



SERBIA 2000 Election Watch / September 11, 2000

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On September 24, 2000, voters throughout Serbia will cast their ballots for the Federal Yugoslav presidency, for both houses of the federal government, and for municipal governments throughout the Republic of Serbia. The federal vote will also be held in the smaller of the two remaining Yugoslav republics, Montenegro, although the Montenegrin government has announced that it will not participate in the elections because it does not accept the legitimacy of the current federal government.

There is much at stake in these elections. If victorious, the regime of Federal Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic is likely to continue to deny Serbia the opportunity for reintegration into Europe after 10 years of war, international isolation, and economic stagnation. A Milosevic victory is also likely to sustain interethnic conflict in Kosovo and intensify hostility between Serbia and Montenegro.

The Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS), an electoral coalition of opposition political parties committed to political and economic reform, hopes to wrest the federal presidency away from Milosevic and the ruling Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS). It also hopes to increase the number of municipalities it governs, thereby improving its chances of defeating the Milosevic regime in Serbian presidential and parliamentary elections anticipated next year.

Parties Contesting the Serbian Elections

Of the 21 political parties and coalitions contesting the elections in Serbia, there are four main contenders:

Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS)

United under presidential candidate Vojislav Kostunica of the Democratic Party of Serbia, the Democratic Opposition of Serbia gathers together many opposition forces, the largest of which are three coalitions (Alliance for Change, DAN and Alliance of Democratic Parties) as well as single parties, such as Socialdemocracy. This is the largest opposition political force in Serbia.

Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO)

Led by Vuk Draskovic, currently in self-imposed exile in Montenegro following alleged assassination attempts, the Serbian Renewal Movement governs many cities across Serbia together with parties belonging to the Democratic Opposition of Serbia. Although Draskovic initially announced a boycott of the elections, the Renewal Movement is participating at all levels. Talks with the Democratic Opposition of Serbia to run joint lists have failed, and the SPO faces the prospect of defeat without the charismatic Draskovic's participation. The mayor of Belgrade, Vojislav Mihailovic, is the Movement's presidential candidate.

Socialist Party of Serbia – Yugoslav United Left (SPS-JUL)

The husband-wife team of Slobodan Milosevic (SPS) and Mira Markovic (JUL) has been the main face of the Yugoslav and Serbian regime for the past 10 years. Their two political parties have their roots in the old communist structures, but focus on power rather than ideology. They have presided over Serbia's participation in the Bosnian, Croatian, and Kosovar wars, its isolation from the international community, and political authoritarianism and economic stagnation at home. Milosevic heads the joint SPS-JUL presidential candidacy.

Serbian Radical Party

Headed by Vojislav Seselj and in coalition government with Milosevic, the Radical Party is running a separate campaign with attacks on both the governing parties and the opposition. Known for extreme nationalism, the

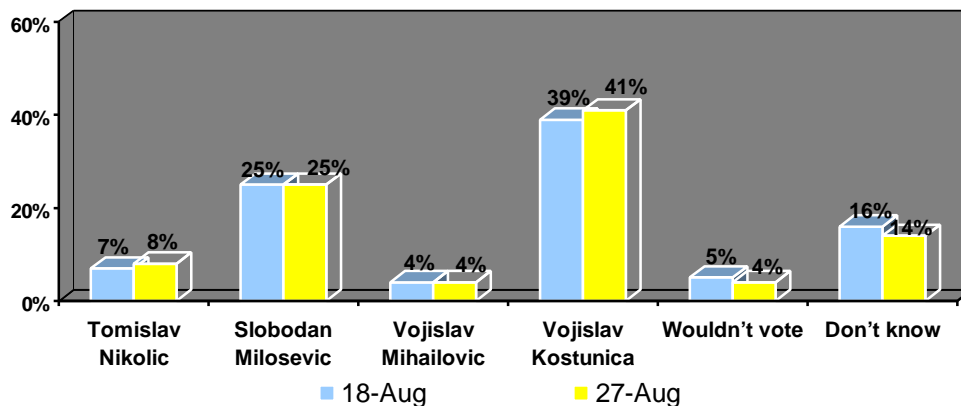
Radical Party represents a small portion of the electorate of Serbia. The party's presidential candidate is Tomislav Nikolic, a minister in the Serbian government.

Serbian Opposition Strengthens Its Lead Over Milosevic

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is conducting a series of public opinion polls in Serbia in association with Penn, Schoen, & Berland, a leading U.S.-based polling firm with substantial experience in the former Yugoslavia. Two such polls, conducted between August 18 and 27, show a sizable and growing lead by the Democratic Opposition of Serbia and its presidential candidate, Vojislav Kostunica, over the ruling Socialist Party of Serbia, led by Slobodan Milosevic, and two other main candidates. (Unlike in the local elections, a run-off for the presidency is required if no candidate receives an outright majority of the vote.)

Two questions asked in the poll, released on September 1, are illustrative:

The election for President of Yugoslavia is scheduled for September 24. If that election were held today, for whom would you vote? Would you vote for...



If elections for federal parliament were held tomorrow, for which party or coalition would you vote?

	18-Aug	27-Aug
Democratic Opposition of Serbia	39	39
SPS/JUL coalition	25	24
Serbian Radical Party (SRS)	9	9
Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO)	6	5
Other – SPECIFY	2	2
Wouldn't vote	3	3
Undecided/don't know	16	17

For more information on NDI Serbia polling or to view the full September 1 poll, please visit the Institute's website at www.ndi.org.

An Unfair Election

In prior elections voters in Serbia have been denied the opportunity to cast their ballots in an open political environment. State media has been used as a propaganda tool of the regime, independent media has been harassed, domestic organizations have been prevented from observing the polls and opposition parties have

been thwarted in getting their message out. Following the 1996 local elections, the Milosevic regime refused to recognize opposition victories in 14 cities, relenting only after three months of popular demonstrations filled the streets of Belgrade and other cities.

The run-up to the upcoming elections has been marked by unprecedented intimidation of, and violence against opposition leaders and civic activists. A number of students campaigning for fair elections under the banner of Otpor ("Resistance") have been beaten and arrested; Rasim Ljajic, a reform politician in Serbia's Sanzak region, has been detained; and former Serbian president Ivan Stambolic has been kidnapped. On September 8, police raided the Belgrade office of Serbia's Center for Free Elections and Democracy (Cesid), a leading nonpartisan organization mobilizing to monitor the elections, confiscating computers and other equipment. Yugoslav Minister of Information Goran Matic subsequently announced that Cesid "will not be an observer at the elections".

The government still maintains control of the election machinery and state-run media is being used for the electoral advantage of Milosevic and the SPS/JUL coalition.

Key Election Dates

September 3	Last day for submission of nomination of presidential candidates
September 4	Federal Election Commission to announce collective election list for federal deputies
September 8	Last day for submission of nominations for local candidates Deadline for the completion of the voting rolls
September 9	Last day for Federal Electoral Commission to finalize list of presidential candidates Last day for nominated presidential candidates to withdraw Last day to close the voter registration list (could be closed earlier)
September 10	Last day for Federal Electoral Commission to publish list of presidential candidates
September 11	Voters List to be made public.
September 19	Every voter on the voters list should receive notification about the date/ time of the election, address of their polling place and their registration number
September 21	Last day for corrections to the voter registration list, including deletions or additions.
September 22/23/24	Period of Electoral Silence. Cessation of electioneering in the media and at public gatherings; Forbidden to publish forecasts of election results until polls are closed.
September 24	Election Day. Polls open at 7:00am and close at 8:00pm
October 8	Last day for second round of Presidential election if required

NDI in Serbia and Montenegro

Since 1997, NDI has worked to support the long-term development of political parties and civic organizations in Serbia and Montenegro that offer an alternative to ultra-nationalism and authoritarianism. NDI's Serbia program is currently operated from Budapest, Hungary. NDI opened an office in the Montenegrin capital, Podgorica, in 1999.

The Institute also conducts programs in Albania, Bosnia & Hercegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania and Slovakia.

