

Kucan also discussed Slovenia's current dispute with Italy over Slovene land that was owned by Italians before 1945. The Slovene parliament was to consider a law to ease restrictions on foreign ownership of property later that day. (The parliament did later approve a proposal by the Spanish presidency of the European Union to resolve the dispute. The Italians foreign ministry has responded positively, but the final outcome of the issue, which rests in the Italian parliament, remains uncertain.)

With State Secretary Golob of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the delegation discussed the Kosovo issue. Golob shared the view of many others—that war in Kosovo would destabilize the entire region and that the foreign presence in the area—particularly that of the United States—is “extremely important.” He described the situation in the former Yugoslavia as “complicated, but not hopeless,” and argued that the price the international community is paying for the IFOR deployment is small compared to the costs that would be associated with failure in Bosnia and a spread of the war.

Prime Minister Drnovsek also argued the legitimacy and importance of the U.S. role in Bosnia. He acknowledged the challenges the involvement poses for the United States in the short term, but expressed its long-term value in terms of the cost-effectiveness of prevention as well as the benefit of helping small democracies develop in Central Europe and the Balkans. He said, “You who espouse democracy, and have enjoyed it for 200 years, have the opportunity to see people who have lived for generations under tyranny, dictatorship, and communism now breathe freely under democracy. We, the small struggling republics, could be like you.”

CROATIA

In addition to a briefing from the Ambassador and other U.S. Embassy officials in Zagreb, the delegation met with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman to discuss progress related to implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord, the prospects for long-term peace in the region, and the investigation of the crash of Secretary Brown's plane in Dubrovnik.

The delegation thanked President Tudjman for Croatia's assistance in the aftermath of the plane crash and expressed the delegation's and the United States' interest in continuing the mission that Secretary Brown started. The senators pressed Tudjman on the importance to U.S.-Croatian relations of continued progress toward democratization and privatization. The delegation also indicated that the United States would be monitoring the following issues over the next 6 to 18 months: continued support for the Muslim-Croat Federation, including respect for Bosnia's borders and protection of human rights within those borders, and for peaceful resolutions of regional disputes; fair treatment and resettlement of Serbs who lived in Croatia before the war; continued progress in Eastern Slavonia; and cooperation with the War Crimes Tribunal. The delegation stated that the United States is looking to Croatia for leadership toward a lasting peace in the region.

Tudjman reported that good progress is being made in Eastern Slavonia, and supported the idea of Serb family reunification, but said that it “would not be realistic” to expect the return of all Serbs from that region. He argued that Bosnian Croats have been more cooperative than Bosnian Muslims with respect to implementation of the Dayton agreement and pointed to recent problems in Mostar to support that claim. Still, Tudjman called himself “an optimist,”

saying that optimism is based on peace being in Croatia's strategic interest and the Bosnians having no other option. He summarily dismissed rumors of his willingness to enter into an agreement with Serbian President Milosevic to divide Bosnia.

GOOD SAMARITAN CENTER'S 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I would like to take this time to congratulate the staff of the Good Samaritan Center as they celebrate 50 years of service to the Tyndall community. The center has provided quality care to senior citizens in the Tyndall area, and its management and staff are to be commended for their hard work and dedication.

During my travels throughout South Dakota, I am continually reminded of the importance of health care institutions in our rural communities. They provide important services to local residents and help preserve our tight-knit communities.

The Good Samaritan Center in Tyndall is one of those institutions, and it gives me great pride to be able to point to such an exemplary South Dakota facility. For half a century, the center has been an integral part of the Tyndall community, serving the elderly with respect and compassion. Most importantly, the Good Samaritan Center ensures that its residents can continue to live close to their friends and loved ones, and in the towns in which many of them have spent their entire lives. The center can be very proud of its role in the Tyndall community.

Once again, I applaud the management and staff of the Good Samaritan Center on this important milestone. I know their next 50 years will be just as successful and rewarding.

TRIBUTE TO MINISTER GABRIEL LEWIS

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, the United States and the Republic of Panama enjoy a long and strong relationship between our two nations, one that stretches back to the 1904 founding of Panama. Since that time, these two great American nations have worked together to build partnerships for peace and prosperity that have not only greatly benefited our respective countries, but all the states of the American continents. During these 92 years, Panamanian and American officials and citizens have built countless friendships, and I rise today to share with my colleagues the unfortunate news that a man most of us know and like very much, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Panama Gabriel Lewis, is resigning his position due to illness.

Minister Lewis' contributions to his nation are well known and well respected. He has served Panama faithfully and selflessly during his career, and through his service, he has worked to make his nation a better and stronger place for its citizens. Perhaps Min-

ister Lewis' greatest legacy and contribution to his countrymen, though, is the leading role he took in opposing the dictatorial and criminal regime of the former Panamanian strongman, Manuel Noriega.

Bringing Noriega to justice and holding him accountable for his illegal and immoral behavior took thousands of individuals to commit acts of great courage. It took courage for Panamanian citizens to take to the streets and protest the regime of Noriega and to face his riot police and organized thugs dubiously titled “Dignity Battalions”; and, it took courage for the young soldiers of the 82d Airborne and the 7th Infantry Divisions to engage in combat with the well trained and equipped Panamanian Defense Force. It took great courage for Minister Lewis to openly defy and condemn the government of his nation, and to take Noriega and his puppet advisers to task for attempting to quash democracy and ignore the basic civil rights of their citizens. Minister Lewis' leadership in the international community during that time of crisis was just as critical to the successful outcome of Operation Just Cause, and the arrest and conviction of Noriega as were the contributions made by the people of Panama or the military personnel of the United States.

Mr. President, though I am sure that those who know Minister Lewis are sorry to see him leave his post as Foreign Minister of the Republic of Panama, I am pleased to note that our friend is not leaving public service. Recognizing an individual of unusual characteristics and qualities, the President of Panama has appointed Gabriel Lewis to be his senior counsel, with cabinet rank. I am confident that Minister Lewis will continue to make many valuable contributions to the people and nation of Panama through this new position, and that he will also continue to work to maintain and further strengthen the friendship between our nations, as well as to further the march of democracy throughout Latin America. I wish him success in his work as senior counsel, and for a speedy and complete recovery to his full health.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, as of the close of business yesterday, Monday, June 17, the Federal debt stood at \$5,137,826,225,531.03, which amounts to \$19,306.97 per man, woman, and child on a per capita basis.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I am sure that we all have high standards for accuracy on this floor, and therefore I wish to comment on certain statements which have been made in recent days.

On June 7, the junior Senator from Oklahoma mistakenly represented that