split of the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists.<sup>8</sup> In the 1996 elections, the DPS won 45 out of 71 seats in a majority-based election of candidates in 14 electoral units,<sup>9</sup> but these seats no longer reflect a single party with a

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<sup>8</sup> Constitutionally, those elected to parliament in 1996 have a maximum term of four years.

<sup>9</sup> A new election law had combined the 21 municipalities into 14 new electoral units.

majority. The People's Unity—the coalition of the Liberal Alliance and the People's Party—won 19 seats and, along with a Democratic Alliance of Montenegro which won two seats and other newly forming parties, will likely seek to hold Djukanovic to his promise for an increased openness in the media and the transparency of the election administration in return for their support of his successful presidential candidacy. The Bosniac-based Party of Democratic Action and the Democratic League of Albanians, which hold three and two seats respectively in the current parliament, will likely do the same, and their supporters may have been motivated by the presidential race to play a bigger role in Montenegrin politics than they have to date.

The more immediate challenge to Montenegro, however, is in its relationship with Serbia. The Djukanovic victory comes at a time when there has been increasing unrest in Kosovo, a region with a more than 90 percent Albanian population which had its autonomy stripped and is severely repressed by Serbian authorities. Meanwhile, Serbia held presidential elections in September and October which proved inconclusive due to low voter turnout but in which the leader of the extreme nationalist Radical Party emerged as a challenge to Milosevic's Socialist Party. New elections in December, which also had to go into two rounds, gave the final victory to the new Socialist candidate, Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milan Milutinovic, but some speculate that the political uncertainty in Serbia is more than just Milosevic's attempt to have political power gravitate to the more stable federal apparatus which he now legally heads. If Milosevic feels he has lost control of events in either Montenegro or Kosovo or even in Serbia itself, he could again resort to conflict to enhance his power. Given the barrage of Serbian press attacks on Djukanovic – and Djukanovic's rather pointed counterattacks—Montenegro could easily become the scene of confrontation. This is certainly the case since Bulatovic, while defeated, still commands a considerable following.

In the end, however, Djukanovic can make a deal with Milosevic, such as cooperation in federal decision-making as long as Montenegro's sovereignty is respected. Milo Djukanovic has not advocated Montenegro's independence from the Yugoslav federation, unlike some opposition parties who advocate complete separation from Serbia as necessary for integration into Europe. Milosevic would have to acquiesce to some sharing of power, and he has previously turned former opponents into convenient allies in order to maintain control. Difficulties may arise if the people of Montenegro, in pushing Djukanovic to increase democratic development, push their new president to maintain a confrontational line with Milosevic as well. If so, and as long as Kosovar Albanians refuse to participate in Yugoslav politics and the Serbian opposition remains in disarray, Montenegro will remain the strongest political opposition Milosevic has. The result will likely be a bumpy future of cooperation and confrontation between the two republics of the new Yugoslav federation.

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