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REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF
DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Letter dated 23 February from the Permanent Representative
of Yugoslavia to the United Nations at Geneva addressed to
the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

I have the honour to enclose herein the text of the letter of the Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Mr. Budimir Loncar, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. J. Pérez de Cuéllar, in which he requested that it be distributed as a United Nations document.

I would be grateful if the said letter, by Mr. Loncar, could be distributed as a document of the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-sixth session.

(Signed): Zivojin Jazic
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

1. The telegram dated 2 February 1990 addressed to you by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, Mr. Reis Malile, was circulated as a document of the United Nations. I noted with regret that the telegram contains gross disinformation and groundless attacks on the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in an attempt to mislead the United Nations and you personally. I feel, therefore, all the more obliged to contribute to an objective understanding of this complex and sensitive problem.

2. As you are undoubtedly aware, a part of my country - the Socialist Autonomous Province (SAP) of Kosovo - where the Albanian nationality constitutes the majority of the population, has a wide autonomy, guaranteed by the Constitution and realized in practice. The Albanian nationality, which is a national minority in Yugoslavia, enjoys the same rights as all other Yugoslav nations and national minorities. The Albanian language is used in the SAP of Kosovo, on the basis of full equality, in education, including at the University, in public administration and judicial system, in the press, on the radio and television, as well as in other scientific and cultural institutions of the Province. Representatives of the Albanian nationality are equitably represented not only in the governmental organs of the SAP of Kosovo and the Socialist Republic of Serbia, of which the Province is a part under the Constitution, but also in all federal bodies, such as the Assembly of the SFR of Yugoslavia, the Presidency of the SFR of Yugoslavia and the federal Government. Persons of Albanian nationality have held so far the positions of Head of State and President of the Federal Assembly. They have headed diplomatic missions, held high positions in the army and the security services. Similar examples in the practice of other countries are not very frequent.

3. Throughout the post-war period, Yugoslavia has, until now, devoted special attention to the acceleration of economic, social and cultural development of the SAP of Kosovo, allocating huge resources for this purpose. Despite the progress achieved, Kosovo is still the least developed part of Yugoslavia, with low productivity and by far the highest birth rate in Europe, as well as other problems stemming primarily from the legacy of the past.

4. Unfortunately, Kosovo is also the scene of activities of extreme nationalistic and separatist forces from the ranks of Albanian nationality which are inspired and instigated from abroad, with the ultimate goal of secession of Kosovo from the SR of Serbia and the SFR of Yugoslavia. This, as you will no doubt agree, poses a threat to my country's territorial integrity and constitutional order. These forces resort to violence, use of arms and acts of destruction, with elements of terrorism, thus endangering the rights and freedoms of citizens and the normal functioning of democratic institutions of the system. In an attempt to create an ethnically pure Kosovo, they have for years exerted and intensified pressure on Serbs, Montenegrins and other nations, who are being forced to leave Kosovo in large numbers. In the atmosphere of pressure and fear, thousands and thousands of these citizens have left Kosovo, and this process, in spite of all the measures taken, has

not been stopped. For all these reasons, the situation in Kosovo is on the brink of an inter-ethnic armed conflict that would certainly cause many casualties.

5. Precisely such a situation has developed recently. In such circumstances, the responsibility of the Yugoslav State to use the necessary means to ensure peace and security for all citizens in that part of Yugoslavia, as would any other State based on the rule of law, is clear. Understandably, we deeply regret the victims. However, the continuation and escalation of unrest had to be prevented, for it would have caused far more serious consequences.

6. The peace and tranquility of all citizens of Kosovo, regardless of their nationality or religion, are a natural precondition for the normal functioning of democratic institutions and the enjoyment of human rights, as well as for unhampered economic and other activities. Moreover, law and order in Kosovo are also an essential precondition for the realization of our main objective at this moment - the implementation of the Yugoslav programme of profound economic and political reforms and full democratization of society, therefore in Kosovo as well.

7. I consider that a stable and prosperous Yugoslavia, with political freedoms and human rights whose further promotion is based on the results already achieved, is not only in Yugoslavia's interest, but in the broader interest as well. We are making great efforts to ensure an unimpeded course of these positive democratic processes in my country, as part of deep transformations in Europe and in the world. It is natural that we should expect understanding and support in that regard, before all others, from neighbouring countries.

8. The position of the most responsible representatives of the PSR of Albania, which objectively encourages those that create the destabilization in Kosovo, is, to say the least, all the more surprising, since the undermining of the stability in the region is certainly not in the national interest of that country either. We have repeatedly drawn the attention of the Government of the PSR of Albania to that fact.

9. I would not wish to compare, on this occasion, human rights and freedoms in Kosovo, that is the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Albanians in Yugoslavia, with the situation in Albania in that respect, or the status of the Albanian nationality in Yugoslavia with that of the Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serbian and other national minorities in Albania. Similarly, I do not wish to pose the question of whether it is moral to encourage unrest among Albanians in Yugoslavia and thus jeopardize their lives as well.

10. Finally, let me stress that the policy of developing good-neighbourly relations remains a lasting aim of the SFR of Yugoslavia. We will strive in that spirit to promote relations and co-operation with all neighbouring countries, including the PSR of Albania, on the basis of the same principles and with the same objectives. Along these lines, Yugoslavia will continue to

contribute to the advancement of regional co-operation, confidence and understanding in the Balkans, thus contributing to the further improvement of relations in Europe.

11. Of course, Yugoslavia's efforts alone are not sufficient. Confidence and co-operation require good will and efforts of both sides. This, too, has been pointed out to the Government of the PSR of Albania on many occasions. In this connection, we would like to believe that this letter would also help inspire the kind of wisdom and responsibility which are indispensable in relations between neighbours.

(Signed): Budimir Loncar
