

SERBIA in Perspective

An Orientation Guide



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Profile

Introduction

Modern Serbia is the continuance of an ancient kingdom that reached its height in the late 14th century. Thereafter, it suffered many centuries of domination by other empires to its south and north. Now it is the most populous of the Balkan nations that have emerged from the fragmentation of Yugoslavia that began in 1991.



© Denis Barthel
Belgrade Inner City

In 2006, Serbia's loose confederation with neighboring Montenegro (under the country name of "Serbia and Montenegro") collapsed when Montenegrin citizens voted for independence. Two years later, in February 2008, the breakaway Kosovo region of Serbia—which had been under United Nations administration since the end of the Kosovo War in 1999—declared its independence from Serbia. The United States and over 50 other nations have since announced their formal recognition of the Republic of Kosovo (as of 1 November 2008).¹ The Serbian government, however, still considers Kosovo as part of its national territory.

Facts and Figures²

Location:

Southeastern Europe, between Macedonia and Hungary

Area:

77,474 sq km (29,913 sq mi)

Border countries:

Bosnia and Herzegovina 302 km (188 mi), Bulgaria 318 km (198 mi), Croatia 241 km (150 mi), Hungary 151 km (94 mi), Kosovo 352 km (219 mi), Macedonia 62 km (39 mi), Montenegro 124 km (77 mi), Romania 476 km (296 mi)

Natural hazards:

destructive earthquakes

Climate

¹ Gabriel, Paul. 2 November 2008. Serbia expels Malaysia's envoy. The Star.

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/11/2/nation/2440197&sec=nation>

² Information in this section comes from the following source: Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. "Serbia." 23 October 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

In the north, continental climate (cold winters and hot, humid summers with well distributed rainfall); in other parts, continental and Mediterranean climate (relatively cold winters with heavy snowfall and hot, dry summers and autumns).

Environment—current issues:

air pollution around Belgrade and other industrial cities; water pollution from industrial wastes dumped into the Sava, which flows into the Danube.

Population:

10,159,046

Note: all population data includes Kosovo (July 2008 est.)

Median age:

37.5 years (2008 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

75.29 years (2008 est.)

Major infectious diseases:

Degree of risk: intermediate

Food or waterborne diseases: bacterial diarrhea and hepatitis A

Vectorborne disease: Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever

Note: Highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza has been identified in this country; it poses a negligible risk with extremely rare cases possible among U.S. citizens who have close contact with birds (2008).

Nationality:

Noun: Serb(s)

Adjective: Serbian

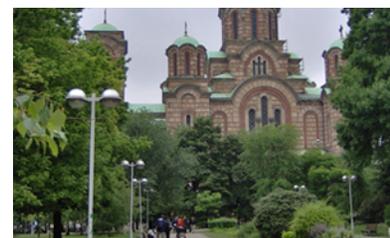
Ethnic groups:

Serb 82.9%, Hungarian 3.9%, Romany (Gypsy) 1.4%, Yugoslavs 1.1%, Bosniaks 1.8%, Montenegrin 0.9%, other 8% (2002 census)

Religions:

Serbian Orthodox 85%, Catholic 5.5%, Protestant 1.1%, Muslim 3.2%, unspecified 2.6%, other, unknown, or atheist 2.6% (2002 census)

Languages:



Serbian 88.3% (official), Hungarian 3.8%, Bosniak 1.8%, Romany (Gypsy) 1.1%, other 4.1%, unknown 0.9% (2002 census)

Note: Romanian, Hungarian, Slovak, Ukrainian, and Croatian all official in Vojvodina.

Literacy:

Definition: persons age 15 and over who can read and write

Total population: 96.4%

Male: 98.9%

Female: 94.1% (2003 census)

Note: includes Montenegro

Country Name:

Conventional long form: Republic of Serbia

Conventional short form: Serbia

Local long form: Republika Srbija

Local short form: Srbija

Former: People's Republic of Serbia, Socialist Republic of Serbia

Government Type:

republic

Capital:

Name: Belgrade (Beograd)

Administrative divisions:

161 municipalities (općstine, singular - općstina)

Serbia Proper: Beograd: Barajevo, Cukavica, Grocka, Lazarevac, Mladovac, Novi Beograd, Obrenovac, Palilula, Rakovica, Savski Venac, Sopot, Stari Grad, Surcin, Vozdovac, Vracar, Zemun, Zvezdara; Borski Okrug: Bor, Kladovo, Majdanpek, Negotin; Branicevski Okrug: Golubac, Kucevo, Malo Crnice, Petrovac, Pozarevac, Veliko Gradiste, Zabari, Zagubica; Jablanicki Okrug: Bojnik, Crna Trava, Lebane, Leskovac, Medvedja, Vlasotince; Kolubarski Okrug: Lajkovac, Ljig, Mionica, Osecina, Ub, Valjevo; Macvanski Okrug: Bogatic, Koceljeva, Krupanj, Ljubovija, Loznica, Mali Zvornik, Sabac, Vladimirci; Moravicki Okrug: Cacak, Gornjki Milanovac, Ivanjica, Lucani; Nisavski Okrug: Aleksinac, Doljevac, Gadzin Han, Merosina, Nis, Razanj, Svrlijig; Pcinjski Okrug: Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Presevo, Surdulica, Trgoviste, Vladicin Han, Vranje; Pirotski Okrug: Babusnica, Bela Palanka, Dimitrovgrad, Pirot; Podunavski Okrug: Smederevo, Smederevska Palanka, Velika Plana; Pomoravski Okrug: Cuprija, Despotovac, Jagodina, Paracin, Rckovac, Svilajnac; Rasinski Okrug: Aleksandrovac, Brus, Cicevac, Krusevac, Trstenik, Varvarin; Raski Okrug: Kraljevo, Novi Pazar, Raska, Tutin, Vrnjacka Banja; Sumadijski Okrug:



© XcepticZP / Wikipedia.org
Belgrade, the capital city

Arandjelovac, Batocina, Knic, Kragujevac, Lapovo, Raca, Topola; Toplicki Okrug: Blace, Kursumlija, Prokuplje, Zitoradja; Zajecarski Okrug: Boljevac, Knjazevac, Sokobanja, Zalecar; Zlatiborski Okrug: Arilje, Bajina Basta, Cajetina, Kosjeric, Nova Varos, Pozega, Priboj, Prijepolje, Sjenica, Uzice

Vojvodina Autonomous Province: Juzno-Backi Okrug: Backi Petrovac, Beocin, Novi Sad, Sremski Karlovci, Temerin, Titel, Zabalj; Juzno Banatski Okrug: Alibunar, Bela Crkva, Kovacica, Kovin, Opovo, Pancevo, Plandiste, Vrsac; Severno-Backi Okrug: Backa Topola, Mali Idjos, Subotica; Severno-Banatski Okrug: Ada, Coka, Kanjiza, Kikinda, Novi Knezevac, Senta; Srednje-Banatski Okrug: Nova Crnja, Novi Becej, Secanj, Zitiste, Zrenjanin; Sremski Okrug: Indjija, Irig, Pecinci, Ruma, Sid, Sremska Mitrovica, Stara Pazova; Zapadno-Backi Okrug: Apatin, Kula, Odzaci, Sombor

Independence:

5 June 2006 (from Serbia and Montenegro)

National holiday:

National Day, 15 February

Constitution:

Adopted 8 November 2006; effective 10 November 2006

Legal system:

based on civil law system; has not accepted compulsory International Court of Justice (ICJ) jurisdiction

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal



© Alxadj / Wikipedia.org
National Assembly of Serbia

Government:

Chief of state: President Boris Tadic (since 11 July 2004)

Head of government: Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic (since 7 July 2008)

Cabinet: Federal ministries act as cabinet

Elections: president elected by direct vote for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); election last held 3 February 2008 (next to be held in 2013); prime minister elected by the Assembly

Election results: Boris Tadic elected president in the second round of voting; Boris Tadic received 51.2% of the vote and Tomislav Nikolic 48.8%

Legislative branch:

Unicameral National Assembly (250 seats; deputies elected by direct vote to serve four-year terms)

Elections: Last held on 11 May 2008 (next to be held in May 2012)

Election results: Percent of vote by party—for a European Serbia 38.7%, Serbian Radical Party 29.1%, Democratic Party of Serbia–New Serbia 11.3%, coalition led by the Socialist Party of Serbia 7.9%, Liberal Democratic Party 5.2%, other 7.8%; seats by party—for a European Serbia 103, Serbian Radical Party 77, Democratic Party of Serbia–New Serbia 30, coalition led by the Socialist Party of Serbia 20, Liberal Democratic Party 13, other 7

Judicial branch:

Constitutional Court, Supreme Court (to become court of cassation under new constitution), appellate courts, district courts, municipal courts

International organization participation:

Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone, Council of Europe, Central European Initiative, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Food and Agriculture Organization, Group of 9, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), International Civil Aviation Organization, International Chamber of Commerce, International Criminal Court, International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, International Development Association, International Finance Corporation, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Fund for Agricultural Development (suspended), International Finance Corporation, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Hydrographic Organization, International Labor Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Maritime Organization, International Mobile Satellite Organization, International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), International Olympic Committee, International Organization for Migration, Inter-parliamentary Union, International Organization for Standardization, International Telecommunications Satellite Organization, International Telecommunication Union, International Trade Union Confederation, Multilateral Investment Geographic Agency, United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nonaligned Movement (observer), Organization of American States (observer), International Organization of the French-speaking World (observer), Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Permanent Court of Arbitration, Partnership for Peace, Southeast European Cooperative Initiative, United Nations, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Mission in Liberia, United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire, United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, World Tourism Organization, Universal Postal Union, World Confederation of Labor, World Customs Organization, World Health



Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, World Meteorological Organization, World Trade Organization (observer)

GDP—real growth rate:

7.3% (2007 est.)

GDP—composition by sector:

Agriculture: 12.3%

Industry: 24.2%

Services: 63.5% (2007 est.)

Labor force—by occupation:

Agriculture: 30%

Industry: 46%

Services: 24% (2002)

Telephones—main lines in use:

2.993 million (2007)

Telephones—mobile cellular:

8.453 million (2007)

Radio broadcast stations:

153 (station types NA) (2001)

Internet users:

1.5 million (2007)

Airports:

39 (2007)

Airports—with paved runways:

Total: 16

Over 3,047 m (1.89 mi): 2

2,438 to 3,047 m (1.51–1.89 mi): 4

1,524 to 2,437 m (0.95–1.51 mi): 4

914 to 1,523 m (0.5–70.95 mi): 2

Under 914 m (0.57 mi): 4 (2007)



© XcepticZP / Wikipedia.org
Jat Airways, the national airline of Serbia

Military branches:

Serbian Armed Forces (Vojska Srbije, VS): Land Forces Command (includes Riverine Component, consisting of a river flotilla on the Danube), Joint Operations Command, Air and Air Defense Forces Command (2008).

Military service age and obligation:

19–35 years of age for compulsory military service; under a state of war or impending war, conscription can begin at age 16; conscription is to be abolished in 2010; 9-month service obligation, with a reserve obligation to age 60 for men and 50 for women (2007).

International disputes:

Kosovo

Serbia with several other states protest the U.S. and other states' recognition of Kosovo's declaring itself as a sovereign and independent state in February 2008. Ethnic Serbian municipalities along Kosovo's northern border challenge final status of Kosovo–Serbia boundary. Several thousand NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) peacekeepers under United Nations Mission in Kosovo authority continue to keep the peace within Kosovo between the ethnic Albanian majority and the Serb minority in Kosovo.



© St Stev / Flickr.com
Serbian passport office

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Serbia delimited about half of the boundary with Bosnia and Herzegovina, but sections along the Drina River remain in dispute.

Illicit drugs:

Transshipment point for Southwest Asian heroin moving to Western Europe on the Balkan route; economy vulnerable to money laundering.

Geography

Introduction

Serbia is a small country, with a total area between the size of South Carolina and West Virginia. Nonetheless, the country is surprisingly geographically diverse. The northern part of the country is mostly flat plains, whereas the southern half consists of numerous mountains and hills. Lying between these two regions are the Danube and Sava Rivers, which for much of Serbian history have combined to serve as both a geographical and a political boundary divide.



© Denis Barthel
Golubac Fortress

Geographic Regions and Topographic Features

Serbia is a part of the Balkans region, a geographical area that encompasses a broad, mountainous peninsula located between the Black and Aegean Seas on the east and the Adriatic and Ionian Seas on the west. The northern boundary of the Balkans is frequently defined to be the Danube and Sava rivers, which join together in Serbia at the capital city of Belgrade.³ Such a definition technically places northern Serbia, the region known as Vojvodina, outside the Balkans region, but for political and historical reasons, all of Serbia is generally considered to be part of the Balkans.⁴

The northern area of Serbia is dominated by a large plain lying at an elevation of 60–100 m (200–350 ft). This fertile region is the southern part of the Pannonian Plain, the remnant of an area that was part of an inland sea in the geological past. In the far western section of this region, between the Danube and Sava Rivers, is the Fruška Gora, a small hill chain that runs east–west. The southern end of the plain is roughly defined by the Sava River on the western side and then the Danube River from Belgrade to the eastern border.



© Nicolás Boullosa
Pannonian Plain

South of the Sava River and the stretch of the Danube River east of Belgrade, much of Serbia consists of mountain ranges and hills, dissected by river valleys. Along Serbia's western border lie the Zlatibor, Tara, and Kopaonik Mountains, all eastern sections of the Dinaric Alps (Dinardi) that parallel the Adriatic coast through much of the Balkans.

³ MSN Encarta. 2008. Balkan peninsula. http://ca.encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761567023/Balkan_Peninsula.html (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁴ Answers.com. Columbia Encyclopedia. n.d. Balkan peninsula. <http://www.answers.com/topic/balkans> (accessed November 20, 2008).

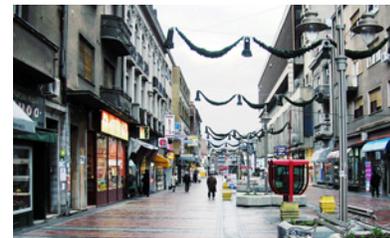
Serbia's highest point, Pančić's Peak (2,017 m, 6,717 ft), is in the Kopaonik Mountains, just north of the Kosovo border.^{5,6}

On the eastern side of Serbia is a curving arc of mountains: the Southern Carpathian Mountains of Romania connecting with the northern Balkan Mountains of Bulgaria. Between these two ranges, the Danube River flows through the Iron Gate, a series of four narrow gorges.⁷ A small section of Serbian territory on the right bank after the river passes through the Iron Gate dam is part of the Wallachian Plain, most of which lies in neighboring Romania.⁸

In south-central Serbia, the terrain is more hilly than mountainous. The Šumadija hills, which range from 600–1,110 m (2,000–3,500 ft), are the prominent physical features of this region, which was the heart of the medieval Serbian empire.⁹

Climate

Serbia is a landlocked nation with mountains on its western and southern flanks that inhibit the inflow of moderating Mediterranean air masses. Instead, most air masses and weather systems come from the north or east throughout the year. In most areas, the climate is characterized as continental, with warm, humid summers followed by cold, relatively dry winters. Mid-summer temperatures in the northern part of the country average about 22°C (71°F), while January temperatures average about -1°C (30°F). In the more mountainous southern part of Serbia, average mid-summer temperatures are cooler (roughly 18°C, or 64°F).¹⁰



© p.medved / flickr.com
Wet walkway in downtown Nis

Precipitation in Serbia peaks in the early spring and late autumn, and ranges from 560 mm (22 in) to 1,900 mm (75 in). Rainfall totals are lowest in the northern plains (the region known as Vojvodina). Snow cover during winter varies from 40 days in Vojvodina to 120 days in the mountainous regions to the south.¹¹

⁵ SerbiaInfo.com. Serbian Office of Communication. 2002. "Kopaonik."
<http://www.arhiva.srbia.sr.gov.yu/enc/mountains/kopaonik.html> (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 2008. Serbia: Land: Relief.
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia> (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁷ MSN Encarta. 2008. Serbia. II. Land of Serbia. A. Rivers."
http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761560887/serbia.html (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁸ Trivisa.com. 2008. Serbia. <http://www.trivisa.com/serbia/serbia-visa.htm>

⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 2008. Serbia: Land: Relief.
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia> (accessed November 20, 2008).

¹⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 2008. Serbia: Land: Climate."
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia> (accessed November 20, 2008).

¹¹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 2008. Serbia: Land: Climate.
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia> (accessed November 20, 2008).

Rivers and Lakes

Most of Serbia's rivers drain to the Danube ("Dunav" in Serbian) River, which flows from northwest to southeast across the plains of Vojvodina on the way to its mouth in the Black Sea. On both sides of Serbia, the Danube forms a part of the country's boundaries with its neighbors. To the west, the Danube separates Serbia from Croatia for most of the northern two-thirds of their shared border. On the east side of Serbia, the Danube forms the Serbian–Romanian border as it traverses the Iron Gate on its way to the Wallachian Plain. The Iron Gate gorge system on this stretch of the Danube was once considered un-navigable because of the exceptionally fast rapids and rock reefs. During the 19th century, the problem was partially solved by completion of a lateral channel and parallel railway that allowed boats to be towed upstream past the rapids.¹² The construction of the Iron Gate dam in 1972 finally tamed this stretch of the Danube.¹³



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
Sava river in Belgrade

The most significant tributary flowing into the Danube from the north (left bank) side is the Tisza River, which flows through Hungary before entering Vojvodina. The Tisza is connected with the Danube by both its natural course and through an extensive series of canals that help irrigate the fields of Vojvodina.

Of the Danube's left bank tributaries, the longest and most important is the Sava River, which originates in the Julian Alps of Slovenia and flows eastward before joining the Danube River at Belgrade. Both the Sava and its right-bank tributary, the Drina River, serve as boundaries between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina along sections of their paths. Downstream from Belgrade, before the Iron Gate gorges, the Danube is joined by the Morava River, which flows northward through the Šumadija hills to the south of the Danube. The Morava is formed by the confluence of the Zapadna (West) Morava and Juzna (South) Morava Rivers, which together represent most of the drainage basin of southern Serbia.

Natural lakes in Serbia are generally quite small and are primarily located in Vojvodina. Most are either glacial remnants or are oxbow lakes formed by river meandering.

¹² Religion, Science, and the Environment Symposia. Panin, Nicolae. 1999. Danube river 1999: general description." <http://www.rsesymposia.org/more.php?catid=102&pcatid=48> (accessed November 20, 2008).

¹³ National Aeronautics and Space Administration. August 9, 2006. Earth observatory: the Danube's Iron Gates <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=6819> (accessed November 20, 2008).

Population and Cities

City	Population Census 2002 (Figure in parentheses includes total municipal area) ^{14,15}	Population Estimate June 2005 (Figure in parentheses includes total municipal area) ^{16,17}
Belgrade (Beograd)	1,120,092 (1,576,124)	1,124,729 (1,596,519)
Novi Sad	191,405 (299,294)	194,374 (310,185)
Niš	173,724 (250,518)	175,477 (253,214)
Kragujevac	146,373 (175,802)	157,166 (175,198)
Subotica	99,981 (148,401)	99,898 (146,765)

Belgrade

Situated at the confluence of the Sava and Danube Rivers, Belgrade's strategic site has ensured its long history of frequent invasions from one direction or another. Throughout the last two thousand years, over 100 battles have been fought over one hill where the Sava and Danube come together. This hill has been the site of forts and citadels since Celtic times.¹⁸ During the 17th through 19th centuries, the city lay at the boundary between the



¹⁴ CityPopulation.de. Brinkhoff, Thomas. October 20 2007. Serbia.

<http://www.citypopulation.de/Serbia.html> (accessed November 20, 2008).

¹⁵ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. 2008. Municipal indicators of Republic of Serbia.

<http://webrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu/axd/en/pok.php?god=2007> (accessed November 20, 2008).

¹⁶ Mongabay.com. 2007. "2005 Population Estimates for Cities in Serbia."

http://www.mongabay.com/igapo/2005_world_city_populations/Serbia.html (accessed November 20, 2008).

¹⁷ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. 2006. Municipalities of Serbia, 2006. 1.1 General Data, 2005. 2006. <http://webrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu/axd/en/opstinski/2006/01.pdf> (accessed November 20, 2008).

¹⁸ Footscray, Victoria. 2007. Belgrad. *Eastern Europe*, 9th Ed. Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

Austrian and Ottoman empires and changed hands frequently, often being extensively razed in the process.¹⁹ The Kalemegdan Fortress, dating back to the 18th century, is the most recent incarnation of Belgrade's long history of fortified settlements. The Fortress is situated atop the hill at the junction of the two rivers and remains the city's most famous landmark.

During more modern times, Belgrade has served as a capital city for several pan-Slavic confederations, including the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and later, Yugoslavia. It has also developed into an industrial center that produces electrical equipment, machinery, processed foods, chemicals, and textiles, among other items.^{20,21}

Administratively, Belgrade occupies a large region—lying mostly south of the Sava and Danube Rivers—that is divided into 17 municipalities. Of these, 10 municipalities represent the urban core of the city, while the remaining municipalities constitute suburbs and more rural regions.²² Stari Grad, which simply means “Old City,” is one of the smallest of these municipalities. It is the cultural and historical heart of the city and includes the parkland area around Kalemegdan.

In the spring of 1999, numerous strategic sites within Belgrade were attacked by NATO missiles and bombers during the Kosovo War, roughly 58 years after the German Nazi Luftwaffe had leveled much of the city in two days of saturation bombing.²³ A significant diplomatic controversy was generated during the 1999 bombing campaign when the Chinese embassy in the city was destroyed during one of the bombings.

Novi Sad

The capital and primary commercial center of the province of Vojvodina is Novi Sad. The city was founded in 1670, which makes it fairly new by European and Serbian standards. Novi Sad was the cultural center for Serbs during much of the 18th and 19th centuries, following large migrations of Serbs from Ottoman-controlled regions to the south beginning in the 1690s.²⁴



¹⁹ BelgradeNet.com. n.d. History of Belgrade.

http://www.belgradenet.com/belgrade_history_middle_ages.html (accessed November 20, 2008).

²⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 2008. Belgrade.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/59413/Belgrade> (accessed November 20, 2008).

²¹ MSN Encarta. 2008. Belgrade. http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761568039/belgrade.html (accessed November 20, 2008).

²² City of Belgrade. 2008. “Urban Municipalities.” 2008.

<http://www.beograd.org.yu/cms/view.php?id=201906> (accessed November 20, 2008).

²³ Serbianna.com. Savich, Carl. 2008. “Belgrade 41: Hitler’s attack.”

<http://www.serbianna.com/columns/savich/081.shtml> (accessed November 20, 2008).

²⁴ Geisler, Michael E., ed. 2005. “Victor Roudometof: toward an archaeology of national commemorations in the Balkans.” In *National Symbols, Fractured Identities*. Lebanon, N.H: University Press of New England.

Like much larger Belgrade to the south, Novi Sad is a port city on the Danube River that is also an industrial center with factories that produce textiles, processed foods, electrical equipment, and other goods.²⁵ Also like Belgrade, Novi Sad was a site of NATO bombing during the 1999 Kosovo War, and all three of its bridges across the Danube River were destroyed. The Novi Sad refinery, one of two petroleum refineries within Serbia, was also heavily damaged during the NATO bombing.²⁶

Niš

Niš is the principal city of southern Serbia and is one of the oldest cities in the Balkans. It is the birthplace of Constantine the Great, who later founded the city of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) as the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire.²⁷ Today, the city is a regional industrial center and is also home to one of Serbia's largest universities outside Belgrade. The city's manufacturing economy centers around tobacco products, electronics products, rubber products, railway and industrial equipment, and processed foods.^{28,29,30,31,32}

Niš is located near the confluence of two tributaries of the Morava River that have carved out transportation corridors through the mountains of the southern Balkan Peninsula. This location makes it a nexus for road and rail traffic bound for Bulgaria to the east or Macedonia and Greece to the south. Niš is also the only Serbian city besides Belgrade to have regularly scheduled international flights.³³

Kragujevac

Although Kragujevac today is only a regional political and economic center, it was the capital of the Turkish principality of Serbia during the period following the second uprising against the Ottoman Empire (1818–1841). Serbia's first newspaper was published in Kragujevac



© Slava Kgonline
Kragujevac, Serbia

²⁵ Schuman, Michael A. 2004. "Cities: Novi Sad." In *Nations in Transition: Serbia and Montenegro*. New York: Facts on File, Inc.

²⁶ United Nations Environment Programme. 1999. "Chronology of the Conflict." In *The Kosovo Conflict: Consequences for the Environment and Human Settlements*. <http://www.grid.unep.ch/btf/final/finalreport.pdf> (accessed November 20, 2008).

²⁷ MSN Encarta. 2008. Nis. http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761552299/Ni%C5%A1.html

²⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Niš." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/415944/Nis> (accessed November 20, 2008).

²⁹ EIExpo.com. n.d. Elektronska industrija. <http://www.eiexpo.co.yu/> (accessed November 20, 2008).

³⁰ MIN Holding Co. 2005. Who we are. http://www.minholding.co.yu/en/o_nama.html (accessed November 20, 2008).

³¹ Privatization Agency, Republic of Serbia. n.d. Privatisation opportunity in Yugoslavia. http://www.pa-serbia.co.yu/pregled_preduzeca/pdf/e-teaser_261.pdf (accessed November 20, 2008).

³² Privatization Agency, Republic of Serbia. n.d. Duvanska industrija Niš." <http://www.pa-serbia.co.yu/> (accessed November 20, 2008).

³³ "Constantin the Great International Airport. n.d. Flights. <http://www.airportnis.co.yu/english/flights.htm> (accessed November 20, 2008).

during this time. By 1851, the city was the industrial hub of Serbia. However, the city eventually ebbed in importance compared to Belgrade. During World War II, in retribution for Serbian resistance attacks, Nazi forces indiscriminately executed between 2,300 and 5,000 people (especially men and boys) in Kragujevac.³⁴

In recent times, Kragujevac's most famous global economic contribution was the Yugo automobile, whose U.S.-imported editions from the 1980s are routinely mentioned in lists of the world's worst cars.³⁵ Nonetheless, Zastava was one of Yugoslavia's most successful industrial concerns until the wars and trade embargoes of the 1990s crippled its production. The Yugo, which was based on the Fiat 128 design and sold in the United States from 1985 to 1991, is one of several car models that have been produced at Kragujevac's Zastava plant, the only automobile factory in Serbia. The plant, which lies adjacent to a Zastava armaments factory, was damaged by NATO bombs in 1999, which briefly put it out of production.³⁶ Recently, Italian auto manufacturer Fiat purchased a majority position in the Zastava automotive plant in return for an investment of EUR 700 million, the largest foreign investment in Serbia's history.³⁷ Prior to that sale, Zastava's armaments division agreed in late 2005 to produce hunting rifles for the Remington Arms Company, the U.S.'s oldest gun maker.³⁸

Subotica

Subotica lies near the Hungarian border and is a major city along the rail and road corridor between Belgrade and the Hungarian capital of Budapest. It has the largest ethnic Hungarian population of any Serbian city, as well as the highest percentage of Roman Catholics.^{39, 40}

Subotica was part of the Habsburg Monarchy of Austria (later Austria–Hungary) during the entire 18th and 19th centuries, unlike southern parts of Serbia that remained part of the Ottoman Empire until relatively late. During the last part of the 18th century, the city was declared a Free Royal Town by the Austrian empress, spurring a period of



© Nir Nussbaum
Subotica's main square

³⁴ Serbianna.com. Savich, Carl. 2008. The Kragujevac massacre. <http://www.serbianna.com/columns/savich/046.shtml> (accessed November 20, 2008).

³⁵ Time.com. 2007. The 50 worst cars of all time: 1985 Yugo GV." http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1658545_1658533_1658529,00.html (accessed November 20, 2008).

³⁶ BBC News. August 1, 2001. Yugo car maker up for sale." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/1469035.stm> (accessed November 20, 2008).

³⁷ WienInternational. October 8, 2008. Fiat to make comeback in Serbia." <http://www.wieninternational.at/en/node/10723> (accessed November 20, 2008).

³⁸ MilitaryPhotos.net. Bloomberg. September 8, 2006. Serbia's weapon producer attracts US companies." <http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?t=90963> (accessed November 20, 2008).

³⁹ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. December 2002. Final results of census 2002. <http://webrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu/axd/Zip/eSn31.pdf> (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁴⁰ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. May 2003. Religion, mother tongue and ethnic or national affiliation by age and sex: data by municipalities. <http://webrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu/axd/en/Zip/CensusBook3.pdf> (accessed November 20, 2008).

growth for the city that continued until World War I. After the war, the city became a border town in the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later known as Yugoslavia) and declined in importance.

Subotica today is a market city for the fertile fields of the Bačka region, the area of Vojvodina lying west of the Tisza River and north of the Danube River. Food processing, electrometallurgy, pharmaceuticals, machinery, metal furniture, and railway equipment are some of the local industries.⁴¹

Environmental Concerns

Serbia has a host of environmental concerns, reflecting the effects of years of poorly regulated industries. Until recently, Serbia's sluggish economy had resulted in one positive aspect: a reduction in its pollution emissions.⁴² However, as the nation's industrial economy has started to revive, there has been a corresponding increase in industrial waste.⁴³



© Ivica Amater
Trash at South Morava river, Serbia

Some of Serbia's biggest contributors to air pollution are its large coal-burning power plants. By one estimate, approximately 80% of Serbia's airborne harmful pollutants come from these power plants.⁴⁴ In Obrenovac, located upstream of Belgrade on the Sava River, very fine boiler ash blown from the nearby Nikola Tesla power plant can darken the sky. Programs sponsored by the European Agency for Reconstruction have been funded to help alleviate the problems at the Nikola Tesla plant, as well as to upgrade the coal-dust filtering system at the Kostolac power plant located near the Danube, downstream from Belgrade.⁴⁵

Groundwater is the main source for Serbian drinking water, as the nation's rivers are significantly polluted by both inorganic pollutants from industries and organic pollutants from municipal wastes.⁴⁶ None of Serbia's three largest cities (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš) have wastewater treatment plants—although the next two largest cities (Kragujevac,

⁴¹ MSN Encarta. 2008. Subotica. http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761572945/Subotica.html (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁴² International Commission for the Protection of the Danube. September 2006. Danube facts and figures: Serbia. <http://www.icpdr.org/icpdr-files/12877> (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁴³ European Agency for Reconstruction. June 10, 2004. Clean up in Serbia: the EU's support to the environment." http://www.ea.eu.int/publications/main/pub-press_release_ser_20040610.htm (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁴⁴ European Environment and Health Committee. October 10, 2006. "Serbia: progress toward regional priority goal III in air quality. http://www.euro.who.int/eehc/implementation/20050526_3 (accessed November 20, 2008).

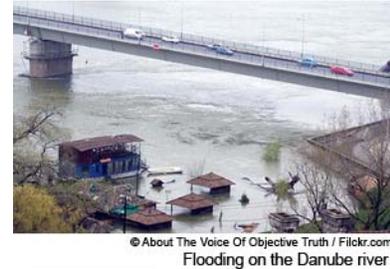
⁴⁵ European Agency for Reconstruction. October 2007. Pollution and solution. <http://www.ea.eu.int/publications/main/documents/POLLUTIONANDSOLUTIONOct07.pdf> (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁴⁶ International Commission for the Protection of the Danube. September 2006. Danube facts and figures: Serbia. <http://www.icpdr.org/icpdr-files/12877> (accessed November 20, 2008).

Subotica) do have such facilities.⁴⁷ A third source of water pollutants are organic wastes from Serbian food processing industries. Serbia also has extensive amounts of acreage devoted to agriculture, but the average amount of fertilizers and pesticides applied per hectare is significantly lower than in most European Union countries.⁴⁸

Natural Hazards

Much of Serbia is a seismically active region that experiences frequent earth tremors and occasional earthquakes.⁴⁹ Fortunately, severe earthquakes are rare.⁵⁰ Those Serbian areas most prone to heavy shaking are in the mountainous regions of the southeast and southwest, adjacent to Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, and western Bulgaria. The most damaging earthquake to affect Serbia in recent decades was a magnitude 5.8 quake in the Kopaonik Mountains in May 1980 that destroyed many buildings in the surrounding region.^{51,52}



Flooding is a recurring problem in Serbia, especially along the Danube River and its tributaries. In April 2006, 10 regions in Serbia declared a state of emergency as the Danube waters rose. The city of Smederevo, about 40 km (24 mi) downstream from Belgrade, saw hundreds of houses flooded by the Danube during this period.⁵³ Landslides also occur in areas adjacent to deforested mountains and hills during heavy rainstorms, with landslide damage occurring most recently during March 2006 across a swath of villages in central Serbia.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ International Commission for the Protection of the Danube. September 2006. Danube facts and figures: Serbia. <http://www.icpdr.org/icpdr-files/12877> (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁴⁸ International Commission for the Protection of the Danube. September 2006. Danube facts and figures: Serbia. <http://www.icpdr.org/icpdr-files/12877> (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁴⁹ Euromost.info. 2008. Serbia country profile. http://www.euromost.info/serbia_country_profile_national_information_economy_history.php (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁵⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government. November 13, 2008. Travel advice: Serbia. <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/advice/Serbia> (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁵¹ U.S. Geological Survey. July 16, 2008. Significant earthquakes of the world, 1980. http://earthquake.usgs.gov/eqcenter/eqarchives/significant/sig_1980.php (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁵² Komatina, Miomir M. 2004. "Geological Factors: Endogenous Geological Processes: Earthquakes." In *Medical Geology: Effects of Geological Environments on Human Health*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

⁵³ BBC News, International Version. April 16 2006. Balkans battle rising floodwater. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4913182.stm> (accessed November 20, 2008).

⁵⁴ ReliefWeb.net. April 7, 2006. Central Europe: floods information bulletin no. 01/2006." [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EK0I-6NQ3QP?OpenDocument&rc=4&emid=FL-2006-000045-HUN-\(accessed November 20, 2008\).](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EK0I-6NQ3QP?OpenDocument&rc=4&emid=FL-2006-000045-HUN-(accessed November 20, 2008).)

History

Introduction

Serbia's history is inextricably intertwined with that of the Balkans, the region it shares with its many neighboring countries. Serbs are part of a large group of people that are collectively referred to as South Slavs, a designation that includes Croats, Bosniaks, Montenegrins, Slovenes, Macedonians, and Bulgarians. The South Slavic ethnic groups are split along linguistic, religious, and cultural lines, but at various times they have shared homelands either under foreign domination or within an independent political state such as Yugoslavia. Non-Slavic peoples to the north and south—most notably, Turks, Albanians, Hungarians, and Austrians—have also played important roles in the history of Serbia and the Balkan Peninsula.



© Sinisa Jovanovic
Medieval fortress in Belgrade

Traditionally, Serbia has occupied the region south of the Danube and Sava Rivers. Modern Serbia, however, includes the Autonomous Region of Vojvodina, a region north of the Danube and Sava Rivers that for much of its history was part of the Hungarian and later Austro-Hungarian empires. Because of several large migrations of Serbs over the last half-millennium, Vojvodina today has a majority population of ethnic Serbs, although there is a significant Hungarian population in the northern-most regions of Vojvodina.

To the south, Kosovo is a region that many Serbs consider an essential part of their nation's history. However, the migrations of Serbs from Kosovo during the Ottoman era eventually left the region with a majority Albanian population. This demographic change ultimately fueled divisions that resulted in purges and deadly inter-ethnic violence in the late 1990s.

The Great Schism and the First Serbian State⁵⁵

The first stable Serbian state appeared in the principality of Raška (present-day western Serbia and northern Montenegro) under Stefan I Nemanja, the founder of the Nemanjić dynasty in 1170. He remained a vassal of the Byzantine emperor and held control of much of the Balkans until 1185. His son and successor, Stefan II Nemanja, further strengthened Serbia by retaining good relations with Rome while simultaneously maintaining his religious loyalty to Constantinople. In 1218, Pope Honorius III recognized Serbian political independence and gave Stefan II the title of “King of Serbia, Dalmatia, and Bosnia.”



Courtesy of Wikipedia
King Stefan II Nemanjić

⁵⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Serbia: History: Medieval Serbia: The Golden Age.” 2008. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43570>

The writings of Stefan II and his brother Rastko (later canonized as St. Sava) were the first works of Serbian literature.

It is important to note that in 1054—over 150 years earlier—the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches split in what is historically known as the Great Schism. The southern Serbs wavered for long periods in their allegiance between Rome and Constantinople. A myriad of factors eventually led to the various Serbian principalities aligning with Orthodoxy. Three of these factors are the consecration of St. Sava as the archbishop of Serbia in 1219, the growing discord between local Catholic and Orthodox clerics, and, to a lesser extent, the ill-will toward the Crusaders, who plundered the Balkans on their way to Jerusalem.

Dušan “the Mighty” and the Serbian Golden Age

The Nemanjić Dynasty grew in strength, moving its frontier southward as Constantinople weakened. In 1282, King Stefan Uroš II Milutin took Skopje, Macedonia, which became the new Serbian capital. Under King Milutin, Serbia grew, its economy expanded, and its position among other European countries improved. Milutin’s reign also produced some excellent examples of Medieval Serbian architecture.

Under Milutin’s grandson, Stefan Dušan (1331–55), the Nemanjić dynasty reached its peak, and Serbia dominated the Balkans. His forces penetrated deep into Byzantine territory, and eventually his territory incorporated Thessaly, Epirus, Macedonia, all of modern Albania and Montenegro, much of eastern Bosnia, and an area of Serbia as far north as the Danube.⁵⁶ Dušan proclaimed himself “Emperor and Autocrat of the Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Albanians.” He elevated the Serbian Orthodox archbishop of Peć to the level of patriarch, and introduced the *Zakonik*, a new legal code combining Byzantine law with Serbian customs. Dušan is considered the greatest ruler of medieval Serbia. Serbs refer to him as Dušan Silni, or “Dušan the Mighty,” and consider his reign the Serbian Golden Age. The Golden Age of the Nemanjić dynasty left Serbia with masterpieces of religious art, combining Western, Byzantine, and local styles.



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
Coronation of Emperor Dušan

The Ottoman Threat (1355–1459)⁵⁷

Serbian power weakened after Dušan’s death in 1355, when rivalries between Serbian nobles broke up the Serbian state. While the Slavs fought among themselves for domination in the area, the Ottoman Turks took Adrianople (modern Edirne, in European Turkey) in 1362. This step began their conquest of the Balkan Peninsula—a process that

⁵⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Serbia: History: Medieval Serbia: The Golden Age.” 2008. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43570>

⁵⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Serbia: History: Medieval Serbia: Conquest by the Turks.” 2008. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43571>

spanned more than a century. In response to the fall of Adrianople, the King of the southern Serbian lands, Vukašin Mrnjavčević, and his brother, John Uglješa of Serres, attacked the army of Murad I on the Maritsa (also Marica) River in 1371. Known as the Battle of Maritsa (sometimes called the Battle of Chernomen) it was a significant defeat for the Serbs that also saw both brothers killed. Other leaders broke with the alliance of Slav powers that had formed, switched their loyalties to the Ottoman Sultan, and accepted Ottoman vassalage in order to retain a degree of independence.

The Battle of Kosovo and the Collapse of Serbia

On 28 June 1389, Serbian Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović, the strongest regional ruler in Serbia at the time, led an army that included Serbs, Bosnians, Albanians, and Hungarians to meet the forces of Sultan Murad I at Kosovo Polje (“Field of Blackbirds”). After Murad I was killed by a Serbian noble, Miloš Obilić, Murad’s son eventually surrounded the Serbian army. Prince Lazar was killed, and the Serbs suffered a bitter defeat.

The Turkish victory did not bring immediate occupation to Serbia, but this Battle of Kosovo became a legend, a theme of great heroic ballads and Serbian folk literature. Prince Lazar was immortalized as a saint, Obilić as a hero, and the Bosnian leader Vuk Branković—who apparently withdrew his forces when defeat became inevitable—was called a traitor (though a number of historians dispute Branković’s exact role in the defeat).⁵⁸ Even today, the battle remains part of the historical consciousness of the Serbian people. The anniversary of the battle is on 28 June and declared the Serbian national holiday, Vidovdan (St. Vitus’s Day).



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
Battle of Kosovo, 1389

The First Migration

In 1459, Serbian resistance to Ottoman rule ended with the fall of the last Serbian stronghold, the capital at Smederevo. With that, the Turks gained control over all Serbian territory. In the period following the Battle of Kosovo and the fall of Smederevo, Serbs migrated from present-day northern Kosovo and southern Serbia into other areas within the Balkan Peninsula, including what are now Vojvodina, Bosnia, Montenegro, and Croatia. At this time, Vojvodina was a territory within the Kingdom of Hungary. The Hungarians encouraged this mass immigration of Serbs and hired many of them as soldiers and border guards. By 1483, about half of the population of Vojvodina consisted

⁵⁸ *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey From the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*. Vine, John V. A., Jr. “Chapter 8. The Balkans in the Late Fourteenth Century [p. 410].” 1994. Ann Arbor, Mich: University of Michigan Press.

of Serbs. Serbian despots⁵⁹ ruled in parts of the area as vassals of the Hungarian kings. By 1552, the Ottoman Empire had moved farther north, taking control of Vojvodina.

The Turkish Night⁶⁰

Although some Serbs formed outlaw bands (*hajduci*) that continued their resistance, the Serbs remained subjects of the Ottoman sultans for the next 326 years. Montenegro, which emerged as an independent principality after the death of Dušan, waged continual guerrilla war against the Turks and was never conquered. Prince Ivan of Montenegro did, however, move his capital high into the mountains in response to the Turkish threat. In 1516, Montenegro became a theocratic state, and *Vladikas* (bishops) would rule for the next two centuries.

The long period of Ottoman rule in the Balkans is called the “Turkish Night” by many Serb historians. However, the dramatic changes—social, economical, and political—contributed substantially to a Serbian national consciousness and to the makeup of the Serbian state. The Ottomans removed the old aristocracy from power, killing many Serbian nobles. In its place, they introduced a system of fiefdoms, based on previous Byzantine practices, and exacted various forms of taxes. Trade and manufacturing were discouraged, literacy was confined to the clergy, and just as the Renaissance was beginning, contact with the West was severed.



Wikimedia Commons
Stefan Dušan, Serbian emperor

There was, however, little forced conversion to Islam. Five religious communities, or millets, throughout the Ottoman-controlled Balkans were recognized. Most Balkan Christians were Orthodox; they were members of the millet headed by the Greek patriarch in Constantinople, which had fallen to the Ottoman armies in 1453. The taxes they were required to pay included the *devşirme*. This form of tax involved the conscription of Christian boys between the ages of 10 and 20, who were taken to Constantinople, converted to Islam, and trained for the corps of Janissaries—an elite order of infantrymen that eventually became the most effective part of the Ottoman military.⁶¹

Seoba Srbalja—The Moving of Serbs⁶²

The resistance of the *hajduci* and other guerilla bands to Ottoman authority continued, and uprisings, particularly in northern areas of the Balkans, were common. One of the

⁵⁹At this time, “despot” was a title of office granted by an emperor to a vassal who held absolute political power over a region.

⁶⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Serbia: History: The Ottoman Period: Life Under the Turks.” 2008. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43573>

⁶¹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Serbia: History: The Ottoman Period: Life Under the Turks.” 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia>

⁶² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Serbia: History: The Ottoman Period: The Disintegration of Ottoman Rule.” 2008. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43574>

most significant of these revolts took place in 1690, when the Holy League (Austria, Poland, and Venice) incited the Serbs to rise in support of an Austrian invasion (the Great War, 1683–90) of the bordering Ottoman-controlled areas. The Habsburg (Austrian) armies eventually had to retreat back across the Sava River, leaving the Serbs exposed to retaliation from the Turks.

The Austrians invited their recent allies to settle to the north as frontier guards. In return, the Serbs would be allowed religious freedom and the right to elect their own *vojvoda*, or military governor. The ensuing migration consisted of 30,000 to 40,000 Serbian families from “Old Serbia” and southern Bosnia who crossed the Danube and settled in the region later known as Vojvodina. It was also the first time Orthodox Serbs were introduced into Catholic Croatian and Hungarian territory. The refugees founded new monasteries that became cultural centers.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Seoba Srbalja (The Moving of Serbs)

During the time of this great migration of 1691, as it came to be called, a gradual conversion of western Kosovo, Kosovo–Metohija⁶³, into a predominantly Albanian region began. Albanians filled the void left behind by the Serbs.

Austro–Turkish Wars

Montenegro and the Serbian Church in southern Hungary established ties with Russia while that country began to compete with Austria for the spoils of the Ottoman collapse. In 1787, the Ottoman armies fought against allied Russian and Austro–Hungarian forces. The Serbs assisted, fighting guerrilla battles against the Turks, with some success. The war ended with the treaties of Sistova (1791) and Jassy (1792). To secure their frontier, the Turks granted the Serbs a degree of autonomy, and agreed to the expulsion of the Janissaries from Belgrade and to the formation of a Serbian militia.⁶⁴

The Wars of 1804–1815

By the early 19th century, the Austrian Empire (Habsburgs) and a declining Ottoman Empire ruled all of what would later be known as Yugoslavia, except Montenegro. The weakening of Ottoman power left the Serbian area unstable, as the treaties of Sistova and Jassy were never completely respected. Renegade Janissaries plundered areas and murdered Serbian leaders, which set off a rebellion led by Karadorđe (“Black George”) Petrović, founder of the Karadorđević dynasty. With the support of Russia, he led a

⁶³ *Metohija* is derived from the Greek word for “monastery estates.”

⁶⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Serbia: History: The Ottoman Period: The Disintegration of Ottoman Rule.” 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia>

popular uprising south of Belgrade in 1804–06, after which the Sultan granted the Serbs limited autonomy.⁶⁵

In 1813, however, the Turks attacked rebel areas, and Karađorđe and his men were forced to retreat across the Danube into Hungary. Serbian villages were despoiled, which led to another rebellion in 1815. This time the Serbs were successful in pushing the Turks out of much of northern Serbia. In subsequent negotiations, they also achieved some concessions, including the right to retain arms and to assemble. In addition, some regions were granted local administrative autonomy.

One of Karađorđe's rebel leaders, Miloš Obrenović, had broken with the rebellion and remained behind in Serbia when Karađorđe and his men fled during the Turkish attacks of 1813. Miloš was given rule over three districts as he worked with the Turks to pacify the country. Eventually, he was recognized as prince of Serbia. When Karađorđe returned to Serbia to organize another uprising, Miloš had him murdered and sent Karađorđe's head to the Sultan as a mark of Serbian loyalty. This rivalry between the dynasties led to more than a century of bloodshed for Serbia.⁶⁶



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Djordje (Karadjordje) Petrovic

A Serbian National Consciousness

As the century progressed, nationalist feelings awoke in the region, and the Turkish grip weakened further. Serbia experienced economic growth and change, and an elite class emerged. After the Russo–Turkish War of 1828–29, Serbia became a principality under Turkey. Miloš Obrenović was officially recognized as a hereditary prince. The Sultan also granted the Serbian Church autonomy and reaffirmed the Russian right to protect Serbia. The leadership of Serbia changed hands frequently throughout the following century, alternating between members of the Karađorđević and Obrenović families.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Miloš Obrenović 1780-1860

Meanwhile, the wars of 1804–1815 had renewed communication between the Serbs living in Serbia and the new middle-class Serbs who lived throughout the Habsburg territory. In 1843, Ilija Garašanin, the son of a merchant from Habsburg-controlled Temesvár, became Serbia's Minister of the Interior. Garašanin drafted a memorandum outlining his vision of the future of Serbian foreign policy. It suggested Serbia work around the “stranglehold” the Habsburgs had on its trade by expanding

⁶⁵ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Country Study: Yugoslavia (Former)*. Sudetic, Charles. “Chapter 1. Historical Setting: History of the Yugoslav People to World War I: The Serbs and Serbia, Vojvodina, and Montenegro.” 1990. [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+yu0017\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+yu0017))

⁶⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Karadjordje.” 2008. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9044676>

southwestward to control ports from Montenegro to Albania, creating a new outlet to the Adriatic Sea.⁶⁷

About this time, the Serbian scholar Vuk Stefanović Karadžić began to work on a standardized literary language. He revised the Cyrillic alphabet for Serbian use, compiled a grammar book and dictionary, and collected Serbian folk songs and poetry. Neither the church nor the state officially supported his work. However, he and Dositej Obradović—who spread the Enlightenment to the Serbs—helped Serbian culture make significant progress, which eventually served to solidify a national consciousness.

*Vojvodina and the Ausgleich*⁶⁸

After Serbs assisted in putting down an uprising of Hungarian nationalists in 1848, a semi-autonomous Vojvodina was created in the north. This administrative area included part of the former Banat of Temesvár, the region of Bačka between the Danube and Tisza rivers, and the part of Baranja between the Danube and Drava rivers. All this territory had historically been part of the Hungarian kingdom. During the period of Turkish



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Serbian Vojvodina in 1848

occupation, Serbs had been migrating to the Vovjodina region, and the number of migrants continued to increase after Ottoman forces were pushed back across the Danube.

The *Ausgleich* of 1867, establishing the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, eliminated the autonomous status of Vojvodina. Vojvodina and Croatia were subordinated to Budapest, a decision that ultimately gave rise to Croatian nationalism. Slavonian Krajina (the old Military Frontier between Austria and the Ottoman empires) was abolished in 1881, expanding Croatia by incorporating an area with a large Serbian population. Then the primarily Magyar government of Hungary apparently provoked Croat–Serb hostility as a way to strengthen their own position.

Beginnings of Industrial Development

Within the Serbian principality, Prince Mihajlo Obrenović, son of Miloš, liberalized the constitution and in 1867 successfully pressured the Turks to withdraw all garrisons that remained in Serbian cities. Industrial development began around this time, and a new class of peasant proprietors emerged, although most of the Serbian people remained illiterate peasants.⁶⁹ Educated in the West but retaining his father’s autocratic approach, Mihajlo and Serbian intellectuals of the time envisioned a South Slav confederation, and Mihajlo organized a regular army to prepare for liberation of Turkish-held Serbian

⁶⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Serbia: History: Modern Serbia: The Passing of the Old Order.” 2008. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43577>

⁶⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Serbia: History: Modern Serbia: The Scramble for the Balkans.” 2008. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-43579>

⁶⁹ Encyclopedia of the Nations: “Yugoslavia: The Serbs and Serbia, Vojvodina, and Montenegro.” No date. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-14769.html>

territory. However, he was eventually assassinated (with the suspicion that Karadžević supporters were involved).

Formal Independence

After an insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1875, Serbia and Montenegro went to war against Turkey in support of the Bosnian rebels. After Russia joined the conflict in 1878, the Turks were defeated. Subsequently, the Treaty of Berlin assigned Serbia and Montenegro additional territory and gave Serbia formal independence.

In 1885, Serbian King Milan Obrenović moved against the newly created Bulgaria in order to expand Serbia's borders into Macedonia. This unpopular and ill-advised action, which led to a significant defeat, contributed to the king's decision to abdicate the throne in 1889. His young son, Aleksandar, assumed the throne in 1893 after proclaiming himself of full age and dismissing his regents. His reign proved no more popular than his father's because of continued scandals, arbitrary rule, and his position favoring Austria–Hungary. Despite official, familial, and popular disapproval, Aleksandar married his mistress in 1900. Three years later, the royal couple was assassinated through a conspiracy of military officers in the palace in Belgrade.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
King Milan I of Serbia

After Aleksandar's assassination, Petar Karadžević, the grandson of Karadžević Petrović, returned from 45 years of exile to take the throne. During the next 10-plus years, King Petar I was able to institute several constitutional, economic, and educational reforms.⁷⁰ In foreign affairs, he aligned Serbia closer to Russia than Austria-Hungary.⁷¹

The Balkan Wars

As the Ottoman Empire declined, Austria-Hungary, Serbia, and other powers vied to gain control of the Empire's remaining Balkan lands. In 1908, Austria-Hungary formally annexed Bosnia, prompting the Serbs to join with Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Greece to take and divide the remaining Ottoman-ruled lands in Europe. After the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, Serbia gained Kosovo and northern and central Macedonia, and divided the *Sandžak* (a geographical region in southwestern Serbia and Montenegro) with Montenegro. Austrian demands required Serbia to give up Albanian territory that would have given it access to the Adriatic.

For most Serbs, the Habsburgs (Austria-Hungary) had replaced the Ottomans as oppressors and as an obstacle to



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Ethnic exchanges & expulsions, Balkan Wars

⁷⁰ InfoPlease.com. Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia. "Peter I." 2007. Columbia University Press. <http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/people/A0838579.html>

⁷¹ Encyclopedia of the Nations: "Yugoslavia: The Serbs and Serbia, Vojvodina, and Montenegro." No date. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-14769.html>

a new Serbian Kingdom.⁷² So when Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand made a state visit to Sarajevo on 28 June, the day Serbs commemorated the legendary Battle of Kosovo, many Bosnian Serbs were insulted. Nevertheless, the assassination of the Archduke and his wife by Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip horrified not only Europe, but the majority of the Serbian population in the Balkans. In the aftermath of the assassination, a series of events took place that eventually led to World War I.

The Start of World War I

In July of 1914, Serbia and Austria-Hungary went to war. Germany joined Austria and, with the assistance of Hungary, launched a second front in late 1915. When a third offensive was opened with assistance from the Bulgarians, the Serbian army—which had been weakened by an epidemic of typhus the previous winter—was forced to retreat across Albania to the Adriatic coast. British and French navies shipped the remnant of the Serbian army to the Greek island of Corfu and to safety. Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian forces now occupied Serbia.

The Corfu Declaration

While exiled on Corfu, the Serbian government worked on plans to establish the Serbian state after the war. Meanwhile, a number of political leaders from the South Slav areas still under the Habsburg Monarchy had withdrawn to London where they formed the “Yugoslav Committee.” The two groups joined forces. In July 1917, they met on Corfu and signed a declaration calling for a single democratic state of South Slavs within the framework of a constitutional monarchy.

Yugoslavia

Upon the collapse of Austria-Hungary at the war’s end in 1918, Vojvodina and Montenegro united with Serbia, and former South Slavs of the Habsburgs also requested the protection of the Serbian crown within the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.

The period between the wars was one of economic modernization, with a push toward industrialization. Political infighting and nationalist struggles, however, plagued the kingdom. In January 1929, in response to a political crisis, King Aleksandar I abolished the constitution and declared a temporary royal dictatorship.⁷³ Attempting to lessen the separatist tensions and regional loyalties, the



© Ninam / Wikipedia
King Aleksandar I

⁷² *The Balkan Wars: Conquest, Revolution, and Retributions From the Ottoman Era to the Twentieth Century and Beyond*. Gerolymatos, André. “Chapter 1. Assassination, Martyrdom, and Betrayal [p. 31].” 1994. Cambridge, Mass: Perseus Publishing.

⁷³ Encyclopedia of the Nations: “Yugoslavia: Political Life in the 1920s.” No date. <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-14769.html>

king changed the country's name to Yugoslavia ("Land of the South Slavs") and split the traditional regions into nine newly defined administrative provinces under Belgrade.

Over the next few years, Aleksandar's exceedingly harsh methods aroused hostility, and the Croats began to resent control from Belgrade. In 1934, Aleksandar was assassinated in France by an agent of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization in collaboration with a Croatian terrorist organization, the Ustaša.⁷⁴ Rule passed to the king's first cousin, Prince Pavle Karađorđević, who held the position of Regent for Aleksandar's juvenile son Petar. In August 1939, Prince Regent Pavle Karađorđević completed difficult negotiations between Croatian and Serbian political leaders that allowed for a partially self-governing Croatian *banovina* (governorship). This agreement marked an early step toward a federalized, as opposed to centralized, Yugoslavia.⁷⁵

World War II and Nazi Occupation

From 1939 to 1941, Serbia and most of the Balkans were largely on the periphery of World War II. In the spring of 1941, the Yugoslavian government negotiated a pact with Germany in which Yugoslavia formally aligned itself with the Axis powers in exchange for Nazi promises to not violate Yugoslav sovereignty. Two days later, a coup against Prince Regent Pavle and the Yugoslavian civilian leadership repudiated the pact and brought sixteen-year-old Petar II to the throne. An angered Adolph Hitler quickly ordered an attack against Yugoslavia.⁷⁶ Despite resistance by Serbian guerilla fighters, the German armies soon defeated and occupied every Balkan state that declined to join the Axis alliance.



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
Serbian Volunteer Corps recruits

During occupation by the Axis forces, Yugoslavia was divided into a series of puppet states, mostly placed under German or Italian zones of military control. In Serbia, a client state was created, with General Milan Nedić heading a civil government. In Croatia, Germany created a puppet state known as the Independent State of Croatia, and it placed Ante Pavelić, leader of the pre-war fascist Ustaša movement, as its head. With Ustaše in control, thousands of Serbs were killed in concentration camps.⁷⁷

With the initial help of remnants of the Royal Yugoslav army (Chetniks), and a more determined communist-led Partisan group (headed by Josip Broz Tito) throughout the war, the resistance against foreign occupiers and Croatian collaborators continued. The

⁷⁴ "The King is Dead, Long Live the Balkans! Watching the Marseilles Murders of 1934." Keith Brown. Watson Institute for International Studies: Brown University. http://www.watsoninstitute.org/pub_detail.cfm?id=132

⁷⁵ *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918-1992*. Djokić, Dejan. "(Dis)Integrating Yugoslavia: King Alexander and Interwar Yugoslavism [p. 155]." 2003. Madison, Wisc: University of Wisconsin Press.

⁷⁶ *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1904-1999*. Glenny, Misha. "The Palaces of Deceit [p. 476]." 2000. New York: Viking.

⁷⁷ GlobalSecurity.org. "Serbo-Croatian War." <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/croatia.htm>

German response to the resistance movement was to punish the civilian population by carrying out reprisal killings, leading to large-scale loss of life, mostly among the Serbs of Bosnia and Croatia. With Soviet and Anglo-American help, all of Yugoslavia was liberated by 1944.

The Second Yugoslavia

On 29 November 1945, Yugoslavia was reborn as the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FNRJ), a socialist federation under the leadership of Prime Minister Tito and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. (The nation was later renamed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1963.) The FNRJ built upon the first tentative pre-war steps toward unifying Yugoslavia through a federal structure. After the war, it drafted a constitution giving Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro separate and equal republican status within the new socialist federation of Yugoslavia, with Kosovo and Vojvodina as autonomous provinces. Despite the initial attempts to form a federal system of government for Yugoslavia, however, Yugoslavia's political life was dominated by Serbian communists for the next 40 years. During this time, Serbia evolved from an agrarian into an industrial society.⁷⁸

Communist Rule During the Tito Era

Under Tito's leadership, Yugoslav communists pursued a socialist program of reforms and maintained close ties with the USSR until a 1948 split with Moscow. After the split, Tito established a foreign policy of nonalignment and a one-party political system with the League of Communists having majority control in the *Skupština* (National Assembly). A distinctive element of Yugoslav communism, or "Titoism," was socialist self-management, in which workers participated in the economy through semi-independent work organizations of associated labor that were managed by councils elected by the workers. Yugoslavs could work or travel freely, and their standards of living were higher than in most other socialist states. This system maintained Yugoslav unity until Tito's death three decades later.



Queen Elisabeth II with Josip Broz Tito, 1972
© Nickel Chromo

However, growing political liberalization in the late 1960s led to a rise in nationalism in Kosovo and Croatia. Demonstrations in these provinces between 1968 and 1974 led to a governmental purge of liberals and reformers, who were replaced with political veterans loyal to Tito. A new constitution was passed in 1974 that gave Yugoslavia's central

⁷⁸ U.S. Department of State. "Serbia and Montenegro." August 1999.
<http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/s/12685.htm>

leadership greater control over the legislative branch, while retaining the decentralizing provisions of the preexisting constitution.⁷⁹

The Rise of Milošević

After Tito's death in 1980, Yugoslavia's economy began to fail, and the communist parties of various regions began to fracture and divide according to long-standing differences and outlooks. The ethnic conflict in Kosovo between Serbs and the Albanian majority surfaced again and fed renewed nationalism. In 1981, Kosovo Albanians demonstrated in favor of a republic and annexation to Albania. The uprisings were put down with force, followed by measures designed to discourage future protests.⁸⁰ By this time, the Albanians had become the largest ethnic group in Kosovo, comprising over 50% of the population.

Slobodan Milošević, a former business official who quickly rose to power in the late 1980s within the League of Communists of Serbia (LCS), used these tensions to push through constitutional reforms in 1990 that re-imposed Serbian direct rule over the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina, prompting Albanians in Kosovo to call for separation from the Republic. Milošević also resisted political and economic reforms that were beginning to be implemented by the other Yugoslav republics and the federal government as a whole.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Slobodan Milošević, 3rd Pres

Resistance in Kosovo

Milošević's government took control of the Kosovo provincial government, dissolved the Kosovo assembly, and closed Kosovo schools teaching in Albanian.⁸¹ These and other severe crackdowns and restrictions on the Kosovo Albanian populace led to protests and a campaign of non-violent resistance launched by Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, a Sorbonne-educated intellectual and pacifist. In February 1990, Yugoslavia sent troops, tanks, warplanes, and 2,000 additional police to Kosovo. Meanwhile, Albanians created their own political, economic and social institutions within Kosovo, including a separate parliament with various political parties, independent schools, and trade unions.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
1st President of Kosovo, Dr. Ibrahim Rugova

In May 1992, Kosovo Albanians held a clandestine election in which Rugova was chosen to be president of the self-declared Republic of Kosovo; however, these elections and the

⁷⁹GlobalSecurity.org. "Tito's Yugoslavia." No date.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/yugo-hist2.htm>

⁸⁰News@SUC.org "The Agony of Kosovo." Dragnich, Alex N. October 1998.

http://www.suc.org/news/world_articles/Dragnich1098.html

⁸¹Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Kosovo." No date. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9046111>

Republic of Kosovo itself were not recognized by the Serbians or any foreign government. Nonetheless, the increasingly worsening conditions within Kosovo did not escape the world's attention. In December 1992, U.S. President George H. W. Bush sent a message to Milošević in his so-called "Christmas Warning," stating that the United States was prepared to use military force to stop Serb-instigated attacks in Kosovo. After President Clinton took office in 1993, his administration reiterated Bush's message.

The Break-up of Yugoslavia

The conflict in Kosovo was just one of several secessionist conflicts that spread across Yugoslavia beginning in the early 1990s. On 25 June 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence, and Macedonia did the same after a referendum in September 1991. Bosnia and Herzegovina voted for independence in early 1992 in a referendum largely boycotted by the region's Serb population. While neither Slovenia nor Macedonia had significant numbers of Serbs, the situation was quite different in the other two republics. In Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbs constituted 12% and 31% of the population, respectively.⁸²

After a brief, failed military intervention to stop Slovenia from seceding, Serbian forces concentrated their actions on Croatia. There, they supported local Serb militias in a civil war with the aim of retaining some areas of the republics within Yugoslavia. Within a short time, parts of Croatia were formed into the Serbian Krajina, a Serbian republic within Croatia. In January 1992, a United Nations-sponsored cease-fire was negotiated between the Croatian National Guard and the Serbian forces, which permitted patrols by a United Nations (UN) Protection Force. Nonetheless, Croatia did not regain full sovereignty over its eastern regions until 1998, two years after Milošević agreed to give up all Serbian claims to Croatia and withdraw Yugoslavian troops. The UN forces would remain in Croatia until 2002.



US Army Photo
US soldiers, UN Forces, and Serbian boys

The Third Yugoslavia and War in Bosnia

On 27 April 1992 in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro joined in passing the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a country now only a fraction of its original size. The new state was not internationally recognized because of its continued military involvement in other republics of the former Yugoslavia. The use of so called "ethnic cleansing" by paramilitary Serbian troops to establish Serbian control of areas with a mixed population created a flood of refugees.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
View of Grbavica, a suburb of Sarajevo, 1996

⁸² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Serbia: History: Modern Serbia: Disintegration of the Federation." No date. 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia>

Some of the worst fighting took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There, with the initial assistance of the Yugoslav army, local Serbian militias gained control of several regions that were consolidated in March 1992 into the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In April 1992, Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, was besieged by Serbian forces and became a worldwide symbol of the brutal destructiveness of the Yugoslav wars. Almost immediately, the UN Security Council imposed strict economic sanctions that quickly led to economic decline in Yugoslavia. Despite the hardships, Milošević and his Socialist Party of Serbia (formerly the Communist League) managed to win re-election in the December 1992 presidential elections.

Following the systematic killing of over 7,000 Bosniaks in Srebrenica in July 1995, NATO began a month-long air campaign conducted against Serbian forces in Bosnia.⁸³ The bombardment and the collapse of Bosnian Serb resistance finally brought the Bosnian Serbs to the bargaining table. In December 1995 in Dayton, Ohio, they accepted a series of agreements with the backing of Milošević. The Dayton Peace Accord established two largely autonomous political entities—the Republic of Srpska (49% of the Bosnia and Herzegovina territory) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (51%)—and ended hostilities in Bosnia. Milošević’s support of the Dayton Peace Accord resulted in economic sanctions being lifted, leading to an upsurge in the Serbian economy.

Conflict in Kosovo

The Kosovo problem was not discussed at the Dayton Peace talks, leaving the significant issues of ethnic Serbs and ethnic Albanians unresolved. In 1996, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), supported by many ethnic Albanians, began carrying out isolated attacks on Serbian police in Kosovo. Meanwhile, Serbian special police continued their policy of creating a depopulated zone in western Kosovo separating the Kosovo Albanian population from Albania. More than 300,000 Kosovo Albanians were displaced by late 1998.⁸⁴



© Nikolic / Wikipedia.org
Yugoslav Army M-84 tanks withdrawing from Kosovo

Ongoing tensions between ethnic Serbs and ethnic Albanians worsened in 1998. In March of that year, Yugoslav army units joined Serbian police to fight the separatists. Armed clashes between the KLA and Yugoslav army units, as well as between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, escalated into a full-scale war in 1999. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervened, heavily bombing Yugoslav targets in Serbia proper and Montenegro. According to a U.S. Agency for International Development estimate, by May 1999, nearly 725,000 Kosovo Albanians were living as refugees in

⁸³ *The Three Yugoslavias: State Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*. Ramet, Sabrina P. “The War of Yugoslav Succession, 1992-1995- [p. 460].” 2006. Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

⁸⁴ GlobalSecurity.org. “Kosovo Background.” No date.
http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/kosovo_back.htm

Albania, Macedonia, or Montenegro.⁸⁵ Although Montenegro was at the time a partner with Serbia in what remained of Yugoslavia, Montenegrin leaders distanced themselves from Serbia's approach to the problems in Kosovo. After Milošević's downfall in October 2000, these leaders were increasingly interested in independence.

The Kosovo war ended on 10 June 1999 with the signing by the Serbian and Yugoslav governments of the Kumanovo agreement. Under the agreement's terms, both signatories agreed to transfer military and governmental administration of Kosovo to the United Nations while Kosovo's political status remained, for the time being at least, as a part of Serbia and Yugoslavia.⁸⁶ Hundreds of thousands of displaced Kosovo Albanians soon began returning to the region, while all but about 120,000 Kosovo Serbs left.^{87,88} A month before the signing of the Kumanovo agreement, the UN War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague indicted Milošević for crimes against Kosovo's ethnic Albanians.

Milošević's Ouster

Saddled with continuing trade sanctions, the Serbian economy faltered. Reflecting general dissatisfaction with the Milošević government, in September 2000, Serbians voted center-right democrat Vojislav Koštunica into the presidential office. Initially refusing to leave office, Milošević was forced to step down a month later by popular uprisings around the country. After a power-sharing agreement with Milošević's Socialist Party of Serbia, Koštunica formed a new government in 2001.



© Frumau / Wikipedia
Vojislav Koštunica, 4th President

The arrest of Milošević in 2001, orchestrated by then-Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić, allowed for his transfer to The Hague to be tried for crimes against humanity. (He would later die of a heart attack in March 2006 while on trial for his alleged crimes.) In 2001, Yugoslavia's suspension from the UN was lifted, and it was once more accepted into UN organizations under its name Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The U.S. and the European Union began lifting economic sanctions and offering aid.

Serbia and Montenegro

In 2002, the Serbian and Montenegrin components of Yugoslavia commenced negotiations to establish a looser relationship. Yugoslavia was officially dissolved in

⁸⁵ FreeSerbia.net. Bureau for Humanitarian Response, U.S. Agency for International Development. "Fact Sheet: USAID Kosovo Crisis Update, May 21st." 21 May 1999.

<http://www.freeserbia.net/Documents/Kosovo/USAID3.html>

⁸⁶ *United Nations Interventionism, 1991-2004*. Economides, Spyros. "8. Kosovo [p. 258]." 2007. Cambridge, Engl: Cambridge University Press.

⁸⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Kosovo Conflict." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1380469/Kosovo-conflict>

⁸⁸ Washington Post. Finn, Peter. "Independence is Declared by Kosovo." 18 February 2008.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/17/AR2008021700176.html>

February of that year and was replaced by a more decentralized union of Serbia and Montenegro. In 2003, the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro was voted into existence by the parliaments of both republics. It was not to last for long, however. Both Serbia and Montenegro were granted the right to choose to leave their federated state after three years. In May 2006, Montenegrins narrowly approved a referendum for independence, and in June 2006 Montenegro formally severed all political ties with Serbia. In what would turn out to be one of the least contentious breakups among the former Yugoslavian states, Serbia quickly recognized the newly independent status of Montenegro.

Recent Political Events

In June 2004, Boris Tadić, leader of the Democratic Party (DS), was elected Serbian president. Tadić took over as leader of the DS after the assassination of former Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in March 2003. Đinđić, a pro-Western academic who strongly pushed for economic reforms and was able to help put a new face on Serbia after the Milošević years, was killed by a sniper outside a government building in Belgrade. Twelve individuals, mostly secret police members and Serbian mafia leaders, were later convicted of conspiring to murder Đinđić.⁸⁹



© Avala / Wikipedia
Boris Tadić, President of Serbia

After Montenegro left its union with Serbia in 2006, Serbia formally changed the country's name to the Republic of Serbia. Two years later, in February 2008, the country held its first presidential election since the break-up with Montenegro. In the final runoff, Boris Tadić was re-elected, defeating by a relatively narrow margin the challenger Tomislav Nikolić. Nikolić was the standard-bearer for the Serbian Radical Party, a political party that is frequently described as “ultranationalist” or “hardline nationalist.”^{90,91} While both presidential candidates vowed during the campaign to keep Serbia whole by not acceding to Kosovan independence, Tadić ruled out the use of force should Kosovo declare such independence (which it did two weeks after the election).⁹² A pro-Western pragmatist, Tadić and his party followers see Serbia's future within the European Union and wish to avoid taking confrontational actions that would be fatal to Serbia's accession bid to that economic body.

⁸⁹ BBC News, International Version. “Twelve Guilty of Djindjic Murder.” 23 May 2007.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6683463.stm>

⁹⁰ USA Today. Associated Press. “Tadic Wins Serbian Presidential Election.” 3 February 2008.
http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2008-02-03-tadic-serbia_N.htm

⁹¹ BBC News. “Q&A: Serbia Presidential Election.” 4 February 2008.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7196896.stm>

⁹² USA Today. Associated Press. “Tadic Wins Serbian Presidential Election.” 3 February 2008.
http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2008-02-03-tadic-serbia_N.htm

Kosovo Independence

In 2005, the UN initiated a negotiation process for determining the future status of Kosovo. While Serbia showed willingness to grant Kosovo a large degree of autonomy within a Serbian federation, Kosovo Albanian negotiators were steadfast in their desire to settle for nothing short of independence. On 17 February 2008, the Kosovo Assembly voted to declare its independence from Serbia. As of late November 2008, 52 UN countries, including the United States, most members of the European Union, and all of the former republics of Yugoslavia with the exception of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, have recognized Kosovo as a separate state. Kosovo Serbs have organized their own parliament within the Serb-dominant northern sections of the new state, but it has no real powers.⁹³



© Marko Milošević
Montenegro's Independence

⁹³ BBC News. "Kosovo Serbs Launch New Assembly." 28 June 2008.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7478865.stm>

Economy

Introduction

Serbia's "lost decade" of the 1990s has left it playing catch-up to many of its neighboring states in improving the economic conditions for its citizens. One telling comparison can be made with Slovenia, its former partner province in the country of Yugoslavia. Slovenia left the Yugoslavian federation relatively peacefully in 1991, suffering through only a brief 10-day war. Thereafter, its national goals were directed toward developing a stable democracy and unifying economically with Western Europe. Today, as a member of the European Union, Slovenia has a GDP per capita of USD 28,400, higher than that of South Korea or New Zealand.⁹⁴ For Serbia, however, the first solid steps in privatizing its economy and establishing economic links with Western Europe began almost a decade later, and today its GDP per capita of USD 10,400 is one of the lowest among European countries who were not formerly part of the Soviet Union.



© Viktor Markovic
Open air seating in Belgrade

Despite its slow start in implementing economic reforms and in privatizing its inefficient socially- and state-owned companies, Serbia has made strides since 2000 in moving toward economic integration with the rest of Europe. (In Serbia, "socially-owned" companies are the worker-managed collective enterprises in which "society" is the owner; "state-owned" companies are generally the largest enterprises, such as the airline or oil companies.) Continued economic progress will depend on Serbia's ability to achieve political stability and to address some of its lingering economic problems, such as high unemployment and a large trade deficit.⁹⁵

Industry and Manufacturing

Serbia's industrial and manufacturing sector declined dramatically during the 1990s. This decline was due to the combined result of wars and economic sanctions, general mismanagement of the economy by the Milošević regime, and damage to the transportation infrastructure and industrial facilities resulting from the 1999 North American Treaty Organization (NATO) bombings.⁹⁶ By the late 1990s, nearly one third of Serbia's companies were listed as insolvent.⁹⁷



© space time cocktail / flickr.com
Old factory wasting away

⁹⁴ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. "Rank Order – GDP – (PPP)." No date. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html>

⁹⁵ The World Bank. "Country Brief 2008: Economy." <http://www.worldbank.org.yu/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/SERBIAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20630647~menuPK:300911~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:300904,00.html#econ>

Since 2000, Serbia's industrial economy has rebounded somewhat, although it is still lagging compared to the pre-1990 period. In 2007, industrial production represented a little less than one quarter of Serbia's gross domestic product (GDP).⁹⁸ Some 75% of this industrial output comes from manufacturing operations, with some key sectors including food and beverage processing, chemicals and chemical products, and manufacture of basic metals.⁹⁹

The Belgrade area is the manufacturing hub for Serbia because of its large labor base and preexisting consumer and business markets for products. Another, smaller industrial center occurs in a string of medium-sized cities along the Zapadna Morava River, including Užice, Cačak, Kraljevo, and Kruševac.¹⁰⁰ A bit north of this region, the larger city of Kragujevac hosts the Zastava automobile factory, the nation's only automobile assembly plant. This plant was purchased in 2008 by Fiat as part of Serbia's privatization initiatives.¹⁰¹ In Vojvodina, Serbia's agricultural heartland, food and beverage processing is the most significant industry.¹⁰²

Agriculture

Agricultural production has long been an important element of the Serbian economy, although in recent years its share of the country's GDP has shrunk to just over 12%.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, between 25 and 30% of working Serbs are occupied in this sector, mostly in the low-lying flatlands of Vojvodina and in adjacent areas south of the Sava and Danube Rivers, including the Morava River valley.¹⁰⁴ In hillier regions of Serbia, livestock production and orchard farming are more prevalent.¹⁰⁵ Pigs are the top source of Serbian meat, followed by cattle and chickens.¹⁰⁶



⁹⁶ CBS News. "Country Fast Facts: Serbia: Economy." 10 September 2007.

http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/09/10/country_facts/main3246901.shtml

⁹⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Serbia: Economy." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia/42933/Economy>

⁹⁸ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. "Serbia." 20 November 2008.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

⁹⁹ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. "Structure of Industry by Divisions." 2008.

<http://webrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu/axd/en/drugastrana.php?Sifra=0015&izbor=odel&tab=20001>

¹⁰⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Serbia: Economy: Industry." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia/42933/Economy>

¹⁰¹ Italiaspeed. "New Chapter Opens for Zastava as Last Car Rolls Off Production Lines." 21 November

2008. <http://www.italiaspeed.com/2008/cars/industry/11/zastava/2111.html>

¹⁰² Slovak Rating Agency/The Jefferson Institute. "Vojvodina: Exploring the Economic Potential." June – December 2004. [http://67.59.142.39/Documents/ekonomski/Low Resolution.pdf](http://67.59.142.39/Documents/ekonomski/Low%20Resolution.pdf)

¹⁰³ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. "Serbia.." 20 November 2008.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html> (accessed 26 November 2008)

¹⁰⁴ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. *Communication* 58, No. 6. "The Number of Employment in 2007 – Annual Average." 17 January 2008.

<http://webrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu/axd/en/dokumenti/saopstenja/ZP20/zp20122007.pdf>

Grains are grown on roughly two thirds of Serbia's crop lands. Maize (corn) is cultivated on well over half this acreage, followed by wheat and barley.^{107,108} Other important crops include sugar beets, potatoes, oilseeds, hemp, flax, fruits, and vegetables. Maize and sugar (produced from the sugar beets) are the two main agricultural exports.¹⁰⁹ Raspberries are also a top Serbian cash crop, and until recently Serbia was the world's largest exporter of frozen raspberries.¹¹⁰

Banking and Currency

The dinar (RSD) is the official currency of Serbia. As of the beginning of December 2008, the dinar was trading at a rate of nearly 71 RSD per United States dollar (USD). This rate was highly volatile and had depreciated significantly from August 2008, when the dollar was trading for less than 50 RSD.¹¹¹ The dinar also significantly declined against the euro (EUR) during this time period, despite interventions by Serbia's central bank, the National Bank of Serbia, to bolster the nation's currency. The dinar dropped in value more than any other European currency during the worldwide economic downturn in 2008.¹¹²



© Nikolic / Wikipedia.org
Central bank, Belgrade, Serbia

Since 2001, Serbia has been overhauling its financial sector by liquidating insolvent banks and privatizing the remaining ones. In 2000, there were 81 banks in Serbia, with over 90% of all banking assets in state-owned banks. By the middle of 2008, the number of Serbian banks was down to 34, and the percentage of assets held by banks in which the state held the largest ownership share was less than 16%.¹¹³ Most of the remaining banks are now controlled by foreign investors, and the increasing confidence in which the

¹⁰⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Serbia: Economy: Agriculture." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia/42933/Economy>

¹⁰⁶ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. "Finale Data on Statistic of Livestock, 2007." 2008.

<http://webrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu/axd/en/drugastrana.php?Sifra=0003&izbor=odel&tab=95>

¹⁰⁷ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. "Crop Production (Since 1947)." 2008.

<http://webrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu/axd/en/poljoprivreda/index1.php?ind=1>

¹⁰⁸ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. "Areas Sown in Spring – on Day 25.05.07 -." 2008.

<http://webrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu/axd/en/drugastrana.php?Sifra=0003&izbor=odel&tab=92>

¹⁰⁹ International Trade Centre/World Trade Organization. "Trade Performance HS: Exports and Imports of Serbia (2006, in USD thousands)." 2008.

http://www.intracen.org/appli1/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI_HS4.aspx?IN=10&RP=688&YR=2006&IL=10 Cereals&TY=T

¹¹⁰ Eric Jansson Online. Financial Times. "Taming Serbia's Wild Raspberries." 30 May 2007. <http://eric-jansson.blogspot.com/2007/06/stymied-by-legal-vacuum.html>

¹¹¹ Exchange-Rates.org. "Serbian Dinars (RSD) to 1 US Dollar (USD)." 28 November 2008.

<http://www.exchange-rates.org/history/RSD/USD/G>

¹¹² The Guardian. Reuters. Filipovic, Gordana. "Serb CBank Sells Euros as Dinar Hits Alltime Low." 28 November 2008. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/feedarticle/8091584>

¹¹³ National Bank of Serbia. "Banking Supervision: Second Quarter Report." July 2008.

http://www.nbs.rs/export/internet/english/55/55_4/index.html

public holds the Serbian banking system is demonstrated by a nearly 600% increase in retail deposits from 2001 to 2006.¹¹⁴ Belgrade is headquarters for most of Serbia's banks, with Novi Sad a secondary banking center.¹¹⁵

Trade

Serbia's exports dropped by nearly three-quarters during the economically devastating 1990s, when the economy suffered from mismanagement and the effect of economic sanctions. Imports declined by about one-half during that time.¹¹⁶ Particularly hard hit were manufacturing exports, which were negatively affected by both the delayed transition to privatization and, in some cases, by bomb damage to factories during the NATO intervention in 1999.

Serbia's trade has since increased, although imports still exceed exports by a roughly two-to-one margin.¹¹⁷ Years of pent-up demand during the 1990s have translated into large amounts of consumer goods imports during the 2000s, which are only partially offset by Serbian exports.¹¹⁸ Iron and steel and copper products are the leading export categories by both total trade revenue and net trade surplus. Plastic products, rubber tires, frozen raspberries, maize (corn), sugar, clothing apparel, and various organic chemicals also contribute positively to Serbia's trade balance.¹¹⁹ Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Montenegro, and Russia are the leading importers of Serbian goods.¹²⁰



¹¹⁴ The World Bank. "Implementation Completion and Results Report (IDA-37230) on a Credit in the Amount of SDR 8.4 Million (US\$13.1 Million Equivalent) to the Serbia and Montenegro for a Privatization and Restructuring of Banks and Enterprises Technical Assistance Project [pp. 2, 18]." 31 October 2007.

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDS/IB/2008/03/07/000333038_20080307030341/Rendered/PDF/ICR6390ICR0P071sclosed0March0502008.pdf

¹¹⁵ National Bank of Serbia. "List of Banks." 2008. http://www.nbs.rs/export/internet/english/50/50_2.html

¹¹⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Serbia: Economy: Trade." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia>

¹¹⁷ United Nations. Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Republic of Serbia. Todorovic, Bojana. "Key Issues in Multilateral Trade Liberalization of Economies in Transition." 9 April 2008.

http://www.un.org/esa/policy/eitconference/rt3_todorovic.pdf [retrieved 1 December 2008]

¹¹⁸ Center for EU Enlargement Studies. Crnobrnja, Milailo; and Nebojša Savić, Jelena Miljković. "Chapter 2. Economic Developments: 2.4.7.3. Imports [pp. 170-171]."

http://web.ceu.hu/cens/assets/files/publications/Serbia_complete

¹¹⁹ International Trade Centre/World Trade Organization. "Trade Performance HS: Imports and Exports of Serbia (2006, in USD thousands)." 2008.

http://www.intracen.org/appli1/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI.aspx?RP=688&YR=2006

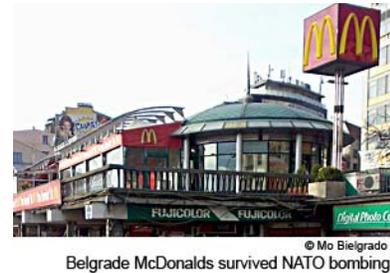
¹²⁰ International Trade Centre/World Trade Organization. "Trade Performance HS: Exports of Serbia 00 – All Industries (2006, in USD thousands)." 2008.

http://www.intracen.org/appli1/TradeCom/TP_EP_CI_P.aspx?IN=00&RP=688&YR=2006&IL=00 All industries&TY=E

Energy resources (mostly oil and natural gas), machinery and appliances, electrical equipment, and motor vehicles are Serbia's largest import categories.¹²¹ Russia, which supplies the majority of Serbia's energy needs, is by far the largest importer into Serbia, followed by Germany, Italy, and China.¹²² Serbia is the only European nation outside the former Soviet Union to have negotiated a free-trade agreement with Russia, although the pact has yet to be ratified by the Russian Duma (parliament).¹²³

Investment

Attracting foreign investors to Serbia was a virtually hopeless task during the 1990s, but the climate began to change after President Slobodan Milošević was forced from office in 2000. An important step was taken in 2002, when a law on foreign investment introduced new guidelines and incentives for international companies wishing to take equity stakes in Serbia's many privatizing businesses.¹²⁴ Since then, Serbia has been a leader in its region for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), most of which has come from European companies. A further positive sign is that a significant portion of this foreign input into Serbia's economy has come in the form of greenfield investments (i.e., foreign corporate investments in the construction of new manufacturing facilities).¹²⁵



A peak year for FDI was 2006, when some USD 4.499 billion flowed into Serbian businesses, including the USD 1.5 billion acquisition of the mobile phone operator Mobi 63, purchased by the Norwegian telecommunications company Telenor.^{126,127} The following year, however, saw a decline in both foreign investment inflows and net investment (foreign inflows less foreign outflows from Serbian companies investing outside the country). Fiat's USD 1.0 billion purchase of a controlling interest in the

¹²¹ International Trade Centre/World Trade Organization. "Trade Performance HS: Imports and Exports of Serbia (2006, in USD thousands)." 2008.

http://www.intracen.org/appli1/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI.aspx?RP=688&YR=2006

¹²² International Trade Centre/World Trade Organization. "Trade Performance HS: Imports of Serbia 00 – All Industries (2006, in USD thousands)." 2008.

http://www.intracen.org/appli1/TradeCom/TP_IP_CI_P.aspx?IN=00&RP=688&YR=2006&IL=00 All industries&TY=I

¹²³ Reuters. "Serbia to Sign Fiat Deal Sept. 29 – EconMin." 19 September 2008.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssAutoTruckManufacturers/idUSLJ44053520080919>

¹²⁴ Lexinter.net. "Serbia Foreign Investment Act." 19 September 2008.

http://www.lexinter.net/LOTWVers4/serbia_foreign_investment_act.htm

¹²⁵ Center for EU Enlargement Studies. Crnobrnja, Milailo; and Nebojša Savić, Jelena Miljković. "Chapter 2. Economic Developments: 2.4.10 Foreign Direct Investment [pp. 179–181]."

http://web.ceu.hu/cens/assets/files/publications/Serbia_complete

¹²⁶ Center for EU Enlargement Studies. Crnobrnja, Milailo; and Nebojša Savić, Jelena Miljković. "Chapter 2. Economic Developments: Executive Summary [pp. 139–140]."

http://web.ceu.hu/cens/assets/files/publications/Serbia_complete

¹²⁷ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *World Investment Report*. "Country Fact Sheet: Serbia." 20 October 2008. http://www.unctad.org/sections/dite_dir/docs/wir08_fs_rs_en.pdf

Zastava automotive plant in September helped spur an increase in foreign investment during 2008.¹²⁸

Energy and Mineral Resources

Energy

Serbia is a net importer of most of its mineral fuels. What little oil and gas that is produced within the country comes from the Vojvodina region. The Naftagas operating unit of the Naftna Industrija Srbije (NIS) carries out all exploration and production, while a separate unit of NIS markets the oil and gas.¹²⁹ NIS also owns and operates the two oil refineries in Serbia, in Novi Sad and Pančevo. Until recently NIS was a state-owned company, but in January 2008 a majority interest in the company was sold to Gazprom, the Russian energy giant.¹³⁰

Hydroelectricity and coal (mostly lignite) are used to supply most of Serbia's electricity.¹³¹ The two largest hydroelectric plants are at the Đerdap dam on the Danube River and the Bajina Bašta plant on the Drina River.¹³² At each of these two plants, the dam lies along a boundary section of its river (neighboring Romania at Đerdap and Bosnia and Herzegovina at Bajina Bašta). Serbia's leading coal region lies south of Belgrade in a basin along the Kalubara River. The lignite deposits found here are used in local coal-burning plants that supply electricity to Belgrade, to which much of the region was incorporated in 1971.¹³³ A secondary coal-mining district is located near the city of Kostolac, east of Belgrade near the Danube River.¹³⁴ Coal mining in Serbia is managed by Elektroprivreda Srbije (EPS), the state-owned electrical utility.



© Mazbln / Wikipedia
Dam of Zvornik Lake

Minerals

Serbia has numerous deposits of various metallic minerals, including iron ore, copper, lead-zinc, antimony, gold, and silver. Of these, copper and iron are most valuable in

¹²⁸ Reuters. "Serbia to Sign Fiat Deal Sept. 29 – EconMin." 19 September 2008.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssAutoTruckManufacturers/idUSLJ44053520080919>

¹²⁹ Naftna Industrija Srbije NAFTAGAS. "Operations." 2008. <http://www.nis-naftagas.co.yu/j2ee/web2/category.jsp?id=199&locale=2>

¹³⁰ Reuters. Shchedrov, Oleg. "Serbia Signs Strategic Energy Deal with Russia." 25 January 2008. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUKL2515142420080125?pageNumber=1&virtualBrandChannel=0>

¹³¹ Society of Mining Professors. Kolonja, Božo. "The Serbian Mining Industry." 23–27 June 2007. <http://www.mineprofs.org/info/industry/SOMP-07-General-Bozo.pdf>

¹³² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Serbia: Economy: Resources and Power: Energy." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia>

¹³³ City of Belgrade. "Lazarevac." 2008. <http://www.beograd.org.yu/cms/view.php?id=202126>

¹³⁴ Society of Mining Professors. Kolonja, Božo. "The Serbian Mining Industry." 23–27 June 2007. <http://www.mineprofs.org/info/industry/SOMP-07-General-Bozo.pdf>

terms of their export value.¹³⁵ Serbia's copper deposits are mostly located in the region around Bor in the Carpathian Mountains. Rudarsko-Topioničarski Basen Bor (RTB Bor) is the state-owned company that runs these mines and the associated smelting operations. Two attempts to privatize RTB Bor, which is currently unprofitable, have failed, but the Serbian Government nonetheless put out a third tender for privatization in November 2008.¹³⁶ Despite the declining production at the Bor complex, copper products remain a major positive contributor to Serbia's trade balance.

Serbia produces pig iron and steel at a large plant in Smederevo, owned by U.S. Steel since the plant's privatization in 2003. At the time of purchase, the Sartid plant (as it was known then) was bankrupt and badly in need of repair and renovation.

Standard of Living

Even though Serbia is making some strides in modernizing its economy and opening it up to outside investment, the nation continues to suffer from a very high unemployment rate, which hovered around 19% in mid-2008.¹³⁷ While this rate was lower than in previous years, the drop was somewhat misleading because the number of employed Serbians has remained the same for three years. Many unemployed Serbians are no longer looking for work and thus are not included in the unemployment statistics. A very high percentage of those who are employed (20%) work in agriculture, roughly three to four times the average percentage of other European countries.¹³⁸ Another concern is that many of those Serbians who now receive wages are working for either state- or socially-owned companies. As these companies eventually privatize, further job cuts can be expected.



Serbia's poverty rate increased dramatically during the 1990s, but has fallen since then. Recent estimates place the percentage of Serbians that are below the poverty line at 6.6%, down from 14% in 2002. But one third of the population remains only marginally above the poverty line and in danger of slipping below it should economic conditions worsen.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ International Trade Centre/World Trade Organization. "Trade Performance HS: Imports and Exports of Serbia (2006, in USD thousands)." 2008.

http://www.intracen.org/appli1/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI.aspx?RP=688&YR=2006

¹³⁶ RTB Bor. "The Third Tender for RTB Bor." 10 November 2008.

<http://www.rtb.rs/showNews.php?lang=English&id=57>

¹³⁷ B92.net. FoNet, Beta. "Unemployment Rate at 18.8 Percent." 23 July 2008.

http://www.b92.net/eng/news/business-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=07&dd=23&nav_id=52152

¹³⁸ B92.net. FoNet, Beta. "Unemployment Rate at 18.8 Percent." 23 July 2008.

http://www.b92.net/eng/news/business-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=07&dd=23&nav_id=52152

¹³⁹ The World Bank. "Country Brief 2008: Economy."

<http://www.worldbank.org.yu/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/SERBIAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20630647~menuPK:300911~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:300904,00.html#econ>

A further concern for Serbian economic planners is the demographics of the country's work force. Serbia's population is the fourth oldest in the world, and its population is expected to decrease by about a half-million people over the next 15 years. Some analysts have attributed the population decline—ongoing since the 1990s—to the generally low standard of living in Serbia, which discourages couples from having children.¹⁴⁰ A lesser but important part of the population decline is tied to out-migration to countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. The demographics of these migrants skews heavily toward the better educated, younger Serbians, thus fostering a “brain drain” that could negatively affect the nation's future economic and social development.¹⁴¹

Tourism

More than ten years of political unrest and periodic warfare has significantly dampened Serbia's tourism potential. Even though some years have passed since the Kosovo hostilities, the country's tourism industry still operates under the weight of the negative publicity of that era. Belgrade is the focus of most foreigners' visits to Serbia, although the country's outlying medieval monasteries, two of which are on the list of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) World Heritage Sites, attract those looking for culturally unique experiences.¹⁴² In the southern mountain regions are mineral spas, national parks, and a sprinkling of low-key ski resorts.



© Viktor Markovic
Tourist Impression Booth

Perhaps the greatest stimulator of Serbian tourism, however, has been the EXIT music festival in Novi Sad. This popular music festival is held at the Petrovaradin Fortress for four nights each July. Less than a decade old, EXIT has in recent years attracted well over 150,000 festival-goers, large numbers of whom travel to Novi Sad from the United Kingdom and other parts of Europe.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ BalkanInsight.com. “Serbia's Population in Sharp Decline.” 11 July 2008.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/news/11763/>

¹⁴¹ Central and Eastern European Online Library. South-East Europe Review. Vuković, Drenka. “Migrations of the Labour Force From Serbia.” April 2005.

www.ceeol.com/aspx/getdocument.aspx?logid=5&id=B90CA5B5-F5EE-4312-9588-6C82AE523D35

¹⁴² UNESCO. “World Heritage List.” 2008. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>

¹⁴³ TimesOnline.com. Spurlock, Gareth. “Serbia Shines for the EXIT Festival.” 28 July 2008.

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/travel/holiday_type/music_and_travel/article4385812.ece?token=null&of fset=0&page=1

Transportation

Although Serbia has for centuries has been a crossroads between Europe and modern-day Turkey, its modern transportation infrastructure is not as well developed as in many of the nation's neighboring regions. Geography is an important factor in this regard, as the southern portions of Serbia are quite mountainous in parts and thus discourage expensive road and rail construction that would benefit only small and moderate-sized towns and cities.¹⁴⁴



© Diego Hernandez
Serbian street car

The central transportation corridor in Serbia's southern regions follows the Morava River valley and connects the nation with Macedonia and Greece to the south. At Niš, a road and rail corridor branches off from the Morava to the southeast, providing land connections with the Bulgarian capital of Sofia.

Most of Serbia's international air traffic, both passenger and cargo, transits through Belgrade's Nikola Tesla Airport, which is also the hub of Jat Airways, the national air carrier. Serbia's other international airport is the much smaller Constantine the Great Airport outside Niš.

While Serbia has no coastline, it does have three navigable rivers: the Danube, the Sava, and the Tisza. Of these, the Danube is the most important economically. The two largest Serbian ports on the Danube are at Belgrade and Novi Sad, with the Belgrade port being the only one equipped with a container terminal.¹⁴⁵

Business Outlook

Serbia has made significant economic strides since the fall of the Milošević government in 2000. By the end of the millennium, Serbia's GDP was reduced to just 40% of what its value had been in 1989. Since then, the nation's GDP has averaged a growth rate of over 5% per year, with much of the increase coming in the services sector.¹⁴⁶ Privatization of the banking and industrial sector made great strides after initial halting steps, although several of the largest state-owned companies remain under government control.



© Andrej Filev
Shopping with mom

¹⁴⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Serbia: Economy: Transportation and Telecommunications: Transportation." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654691/Serbia>

¹⁴⁵ Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Belgrade University. *FME Transactions*, Vol. 34. Georgijević, Milosav; and Nenad Zrnić. "Container Terminals in River Ports [p. 201]." 2006. http://www.mas.bg.ac.yu/istrazivanje/biblioteka/publikacije/Transactions_FME/Volume34/4/4_Georgijevic_199-204.pdf

¹⁴⁶ Center for EU Enlargement Studies. Crnobrnja, Milailo; and Nebojša Savić, Jelena Miljković. "Chapter 2. Economic Developments: Executive Summary [pp. 137-138]." http://web.ceu.hu/cens/assets/files/publications/Serbia_complete

Moving forward, Serbia faces several challenges. Its new coalition government that came to power after parliamentary elections in 2008 has reaffirmed the nation's goal of furthering its economic ties with Europe, primarily through its eventual integration into the European Union (EU). Some political issues, however, continue to make that path less than smooth. Serbia's continued cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has been one of these. The declaration of independence from Serbia by Kosovo has also been used by some elements in Serbia's fragmented political landscape as a rallying point for Serbian nationalism, stimulating calls for a change in the country's economic tilt toward the EU.

Foreign direct investment will continue to be an important element in developing a Serbian market-oriented economy. Thus, the economic downturn during the last half of 2008, which widely reduced business investment worldwide, was a particularly troublesome concern for Serbian economic officials. Already, the privatization of Telekom Srbija, one of Serbia's largest and most economically viable state-owned companies, has been put on hold until 2010 because of the global financial crisis, according to the company's president.¹⁴⁷ The Serbian government has in turn responded to the downturn in investment willingness by introducing a novel "rent-to-buy" privatization process, whereby business investors may gain control of a company by putting down the cost of 30% of the company's share. The buyer is then given five years to purchase the remainder of the company's shares.¹⁴⁸

International Organizations

Serbia is currently going through the final stages of negotiations to attain accession to the World Trade Organization. Equally important, the nation has also progressed recently in its candidacy for accession into the European Union, after political uncertainty briefly had slowed the process. In April 2008, the Serbian government and the EU signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) that formalized trade and political links between the two entities and created the framework for eventual Serbian accession into the EU.

Several months later, after the May 2008 parliamentary elections in Serbia in which both the SAA and the EU members' generally supportive stance toward Kosovo's independence became heated campaign issues, the SAA was formally ratified by the Serbian parliament. All 27 EU member-states now must also ratify the Serbian SAA.¹⁴⁹ However, at least one EU member—the Netherlands—has stated that it will not sign the agreement until former Bosnian Serb



Courtesy of Wikipedia
The Western Gates of Belgrade

¹⁴⁷ FDI.net. Business Monitor International. "Privatization: Right Idea, Wrong Time." 2008.

http://www.fdi.net/bmi/bmidisplay.cfm?filename=OEMO_20081110_217234_xml.html

¹⁴⁸ FDI.net. Business Monitor International. "Privatization: Right Idea, Wrong Time." 2008.

http://www.fdi.net/bmi/bmidisplay.cfm?filename=OEMO_20081110_217234_xml.html

¹⁴⁹ Southeast European Times. "Serbian Parliament Ratifies SAA." 9 September 2008.

http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2008/09/09/feature-01

army commander Ratko Mladić is arrested and delivered to the ITCY in The Hague to stand trial on charges of genocide.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ B92.net. Dnevnik, Tanjug. “Dutch FM: Govt. Promised Mladić Arrest.” Southeast Europe Times. 19 October 2008. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=10&dd=19&nav_id=54339

Society

Introduction

Serbia's heritage goes back many centuries and is imprinted by its many cultural interactions with its neighbors in all directions. Thus, Serbian society today reflects influences from Central Europeans (Hungarians), Eastern Europeans (Bulgarians, Romanians), and Southern Europeans (Albanians, Greeks), as well as from smaller groups such as the Romanies (gypsies) and all the South Slavic ethnic groups of the Balkans (Croats, Bosniaks, Slovenes, etc.) If there is a distinguishing cultural identifier for Serbia and Serbians, it would most likely be the Serbian Orthodox Church, which has been one of the few constants during the many centuries of Serbian migrations and diasporas.¹⁵¹



© Diego Hernandez
Friends

Ethnic Groups and Language

With the break-up of Serbia and Montenegro into separate countries, as well as the independence of Kosovo (although not recognized by Serbia), the remaining portion of the country is much more ethnically homogeneous than it was previously. In Central Serbia (all of Serbia excluding Vojvodina), nearly 90% of the population is now Serbian, with Bosniaks (2.5%), Romanies (1.45%), and Albanians (1.1%) being the largest minority groups. Vojvodina is somewhat more ethnically diverse, with Serbs making up 65% of the population, followed by Hungarians (14.3%), Slovaks (2.8%), Croats (2.8%), and Montenegrins (1.75%).¹⁵²

Serbs are the majority population in most parts of the country, with a few notable exceptions. In southern Serbia, the southeastern regions that border Kosovo are dominated by Albanians, and a few municipalities adjacent to the Bulgaria border are dominantly Bulgarian. In parts of the mountainous region of Sandzac, which lies adjacent to both Montenegro and Kosovo, Bosniaks are the majority ethnic group. In Vojvodina, Hungarians are the majority ethnic group in most of the northern municipalities adjacent to Hungary. Slovaks, whose forefathers migrated to Vojvodina in the 18th and 19th century, are the ethnic majority in a few scattered municipalities in the central plains of Vojvodina.¹⁵³ Romanians and Vlachs—groups who speak the same language and are self-identified as



© Shkelzen Rexha
Kosovo Albanian ethnic costume/dance

¹⁵¹ Dispora [Noun]: a dispersion of people originally belonging to one nation [Greek: a scattering]

¹⁵² Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. *Communication* 295, No. 52. "Final Results of the Census 2002." 24 December 2002. <http://www.statserb.sr.gov.yu/zip/esn31.pdf>

¹⁵³ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. *Communication* 295, No. 52. "Final Results of the Census 2002." 24 December 2002. <http://www.statserb.sr.gov.yu/zip/esn31.pdf>

equivalent by some, but not all—are the majority in some of the eastern towns of Vojvodina and Central Serbia, respectively.¹⁵⁴

Unlike other parts of the world, where ethnicity is associated with an individual's first language, Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats, and Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) all speak a South Slavic language that is mutually intelligible among members of each group, with only minor variations in pronunciation and vocabulary. At one time, particularly during the Yugoslav era, this language was referred to as Serbo-Croatian, but today it is more common to refer to it based on individual national identities (Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian). The alphabets used for each language may be either Latin or Cyrillic, but in general the Latin alphabet is used by Croats and Bosniaks, whereas a modified Cyrillic has traditionally been the preferred form with Serbs and Montenegrins.¹⁵⁵ However, as Serbia has increasingly become exposed to Western cultural influences, the Serbian (modified) Latin script has been seen more frequently.¹⁵⁶

Religion

The Serbian Orthodox Church—which dates back to the consecration of Prince Rastko Nemanjić (St. Sava) as archbishop of Serbia in 1219—is the dominant religious body in Serbia. The Serbian Orthodox Church, through stretches of its history, has come to represent Serbian nationalism, most notably during the several centuries of Ottoman domination. Up until 1766, the chief see (religious center) of the Serbian Orthodox Church was for most of its history located in the Kosovo city of Peć¹⁵⁷, which is one reason many modern-day Serbs are opposed to Kosovo independence.



© NeroN BG / Wikipedia.org
Đurđevi Stupovi Orthodox monastery

More so than language, religious affiliation today is one of the defining characteristics of Serbia's ethnic population. Religious Serbs are primarily members of the Serbian Orthodox Church (82.9%), Croats and Hungarians are dominantly Roman Catholics (5.5%), Albanians and Bosniaks are Sunni Muslims (3.2%), and Slovaks are mostly Protestant Christians (1.1%).

Serbia's constitution guarantees religious freedom, and no state religion is identified. However, under a controversial Law on Churches and Religious Communities passed in 2006, those religions not on a list of recognized "traditional" religious communities are required to undergo a long and burdensome registration process. Those unrecognized religions that do not go through the registration process give up their rights to open a

¹⁵⁴ Balkan Investigative Reporting Network. Bozinovic, Suzana; and Sasa Trifunovic. "Vlachs Face Identity Crisis Over Link to Romania." 25 July 2007. <http://www.birn.eu.com/en/95/10/3718/>

¹⁵⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Serbo-Croatian Language." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/535405/Serbo-Croatian-language>

¹⁵⁶ Christian Science Monitor. Itano, Nicole. "Serbian Signs of the Times are not in Cyrillic." 29 May 2008. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0529/p20s01-woeu.html>

¹⁵⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Peć." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/448273/Pec>

bank account, publish religious literature, receive tax exemptions, and carry out other customary legal and business activities. The list of recognized faiths cited in the Serbian religion law consists of the following religious communities: Serbian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, Slovak Evangelical Church, Reformed Christian Church, Evangelical Christian Church, Islamic community, and Jewish community.¹⁵⁸ Some of the Serbian branches of churches that lost their legal status under the religion law include the Baptists, Church of the Nazarene, and Seventh-Day Adventists.¹⁵⁹

Traditions: Celebrations and Holidays

Many of the major holidays in Serbia are religious and tied to the religious calendar of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Since the Orthodox Church continues to use the old Julian calendar, rather than the Gregorian calendar adopted by the West, several of these holidays fall on different days from those celebrated in Protestant- or Roman Catholic-dominated countries. For example, Christmas in Serbia falls on 7 January and Easter is typically celebrated anywhere from one to five weeks later than its date according to the Gregorian calendar.¹⁶⁰ All Serbians, no matter what their religion, typically receive these two holidays off from work (on the following Monday in the case of Easter) as well as Good Friday.¹⁶¹



© Leticia Dáquer
Orthodox Christmas ritual in Serbia

Secular public holidays in Serbia include two days for New Year's (1 and 2 January), International Labor Days (1 and 2 May), and Constitution Day (15 February). In addition, several religious holidays that are not official public holidays are widely celebrated by most Serbians. These include St. Sava's Day (27 January), a feast day, and each individual family's Patron Saint's Day. The latter holiday, known as *Slava* or *Krsna Slava* within Serbia, is a uniquely Serbian tradition in which the family commemorates its Christian faith on a day that is tied to the family's specific patron saint. This saint has been honored by each generation of the family over centuries. The celebratory ritual includes several symbols: a candle, bread (*slavski kolač*), boiled wheat grains (*slavsko žito*), and red wine. After the local priest blesses the *slavski kolač*, friends and visitors are welcomed into the home all day and join the family for a celebration feast.^{162,163}

¹⁵⁸ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report 2008*. "Serbia." 19 September 2008. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108470.htm>

¹⁵⁹ Refworld. Đenević, Drasko. "Serbia: President Signs Controversial Religion Law." 28 April 2006. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,FORUM18,,SRB,,46891998d,0.html>

¹⁶⁰ *Cultures of the World: Serbia and Montenegro*. King, David C. "Festivals: Eastern Orthodox Holidays [pp. 118–119]." 2005. Tarrytown, N.Y: Benchmark Books

¹⁶¹ WorldTravelGuide.net. "Public Holidays: Serbia." 2008. http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/323/public_holidays/Europe/Serbia.html

¹⁶² About.com. Rolek, Barbara. "Krsna Slava." 2008. <http://easteuropeanfood.about.com/od/holidaysfestivals/a/krsnaslava.htm>

One other holiday that has singular significance for Serbians is St. Vitus' Day, or *Vidovdan* (28 June). Not only does this feast day celebrate St. Vitus (*Vid* in Serbian), who is widely venerated in South Slavic regions, but more importantly it marks the date of the Battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389. For many Serbs, this battle expresses a division point in Serbian history: the end of the Kingdom of Serbia's Golden Age and the beginning of nearly 500 years of domination by the Ottoman Empire. The battle itself and the many legends associated with it have combined to forge the Serbians' understanding of their national and historical identity. Its importance is difficult to overestimate.¹⁶⁴

Cuisine

Serbian cuisine is derived from a number of culinary traditions, with dishes influenced by Greek, Turkish, Italian, Hungarian, German, and several other Austrian styles of cooking.¹⁶⁵ These influences have extended over large parts of the Balkans region, and thus many Serbian dishes have popular counterparts in adjacent countries.

Most Serbians eat three meals daily: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Breakfast may include bread, *bureks* (savory pastries filled with cheese, ground meat, mushrooms, or other ingredients), yoghurt, meat, and/or eggs.¹⁶⁶ Lunch is often the largest meal and typically is eaten around 2:00 p.m. This meal generally includes several courses, including soup, a main dish with meat, maybe salad, and dessert. Dinners are much lighter and are eaten around 8:00 p.m.

Even though Serbia is not a large country, regional variations in its cuisine are clearly noticeable. In Vojvodina, for example, Austrian and Hungarian influences are seen in the popularity of goulash, dumplings, noodles, *kulen* (smoked sausage spiced with paprika) and *buhle* (soft buns filled with jams and other fillings).^{167,168,169}

In Serbian kitchens, all varieties of preserves, relishes, and food accompaniments can be found; many of which are homemade. These include *ajvar*, a relish or spread made from red peppers, often with eggplant, garlic, and chili peppers; *kajmak*, a specialty of the southwestern mountain regions of Serbia that is similar in texture



© Hoch Sollst Du Leben
Stuffed cabbage and peppers

¹⁶³ *Cultures of the World: Serbia and Montenegro*. King, David C. "Festivals: Patron Saint's Day [p. 120]." 2005. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark Books

¹⁶⁴ Bill Sterland Consultancy. Sterland, Bill. "Serbian Nationalism, History, and the 'New Europe' [pp. 5–6]." August 1992. <http://www.sterland.biz/Docs/SNH1.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ *Cultures of the World: Serbia and Montenegro*. King, David C. "Food [p. 123]." 2005. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark

¹⁶⁶ BalkanInsight.com. Andjelkovic, Pat. "In Praise of Burek and Boza." 20 October 2008. http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/life_and_style/14106/

¹⁶⁷ *Cultures of the World: Serbia and Montenegro*. King, David C. "Food [p. 124]." 2005. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark

¹⁶⁸ Vegeta.com. "Serbia." No date. <http://www.vegeta.com.au/articles/serbia>

¹⁶⁹ Panacomp. "Serbia: Gastronomy." 2008. <http://www.panacomp.co.yu/engleski/gastronomija.php>

(though not in flavor) to cream cheese; and *kiseli kupus*, the Serbian version of sauerkraut. *Sladko*, a type of sweetened fruit preserve, is also very common.

Popular meat dishes associated with Serbian cuisine include *sarma*—grape leaves, or more often, fermented cabbage leaves (like sauerkraut, but whole leaf) rolled around minced meat and other fillings, *ćevapi*—grilled rolls of minced pork or beef served with *kajmak* and chopped onions on the side, *podvarak*—roasted pork with *kiseli kupus* and onions, and *pljeskavica* (spicy grilled pork or beef patties served with onions).

Bread has long been a staple of most Serbian meals and is associated with many Serbian Orthodox religious rituals. *Krsna Slava*, the religious celebration in which Orthodox Serbians celebrate the patron saint of their family, is commemorated with *slavski kolać*, a circular bread loaf in which religious and family seals are often imprinted into the upper crust.¹⁷⁰

Beverages

Fruit juices and mineral waters are popular in Serbia, together with *boza*, a mildly fermented traditional drink usually made from corn.¹⁷¹ Serbian coffee is traditionally made in a variation of the Turkish style (water and sugar is boiled with the grounds and then poured into a cup). Herbal and regular teas are far less popular, yet they are sometimes a comfort beverage or consumed as a medicinal supplement.

Beer is a favorite alcoholic drink in Serbia. There are numerous breweries located in Serbia, many of which are now owned by international companies such as Carlsberg and Heineken, and Efes. Homemade and commercial fruit brandies, known as *rakija*, are also popular. One of the most common of these is *šljivovica*, which is made from plums and is frequently called the Serbian national drink.



© photos.de.tlbo / flickr.com
Rakija

¹⁷⁰ BreadCulture.net. Vujadinović, Dimitrije. “The Slava Loaf (Cake) and Dining Table in the Serbian Tradition.” No date. http://www.breadculture.net/web/files/14/en/slavski_hleb_prevod.pdf

¹⁷¹ BalkanInsight.com. Andjelkovic, Pat. “In Praise of Burek and Boza.” 20 October 2008. http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/life_and_style/14106/

Arts

Music

Traditional folk music has remained popular in Serbia, particularly in more rural areas, but Western culture continues to place an indelible stamp on Serbian music. A wildly diverse cross-section of styles can be heard today in the clubs of Belgrade and other large Serbian cities, from rock to blues to jazz to fusion. During the 1990s, Serbia's own contribution, of a sort, to the fusion scene was turbo-folk, a meshing of traditional Serbian folk styles with techno-pop dance rhythms. Turbo-folk performers such as Ceca became the most identifiable musical stars within Serbia. However, the music itself came under attack from many within the country, who viewed it as the ubiquitous state-sponsored soundtrack for the nationalistic policies of the Milošević era. Turbo-folk's popularity ebbed somewhat after his fall in 2000, but today it has once again risen to be the most popular musical genre within Serbia. Although many Serbians continue to view it with contempt, others, less harshly, treat it as a guilty pleasure.¹⁷²



© Mo Belgrado
Bagpipe street performer

A far more traditional but much more respected Serbian musical genre is *blehmuzika*, a brass-instrument-dominated style. Its cadences echo the military music of Turkey, overlain on melodies that often spring from Romani (gypsy) folk tunes. Each August, the small village of Guća attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors to a music festival that showcases *blehmuzika* bands from across the Balkans.¹⁷³ *Blehmuzika*'s roots may be in folk traditions, but it continues to evolve, and some music critics consider it the consummate jazz form of the Balkans. Legendary jazz trumpeter Miles Davis, upon hearing the thumping rhythms and feverish melodies at Guća, observed, "I didn't know you could play trumpet that way."¹⁷⁴

Film

Many Serbian films in recent years have received awards at film festivals around the world. Not surprisingly, war and violence has frequently been a significant thematic element in many of these films, many times using symbolism, absurdist elements, and surrealism as techniques to convey the stories. One of Serbia's most noteworthy modern directors is Emir Kusturica, a Bosniak from Sarajevo by birth who later converted to the Serbian Orthodox faith. Among his frenetically energetic works, which often use *blehmuzika* bands as a



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Emir Kusturica

¹⁷² Chrisitan Science Monitor, Itano, Nicole. "Turbo-Folk Music is the Sound of Serbia Feeling Sorry for Itself." 5 May 2008. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0505/p20s01-woeu.html?page=1>

¹⁷³ BBC News, UK Version. Prodger, Matt. "Serbian Town Has Much to Trumpet." 7 August 2005. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4129572.stm>

¹⁷⁴ RockPaperScissors. "Serbia Burning Brass Set Mile's Ears on Fire." 2002. http://www.rockpaperscissors.biz/index.cfm/fuseaction/current.press_release/project_id/29.cfm

musical Greek chorus, are *Underground* (1995),¹⁷⁵ an allegory tracing the history of Yugoslavia that ends in 1992 as the country dissolves in a series of ethnic wars; and *Life is a Miracle* (2005), set in a rural town on the Bosnian-Serbian border amidst the Bosnian war.¹⁷⁶

Goran Paskaljević (*Cabaret Balkan*, 1998; *Midwinter's Night Dream*, 2004) is a Serbian expatriate who fled his country during the Milošević era and has since directed several biting films that explore the psychological underpinnings of the ethnic wars that enveloped the Balkans during the 1990s, and how Serbians have coped in the aftermath of that experience.¹⁷⁷

Literature

The earliest Serbian literature dating back to the medieval era is mostly church-related, including works by Saint Sava and King Stefan II Nemanja, who wrote about the lives of Orthodox religious leaders. In the 19th century, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić made several contributions to Serbian literature, including the creation of a standardized Serbian Cyrillic alphabet, the compilation of the first Serbian dictionary, and the collection and publication of several volumes of Serbian folk stories and poems. Several poems from the latter volumes described the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, and the events preceding it and following it. These and other epic poems about the Kosovo battle remain familiar to this day to all Serbians and have become a key component of Serbian national identity.

Serbian literature came to international recognition with the writings of Ivo Andrić, who won the Nobel Peace Prize for Literature in 1961. (Andrić, who lived much of his adult life in Belgrade, was born and raised in what is now Bosnia and Herzegovina to parents who were ethnic Croats. Thus, he is now considered a major literary figure in three countries.^{178,179}) Andrić's most famous work, *The Bridge on the Drina* (1945), uses the Drina River and its bridge at Višegrad (in modern-day Bosnia and Herzegovina) to symbolize the separations and connections between the various ethnic groups living in the region.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Andrić Ivo

Among modern Serbian writers, Milorad Pavić's books have drawn attention for their unique narrative constructions. One of the most widely read of these is his *Dictionary of*

¹⁷⁵ New York Times. Maslin, Janet. "Movie Review: Underground (1995)." 12 October 1996.

<http://movies.nytimes.com/mem/movies/review.html?res=9C01E7DA103EF931A25753C1A960958260>

¹⁷⁶ New York Times Magazine. Halpern, Dan. "The (Mis)Directions of Emir Kusturica." 8 May 2005.

http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/08/magazine/08EMIR.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1

¹⁷⁷ International Herald Tribune. "Goran Paskaljevic: A Serbian Director's Eye Remains Fixed on Uncomfortable Truths." 9 January 2008. <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/01/09/arts/paska.php?page=1>

¹⁷⁸ Books and Writers. Liukkonen, Petri. "Ivo Andrić (1892–1975)." 2008.

<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/andric.htm>

¹⁷⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Ivo Andrić." 2008.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/24035/Ivo-Andric#ref=ref188497>

the Khazars: A Lexicon Novel, first published in 1984. As Pavić himself states, “I was the most unread writer in my country until 1984, after which I became the most widely read.”¹⁸⁰ *Dictionary* takes the form of three cross-referenced encyclopedias containing entries about the religious conversion of a fictional version of the Khazars, an ancient Asiatic people. It is written from the perspective of experts relying on historical documents from Christian, Judaic, and Muslim sources, respectively. The book also comes in “male” and “female” versions that differ in only one significant paragraph. Underlying the playful nature of the book’s unique presentation, which may be read in several different ways, are questions concerning the complexities of truth.

Traditional Dress

Serbians today dress similarly to their counterparts in other European countries, and traditional folk dress is mostly restricted to Serbian cultural festivals.¹⁸¹ However, several items of traditional Serbian dress are quite distinctive and continue to be widely marketed by retailers specializing in folk clothing. Among these are *opanci*, leather sandals with curled, upturned toes that are fastened to the feet by ankle straps. The *šajkača*, a traditional hat characterized by its V-shaped top, is still worn by elder villagers in some rural areas. The hat became a symbol of the Serbian Army in World War I and Chetnik resistance fighters during World War II. Later, it was re-appropriated as a Serbian nationalist symbol by Bosnian Serb commanders during the Bosnian War in the 1990s.¹⁸²



© Phillip Capper
Casually dressed

Folk Culture and Folklore

Much of Serbia’s rich folklore is embedded in the numerous epic poems and folk songs that have been passed down for centuries from one generation to another. These epic poems and songs were traditionally spoken and sung by wandering minstrels (*guslars*), who played a one-stringed instrument known as a *gusle*.^{183,184}

When Vuk Stefanović Karadžić’s collections of these poems and songs were published during the first half of the 19th century, they were a huge success throughout Europe. German linguist/folklorist Jacob Grimm (of Grimm’s fairy tales) learned Serbian in order

¹⁸⁰ Khazars.com. Pavić, Milorad. “Autobiography.” No date. <http://www.khazars.com/en/autobiography/>

¹⁸¹ *Nations in Transition: Serbia and Montenegro*. Schuman, Michael A. “8. Daily Life: Dress [pp. 125–126]. 2004. New York: Facts on File, Inc.

¹⁸² MySanAntonio.com. San Antonio Express News. Kampschror, Beth. “Thousands Converge on Serbian Village for Annual Gypsy Festival.” No date.

http://www.mysanantonio.com/life/MYSA091706_1Q_serbia_d5708b_html.html

¹⁸³ *Folklore and Folklife*. Dorson, Richard A., Ed. Oisnas, Felix J. “3. Folk Epic [p. 111].” 1982. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press

¹⁸⁴ *Romantic Drama: A Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages*. Hanak, Miroslav J.; and Nadežda Andreeva-Popova. “Folklore and Romantic Drama [p. 128].” 1994. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company

to read the original stories in their native language. Translations were carried out by illustrious figures such as the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin and the British political economist (and later diplomat) Sir John Bowring.

Most famous of the Serbian epic poem cycles are the recounts of the Battle of Kosovo, an actual event into which mythological elements have been woven. Other epic poems concern themselves with the period following the Battle of Kosovo, when most of what is now central Serbia was under Ottoman domination. During this time, oral epic poetry became an intrinsically important way in which Serbs preserved their historical and cultural identity under the assimilative pressures of the Ottomans. Many of the poems focus on the resistance against the Turks waged by *hajduks* and *uskoks*, who were raiders against the Ottoman Empire that lived within the Ottoman-controlled lands and on its borders, respectively.¹⁸⁵

Another of these poem cycles centers on Prince Marko, historically a regional ruler who became a Turkish vassal after his father, King Vukašin, was killed by Ottoman forces at the Battle of the Maritsa in 1371. Marko's legendary feats in the epic poems far transcend anything in the historical record and include supernatural accomplishments as well.¹⁸⁶ The Marko poems also include numerous references to his mother Jevrosima whose wise counsel provides a moral compass for her son.¹⁸⁷



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Prince Marko Kraljević

Sports and Recreation

The most popular spectator sport in Serbia is football (soccer). Virtually all Serbian cities of any size have a local stadium. The national team, competing as Yugoslavia between 1992 and 2003 and as Serbia and Montenegro from 2003 until 2006, has had isolated success in international competition since the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. The high point came in 1998, when their team moved up to the second round of the World Cup.

Basketball is also tremendously popular in Serbia, and the country has sent several of its star players on to the National Basketball League, including All Stars Vlade Divac and Pedrag Stojaković. Tennis has also gained popularity in Serbia as its players have continued to excel in international competition. As of late 2008, three Serbian tennis players were ranked in the top five of their sport:



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Jelena Jankovic

¹⁸⁵ Serbian Unity Congress. Milosevic-Djordjevic, Nada. "The Oral Tradition: History." 2008.

http://www.serbianunity.net/culture/history/Hist_Serb_Culture/chi/Oral_Tradition.html/

¹⁸⁶ *Folklore and Folklife*. Dorson, Richard A., Ed. Oisnas, Felix J. "3. Folk Epic [p. 103]." 1982. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press

¹⁸⁷ Serbian Unity Congress. Milosevic-Djordjevic, Nada. "The Oral Tradition: History." 2008.

http://www.serbianunity.net/culture/history/Hist_Serb_Culture/chi/Oral_Tradition.html/

Jelena Janković (women's number one), Ana Ivanović (women's number five), and Novak Đoković (men's number three).^{188,189} In 2008, both Ivanović and Đoković joined Monica Seles as the only Serbian-born players to win Grand Slam tennis events.¹⁹⁰

Outdoor recreational opportunities are abundant in Serbia, particularly in its mountainous areas, and include hiking, fishing, skiing, horseback riding, mountain climbing, rock climbing, and paragliding.¹⁹¹ Urban dwellers in Belgrade who do not wish to leave the comforts of the city may prefer strolls along pedestrian ways in town or in malls in the suburban areas. Evening entertainment includes cafés and a very diverse nightclub scene that carries on past late into the night and into the dawn.¹⁹²

Gender and Family Issues

Serbia's low birth rate, far below the replacement rate needed to keep the population from dropping, has been a subject of concern for many years. Recently, concerns expressed about the declining fertility rate have been tied to sustaining a viable Serbian work force. Already Serbia's median age is higher than the European average.¹⁹³



While many European countries have declining birth rates, Serbia's situation is not due to an increasing number of women entering the workforce and choosing to delay having children or to not have them at all. The precipitous drop in the birth rate during the 1990s was blamed on the chaotic economic conditions of the time, but after a brief increase following the end of the Kosovo War, the birth rate has continued to decrease even as the overall economy improved.¹⁹⁴ Government officials in Vojvodina, where some of the sharpest declines in births have occurred, even instituted a financial incentive package for

¹⁸⁸ ESPN.com. "Women's Tennis WTA Rankings – 2008." 24 November 2008.

<http://sports.espn.go.com/sports/tennis/rankings?year=2008&type=2>

¹⁸⁹ ESPN.com. "Men's Tennis ATP Rankings – 2008." 24 November 2008.

<http://sports.espn.go.com/sports/tennis/rankings?year=2008&type=1>

¹⁹⁰ The Independent. Newman, Paul. "Serve and Volley: The Tennis School That Conquered the World." 9 July 2008. <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/serb-and-volley-the-tennis-school-that-conquered-the-world-842718.html>

¹⁹¹ *Cultures of the World: Serbia and Montenegro*. King, David C. "Leisure: Seasonal Activities [pp. 108–109]. 2005. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark Books

¹⁹² DW-World. Gruber, Barbara. "Serbia: Belgrade's Nightlife Floats on the Danube." 22 August 2006. <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2129528,00.html>

¹⁹³ European Training Foundation. Arandarenko, Mihail. "Transition from Education to Work: Serbia Country Report." January 2007 (working document).

[http://www.etf.europa.eu/pubmgmt.nsf/\(getAttachment\)/C3E097CB7691F509C125740200550F35/\\$File/NOTE7CEL6L.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/pubmgmt.nsf/(getAttachment)/C3E097CB7691F509C125740200550F35/$File/NOTE7CEL6L.pdf)

¹⁹⁴ New York Times. Harden, Blaine. "Crisis in the Balkans: Population; Stresses of Milosevic's Rule Blamed for Decline in Births." 5 July 1999.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?sec=health&res=9E01E0D6103DF936A35754C0A96F958260>

mothers, guaranteeing a monthly income for mothers having three or more children until their youngest child turns one.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Institute for War and Peace Reporting. Sper, Darko. "Falling Birthrate Empties Villages." 5 October 2005. http://iwpr.net/?p=bcr&s=f&o=256891&apc_state=henpbc

Security

Introduction

For those who continue to see Serbia through the lens of its role in the numerous wars that gripped the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, it may come as a surprise that Serbia today has at least moderately good relations with virtually all its neighbors. The nationalistic fervor that fueled the “Greater Serbia” ethnic campaigns in that decade has receded as the nation’s government has pursued policies to strengthen its relations with its neighbors and to acknowledge and address atrocities committed during the Milošević era.^{196 197}



© Muleni / Wikipedia.org
President of Serbia, Boris Tadić

However, the fate of Kosovo continues to be a wild card in determining how well Serbia will continue to progress toward economic and political alliance with the ever-growing European Union. Because most EU members have recognized Kosovo, some political factions within Serbia have argued that Serbia should be looking to Russia as the key foreign relationship for Serbia’s future.¹⁹⁸ Although Serbia’s government is presently made up of a coalition of pro-EU parties, the uncertainty concerning the Kosovo situation has seemingly played a role in some governmental decisions, including the 2008 sale of controlling interest in Naftna Industrija Srbije (NIS), Serbia’s national oil company, to Russian energy giant Gazprom.¹⁹⁹

Military

Serbia’s military consists of the Serbian Land Forces Command, the Air and Air Defense Forces Command, and the Joint Operations Command. Because Serbia does not have a coastline, it does not have a navy, although a small river flotilla patrols the Danube. Military participation is mandatory for all Serbians, and nine months of active-duty service are required for Serbians between the ages of 19 and 35. After serving on active



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Serbia and Montenegro Air Defense SA-13 Strela-10

¹⁹⁶ EU Observer. Licht, Sonja. “Comment: Europe Should Shed Serbia Stereotypes.” 14 November 2008. <http://euobserver.com/15/27101>

¹⁹⁷ People’s Daily Online. Xinhua. “Good-Neighbor Relationship, Top Priority of Serbia: PM.” 29 May 2007. http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200705/29/eng20070529_378798.html

¹⁹⁸ International Herald Tribune. Bilefsky, Dan. “Tomislav Nikolic, Far Right Leader in Serbia, Follows Own Path.” 2 May 2008. <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2008/05/02/europe/profile.php?page=2>

¹⁹⁹ The Guardian. Bancroft, Ian. “Russia’s Serbian Bargain.” 2 January 2009. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jan/02/russia-balkans>

duty, each Serbian then shifts to reserve status that continues to age 60 for men and 50 for women. By 2010, however, Serbia hopes to move to an all-volunteer army.²⁰⁰ Currently the Serbian military has 28,000 active members, and plans have been announced to increase to 30,000 in the future.²⁰¹ The military budget presently runs around 2.4% of GDP.²⁰²

From March to June 1999, military and strategic targets throughout Serbia were bombed by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air forces with a goal of forcing an end to brutal Serbian military action in Kosovo. Remarkably, fewer than eight years later, Serbia became a member of NATO's Partnership for Peace program—although any intentions on Serbia's part to eventually seek NATO membership became extremely unlikely after Kosovo declared its independence in 2008.^{203,204} The Serbian military also entered into a State Partnership Program with the Ohio National Guard (U.S.A.) in September 2006 and has held several joint training programs in both countries, which have focused on building the Serbian non-commissioned officers (NCO) corps.^{205,206}

U.S.–Serbia

Relations between the United States and Serbia have generally been improving since 2000, although U.S. recognition of Kosovo in February 2008 put a strain in the relationship. Serbia's ambassador to Washington was recalled to Serbia shortly after the U.S. recognition of Kosovo. In addition, the U.S. embassy in Belgrade was overrun by angry protesters and parts of it were set on fire.²⁰⁷ While Serbian officials continue to insist that Kosovo is still a constituent of their country, the situation cooled off somewhat after the May 2008 parliamentary elections brought a new governing coalition to power. In October 2008, Serbia's ambassador returned to his post in Washington, D.C.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁰ Central Intelligence Agency. The World Factbook. "Serbia." 4 December 2008.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

²⁰¹ Novosti. Krsnik, D. "Srbija jaća svoju vojsku." 21 September 2008.

<http://www.novosti.rs/code/navigate.php?Id=4&status=jedna&vest=128991&datum=2008-09-21>

²⁰² Advanced Research and Assessment Group. Popović, Djordje. "Whither the Serbian Military After Kosovan Independence?" May 2008. [www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/balkan/08\(18\)DP.pdf](http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/balkan/08(18)DP.pdf)

²⁰³ Ministry of Defence, Republic of Serbia. Popović, Djordje. "Partnership for Peace Programme." 2008. http://www.mod.gov.rs/eng/mvs/partnerstvo_za_mir/index_pzm.php

²⁰⁴ Advanced Research and Assessment Group. Popović, Djordje. "Whither the Serbian Military After Kosovan Independence?" May 2008. [www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/balkan/08\(18\)DP.pdf](http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/balkan/08(18)DP.pdf)

²⁰⁵ National Guard Bureau, U.S. Department of the Army. "Ohio, Serbia Continue Cooperation, Training." July 2008. http://www.ngb.army.mil/news/archives/2008/07/071408-ohio_serbia.aspx

²⁰⁶ Ministry of Defence [sic], Republic of Serbia. "State Partnership Program With the National Guard of Ohio." 2008. <http://www.mod.gov.rs/eng/mvs/ohajo/ohajo.php>

²⁰⁷ Washington Post. Finn, Peter; and Robin Wright. "U.S. Embassy in Belgrade Overrun." 22 February 2008. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2008/02/21/ST2008022102536.html>

²⁰⁸ Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Serbia." December 2008. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm>

Presently, the United States annually provides Serbia with about USD 50 million of foreign aid, most of which is earmarked for political and economic reform.²⁰⁹ U.S. senators threatened to cut off this money after a strain in relations occurred between the two countries in July 2008.²¹⁰ The bilateral tensions were set off when a Serbian basketball player at the State University of New York at Binghamton fled the U.S. using an illegally issued passport provided by the Serbian Deputy Counsel in New York. The player's flight from the U.S. occurred after he was charged and then released on bail for the severe beating of another student in a bar fight.²¹¹ Serbia refused to extradite the player, citing a Serbian constitutional restriction on acceding to such a request. However, Serbian police did place him under administrative detention in October 2008 after U.S. law enforcement officials forwarded their investigation files to Serbian prosecutors.²¹² While the U.S. continues to push for the player's extradition, the October arrest in Serbia seems to have helped lessen diplomatic tensions between the two governments.²¹³



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US Army soldiers from TF Sabre training in Serbia

Relations With Neighboring Countries

Bulgaria

Echoing a response by many of its neighbors, Serbia's relations with Bulgaria became strained after the Bulgarian government recognized Kosovo as an independent state in March 2008. The Serbian ambassador in Sofia was recalled for two months as a protest against Bulgaria's decision on Kosovo.



© Jordan Sitkin
Serbia / Bulgaria border

Despite this bump in the diplomatic road between the two nations, Bulgaria and Serbia have generally shared a positive, cooperative relationship. Bulgaria is presently a member of the European Union, and has pledged its willingness to act as an advocate on behalf of Serbia's EU accession efforts.²¹⁴

²⁰⁹ Congressional Research Service. Woehrel, Steven. "Serbia: Current Issues and U.S. Policy." <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/102627.pdf>

²¹⁰ B92. Beta. "U.S.: Košević Case Very Serious." 6 August 2008. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=08&dd=06&nav_id=52490

²¹¹ ABC News. Associated Press. Matthews, Karen. "Beating at N.Y. Bar Strains U.S.-Serbia Relations." 25 July 2008. <http://abcnews.go.com/US/WireStory?id=5447149&page=1>

²¹² B92. "Fugitive Student Košević Arrested." 28 October 2008. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=10&dd=28&nav_id=54546

²¹³ PressConnects.com. Ebbeling, Vanessa. "Serbs Question Fugitive in Beating Case." 29 October 2008. <http://www.pressconnects.com/article/20081029/NEWS01/810290326/1006&theme=FUGITIVE>

²¹⁴ EmPortal. BTA. Koev, Nikolai. "Presidents of Serbia, Bulgaria Discuss Issues From Agenda of Bilateral Relations." 20 November 2008. <http://www.emportal.co.yu/en/news/serbia/69895.html>

Infrastructure linkages are important issues between the two countries at present.²¹⁵ Sofia, Bulgaria's capital is connected to the western Balkans and onwards to Central Europe by an aging road and rail system that links to Serbia's main north-south transportation corridor in Niš. The road system between Niš and Sofia is currently being upgraded to a four-lane highway status on the Serbian side of the border, and similar improvements should soon begin on the Bulgarian side.^{216,217} The two countries also may be connected, within the next five years, by the South Stream pipeline carrying Russian natural gas to Austria and Slovenia.²¹⁸

Romania

Serbia and Romania enjoy strong relations. Like Bulgaria, the Romanian government has been supportive of Serbia's bid to join the EU.²¹⁹ In recent years, the two countries have also been working together to obtain the approvals and funding to construct a pipeline that would transport Caspian Sea oil and possibly Central Asian oil from the Black Sea port of Constanta to the Italian port of Trieste.²²⁰

Romania is one of only five members of the European Union that, as of December 2008, had not recognized Kosovo as an independent state. (The others are Spain, Slovakia, Greece, and Cyprus.)²²¹

Romania has agreed to send soldiers and police to Kosovo as part of the European Union Rule of Law (known by the acronym EULEX) mission, and Romania's President Popescu Tariceanu has pointed to Romania's participation as evidence that the mission will remain neutral with regards to the ultimate status of Kosovo.²²²



© Johann Bitsoenn
Trikulje Fortress, Danube river
between Serbia and România

²¹⁵ EmPortal. BTA. Koev, Nikolai. "Presidents of Serbia, Bulgaria Discuss Issues From Agenda of Bilateral Relations." 20 November 2008. <http://www.emportal.co.yu/en/news/serbia/69895.html>

²¹⁶ NewBalkan.com. Government of Serbia. "Section of Nis-Sofia Highway Opened." 5 November 2007. http://www.newbalkan.com/index.php?en_outer/popup_art_email&page%5Bid_article%5D=9127

²¹⁷ PropertyWiseBulgaria. Dnevnik. "Trakia Highway Concession Deal Is Signed." 18 January 2008. http://www.propertywisebulgaria.com/article/trakia-highway-concession-deal-is-signed/id_2250/catid_12

²¹⁸ RIA Novosti. "More Countries Join South Stream Pipeline Project." No date. <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20080416/105254173.html>

²¹⁹ EUBusiness.com. "Romania, Serbia, Suggest Three Way Talks With Italy Over EU Bid." No date. <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/1224856922.48>

²²⁰ Reuters.com. "Funds Still Short for Pan-European Oil Pipeline." 4 June 2008. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/rbssEnergyNews/idUKL0488037320080604?pageNumber=1&virtualBrandChannel=0>

²²¹ KosavaThankYous.com. "Who Recognized Kosova as an Independent State?" December 2008. <http://www.kosovothankyou.com/>

²²² Daily Survey. Beta. "Tadic and Romanian Prime Minister on EULEX in Kosovo." 24 October 2008. http://www.mfa.gov.yu/Bilteni/Engleski/b271008_e.html#N15

Hungary

Hungary and Serbia share a long history, particularly in Vojvodina, the area of modern-day Serbia that was part of the Kingdom of Hungary for a large part of the second millennium C.E. Today, ethnic Hungarians constitute a significant minority in Vojvodina and overall are the second largest ethnic group in Serbia.



© Meelosh / Wikipedia.org
Serbian border crossing to Hungary near Horgos

Hungary is a member of both the EU and of NATO. As part of the latter organization, it was the only neighbor of Serbia that participated in the 1999 NATO bombing raids during the Kosovo War (current NATO members Bulgaria and Romania did not join the organization until 2004). During the Kosovo conflict, Hungarian airfields were used for missions during the last weeks of the bombing raids, but the Hungarian government refused to let the country be used as a staging area for ground attacks.^{223,224}

Since the fall of the Milošević government, relations between Hungary and Serbia have improved. In a November 2008 meeting between the Serbian and Hungarian Prime Ministers, the primary focus in the talks was on continuing to improve economic links between the two countries and establishing the role that Hungary could play in helping advance Serbia's accession into the EU.²²⁵ Hungary, like most of the EU members, did recognize Kosovo after it declared its independence, triggering a two-month period in which the Serbian ambassador to Hungary was called back to Belgrade.²²⁶ The two countries, however, quickly returned to a normalized relationship after the ambassador's reinstatement in Budapest in July 2008.

²²³ New York Times. Tagliabue, John. "Crisis in the Balkans: The Neighborhood: Front-Line Hungary Feels Anxiety." 2 May 1999.
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A0DEED61F3DF931A35756C0A96F958260&sec=&spn=&pagewanted=print>

²²⁴ Hellenic Resources Network. Macedonian Press Agency. "Hungary-Based US Aircrafts Have Began Raids Against Yugoslavia." 1 June 1999. <http://www.hri.org/news/greek/mpab/1999/99-06-01.mpab.html#06>

²²⁵ EmPortal. Tanjug. "Hungary Supports Serbia's EU Integration." 22 November 2008.
<http://www.emportal.co.yu/en/news/serbia/70318.html>

²²⁶ RIA Novosti. "Serbia to Reinstall EU Ambassadors Recalled Over Serbia." 24 July 2008.
<http://en.rian.ru/world/20080724/114855044.html>

Croatia

One of the early conflicts in the Yugoslavian Wars of the 1990s took place in Croatia, when ethnic Serbs in Croatia, favoring continued political alignment with Serbia (which was still part of a reduced Yugoslavia at the time), battled Croatian military forces. Ultimately, the Yugoslav People's Army came to the support of the Croatian Serbs. After early successes by the Serbian forces amidst brutal fighting that completely devastated some cities (such as the border town of Vukovar) the tide turned and Croatian forces regained many of the regions that had come under Serb control.²²⁷ The final push by the Croatian military, a 1995 mission known as Operation Storm, regained the remaining Serb-controlled areas and also led to an estimated exodus of 200,000 ethnic Serbs who fled their homes in Croatia into Serbia.²²⁸ Over the years, many of those refugees have either returned to their homes in Croatia or have taken on Serbian citizenship. At the end of 2007, approximately 70,000 ethnic Serbs from Croatia were still considered refugees.²²⁹



© Arthur Karnst
Duty free shop on Croatia border

Serbia and Croatia established diplomatic relations in 1996, but the relationship between the two countries still remains somewhat clouded by the events that occurred in the 1990s.²³⁰ In 1999, Croatia filed a suit against Serbia in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) based on claims that the government of Serbia had provided assistance in war crimes and genocide carried out by Serbs in Croatia during the fighting in the early 1990s. In November 2008, after the case was cleared for trial, Serbia immediately filed a counter-suit in the ICJ against Croatia for its alleged role in ethnic cleansing of Serbs in eastern Croatia during Operation Storm in 1995.²³¹

Bosnia and Herzegovina

In fighting that chronologically paralleled the war in Croatia during the early 1990s, Bosnian Serbs, with assistance from the Yugoslav People's Army, battled ethnic Croats and Bosniaks for territorial control of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ethnic massacres and medieval-style sieges of cities such as Sarajevo characterized this bloody conflict. It formally ended in November 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord. Today, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a dual-entity state comprising the Federation of Bosnia and

²²⁷ BBC News, International Version. Partos, Gabriel. "Vukovar Massacre: What Happened." No date. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2988304.stm>

²²⁸ BBC News, International Version. Prodger, Matt. "Evicted Serbs Remember Storm." 5 August 2005. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4747379.stm>

²²⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Statistics Database." 2008. <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/45c063a82.html>

²³⁰ New York Times. "Serbia and Croatia Agree to Diplomatic Relations." 8 August 1996. [http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E03E3DB153EF93BA3575BC0A960958260&n=Top/News/World/Countries and Territories/Serbia and Montenegro](http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E03E3DB153EF93BA3575BC0A960958260&n=Top/News/World/Countries%20and%20Territories/Serbia%20and%20Montenegro)

²³¹ SofiaEcho.com. ~~BalkanInsight.com~~. "Serbia Announces Countersuit Against Croatia." 19 November 2008. http://www.sofiaecho.com/article/serbia-announces-countersuit-against-croatia/id_33043/catid_68

Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. The former entity is dominantly populated by Bosniaks and Croats, whereas the latter consists of mostly ethnic Serbs. Serbia's border with Bosnia and Herzegovina adjoins the Republika Srpska regions.²³² Portions of this border, much of which runs along the Drina River, have not been formally demarcated.²³³

Although Serbia's relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina have been relatively stable since the Dayton Accord was signed, there are concerns that this stability could abruptly shatter if the Republika Srpska were ever to push for independence, thereby possibly triggering another round of ethnic fighting.^{234,235} Such fears briefly flared in February 2008 when Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia, and they were reignited in October 2008 during debate over a proposed political measure that Bosnian Serb leaders felt would jeopardize their ability to effectively veto legislation.^{236,237}



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Signing the final peace agreement, December 14, 1995

Bosnia and Herzegovina has not recognized Kosovo, joining Romania as the only Serbian neighbor not to have established formal relations with the fledgling Kosovo government. Given the continuing strong ethnic division in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there would seem to be little chance that Bosnian recognition of Kosovo will be forthcoming any time soon.²³⁸

As with its other former Yugoslavian neighbors, Serbia's relations with Bosnia are heavily weighted by the events of the 1990s. In February 2007, the International Court of Justice cleared Serbia of direct responsibility for genocide during the Bosnian War, but it did rule that Serbia was guilty of failing to prevent the genocidal massacre of Bosniaks that had occurred at the east Bosnian town of Srebrenica in July 1995. In addition, Serbia was ordered to hand over Ratko Mladić (the Bosnian Serb general accused of directing

²³² Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Bosnia and Herzegovina." May 2008. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2868.htm>

²³³ Central Intelligence Agency. The World Factbook. "Serbia." 4 December 2008.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html>

²³⁴ Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Bosnia and Herzegovina." May 2008. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2868.htm>

²³⁵ SFGate.com. New York Times. Bilefsky, Dan. "Prospects Loom for Another Bosnian War." 18 December 2008. [http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/12/18/MNRD14NLU1.DTL&type=printable)

[bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/12/18/MNRD14NLU1.DTL&type=printable](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/12/18/MNRD14NLU1.DTL&type=printable)

²³⁶ International Relations and Security Network, ETH Zurich. Alic, Anes. "Bosnia Serbs Play Up Secession Threats Over Kosovo." 22 February 2008. <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/Security-Watch/Detail/?ots591=4888CAA0-B3DB-1461-98B9-E20E7B9C13D4&lng=en&id=54209>

²³⁷ SFGate.com. New York Time. Bilefsky, Dan. "Prospects Loom for Another Bosnian War." 18 December 2008. <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/12/17/MNRD14NLU1.DTL>

²³⁸ Thaindian News. Deutsche Presse-Agentur. Zdravko, Ljubas. "Kosovo's Independence to be Monitored by Bosnia-Herzegovina." 17 February 2008. http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/politics/kosovos-independence-to-be-monitored-by-bosnia-herzegovina_10018300.html

the massacre at Srebrenica) to the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).²³⁹

Montenegro

Montenegro, which until 2006 was Serbia's partner in the last vestige of Yugoslavia, continues to share strong political and economic connections to Serbia. As Montenegro slowly develops its own formal network of diplomatic relations, the two countries have agreed for Serbia to provide consular services to Montenegrins in nations in which Montenegro does not yet have its own diplomatic mission. Montenegro is beginning to strengthen trade ties (to nearby EU nations such as Italy, Greece, and Slovenia) but it still relies on Serbia for roughly 40 to 50% of its imports.^{240,241}



© Amanda Robinson
Kotor, Montenegro

Despite the generally strong relations between the two nations, Serbia expelled Montenegro's ambassador to Serbia in October 2008 after Montenegro formally recognized Kosovo. This diplomatic response was sharper than the earlier recalls of Serbian ambassadors to EU nations, the United States, and other countries that had recognized Kosovo's independence. Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić defended the move by stating that "regional countries have special responsibility in preserving peace and stability in the Balkans."²⁴² Timing was also a factor in the decision to expel the Montenegrin ambassador, as Montenegro's recognition of Kosovo came just after the United Nations voted to seek a legal opinion from the International Court of Justice on Kosovo independence.^{243,244} Nonetheless, the Serbian move proved to be simply a short-term form of protest, as one month later Serbian President Boris Tadić reversed course and called on Montenegro to nominate a new ambassador for the Belgrade post.²⁴⁵

²³⁹ SF Gate.com. Associated Press. Max, Arthur. "Court: Serbia Failed to Prevent Genocide." 26 February 2007. <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2007/02/26/international/i033600S38.DTL&type=politics>

²⁴⁰ International Trade Centre/World Trade Organization. "Trade Performance HS: Imports and Exports of Montenegro (2006, in USD thousands)." 2008. http://www.intracen.org/appl1/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI_P.aspx?IN=00&RP=070&YR=2006&IL=00 All industries&TY=T

²⁴¹ Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Montenegro." December 2008. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/70949.htm>

²⁴² B92. Beta, Tanjug. "Serbia Expels Montenegrin Ambassador." 9 October 2008. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=10&dd=09&nav_id=54118

²⁴³ Deutsche Welle. "UN Refers Kosovo Independence to World Court." 9 October 2008. <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,3701015,00.html>

²⁴⁴ B92. Beta, Tanjug. "Serbia Expels Montenegrin Ambassador." 9 October 2008. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=10&dd=09&nav_id=54118

²⁴⁵ B92. Beta, Danas. "Macedonia, Montenegro to Name New Ambassadors." 19 November 2008. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/region-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=11&dd=19&nav_id=55126

Kosovo

As Serbia does not recognize Kosovo as an independent country, foreign relations between the two states do not formally exist. For Serbia, Kosovo remains the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, part of the Republic of Serbia.²⁴⁶ While up-to-date population data do not exist for Kosovo, it is estimated that roughly 120,000–130,000 ethnic Serbs continue to live within Kosovo. Most of the remaining population of roughly 2.1 million people is ethnic Albanians.²⁴⁷

It is estimated that anywhere from one-third to roughly one-half of Kosovo's Serbs live in the northern-most region of Kosovo, with the city of Mitrovica (or, more precisely, the part of the city on the northern bank of the Ibar River) serving as the undeclared capital of the region.^{248,249}

From 1999 to 2008, Kosovo was placed under the interim administration of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo. Beginning in 2005, talks between Serbian and Kosovan negotiators on the future status of Kosovo led to little progress. The U.N. Special Envoy for these talks, Martti Ahtisaari, ultimately recommended that Kosovo become independent after an interim period of supervision under international authority. Not surprisingly, Kosovo embraced Ahtisaari's proposal, while Serbia rejected it.²⁵⁰

After another round of Kosovo status talks led by the so-called Troika (consisting of the U.S., Russia, and the European Union) failed in late 2007 to lead to any progress, Kosovo declared its independence in February 2008 and pledged its support of the Ahtisaari proposal. In December 2008, the EULEX Mission in Kosovo began taking over many of the civil and policing monitorial responsibilities within Kosovo. It is important to note, however, that the EULEX mission is "status neutral," meaning that it is not the international authority called for in the Ahtisaari proposal because it does not reflect a stance one way or the other on the question of Kosovo independence. It remains to be seen to what extent, if any, EULEX will attempt to rein in the parallel institutions that have developed in the Serb-dominated



© Kulmbacher / Wikipedia.org
Kosovo Liberation Army Commander Selimi

²⁴⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Serbia. "Decision on the Annulment of the Illegitimate Acts of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo and Metohija on Their Declaration of Unilateral Independence." 2008. <http://www.mfa.gov.yu/Foreinframe1.htm>

²⁴⁷ Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Kosovo." July 2008. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/100931.htm>

²⁴⁸ Time. Purvis, Andrew. "Almost Mellow at Kosovo's Front-Line Cafe." 4 June 2008. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1811795,00.html>

²⁴⁹ International Relations and Security Network, ETH Zurich. Jovanovich, Igor. "EULEX, for a New Kosovo." 16 December 2008. <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/Security-Watch/Detail/?lng=en&id=94764>

²⁵⁰ Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Kosovo." July 2008. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/100931.htm>

northern part of Kosovo, which some observers view as a precursor to Kosovo partition.^{251,252}

Macedonia

While Macedonia largely avoided the fighting that swept the former Yugoslavian provinces during the 1990s, it was still deeply affected by the fallout from those wars. In particular, the Kosovo War briefly created a wave of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanian and Romani refugees from Kosovo. Most of these refugees have long since returned to their homes in Kosovo, although Macedonia still hosts a small number of Romani refugees.²⁵³



© Nir Nussbaum
Macedonia's border

In the nearly ten years since the conclusion of the Kosovo War, relations between Macedonia and Serbia have steadily improved and are generally good today, albeit with occasional setbacks. Macedonia recognized Kosovo at the same time Montenegro did, in October 2008. As was the case with Montenegro, Macedonia's ambassador was immediately asked to leave Belgrade by the Serbian government, a decision that was rescinded one month later.²⁵⁴

Economically, the two countries retain strong ties. Serbia is Macedonia's chief export market, although some of this trade (particularly oil products from Macedonia's OKTA refinery in Skopje) has traditionally targeted Kosovo.^{255,256}

One constant source of low-level friction between the two nations has been the poor state of relations between the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) and the Macedonian Orthodox

²⁵¹ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Sindelar, Daisy. "EULEX Launches, But the Devil Is in the Details." 9 December 2008.

http://www.rferl.org/Content/EULEX_Set_To_Launch_But_Devil_In_Details/1357414.html

²⁵² International Relations and Security Network, ETH Zurich. Jovanovich, Igor. "EULEX, for a New Kosovo." 16 December 2008. <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/Security-Watch/Detail/?lng=en&id=94764>

²⁵³ ReliefWeb. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "One Macedonian Town's Waste Is Refugees' Livelihood." 17 March 2008. <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EGUA-7CTRZT?OpenDocument>

²⁵⁴ Radio Srbija. "Crvenkovski and Vujanovic Announced Ambassadors' Return to Belgrade." 21 November 2008.

http://glassrbije.org/E/index.php?option=com_content&task=archivecategory&id=0&year=2008&month=11&module=1&limit=9&limitstart=81

²⁵⁵ Kosovo Institute of Journalism and Communication. Bajraktari, Kreshnik. "Cars in Kosovo Run on Unreliable Gas." 21 March 2007.

<http://www.kijacnews.net/vnews/display.v/ART/2007/03/21/46010a5a55d19>

²⁵⁶ International Trade Centre/World Trade Organization. "Trade Performance HS: Imports and Exports of Macedonia (2006, in USD thousands)."

http://www.intracen.org/appli1/TradeCom/TP_TP_CI_P.aspx?IN=00&RP=070&YR=2006&IL=00%20%20All%20industries&TY=T

Church (MOC). The SOC does not recognize the autocephalous status of the MOC and has set up its own archbishopric in Macedonia, a move that the MOC considers schismatic, and which the Macedonian government has refused to register as a legally recognized religion.^{257,258}

Terrorist Groups

Excluding Kosovo—which even before it declared its independence in 2008 had not been under Serbian administrative control since 1999—Serbia has experienced very few terrorist attacks over the last decade. Nonetheless, the country has been used as a transit route and occasional hideout by some international terrorists. Perhaps the most noteworthy of such individuals is Moroccan Abdelmajid Bouchar, who was arrested in August 2005 in Belgrade after being found with falsified identity papers.²⁵⁹ Bouchar was believed to have ties with the ringleaders of the March 2004 train bombings in Madrid. In 2008, he was acquitted on charges of being directly involved with the bombings, but was given an 18-year sentence for possession of explosives and membership in a terrorist organization.²⁶⁰

Some Islamic fundamentalists continue to live in the mountainous Sandžak region of Serbia, which is located between Bosnia and Herzegovina to the northwest and Kosovo to the southeast. These individuals are Wahabis, who practice and promote an ultra-conservative form of Islam that initially took root in present-day Saudi Arabia during the late eighteenth century. The movement sprouted regionally during the early 1990s when perhaps as many as 4,000 mujahideen mercenaries²⁶¹ from Islamic countries came to Bosnia to fight in support of Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) during the 1992–1995 civil war.²⁶² After the war ended, several hundred mujahideen stayed on in Bosnia and continued efforts to convert local Muslim youths.²⁶³ By the late 1990s, Wahabis began appearing in the Sandžak region.²⁶⁴



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Facility for Islamic studies in Novi Pazar

²⁵⁷ SofiaEcho.com. “Reading Room—Case Study: Serbia and Macedonia.” 15 January 2004.

http://www.sofiaecho.com/article/reading-room-case-study-serbia-and-macedonia/id_8700/catid_29

²⁵⁸ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report 2008*. “Macedonia.” 19 September 2008. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/index.htm>

²⁵⁹ BBC News, International Edition. “Serbia Holds Madrid Bomb Suspect.” 17 August 2005.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4159946.stm>

²⁶⁰ The Guardian. Sturcke, James. “Madrid Bombings: The Defendants.” 31 October 2007.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/oct/31/spain.jamessturcke>

²⁶¹ Estimates of the total number of foreign mujahideen fighters who came to Bosnia vary considerably.

²⁶² Los Angeles Times. Meyer, Josh; and William C. Rempel, Craig Pyes. “Bosnia Seen as Hospitable Base and Sanctuary for Terrorists.” 7 October 2001. <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/oct/07/news/mn-54505>

²⁶³ Adkronos International. “Balkans: Wahabis Seen as Growing Regional Threat.” 7 July 2007.

<http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Religion/?id=1.0.1086621768>

²⁶⁴ Balkan Investigative Reporting Network. Bajrovic, Amela. “Raid on Wahhabi ‘Camp’ Raises Tensions in Sandzak.” 22 March 2007. <http://www.birn.eu.com/en/75/10/2496/>

In March 2007, a raid of a Wahabi training camp in the Serbian Sandžak mountains uncovered an underground cache of rocket-propelled grenades, plastic explosives, automatic assault rifles, and terrorist propaganda materials.²⁶⁵ Serbian security officials charged that the weapons were for use in planned attacks against a local moderate Muslim leader, a mosque in the Sandžak city of Novi Pazar, and various buildings in Belgrade.^{266,267} During a follow-up raid in April 2007, the alleged leader of the Wahabi group, Ismail Prentić, was killed in a gun battle with Serbian police.²⁶⁸

Other Security Issues

Paramilitary Groups

During the wars that raged throughout the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, numerous Serb paramilitary groups with colorful names such as the White Eagles, Scorpions, Red Berets, and Tigers fought to seize lands throughout the former Yugoslavia in the name of “Greater Serbia.” These groups were ultimately tied to many of the notorious war crimes committed during that era.²⁶⁹

While all these groups have long since been disbanded and many of their leaders are either on trial for—or have been convicted of—war crimes, lingering Serbian nationalism fueled by the Kosovo’s declaration of independence has contributed to a developing resurgence of paramilitarism.²⁷⁰ It should be emphasized that unlike the 1990s, modern groups urging violent means to re-secure Kosovo are neither supported nor tolerated by the national government.²⁷¹ The Tsar Lazar Guards are the most widely known of these would-be paramilitary groups, but to date their activities have mostly consisted of highly publicized rallies and threats to shell the Kosovo capital of Priština and undertake other violent actions.^{272,273}

²⁶⁵ Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State. Country Reports on Terrorism 2008. “Chapter 2—Country Reports: Europe and Eurasia Overview: Serbia.” 30 April 2008.

<http://www.state.gov/2/ct/rls/crt/2007/103707.htm>

²⁶⁶ Adnkronos International. “Serbia: Five More Wahabis ‘Probed for Terrorist Activities.’” 25 September 2008. <http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Security/?id=1.0.1346095576>

²⁶⁷ B92. Beta. “Jihadi Videos Shown in Wahhabi Trial.” 26 November 2008.

http://www.b92.net/eng/news/crimes-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=11&dd=26&nav_id=55321

²⁶⁸ Adnkronos International. “Serbia: Trial Begins for 15 Wahabi Terrorism Suspects.” 14 January 2008.

<http://www.adnkronos.com/AKI/English/Security/?id=1.0.1769443306>

²⁶⁹ International Herald Tribune. Wood, Nicholas. “Gathering of Serbian Nationalists on Kosovo Raises Dark Specter.” 6 May 2007. <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/05/06/news/serbs.php>

²⁷⁰ SperoNews. Alis, Anes. “Serbia Sentences Its Scorpions.” 17 April 2007.

<http://www.speroforum.com/site/article.asp?id=9071>

²⁷¹ International Herald Tribune. Wood, Nicholas. “Gathering of Serbian Nationalists on Kosovo Raises Dark Specter.” 6 May 2007. <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/05/06/news/serbs.php>

²⁷² The Independent. Sengupta, Kim. “Serbs: ‘We Are Defending Europe Against Muslim Aggression.’” 7 December 2007. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/serbs-we-are-defending-europe-against-muslim-aggression-763561.html>

²⁷³ B92. “Czar Lazar Guard: War is Inevitable.” 16 November 2007. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2007&mm=11&dd=16&nav_id=45450

Nationalism

While the Tsar Lazar Guards and similar groups are clearly on the fringe within Serbia, other less aggressive nationalist groups have long been a part of Serbia's political landscape. The most hard-line of these groups is the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), whose platform in the past has promoted the use of force to stop Kosovo from seceding from Serbia.²⁷⁴ Since 2003, the leader of the SRS, Vojislav Šešelj, has been held in custody by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. He is presently being tried by the ICTY on 14 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity stemming from his activities during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s.²⁷⁵

The SRS has been a significant player in Serbian parliamentary elections over the last decade, usually collecting between 25% and 30% of the vote, but the party's aggressive stances toward Serbian nationalism and against EU accession have limited its ability to form or join coalition governments. The SRS's interim leader in Šešelj's absence, Tomislav Nikolić, has come a close second in the last two Serbian presidential elections, although his positions over time have moderated somewhat from those of Šešelj.²⁷⁶ In September 2008, the SRS splintered as Nikolić and some other SRS party leaders in favor of Serbia pursuing EU accession broke away from the hard-line Šešelj bloc. As a result, some question whether the SRS will continue to be a force in Serbian national politics.^{277,278}



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SRS office, in blue

²⁷⁴ Washington Post. Associated Press. Stojanovic, Dusan. "Serbian Radical Party Riding High." 24 January 2007. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/24/AR2007012401340_2.html

²⁷⁵ Trial Watch. "Vojislav Seselj." 2009. http://www.trial-ch.org/en/trial-watch/profile/db/legal-procedures/vojislav_seselj_196.html

²⁷⁶ International Herald Tribune. Bilefsky, Dan. "Tomislav Nikolic, Far Right Leader in Serbia, Follows Own Path." 2 May 2008. <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/05/02/europe/profile.php?page=2>

²⁷⁷ SofiaEcho.com. "Serbia's Nationalist Radical Party Splits Over EU Accession." 9 September 2008. http://www.sofiaecho.com/article/serbia-s-nationalist-radical-party-splits-over-eu-accession/id_31651/catid_68

²⁷⁸ EU Observer. Licht, Sonja. "Comment: Europe Should Shed Serbia Stereotypes." 14 November 2008. <http://euobserver.com/15/27101>