Column misrepresented Yugoslavia, ignored important age-old disputes

It was very pleased to see Matthew H. Hersch’s 94’s column in The Tech (“Confederate is the answer,” March 3); seldom do the issues receive the attention in the United States that they deserve. However, I must point out several inaccuracies and misconceptions which damage an otherwise noble effort.

First, the Yugoslav Republic comprises six republics and two autonomous regions. The republics are Serbia, the most powerful.

Second, it is useful to note that he may have misunderstood about Yugoslavia’s age-old disputes. The Yugo-Slav region is a complex of Serbs and Croats, among others.

Slovenia and Croatia are largely Roman Catholic; Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia are mostly Orthodox. Bosnia-Herzegovina has a mix of Catholic, Muslim and Serb populations.

The brief modern history of Yugoslavia presented was in many cases incorrect. The behavior of Croatia under Fascist occupation is not the same as that of Serbia, which has a particularly large explanation for today’s troubles.

Serbs and Croats each had its share of collaborators and freedom fighters; and both groups were probably brutal at times. The cause of the present communism is the simple fact that the Serbian-dominated federal system has fallen apart since Tito’s death over 10 years ago.

No one has been able to make the precarious balance of nationalities work, something which Tito, for all his many flaws, played like a virtuoso.

Furthermore, the Serbian Communist-nationalist government of Milosevic has been whipping up a xenophobic frenzy which has dramatised the Yugoslavian-Serbian population.

Through a tightly controlled government press, Milosevic has exacerbated the tensions among the republics. This is what is to blame for the current high level of tension; the separatist actions of Croatia and Slovenia have in large part been responses to the mistakes of the authoritarian Serbian government.

Therefore, Hersch’s conclusion is correct. Don’t expect a solution to emerging issues to be simple.

On the table are the six republics and a large number of ethnic minorities.

Column misrepresentation is a serious problem. In the future, we should examine the facts better and put aside emotions when discussing age-old problems.