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ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR
REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON PROGRESS IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE FOURTH CONFERENCE

Report of Yugoslavia**

Paper submitted by Yugoslavia

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** Prepared by Miroslav Peterca, Head, Military Geographic Institute,
Beograd.

This is the fourth time that Yugoslavia is taking part in the United Nations conferences on the standardization of geographical names. Yugoslavia considers that each of these conferences has helped the better understanding of the subject matter on the standardization and that the principles established in the resolutions adopted by the Conferences help all States to perfect policy and technique of using geographical names within their boundaries. The Fifth Conference will be another impetus for acceleration of work on standardization of geographical names.

Delegation of Yugoslavia wants again to confirm its agreement with the viewpoint that the standardization of geographical names is in the competence of the State where described geographical features are; as follows that international standardization of geographical names can be based by means of national standardization and/or international agreement, including the achievement of equivalences between different writing systems.

The reports of Yugoslavia submitted on the previous conferences (London 1972, Athens 1977, Geneva 1982), contained the principles on which the questions of the standardization of geographical names are solved, having in mind the fact that Yugoslavia is the State in which live several nations and national minorities.

Yugoslavia supports a viewpoint that the questions of geographical names should be observed as the integral part of the general principles about the right of nations and nationalities to use their own language and writing system. The right to use geographical names in their own language and writing system is an integral, inseparable and inalienable part of overall rights of every nation and national minority, disregarding their number and administrative borders of their ethnic areas. Geographical names should reflect an objective picture of national belonging of the population to whose territory refer.

In official Yugoslav documents for ethnically mixed territories of Yugoslavia, as well as the territories of neighbouring countries on which part of Yugoslav nations live as national minorities, the principle of bilingual representation of geographical names is implemented. The Socialist Republic of Slovenia, for example, in 1980 issued a decree of the use of bilingual geographical names in topographic plans and geographic maps on ethnically mixed regions of that republic. In the communities of Koper, Piran and Izola names are written the same in the Slovenian and Italian languages (e.g. Koper-Capo d'Istria), and in the communities of Murska Sobota and Lendava in Slovenian and Hungarian. We wish that the members of our nations who live out of the border of Yugoslavia as national minorities have too adequate rights.

The equality of the languages and scripts of nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia is established by the constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in the constitutions of the socialist republics and autonomous provinces; furthermore, in legal and sublegal acts in the statutes of communities. In accordance with the constitutional principles, in Yugoslavia there is neither one national language and script, neither one state language, nor one main or principal language which has the broadest sphere of influence.

During the period 1982-1987 Yugoslavia has continued work at establishing the principles of standardization of geographical names and forming the corresponding names authorities on the levels of federation and republics. Yugoslav Government decided in 1986 to form a commission for standardization of geographical names. In the Government Decision, among other things, the following activities of the Commission are defined:

- (a) To create a codex for the use and standardization of geographical names on the territory of Yugoslavia;
- (b) To establish the criteria for writing and using geographical names in languages of nations and nationalities in Yugoslavia, as well as for its use out of the territory of Yugoslavia where nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia exist;
- (c) Publishing of an Yugoslav Glossary of Technical Terminology in the field of standardization of geographical names in the languages of our nations and nationalities, in accordance with the "Glossary of Technical Terminology" adopted by the United Nations Conference on standardization of geographical names;
- (d) To produce a standard for names of maritime and undersea features at near-coast and open sea where the interests of the SFR Yugoslavia are present, and
- (e) To perform other activities in the domain of standardization of geographical names.

Yugoslav Government, examining the report of our delegation on the Fourth United Nations Conference (Geneva 1982), adopted the conclusion on the necessity of establishing republic and provincial names authorities for standardization of geographical names. Presently, such commissions are established in the republics of Slovenia and Macedonia.

In the field of toponymical terminology, the necessity of creating some terminological system in standardization of geographical names in languages of our nations and nationalities is pointed out. Based on the "Glossary of Technical Terminology" adopted on Third United Nations Conference in Athens 1977, the Yugoslav Glossary of Technical Terminology have been compiled and published. He includes definition of 61 terms estimated to be most frequent in standardization of geographical names in Yugoslav toponymical ambient. It is certain that the existence of Glossary adopted by United Nations Conferences greatly facilitates the work on national glossaries.

Commission for Toponymy and Terminology of the Association of Geographical Societies of Yugoslavia organized in Sarajevo 1984 the Yugoslav Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names in Languages of Nations and Nationalities of Yugoslavia. On the Conference it was concluded that the standardization of geographical names on the territory of Yugoslavia is not only a scientific or technical matter, but also a political one, because it is dealing with legitimate rights of nations and nationalities to use its own languages and scripts. The existence and mixture of various ethnic cultures on our territory, as well as various influences which through history made marks on genesis and development of

Yugoslav toponymy, makes that task extremely complex and responsible. Those tasks are often interdisciplinary in nature, so the scientists and experts from the fields of geography, topography, linguistics and history should be engaged.

Yugoslavia wishes that existing international misunderstandings resulting from unrecognizing or only partially recognizing the right of national minorities to use geographical names in their own language and alphabet or from the use of exonims, be resolved in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other international documents on human rights and in accordance with recommendations of the United Nations Conferences on standardization of geographical names. Yugoslavia will propose co-operation and agreement to particular neighbouring countries aimed at reducing the number of exonims and finding mutually acceptable solutions for exonims.

In national report presented on the Third United Nations Conference was made certain critical remarks on the treatment of some Yugoslav names in the international usage. In some foreign cartographic publications (maps and atlases) which are intended to international usage, treatment of some names related to geographical entities on the territory of Yugoslavia is not in accordance with national standards in Yugoslavia. Because of that, it would be most desirable that foreign scientific, professional and publishing organizations which produce such publications consult our experts so that the correct form of geographical names would be attained.

Finally, Yugoslavia wishes to emphasize that the activities of United Nations Conferences held up to date, have been very advantageous and that adopted resolutions produce constant stimuli for more efficient and organized activity in the field of standardization of geographical names in Yugoslavia.
