

BYRONICA

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE LORD BYRON FOUNDATION FOR BALKAN STUDIES

Srebrenica, 15 Years Later THE ANATOMY OF A LIE

On July 11 the constituent nations of Bosnia-Herzegovina – no longer warring, but far from reconciled – marked the fifteenth anniversary of “Srebrenica.” The name of the eastern Bosnian town evokes different responses from different communities, however. The difference goes beyond semantics. The complexities of the issue remain reduced to a simple morality play devoid of nuance and context.



That is exactly how the purveyors of the Srebrenica Genocide myth want it to stay. That’s how the sponsors of the Srebrenica Remembrance Day – who unsuccessfully tried to have it passed by the Canadian House of Commons last June, before they were halted (to his lasting credit) by Prime Minister Harper – wanted it to be:

“Whereas the Srebrenica Massacre, also known as the Srebrenica Genocide, was the killing in July of 1995 of an estimated 8,000 Bosniak men and boys in the region of Srebrenica ... by Bosnian Serb forces;

“Whereas the Srebrenica Massacre is the largest mass murder in Europe since World War II and the largest massacre carried out by Serb forces during the Bosnian war;

“Whereas the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague unanimously decided in the case of Prosecutor v. Krstić that the Srebrenica massacre was genocide...”

The event designated by the bill’s sponsors as the “Sreberenica genocide” was no such thing.

The contention that as many as 8,000 Muslims were killed has no basis in available evidence; it is not an “estimate” but a political construct.

As for The Hague Tribunal, an Orwellian institution *par excellence*, its “unanimous decisions” are as drearily predictable as those in Moscow in 1936.

It is not known to the public, however, that those “decisions” are disputed by a host of senior Western military and civilian officials, NATO intelligence officers, and independent intelligence analysts who dispute the official portrayal of the capture of Srebrenica as a unique atrocity in the Bosnian conflict.

The Facts – During the Bosnian war between May 1992 and July 1995, several thousand Muslim men lost their lives in Srebrenica and its surroundings. Most of them died in July of 1995 when the enclave fell unexpectedly to the Bosnian Serb Army and the Muslim garrison attempted a breakthrough. Some escaped to the Muslim-held town of Tuzla, 38 miles to the north. Many were killed while fighting their way through; and many others were taken prisoner and executed by the Bosnian Serb army.

The exact numbers remain unknown, disputed, and misrepresented, notably at the Islamic shrine at Potočari (1). With 8,000 executed and thousands killed in the fighting, there should have been huge gravesites and satellite evidence of executions, burials, and body removals.

The UN searches in the Srebrenica vicinity, breathlessly frantic at times, produced two thousand bodies. They included those of soldiers killed in action – both Muslim and Serb – both before and during July 1995.

That a massacre did take place, that some hundreds of Muslim prisoners were killed, is undeniable. The number of the victims remains forensically and demographically unverified, however. According to the former BBC reporter

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Jonathan Rooper, “from the outset the numbers were used and abused” for political purposes.

Over the years, he says, it has been held to be highly significant that original ballpark estimates for the number who might have been massacred at Srebrenica corresponded closely to the ‘missing’ list of 7,300 compiled by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). But the early estimates were based on nothing more than the simple combination of an estimated 3,000 men last seen at the UN base at Potočari and an estimated 5,000 people reported ‘to have left the enclave before it fell’:

Perhaps the most startling aspect of the 7-8,000 figure is that it has always been represented as synonymous with the number of people executed. This was never a possibility: numerous contemporary accounts noted that UN and other independent observers had witnessed fierce fighting with significant casualties on both sides. It was also known that others had fled to Muslim-held territory around Tuzla and Žepa, that some had made their way westwards and northwards, and that some had fled into Serbia. It is therefore certain that nowhere near all the missing could have been executed

The arithmetic does not add up. The International Committee of the Red Cross reported at the time that some 3,000 Bosnian Army soldiers managed to reach Muslim lines near Tuzla and were redeployed by the Bosnian Army “without their families being informed.” This number of military survivors was also confirmed by Muslim General Enver Hadžihasanović in his testimony at The Hague.

The last (1991) census results counted 37,211 people in Srebrenica and the surrounding villages. 27,118 were Muslims (72.8 percent) and 9,381 Serbs (25.2 percent). Displaced persons from Srebrenica registered with the World Health Organization and Bosnian government in early August 1995 totaled 35,632. With 3,000 Muslim men who reached Tuzla “without their families being informed” we come to the figure of over 38,000 survivors. The Hague Tribunal’s own estimates of the total population of the Srebrenica enclave before July 1995 – notably that made by

Judge Patricia Wald – give 40,000 as the maximum figure. The numbers just don’t add up.

Despite spending five days interviewing over 20,000 Srebrenica survivors at Tuzla a week after the fall of the enclave, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Henry Wieland declared, “we have not found anyone who saw with their own eyes an atrocity taking place.”

A decade later Dr Dick Schoonoord of the Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdokumentatie (NIOD) confirmed Wieland’s verdict: “It has been impossible during our investigations in Bosnia to find any people who witnessed the mass murder or knew the fate of the missing men.”

UN-Protected Jihadist Camp – It is often pointed out that Srebrenica was an UN “protected zone” but it is seldom noted that the enclave was simultaneously an armed camp used for attacks against Serb villages – such as Kravica (l. above, after a Muslim attack on Orthodox Christmas 1993) – in the surrounding areas. Muslim General Sefer Halilović confirmed in his testimony at the Hague Tribunal that there were 5,500 Bosnian Army soldiers in Srebrenica *after* it had obtained the “safe haven” status, and that he had personally arranged deliveries of sophisticated weapons by helicopter.

French General Philippe Morillon (r.), the UNPROFOR commander who first called international attention to the Srebrenica enclave, is adamant that the crimes committed by those Muslim soldiers made the Serbs’ desire for revenge inevitable.



General Morillon testified at The Hague Tribunal on February 12, 2004, that the Muslim commander in Srebrenica, Naser Orić, “engaged in attacks during Orthodox holidays and destroyed villages, massacring all the inhabitants. This created a degree of hatred that was quite extraordinary in the region.” Asked by the ICTY prosecutor how Orić treated his Serb prisoners, Morillon, who knew him well, replied:

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“Naser Orić was a warlord who reigned by terror in his area and over the population itself... According to my recollection, he didn't even look for an excuse. It was simply a statement: One can't be bothered with prisoners.” What he meant exactly is gruesomely visible on the mutilated remains of Serbs captured by Orić's men.



Professor Cees Wiebes, who wrote the intelligence section of the Dutch Government report on Srebrenica, notes that despite signing the demilitarization agreement, Bosnian Muslim forces in Srebrenica were heavily armed and engaged in open provocations (“sabotage operations”) against Serbian forces. Professor Wiebes, a senior lecturer in the Department of International Relations at Amsterdam University, caused a storm with his book *Intelligence and the War in Bosnia 1992-1995*, detailing the role of the Clinton administration in allowing Iran to arm the Bosnian Muslims. Wiebes catalogues how, from 1992 to January 1996, there was an influx of Iranian weapons and advisers into Bosnia. By facilitating the illegal transfer of weapons to Bosnian Muslim forces and turning a blind eye toward the entry of foreign Mujahadeen fighters, the US turned supposed safe zones for civilians into staging areas for conflict and a tripwire for NATO intervention. Dr Wiebes notes that the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency arranged the illegal transfer of arms from Muslim countries to the Tuzla airport using Hercules C-130 planes. It arranged for gaps in air surveillance by AWACs, which were supposed to guard against such illegal arms traffic. Along with these weapons came Mujahadeen fighters from both Iranian training camps and al-Qaeda, including two of the hijackers involved in the attacks on the World Trade Center and Khaled Sheik Mohammed who helped plan the attack.

On 11 July 1995 the Muslim garrison was ordered to evacuate the town which the Serbs entered unopposed. Local Deputy Director of UN Monitors, Carlos Martins Branco, wrote in 2004 (“Was Srebrenica a Hoax?”) that Muslim forces did not even try to take advantage of their heavy artillery because “military resistance would jeopardize the image of ‘victim,’ which had been so carefully constructed, and which the Muslims considered vital to maintain.”

Stage Managed Fall? – Two prominent Muslim allies of the late Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović, the Srebrenica SDA party chairman Ibran Mustafić and police commander Hakija Meholjić, have subsequently accused Izetbegovic of deliberately sacrificing the enclave in order to trigger NATO intervention. Meholjić is explicit: in his presence, Izetbegovic quoted Bill Clinton as saying that 5,000 dead Muslims would be sufficient to provide the political basis for an American-led intervention on the side of the Muslims, which both of them wanted.

In their testimony before The Hague Tribunal, Bosnian Muslim Generals Halilović and Hadžihasanović confirmed that 18 top officers of the Srebrenica garrison were abruptly removed in May 1995. This was done even as the high command was ordering sabotage operations against Bosnian Serbs. One of these was a militarily meaningless attack on a strategically unimportant nearby Serb village of Višnica, which triggered off the Serb counter-attack that captured the undefended town. Ibran Mustafić, the founder of the Muslim SDA party in Srebrenica, is adamant that the scenario for the sacrifice of Srebrenica was carefully prepared:

Unfortunately, the Bosnian presidency and the Army command were involved in this business ... Had I received orders to attack the Serb army from the demilitarized zone, I would have rejected to carry them out. I would have asked the person who had issued that order to bring his family to Srebrenica, so that I can give him a gun and let him stage attacks from the demilitarized zone. I knew that such shameful, calculated moves were leading my people to catastrophe. The orders came from Sarajevo.

British military analyst Tim Ripley, who has written for *Jane's*, agrees with the assessment that Srebrenica was deliberately sacrificed by the Muslim political leaders. He noted that Dutch UN soldiers “saw Bosnian troops escaping from Srebrenica past their observation points, carrying brand new anti-tank weapons [which] made many UN officers and international journalists suspicious.”

The G-word – The term “genocide” is more contentious than the exact circumstances of Srebrenica's fall. UN's Carlos Martins Branco has noted that if there had been a premeditated plan of genocide,

instead of attacking in only one direction, from the south to the north - which left the hypothesis to escape to the north and west, the Serbs would have established a siege in order to ensure that no one escaped... There are obviously mass graves in the outskirts of Srebrenica, as in the rest of ex-Yugoslavia where combat has occurred, but there are no grounds for the campaign that was mounted, nor the numbers advanced... The mass graves are filled by a limited number of corpses from both sides, the consequence of heated battle and combat, and not the result of a

premeditated plan of genocide, as occurred against the Serbian populations in Krajina in the summer of 1995, when the Croatian army implemented the mass murder of all Serbians found there.

The fact that The Hague Tribunal called the events in Srebrenica “genocide” does not make it so. What plan for genocide includes offering safe passage to women and children? And if this was all part of a Serb plot to eliminate Muslims, what about hundreds of thousands of Muslims living peacefully in Serbia itself, including thousands of refugees who fled there from Bosnia? Or the Muslims in the neighboring enclave of Žepa, who were unharmed when the Serbs captured that town a few days after capturing Srebrenica? To get around these common sense obstacles, the ICTY prosecution came up with a sociologist who provided an “expert” opinion: the Srebrenica Muslims lived in a patriarchal society, therefore killing the men meant that there would be no more Muslims in town. Such psychobabble turns the term “genocide” into a gruesome joke.

Yet it was on basis of this definition that in August 2001 the Tribunal found Bosnian Serb General Radislav Krstić guilty of “complicity in genocide”. Even if the unproven figure of “8,000” is assumed, it affected less than one-half of one percent of Bosnia’s Muslim population in a locality covering one percent of its territory. On such form, the term “genocide” loses all meaning and becomes a propaganda tool rather than a legal and historical concept. On that form, America’s NATO ally Turkey – a major regional player in today’s Balkans – certainly committed genocide in northern Cyprus in 1974. On that form, no military conflict can ever be genocide-free.

Because of the manner in which international criminal law is currently formulated, the threshold of proof required to secure a conviction for genocide is actually lower than it is for crimes against humanity. To secure a conviction for crimes against humanity the ICTY prosecution must prove that the acts were “widespread or systematic.” No such condition applies for genocide. Moreover, as British analyst John Laughland points out, crimes against humanity can be committed only against civilians, whereas genocide – as redefined in the case of Srebrenica – can include the killing of military personnel as well. In other words, spontaneous or disparate acts involving the killing of military personnel can be classified as “genocide.” This creates ample room for propagandistic abuse of the term.

Laughland contends that the myth of the “Srebrenica Genocide” is essential to a program of international interventionism, based on weak legal reasoning and disregard for due process, of which the Serbs happen to be the guinea-pigs. In his view, Srebrenica has been raised to the status it now enjoys because its fall represented a defeat not only for the Bosnian Muslims but also for the “international community” and its policy of global interventionism. Srebrenica, for the global intererventionists, is an existential issue, not as much for Republika Srpska as

for those activists who seek to consolidate once and for all that outcome which the former ICTY Prosecutor, Louise Arbour, said she had achieved in 1999: “We have passed from an era of cooperation between states to an era in which states can be constrained.”

Dr. Diana Johnstone, an American expert on the Balkans, has summed up the Arbour mindset neatly in a seminal *Counterpunch* article:

The “Srebrenica massacre” is part of a dominant culture discourse that goes like this: We people in the advanced democracies have reached a new moral plateau, from which we are able and have a duty both to judge others and to impose our “values” when necessary. The others, on a lower moral plateau, must be watched carefully, because unlike us, they may commit “genocide”. . . . The subliminal message in the official Srebrenica discourse is that because “we” let that happen, “we” mustn’t let “it” happen again, ergo, the United States should preventively bomb potential perpetrators of “genocide.”

The Motive – Questioning the received elite class narrative on “Srebrenica” is a good and necessary endeavor. The accepted Srebrenica story, influenced by war propaganda and uncritical media reports, is neither historically correct nor morally satisfying. The relentless Western campaign against the Serbs and in favor of their Muslim foes – which is what “Srebrenica” is really all about – is detrimental to the survival of our culture and civilization. It seeks to give further credence to the myth of Muslim blameless victimhood, Serb viciousness, and Western indifference, and therefore weaken our resolve in the global struggle euphemistically known as “war on terrorism.” The former is a crime; the latter, a mistake.

The involvement of the Clinton administration in the wars of Yugoslav succession was a good example of the failed expectation that pandering to Muslim ambitions in a secondary theater will improve the U.S. standing in the Muslim world as a whole. The notion germinated in the final months of George H.W. Bush’s presidency, when his Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said that a goal in Bosnia was to mollify the Muslim world and to counter any perception of an anti-Muslim bias regarding American policies in Iraq in the period leading up to Gulf War I. The result of years of policies thus inspired is a terrorist base the heart of Europe, a moral debacle, and the absence of any positive payoff to the United States.

If Western and especially U.S. policy in the Balkans was not meant to facilitate Jihad, the issue is not why, but how its effects paradoxically coincided with the regional objectives of those same Islamists who confront America in other parts of the world. “Srebrenica” provides some of the answers. The immediate bill is being paid by the people of the Balkans, but “Srebrenica’s” long-term costs will come to haunt the myth’s perpetrators for decades to come.

PUSHING THE MYTH

Nebojsa Malic¹

Some weeks ago, several Liberal MPs in the Canadian Parliament proposed a resolution declaring July 11 “Srebrenica Remembrance Day.” Fortunately, Prime Minister Harper would have none of it, so the proposal was taken off the table - for now.

The resolution was not a product of altruism and sheer goodness of the Liberals’ hearts, but rather an initiative mounted by the Congress of North American Bosniaks, and something called the “Institute for the Research of Genocide” (whose URL identifies them as the “Institute for Genocide”). After Mr. Harper put the kibosh on the resolution, the CNAB and the Institute raised a ruckus. Their initial protest, on June 23, included a long list of people identified as an “international team of experts” and claiming illustrious academic titles. The post with the list, however, has since been taken down from the Institute website. Here are just some of the names from the list:

- M. Cherif Bassiouni (former UN rapporteur on the events in Bosnia, who endorsed the ridiculously inflated casualty figures and the “mass rape” hoax)
- Francis A. Boyle (international ambulance-chaser and author of the “genocide” lawsuit by the Izetbegović government against Serbia, rejected by the ICJ)
- Florence Hartmann (once spokesperson for Carla Del Ponte at the ICTY)
- Marko Attila Hoare (a Serbophobe historian)
- Daniel Toljaga (listed as member of the Board of Directors at the Congress of North American Bosniaks, proprietor of the Srebrenica Genocide Blog)
- Džemaludin Latić and Fatmir Alispahić, champions of militant Islam and Serbophobia considered even in Bosnia to be the lunatic fringe.

Suffice to say that the list was a veritable who’s who of professional victims, genocide entrepreneurs, and people who have built their careers on the myth of Bosnia. So, these people have taken upon themselves to have the Canadian Parliament endorse their version of history by government fiat - i.e. by force, since they cannot prove it in court. It is as if they do not believe their argument good enough to persuade people, even though it has enjoyed almost uncontested dominance in the media for 15 years.

The much less organized Canadian Serbs have protested this proposal with letters. The response they got was pretty much a set of talking points reminiscent of the content found on the SGB, Hoare’s blog, or the CNAB site. The letter says that the “the genocidal nature of the

particular incident at Srebrenica in the summer of 1995 has been internationally recognized.” It specifically mentions the ICTY and ICJ verdicts, claiming they were *thoughtful results of fair and independent investigation and testimony*.

Yet the ICJ verdict specifically said it had not considered the Srebrenica events itself, but simply accepted the ICTY rulings at face value. To call the ICTY’s verdicts “thoughtful,” their investigations “independent” and the testimonies of serial perjurers “fair” is rich. Their crown witness, on which the entire case hangs, is a liar. They have conducted sloppy forensic work and later destroyed much of the evidence. They refuse to show the DNA evidence, then claim it proves something that is physically impossible for DNA evidence to prove (i.e. manner of death). And that’s just the tip of the iceberg! The ICTY verdicts have more holes in them than a kitchen sieve.

Another argument in the response is that others have done this – the European Parliament, the US House and Senate, and hey, even the (quisling) government of Boris Tadić in Serbia! – so why not the Canadian legislature? Well, since when did “everyone is doing it” become a valid argument? Just because some lawmakers in Europe and the US have voted with their hearts for a well-prepared piece of propaganda does not have the magical power to transform that propaganda into fact. Truth is not a matter of majority vote, or consensus.

From the first days of the Bosnian War, the Izetbegović regime’s weapon of choice was propaganda. They aimed to win the war by getting outside forces to do the fighting for them, based on heart-rending stories of massacres, mass rape, concentration camps and genocide. One after another, those stories have been exposed as fabrications and deliberate distortions of the already horrifying reality, while the full horrors of the war were never reported, so as not to interfere with the mythical narrative. The Srebrenica “genocide” is the last lie that remains, the one myth that was built up and reinforced more than any of the others. By now, Srebrenica has become a *post facto* justification for everything: the ethnic cleansing of Serbs, the foreign mujahedin, the rise of Wahhabism and terrorism, the re-Islamization of Bosnia’s Muslims (a goal Izetbegovic set for himself in the 1970’s, mind you), the ongoing refusal of Muslim politicians to abide by the country’s Constitution, and the equally ongoing attempts to fulfill their wartime objectives politically, by overturning the Dayton Accords.

All of this rests on the foundation of a myth that what happened in July 1995 in Srebrenica was “genocide.” Even though the women and children were safely evacuated. Even though the column that refused to surrender and set off across the mountains and minefields to Tuzla was a military formation. Even though the actual number of people who died on that march was never established (the “8,000” figure is equally arbitrary as the “300,000” we’d heard for a decade, before facts became impossible to

¹ www.grayfalcon.com, July 3, 2010

ignore), and the actual evidence suggests that the number of people actually murdered (as in executed, which indeed is a war crime) is several hundred. Even though nothing was ever produced to demonstrate intent on part of the Bosnian Serbs to actually exterminate the Muslims as a people - apart from the belief by the Muslims that this was the case.

Yet in a proper court of law, it does not matter what one believes – only what one can prove. Fully aware that the ICTY judgments are based on belief and conjecture rather than actual facts, the believers in the Srebrenica Genocide Myth are now trying to impose it by force, by getting governments to pass resolutions. Next up will probably be demands that anyone questioning their myth be prosecuted as a “holocaust denier.” So, not only are they disparaging the actual Holocaust by declaring Srebrenica a “genocide,” they are also exploiting and abusing the mechanisms established so no one could strive to rehabilitate the Nazis and deny the suffering of the Jews. When you consider the fact that the ancestors of many of those Muslims actually helped the Nazis in their ghastly *Endloesung*, it becomes obvious that Srebrenica is not just about the present and the future, but also about whitewashing the past.



I understand why it is in the interest of the Bosnian Muslims’ religious, political and propaganda leadership (and their associates, fellow-travelers and useful idiots in the West and elsewhere) to promote the Srebrenica Genocide Myth. How that would serve Canada’s interests, however, is beyond me.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper (above) appears to have reached a similar conclusion – and for that he deserves thanks, not just of the Serbs living in Canada, but all Canadians who care about their own country.

DISPUTED LANDS, GEORGIA TO KOSOVO

Michael Averko¹

In the United States, high profile opposition to Russian policies in the former Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic is still in evidence. David Kramer of the German Marshall Fund and Massachusetts Senator and Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry have adopted this stance, among others. Kramer reflects a part of the American foreign policy establishment which is especially critical of the Russian government. During his 2004 presidential campaign, Kerry suggested that his opponent George Bush was soft on Russia.

President Barack Obama says that he brought up Russian-American differences over Georgia during his recent meeting with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. On July 5, in the Georgian capital Tbilisi, U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton reiterated the Obama administration’s support for Georgia’s claim on former Georgian SSR territory in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

In this situation, a noticeable portion of American mass media is nurtured to focus attention on whether the American government has been forceful enough in expressing its position to their Russian counterpart. On the subject of issues challenging improved Russian-American relations, little if any mention is made of the American government’s support for Kosovo’s independence, in contradiction to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. Along with many other countries, Russia opposes Kosovo’s independence from Serbia.

The Russian recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia was not primarily in response to the earlier independence recognition that the United States and some other nations gave to Kosovo. Two factors differentiate the former Georgian SSR dispute from the territorial disputes involving Serbia, Moldova and Azerbaijan:

1 Following their respective wars in the 1990’s, Serbia, Moldova and Azerbaijan have refrained from the kind of military action like the 2008 Georgian strike on South Ossetia. Before that attack, Russia had not recognized Abkhaz and South Ossetian claims to independence. The Russian recognition came only *after* the 2008 war. Russia continues not to recognize the independence of the other disputed territories in the former communist countries.

2 Vis-a-vis Russia, the Serb, Moldovan and Azeri governments have not been irksome in the manner exhibited by Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili.

The combined influence of the pro-Kosovo independence U.S., U.K., France, Germany and Turkey over Russia is one major reason why more countries support Kosovo’s independence over South Ossetia’s and Abkhazia’s.

¹ *The American Spectator*, July 6, 2010

EUROPEAN UNION: NO FURTHER ENLARGEMENT AFTER CROATIA

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has confirmed that the European Union's eastern enlargement will be ended for many years to come after Croatia joins the Union next year. The decision, which reflects an informal yet well-known Brussels consensus of long standing, was confirmed at a meeting of the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) in June.

Serbia's "pro-European" ruling regime still refuses to face the facts and act accordingly, however. The Serbian government claims that Belgrade has not received any official or unofficial document to that effect. This may be true, but it is irrelevant; and invoking such "argument" smacks of despair. As *The Financial Times* reported on June 11 ("EU suffers an extreme case of Balkan enlargement fatigue"), one little-noticed side effect of the Greek debt crisis is that it is playing into the hands of those who oppose enlarging the European Union. Western Balkan countries such as Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia are queuing at the EU's door, but only Croatia has any chance of membership:

Among the reasons is that Greece, the first Balkan state to enter the EU (in 1981), has been exposed as a country that not only ran ruinous and reckless fiscal policies for many years, but deceived its partners with false data in order to join the eurozone at the start of this decade... Some policy-makers in EU national capitals argue that this unhappy experience demonstrates that, when it comes to public probity, Balkan states are just not to be trusted.

They point to the fact that corruption, organized crime and judicial inefficiency remain serious problems in Bulgaria and Romania, two other Balkan countries, which entered the EU in 2007. Croatia, too, has problems in these areas, which is one of the reasons why Zagreb's EU negotiations are taking longer than once expected.

Serbia's entry into the EU, on the other hand, is to be postponed indefinitely. It is not even a formal membership candidate. Macedonia, by contrast, is an official candidate but cannot start its negotiations because Greece is blocking them over the long-standing name dispute.

The countries aspiring to EU membership have been diplomatically notified of the true score. The decision sparked panic among Serbian political leaders, because President Tadic's policy is being destroyed and discredited. An additional sign of how things stand is that, after much deliberation, hand-wringing and years of misguided and contradictory policy initiatives, the European Union is still unable or unwilling to appoint an envoy to the Western Balkans. No definitive decision has been made and no names were formally proposed at Wednesday's last June's

EU Western Balkans Summit in Sarajevo. Long heralded as a move that will open a new chapter in the Balkan states' EU aspirations, and speculation over possible candidates had been rife prior to Merkel's bombshell.

With the EU still struggling with the institutional fine print of its foreign policy machinery, continued British pressure to name a special EU envoy for the Balkans is now seen as a non-starter by the UK's continental partners. Diplomats in Brussels and other EU capitals say the idea, proposed by Britain's new foreign secretary William Hague, is unpopular among other EU member states. "The appointment of a European special envoy for the Balkans is not foreseen in the Lisbon treaty, and the EU would contradict itself with naming one," one EU diplomat said.

He recalled that Brussels strongly argued against a US demand for a special envoy last year, saying at the time the move would flag the Balkans as a crisis area, similar to the Middle East or Afghanistan. In the new European External Action Service, or EEAS, the all-EU diplomatic corps established by the Lisbon Treaty, an official will be in charge of the Balkans, but without the title of a special envoy. The real question remains what kind of title this official should have, how high in the hierarchy he will rank.

During the time in office of Ms Ashton's predecessor Javier Solana, Austrian diplomat Stefan Lehne oversaw Balkan affairs, ranking as senior advisor and Director of the Council's Directorate General for External and Politico-Military Affairs – a fairly low-ranking title. In addition, a taskforce for the Western Balkan was established, with Italian diplomat Mike Giffoni as chief and advisor to Mr Solana. When Mr. Lehne left office in 2008 to be a political director in the Austrian Foreign ministry and Mr. Giffoni became Italy's first ambassador in Pristina, they were not replaced at the same level.

This has meant that in the Council, the EU governments' decision-making body, the Balkans have been given less prominent attention over the last couple of years. This development was compounded when Mr. Solana, who personally knew every political leader in the region, was replaced by Lady Ashton, who had to learn the names of some prime ministers and foreign ministers. In any case, appointing a special envoy for the Balkans would create just more confusion. Brussels already has Special Representatives in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia, plus Eulex [the rule of law mission] in Pristina, not to mention the chief of EU delegations in all Western Balkan countries.

Diplomats say it would be better appointing someone who co-ordinates all those EU officials on the ground and advises Ashton like Lehne and Giffoni advised Solana," a Brussels-based Central European diplomat said. In any event, the profile of the EEAS official in charge of the Balkans is too low for the likes of Paddy Ashdown, former High Representative for Bosnia, ex-EU commissioner Chris Patten or Slovak foreign minister Miroslav Lajčák.

2010 European sovereign debt crisis explained THE AEGEAN CONTAGION

In early 2010 fears of a sovereign debt crisis, or the 2010 Euro Crisis (also known as *Aegean Contagion*), exploded in Greece, and soon affected Spain and Portugal. This led to a crisis of confidence and the widening of bond yield spreads and risk insurance on credit default swaps between these countries and other EU members, most importantly Germany.

The debt crisis has been mostly centered on recent events in Greece, due to the rising cost of financing government debt. On 2 May 2010, the Eurozone countries and the International Monetary Fund agreed to a €110 billion loan for Greece, conditional on the implementation of harsh Greek austerity measures. On 9 May 2010, Europe's Finance Ministers approved a comprehensive rescue package worth almost a trillion dollars aimed at ensuring financial stability across Europe by creating the European Financial Stability Facility.

The Greek economy was one of the fastest growing in the eurozone during the 2000s; from 2000 to 2007 it grew at an annual rate of 4.2% as foreign capital flooded the country. A strong economy and falling bond yields allowed the government of Greece to run large structural deficits.

Large public deficits are one of the features that have marked the Greek social model since the restoration of democracy in 1974. After the removal of the military junta, the government wanted to bring left leaning portions of the population into the economic mainstream. In order to do so, successive Greek governments have run large deficits to finance public sector jobs, pensions, and other social benefits. Since 1993 debt to GDP has been above 100%.

Initially currency devaluation helped finance the borrowing. After the introduction of the euro Greece was initially able to borrow due the lower interest rates government bonds could command. The global financial crisis that began in 2008 had a particularly large effect on Greece. Two of the country's largest industries are tourism and shipping, and both were badly affected by the downturn with revenues falling 15% in 2009.

Concealment of Reality – To keep within the monetary union guidelines, the government of Greece has been found to have consistently and deliberately misreported the country's official economic statistics.

In early 2010, it was established that Greece had paid Goldman Sachs and other banks hundreds of millions of dollars in fees since 2001 for arranging transactions that hid the actual level of borrowing. The purpose of these deals made by several subsequent Greek governments was to enable them to spend beyond their means, while hiding the actual deficit from the EU overseers.



In 2009, the government of George Papandreou revised its deficit from an estimated 6% (8% if a special tax for building irregularities were not to be applied) to 12.7%. In May 2010, the Greek government deficit was estimated to be 13.6%, which is one of the highest in the world relative to GDP. Greek government debt was estimated at €216 billion in January 2010. Accumulated government debt is forecast, according to some estimates, to hit 120% of GDP in 2010. The Greek government bond market is reliant on foreign investors: up to 70% of Greek government bonds are held externally.

Tax evasion costs the Greek government over \$20 billion per year. On 27 April 2010, the Greek debt rating was decreased to the first levels of 'junk' status by Standard & Poor's amidst fears of default by the Greek government. Yields on Greek government two-year bonds rose to 15.3% after the downgrading. Some analysts question Greece's ability to refinance its debt. Standard & Poor's estimates that in the event of default investors would lose 30–50% of their money. Stock markets worldwide declined in response to this announcement.

On 3 May 2010, the European Central Bank suspended its minimum threshold for Greek debt "until further notice" - meaning the bonds will remain eligible as collateral even with junk status. The decision will guarantee Greek banks' access to cheap central bank funding, and it should also help increase Greek bonds' attractiveness to investors. Following the introduction of these measures the yield on Greek 10-year bonds fell to 8.5%, 550 basis points above German yields, down from 800 basis points earlier.

Austerity and loan agreement – On 5 March 2010, the Greek parliament passed the Economy Protection Bill, expected to save €4.8 billion through a number of measures including public sector wage reductions. On 23 April 2010, the Greek government requested that the EU/IMF bailout package be activated. The IMF has said it was "prepared to move expeditiously on this request." Greece needed money before 19 May, or it would face a debt roll over of \$11.3bn.

On 2 May 2010, a loan agreement was reached between Greece, the other eurozone countries, and the International Monetary Fund. The deal consists of an immediate €45 billion in low interest loans to be provided in 2010, with more funds available later. A total of €110 billion has been agreed. The interest for the eurozone loans is 5%, considered to be a rather high level for any bailout loan. The government of Greece agreed to impose a fourth and final round of austerity measures. These include:

- Public sector limit of €1,000 to bi-annual bonus.
- An 8% cut on public sector allowances and a 3% pay cut for public sector utilities employees.
- Return of a special tax on high pensions.
- Reduced payments for lay-offs and overtime pay.
- Extraordinary taxes imposed on company profits.
- Increases in VAT to 23%, 11% and 5.5%.
- 10% tax hike on luxuries, alcohol, tobacco, fuel.
- Equalization of men's and women's pension age limits.
- A financial stability fund has been created.
- Public sector retirement age raised from 61 to 65.
- Public-owned companies cut from 6,000 to 2,000.

On 5 May 2010, a nationwide general strike was held in Athens to protest to the planned spending cuts. Three people were killed, dozens injured, and 107 arrested.

According to research published on 5 May 2010, by Citibank, the EMU loans will be *pari passu* and not senior like those of the IMF. In fact the seniority of the IMF loans themselves has no legal basis but is respected nonetheless. The amount of the loans will cover Greece's funding needs for the next three years (estimated at 30bn for the rest of 2010 and 40bn each for 2011 and 2012). The fiscal tightening will amount to a total of €30 billion (i.e. 12.5% of 2009 Greek GDP) and consist of 5% of GDP tightening in 2010 and a further 4% tightening in 2011

Danger of default – Without a bailout agreement, there was a possibility that Greece would have been forced to default on some of its debt. The premiums on Greek debt had risen to a level that reflected a high chance of a default or restructuring. Analysts gave up to 90% chance of a default or restructuring. A default would most likely have taken the form of a restructuring where Greece would pay creditors only a portion of what they were owed, perhaps 50 or 25 percent. This would effectively remove Greece from the euro, as it would no longer have collateral with the European Central Bank. It would also destabilize the Euro Interbank Offered Rate, backed by government securities.

Because Greece is a member of the eurozone, it cannot devalue a portion of its obligations by the means of introducing inflation, or otherwise stimulate its economy with monetary policy. For example, the U.S. Federal

Reserve expanded its balance sheet by over \$1.3 trillion USD since the global financial crisis began, essentially printing new money and injecting it into the system by purchasing outstanding debt.

The overall effect of a probable Greek default would itself be small for the other European economies. Greece represents only 2.5% of the eurozone economy. The more severe danger is that a default by Greece will cause investors to lose faith in other eurozone countries. This concern is focused on Portugal and Ireland, all of whom have high debt and deficit issues. Italy also has a high debt, but its budget position is better than the European average, and it is not considered amongst the countries most at risk. Recent rumors about a Spanish bailout were dismissed by Premier Zapatero as “insane.” Spain has a comparatively low debt amongst advanced economies, at only 53% of GDP in 2010, more than 20 points less than Germany, France or the US, and more than 60 points less than Italy, Ireland or Greece, and it does not face a risk of default.

Objections to proposed policies – The crisis is seen as a justification for imposing fiscal austerity on Greece in exchange for European funding which would lower borrowing costs for the Greek government. The negative impact of tighter fiscal policy could offset the positive impact of lower borrowing costs and social disruption could have a significantly negative impact on investment and growth in the longer term.

An alternative to the bailout agreement would have been for Greece to leave the eurozone. The preferred solution to the Greek bond 'crisis' might be a Greek exit from the euro followed by a devaluation of the currency. Fiscal austerity or a euro exit is the alternative to accepting differentiated government bond yields within the Euro Area. If Greece remains in the euro while accepting higher bond yields, reflecting its high government deficit, then high interest rates would dampen demand, raise savings and slow the economy. An improved trade performance and less reliance on foreign capital would result.

Possible spread beyond Greece – The government surplus or deficit of Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, United Kingdom, and Spain against the European Union and eurozone 2002–2009. One of the central concerns prior to the bailout was that the crisis could spread beyond Greece. The crisis has reduced confidence in other European economies. Ireland, with a government deficit of 14.3 percent of GDP, the U.K. with 12.6 percent, Spain with 11.2 percent, and Portugal at 9.4 percent are most at risk.

The Greek crisis has gone global. Financing needs for the eurozone in 2010 come to a total of €1.6 trillion, while the US is expected to issue US\$1.7 trillion more Treasury securities in this period, and Japan ¥213 trillion of bonds.

For 2010, the OECD forecasts \$16,000bn will be raised in government bonds among its 30 member countries. Greece has been the notable example of an



industrialized country that has faced difficulties in the markets because of rising debt levels. Even countries such as the US, Germany and the UK, have had fraught moments as investors shunned bond auctions due to concerns about public finances and the economy.

Long-term solutions – EU leaders have made two major proposals for ensuring fiscal stability in the long term.

- The first proposal is the creation of a common fund responsible for bailing out, with strict conditions, an EU member country (dubbed the European Monetary Fund by the media).
- The second is a single authority responsible for tax policy oversight and government spending coordination of EU member countries. This preventive tool is dubbed the European Treasury.

The monetary fund would be supported by EU member governments, and the treasury would be supported by the European Commission. However, strong European Commission oversight in the fields of taxation and budgetary policy and the enforcement mechanisms that go with it have been described as infringements on the sovereignty of eurozone member states and are opposed by key EU nations such as France and Italy.

Corrective policies are needed to control public debt. Some senior German policy makers say that emergency bailouts should bring harsh penalties to EU aid recipients such as Greece. Others argue that the deflationary policies imposed on countries such as Greece and Spain might prolong and deepen their recessions. Ultimately the Greek "social contract," which involves buying social peace through public sector jobs, pensions, and other benefits, will have to be changed in favor of price stability and government restraint if the euro is to survive. As Greece can no longer devalue its way out of economic difficulties, it will have to control spending more tightly than ever.

As long as cross border capital flows remain unregulated in the Euro Area, asset bubbles and current account imbalances are likely to continue. A country like Serbia that runs a large current account or trade deficit (i.e., it imports more than it exports) must also be a net importer

of capital; this is a mathematical identity called the balance of payments. In other words, a country that imports more than it exports must also borrow to pay for those imports. Conversely, Germany's large trade surplus (net export position) means that it must also be a net exporter of capital, lending money to other countries to allow them to buy German goods. The 2009 trade deficits for Spain, Greece, and Portugal were estimated to be \$69.5 billion, \$34.4B and \$18.6B, respectively (\$122.5B total), while Germany's trade surplus was \$109.7Bn. A similar imbalance exists in the U.S. which runs a large trade deficit.

A country with a large trade surplus would generally see the value of its currency appreciate relative to other currencies, which would reduce the imbalance as the relative price of its exports increases. This currency appreciation occurs as the importing country sells its currency to buy the exporting country's currency used to purchase the goods. Many of the countries involved in the crisis are in the eurozone, so this is not an available solution at present. Of course, trade imbalances might be addressed by changing consumption and savings habits. For example, if a country's citizens saved more instead of consuming imports, this would reduce its trade deficit. Likewise, reducing budget deficits is another method of raising a country's level of saving. Capital controls that restrict or penalize the flow of capital across borders is another method that can reduce trade imbalances. Interest rates can also be raised to encourage domestic saving, although this benefit is offset by slowing down an economy and increasing government interest payments.

The suggestion has been made that long term stability in the eurozone requires a common fiscal policy rather than controls on portfolio investment. In exchange for cheaper funding from the EU, Greece and other countries, in addition to having already lost control over monetary policy and foreign exchange policy since the euro came into being, would also lose control over domestic fiscal policy.

An Anglo Conspiracy? – There has been considerable controversy about the role of the English-language press in the regard to the bond market crisis. Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero even ordered the Centro Nacional de Inteligencia to investigate the role of the "Anglo-Saxon media" in fomenting the crisis. He has suggested that the recent financial market crisis in Europe is an attempt to draw international capital away from the euro in order that countries, such as the U.K. and the U.S., can continue to fund their large external deficits which are matched by large government deficits. The U.S. and U.K. do not have large domestic savings pools to draw on and therefore are dependent on external savings. This is not the case in the eurozone which is self funding. Greek Prime Minister Papandreou has suggested that the financial crisis was politically motivated: "This is an attack on the eurozone by certain other interests, political or financial."

SERBIA'S FLAWED EU OBSESSION

Vojin Joksimovich

A re-examination of the Serbia's commitment to the EU, as well as to the IMF, is needed instead of a blind adherence to Serbia's eventual, ever-elusive EU membership.

After his meeting with the Republika Srpska Prime Minister Milorad Dodik in Laktasi, near Banja Luka last spring, Serbian President Boris Tadic reiterated his commitment for Serbia to join the EU as soon as possible. For years he has been saying that there is a no alternative for Serbia but to join the EU. This is factually flawed and philosophically nonsensical: only death has no alternative. Putting all the eggs into one basket has hardly ever been a good strategic decision. Recent global financial meltdown and the debt crisis will adversely impact the entire EU and the euro-zone in particular. It necessitates a wakeup call, which should reach Tadic's office as well. A re-examination of the Serbian strategy is long overdue.

There are viable alternatives for Serbia, more promising than joining the EU, e.g. an association with the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China). The BRIC bloc has much more economic potential than the moribund EU. Besides, unlike the EU, with 22 out of 27 recognitions of Kosovo, BRIC countries have been supporting the Serbian position with regard to the illegal Kosovo unilateral declaration of independence.

EU Sovereign Debt Calamity - The magnitude of this crisis is best illustrated with the statement of the European Central Bank (ECB) President Jean-Claude Trichet who said that this was the worst European economic crisis since WWII and perhaps even WWI. Greece for all intents and purposes went bankrupt. The interest rate on the Greek bonds shot up to 38%. The stave a collapse, but after a long procrastination which exasperated the crisis, the EU leaders, primarily Germany and France, hastily arranged a EUR 110 billion (\$185 billion) a bailout package for Greece but not without participation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The size of this package was three times the amount officials initially estimated. This bailout is more of a bailout of primarily French and German banks rather than a bailout of Greece. The French and German banks had flooded the Greece with cheap credits for a decade and now hold at least EUR100 billion in Greek government bonds. The Greek bondholders have not been asked to miss a single interest payment, reschedule a cent of debt, suffer any write-downs, or any other messy measure to address the sovereign debt subject with empty coffers.

The lenders are extracting their pound of flesh. The Greek government has to slash its public deficit by implementing draconian and unpopular package of new taxes and reducing the wages of public employees and pensioners. The birthplace of democracy was in flames.



The bailout package has failed to convince the markets. Concerned that a Greek default might imperil the euro and in order to calm the markets, the EU leaders in conjunction with the IMF conceived yet another large-scale intervention in the form of establishment of EUR 750 billion stabilization fund (a trillion dollars).

The crisis is still unfolding and at this point nobody knows how it may end. Is the trillion dollar fund but a temporary relief, until larger obligations of Spain and Italy come into question? Some have suggested that unless Germany assumes responsibility for the Club Med debts, something its voters will not permit, the Euro is dead. Even the IMF wizards who a year ago were urging more stimulus spending, have made a 180 degrees turn and started demanding tax increases and spending cuts: more austerity, rather than tax cuts or other pro-growth mechanisms.

EU to become Fiscal Union? - Trichet has started urging tighter euro-zone coordination. In an interview with German Der Spiegel he said: "Europe needs a quantum leap in how it collectively manages public finances." German Chancellor Angela Merkel is also pushing for tightening of zone's fiscal rules. She advocates real enforcement and penalties behind limits on debt and budget deficits including suspension of voting rights. For a good reason euro-zone governments have long resisted stronger oversights of their budgets by the EU executive arm, the EU Commission in Brussels. While such a fiscal union might impose some discipline on national governments, control of budgets and taxes by the EU Commission amounts to a total loss of national sovereignty, which puts a nation on the road to self-destruction and oblivion. The EU Commission demanded from Bulgaria, Slovakia and Lithuania to shutdown Russian-built nuclear power plants, despite their good operating and safety records as a pre-condition for joining the EU. There was no evaluation on the basis of own merits. Simply these plants didn't satisfy the EU standards. This smacks of yet another loss of

sovereignty, but the countries in question swiftly swallowed the EU demand. All three countries have opted to build new nuclear power plants thus enabling the vendors from EU countries, France in particular, to make profits at the expense of future member countries.

EU demands on Serbia – The EU is not in a position to seriously consider expansion of the Union until it resolves the exiting fiscal crisis. It has been reported that Germany now opposes the EU expansion to include the Western Balkans. Hence, the Serbian government expectations will have to be pushed back anyhow. While the euro-calamity briefly summarized above may or may not result in any additional demands on Serbia, the existing demands should have already been deemed unacceptable to Serbia. The Srebrenica declaration by the Serbian government is a case in point followed by the Kosovo independence resolution.



Last January Tadić (l.) announced that the Serbian Parliament would pass a resolution condemning “genocide” in Srebrenica, which did not happen. This development was probably cooked in Washington, Brussels and Strasbourg. Last March Slovenian Jelko Kacin, the European Parliament deputy, revealed that in December 2009 Tadić was presented with a

done deal.

The Turkish newspaper *Zaman* has revealed some months ago that the Turkish foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu was also privy to the resolution text before Tadić himself. Tadić barely mastered a majority of 127 votes in the 250-person Serbian legislature. However, the term “genocide” was dropped making so-called Bosniaks and some in Washington and Brussels unhappy. This is yet another example that whatever the Serbian government does, irrespective whether Milosevic, Kostunica, Djindjić or Tadić are in power, is never is enough to satisfy Washington/Brussels totalitarianism.

In succumbing to the Washington/Brussels pressure Tadić, while labeling the vote as patriotic, has damaged the Serbian national interests despite a presumable intent to advance only the EU membership status by appeasing the Dutch. While the resolution did not use the term “genocide,” it acknowledges involvement of the Serbian government in the massacre of some 7-8,000 Muslims despite the fact that the Serbian government never commissioned its own study to establish the facts on Srebrenica. The Hague Tribunal fabricated casualty numbers become the “truth,” while the governing coalition in Belgrade acknowledges the Hague-perpetrated fraud as the truth, with major legal consequences. Stefan

Karaganovic, a Serbian-American lawyer, made an important point that The Hague Srebrenica verdict would not have succeeded in any American court and that it would have been thrown out.

The Hague Tribunal case has entirely favored the standpoint of the prosecution, which in turn was based mostly on falsehoods and distorted interpretation of a few meager facts. The likely outcome of this irresponsible act of the Tadić’s coalition will be a multimillion dollar lawsuit to be filed by the Croat-Muslim Federation.

Give up Kosovo to join the EU - As mentioned above, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia had to give up cheap electricity that would have been generated by Russian built nuclear power plants with good safety records. In addition to the cost of replacement power they had to commit cost of the plant decommissioning with some help from the EU. The likelihood that Serbia could join the EU without recognition of the Republic of Kosovo is next to zero. This is, however, the exact opposite of what Tadić and his followers had been telling the Serbian people for years. ...

Philip Gordon, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, told reporters in May: “Serbia’s path to the EU will only be completed when it resolves its differences with Kosovo. The EU has been quite clear... that they are not going to be too keen to incorporate border disputes, non-recognitions and ambiguous relationships.” Incidentally, the EU did that when it accepted Cyprus as a member. Gordon is another holdover from the Clinton administration. He has worked closely with Ivo Daalder, Obama’s pick for the U.S. NATO Ambassador. Daalder is known to the Serbian-American community for his response to the late Prof. Alex Dragnich’s question: “How can NATO bomb a sovereign country without the approval of the U.S. Congress.” Daalder’s answer was: “Because we can” ...

Another pogrom? - The ICJ ruling is expected this summer. The judges representing those countries that have recognized Kosovo independence will in all likelihood introduce ambiguities in the ruling, subject to interpretation, but they cannot ignore the UN Charter and the UNSC Resolution #1244. While there will be all sorts of spins, the ruling is likely to favor the Serbian position and thus alienate the Albanian leadership.

Judging by the past, Thaci & Co. will threaten violence, including a Pogrom 2 (Pogrom 1 in which the Albanian mobs attacked Serb and Roma communities as well as the Serbian churches, took place in March 2004). KFOR did not adequately protect the Serbs and other minorities in 2004. How would it be able to do a better job in late 2010 or 2011 when NATO currently mulls cutting the force to 2000 men? Needless to say, Hashim Thaci welcomes NATO plans to reduce troops. Yet there are no contingency plans for this grim scenario by the Belgrade government, such as a military agreement with Russia.

THE KRAJINA CHRONICLE (IV)

Excerpts from Dr. Srdja Trifkovic's book on the history of the Serbs in today's Republic of Croatia, published in February 2010 by the LBF

Yugoslavia In Crisis

King Alexander's attempt to enhance the unity of the Yugoslav state ended in failure. It disoriented the Serbs and consolidated the Croats. In spite of the crisis, however, Yugoslavia remained largely free of the totalitarian tendencies rampant in Europe at that time. With the meteoric rise of Stjepan Radić and his party, other Croatian political groups either ceased to exist as serious concerns or else were forced to the margins of the political spectrum. The heirs to the tradition of Ante Starčević and Josip Frank felt frustrated by what they saw as Radić's inconsistency, manifest in his willingness in 1925 to accept the legitimacy of the state, the Crown and the constitution. This was anathema to them but they were powerless to challenge Radić's status as the undisputed national leader. With only two parliamentary deputies and a few thousand members (mostly the city of Zagreb) the 'Rightists' could not hope to threaten HSS's political monopoly.

An option for 'hard' separatists was to abandon the constitutional process altogether and to engage in subversion and violence. This was the path chosen by one of the two Frankist deputies in Belgrade, lawyer Ante Pavelić, the founder of the Ustaša movement. Pavelić's creation was to become a local manifestation of fascism in South Slav lands: rabidly nationalist, racist, anti-democratic, and violent to the point of genocide.

Pavelić left Yugoslavia in 1929, shortly after King Alexander proclaimed his personal rule. In Sofia he established contacts with the leadership of pro-Bulgarian separatists from Macedonia ('Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization,' VMRO). Soon thereafter he accepted an invitation to establish a base in Italy. Pavelić defined the objectives of his 'movement' as armed struggle for Croatian independence. First volunteers numbered fifty and were recruited among Croat guest-workers in Belgium, France and Germany. They responded to Pavelić's fliers heralding an imminent anti-Serb uprising inside Croatia. In Italy they were promised board and lodging at a time when many were being laid off due to the great depression.

Pavelić established a 'headquarters' in the province of Brescia, where he promulgated the statute of the 'Ustaša, Croatian Revolutionary Organisation' (*Ustaša, hrvatska revolucionarna organizacija*, UHRO) in 1932 and the 'Principles' (*Načela Ustaškog pokreta*) a year later. The key points of the *Principles* are assertion of continued statehood, claim on sovereignty over the entire 'ethnic and historical' territory, denial of legal and property rights to

non-Croats in the future state, collectivism, and organic nationalism. The Statute postulated blind obedience to the leader (*Poglavnik*): the *Führerprinzip* applied to him personally. The spirit of these documents and the posturing of early Ustaša



volunteers (r.), were reminiscent of secret nationalist societies in the 19th century Balkan tradition, rather than a mass movement of the 1930s bent on taking power.

Pavelić's ideological grounding was provided by Ante Starčević. In the 1920s an updated treatment of 'the Serb problem' was given by Milan Sufflay, a historian and sociologist assassinated in 1931. Sufflay's main thesis was that there could be no accord between Croats and Serbs owing to the inherent biological and racial differences between them. Twelve centuries of divergent development had turned Croatia into a Western nation, by virtue of its religion, culture, and modes of thought, while Serbia leaned to the East, to Orthodoxy, and to Russia, as Byzantium's successor in world politics.¹ Sufflay claimed that such differences were genetically insurmountable and rooted in racial differences, Croats being a *fair race with some Mongolian blood* and Serbs being a *darker race of paleo-Balkan origin*. Paradoxically, however, as soon as a Serb accepted Croat national consciousness, such differences no longer mattered to Sufflay; an act of will could override the genes. In a similar vein, half a century earlier Starčević included Serbs in the Croat nation, invoking the day of their return to the fold, and at the same time branded them an inferior race if they refuse to do so.

The Ustaša began to organize terrorist raids into Yugoslav territory from abroad, chiefly from Hungary, where they had a camp at Janka Puzsta near Croatia's border. Following a failed attempt on the life of King Alexander by an Ustaša activist in Zagreb, Pavelić recruited an experienced VMRO assassin who murdered King Alexander and France's Foreign Minister, Louis Barthou in Marseilles in October 1934. Pavelić was placed under arrest by Mussolini but not extradited to France, where he was sentenced to death in absentia.

Pavelić postulated a demonic concept of the Serb. The hatred of the 'Vlachs' was the cornerstone of his followers' entire outlook, and above all the key defining trait of their Croatness. The Serb was a subhuman beast (Starčević), racially different from the Croat and genetically inferior to him (Sufflay), a 'scheming Byzantine oriental... an alien thorn in Croatia's very flesh' (Pavelić). Such views made a compromise impossible by definition. That compromise

¹ Milan Sufflay. *Hrvatska u svjetlu svjetske historije i politike*. Zagreb, 1928.



was nevertheless attempted by Croatia's political mainstream, the Peasant Party. After King Alexander's death his cousin Prince Paul took over the regency until young King Peter reached maturity.

For several years the Prince (I.) relied on Milan Stojadinović, prime minister of Yugoslavia from 1935 until early 1939. He was a talented politician and financial expert with authoritarian tendencies. Initially, at the time of his appointment, Stojadinović made statements that indicated his readiness to resolve the Croat question. Maček was not ready, however: he demanded that the Constitution of 1931 be abolished, and insisted that there had to be a clear understanding – in advance of any formal agreement – what exactly would be the territory and constitutional status of the future Croat unit within Yugoslavia. He expected the rising tension in Europe to work in his favor by making Belgrade readier to grant concessions.

Wooed by Germany, friendly with Italy, nominally allied with France and the Little Entente, Stojadinović believed he was building a strong external position and he was in no hurry. After he signed an agreement with Italy's foreign minister Ciano in 1937, all Ustaša activity was terminated and Pavelić's followers interned on the distant Lipari Islands off Sicily. Many decided to return to Yugoslavia voluntarily, where they were promised amnesty. Stojadinović seemed unconcerned: the home branch of Pavelić's organization never numbered more than a thousand members. His authorities even tolerated the ultra-nationalist newspapers *Hrvatski narod* ('Croat People') and *Nezavisnost* ('Independence').

Prince Paul decided to replace Stojadinović shortly after the election of December 1938. He was concerned that Stojadinović's policy of friendship with the Axis powers went too far. Also, in order to reach an agreement with Maček, which he regarded as urgently needed, Prince Paul knew he needed someone new at the helm. He selected Dragiša Cvetković, a government minister from Niš who was reputed to be in favor of an agreement with the Croats. Unfortunately for the Prince, the new government lacked credibility and a clear mandate among the Serbs.

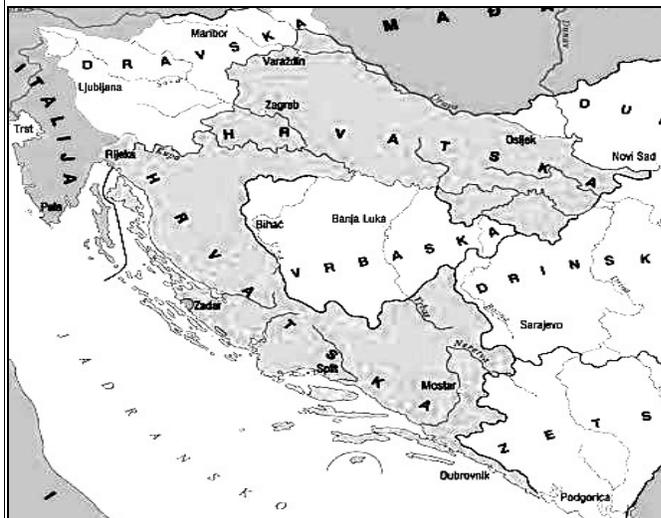
Cvetković stated his intention to negotiate with Maček on March 10, 1939. He arrived in Zagreb three weeks later, not only as the Premier but also as Prince Paul's envoy. The talks proceeded smoothly, and by the end of April a tentative agreement was reached and sent to Prince Paul for approval. It was short and simple: an autonomous Croat province (*Banovina*) was to be created, embracing the Savska Banovina, the Primorska Banovina and the district of Dubrovnik (see map, r.).

The new Banovina of Croatia would enjoy wide autonomy. A joint government would be formed to see the agreement (*Sporazum*) through. It was based on Article 116 of the 1931 Constitution, which provided for emergency measures in case of a threat to the country's security. After some additional talks the final version was signed by Prince Paul on 24 August 1939.

The Agreement opened with the statement that *Yugoslavia is the best guarantee of the independence and progress of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*. This declaration of principle by the HSS reaffirmed its acceptance of the Yugoslav state. The Banovina of Croatia comprised more territory than envisaged in the provisional agreement of 27 April, by including several districts of Bosnia and Herzegovina inhabited by Croats. The central government, which the HSS joined as a coalition partner, retained control over national security and defense, foreign affairs, and most financial issues. The first Ban became Ivan Šubašić known as a pro-Yugoslav HSS moderate. He was to be responsible to the Crown on the one hand, and to the *Sabor* of Croatia (yet to be elected) on the other. Laws pertaining to the Banovina of Croatia would be signed by the King and countersigned by the Ban.

As the only *Banovina* constituted on the principle of nationality and named after the nation which comprised a majority within it, the new unit came close to resembling a nation-state. The *Sporazum* that created it was similar in spirit to the Austro-Hungarian *Ausgleich* of 1867. It was the sort of deal that could have satisfied Radić two decades earlier. In the event, it was too little, too late to some Croats; too much, too soon to some Serbs. To the separatists the Agreement was a sellout, an act of treason. On the other side, many Serbs – notably the circle around Professor Slobodan Jovanović and the Serbian Cultural Club – thought that by 'solving' the Croatian question Prince Paul had helped exacerbate the Serbian one.

The Agreement was an emergency political measure meant to unify and strengthen the country on the eve of a



new European war. For that it was too late. Far from strengthening Yugoslavia, King Alexander's dictatorship had disrupted political life and created disorientation among the Serbs, without breaking the Croats' striving for self-rule. The Serbs, as it turned out, were the only ones to fall for their own propaganda of 'one nation with three names.' The Yugoslav experiment had diminished their leaders' ability to pursue a commonly agreed Serb national interest. In contrast, throughout this period there had existed a consistent 'Croat line' embodied in the HSS. It was characterized by dual-track approach. Maček did not conceal his desire that the Banovina jurisdiction and territory should be eventually increased, but he claimed to accept the Royal Yugoslav solution (embodied in the



Banovina's coat of arms, l.) as the framework for the achievement of that objective. On the other hand, many HSS field activists and the party press talked of the Agreement as but a bare minimum, 'the first step,' and hinted that the final objective was nothing short of full independence. Such approach reflected real differences of opinion within the HSS. The hard-liners attacked Maček for his failure to take

advantage of the 'unique' situation, ally the Croat cause with the Axis, and work for an independent Croatia.

The outbreak of war in September 1939 was followed by Yugoslavia's declaration of neutrality. This suited both belligerent camps at first. The Western allies accepted Yugoslavia's neutrality since they knew that they could not expect more. Germany's focus was elsewhere, and her supplies of food and raw materials needed for the war effort continued to arrive as before. Even though Belgrade was intimately sympathetic to Britain and especially France, Germany had little reason for concern. Her quick victory over Poland, while the Allies remained passive, created a deep impression. Talking to Ciano on October 1, 1939 Hitler calmly remarked that *for the time being nothing new is going to happen in the Balkans.*

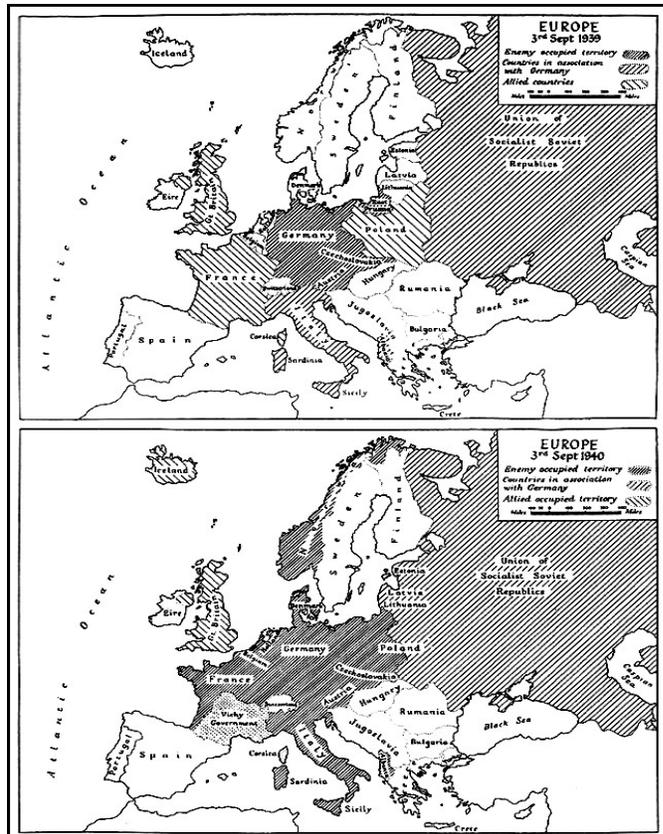
By the end of 1940, however, the geostrategic and political position of Yugoslavia suddenly grew precarious. The Balkan geopolitical equation changed suddenly and irreversibly with Mussolini's attack on Greece. Subsequent Italian military setbacks and British involvement in the defense of Greece forced Germany not only to become more directly involved in the Southeast, but also to assume a more explicit final word in what was nominally Italy's zone of influence.

Increased German pressure on Yugoslavia initially took the form of vague demands that it should become more friendly to the Axis. Once its hand was forced by the Italian

action in Greece, Germany no longer wooed Belgrade; now was the time to bully it into submission.

Prince Paul saw the writing on the wall. His gloom reflected the shock which the rapid fall of France caused in Yugoslavia, especially among the traditionally Francophile Belgrade elite. In early 1941 Germany's diplomatic and military pincer movement in the Balkans was in full swing. One by one, Yugoslavia's neighbors to the north and east were joining the Tripartite Pact and accepting German troops on their territory. The primary objective of Germany was to prepare the attack on the Soviet Union (Operation Barbarossa); the secondary was to reach Greece and attack it from the northeast. In the process, Belgrade found itself physically encircled. Most of Germany's new Balkan allies had actual or potential irredentist claims against Yugoslavia, which left the country vulnerable militarily and psychologically. In the Balkans, in the winter of 1940-1941, it was not easy to enjoy the distinction of being the very last 'Versailles creation' to have its 1919 frontiers still intact.

Prince Paul's policy of neutrality, pursued as long as possible, ended at the Belvedere on 25 March 1941. The signing of the Tripartite Pact was not an expression of the Prince's political will, but it was the best he could hope for: Hitler made several major concessions, including the pledge not to demand transit rights for German troops or supplies across Yugoslav territory. This was a diplomatic victory for the beleaguered government in Belgrade: "By dragging their feet for so long, they had shown unequalled courage in



the face of a state so much stronger than themselves.”¹ The leaders in Belgrade hoped that the watered-down version of the Pact, grudgingly accepted by Hitler, would calm public opinion at home. This failed; the government of Cvetković and Maček, and Prince Paul himself, did not enjoy the confidence of the Serbian public.

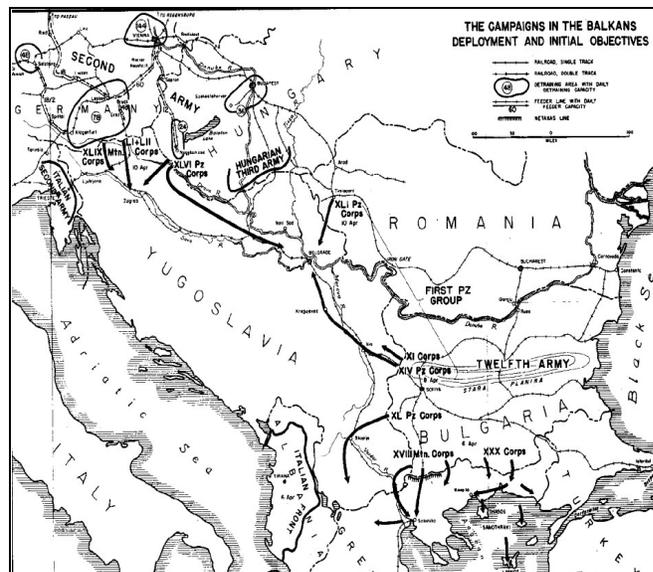
In the early hours of March 27, 1941, a group of officers led by Air Force generals Bora Mirković and Dušan Simović took power in an almost bloodless coup in Belgrade. Its apologists claimed that, for all its awful consequences, it enabled Yugoslavia to avoid the allegedly inevitable slide into the Axis war camp. This sentiment was echoed in the streets of Belgrade and other Serbian cities in the slogan of ‘Better grave than slave’ (*Bolje grob nego rob*) and ‘Better war than the Pact’ (*Bolje rat nego pakt*).

The event is known in Serbia simply as ‘the 27th of March.’ It was an act of explicit rejection of political realism for unclear goals. The conspirators reflected a Serbian tradition harking back to the *hajduks* and the regicide of 1903. In 1941 the upholders of that tradition were disconnected from any notion of national interest rationally defined and prudently pursued. Its proponents sought legitimacy in the support of an excitable mob. Even their *a posteriori* claim that it contributed to victory over Nazism, allegedly by forcing Hitler to postpone his attack on Russia, was false. British intelligence was heavily involved, but its machinations would not have sufficed were it not for the Serbs’ willingness to act rashly.

In Berlin the news caused shock. Hitler had an attack of fury and treated the coup as a personal blow. He decided to smash Yugoslavia. He would do it with assistance from Italy, Bulgaria, and, a few days later, Hungary. The German attack (see map above) started on April 6, 1941, with a vengeful bombing of Belgrade. It ended in the military and political collapse ten days later. Unconsolidated Yugoslavia – or, rather, disoriented Serbia – may have “found its soul” (as Churchill claimed), but in doing so it headed straight for ‘the Kingdom of Heaven’ in the mythical tradition of Prince Lazar, martyred at Kosovo in 1389. The Serbs have not recovered since.

Hitler did not seek to break up Yugoslavia before the coup of March 27. He *did* want to break up the Little Entente and to exclude French influence from Central Europe. To that end, from his earliest days in power, he sought to woo Yugoslavia rather than to seek its destruction. This was in contrast with his policy towards other ‘Versailles creations,’ Czechoslovakia and Poland. The theme of a strong Yugoslavia friendly to Germany as the key to Berlin’s policy in the Balkans was a salient feature of German diplomatic documents in the 1930s.

The main cause of the fall of Yugoslavia was the military superiority of the German Reich. Even if the



country had been united in the will to resist, the defense would have been hopeless. In April 1941 there had been no military, economic, political, or psychological foundations for a sustained defense of the Yugoslav state.

Serbs Outlawed

The system of occupation in the former Yugoslavia, hastily created in April 1941, was presumably temporary in nature. Immediately following the successful completion of operations in the Balkans Hitler paid no attention to the newly conquered area. Initially he envisaged Croatia in some sort of union with Hungary, or as an autonomous state, probably under Hungarian influence. A week later (12 April) the Wehrmacht Provisional Guidelines on the partition of Yugoslavia mentioned an “independent Croatian state,” but with the specific exclusion of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The proclamation of the ‘Independent State of Croatia’ on Zagreb’s radio by one of Pavelić’s followers, former Austrian-Hungarian officer Slavko Kvaternik, was not the Germans’ favorite option. It was adopted in the absence of a better alternative following the entry of German troops into Croatia’s capital on April 10, 1941. In previous days Vladko Maček had turned down German offers of power. At the same time he addressed the HSS rank and file over the radio immediately after Kvaternik and asked his followers to “extend sincere cooperation” to the new regime.

In the meantime the leader of the Ustaša movement and his two hundred followers were still in Italy. Until 27 March they were politically and militarily passive, dispersed all over the peninsula, and demoralized. The Italians insisted on their total inactivity, in view of the impending signing of the Tripartite Pact by the government of Cvetković and Maček. But on 28 March, upon learning

¹ Martin van Creveld. *Hitler’s Strategy 1940-1941: The Balkan Clue*. Cambridge University Press 1973, p. 139

of Hitler's decision to attack Yugoslavia, Mussolini decided to reactivate Pavelić. Two meetings took place in the two weeks between the coup in Belgrade and Pavelić's departure for Zagreb. The first, on 29 March, was attended by acting foreign minister Anfuso, who was taking notes. Pavelić asserted his readiness to accept Italy's annexation of Dalmatia: "He confirms earlier obligations to Italy; he guarantees that he will carry them out; he dispenses any doubts about his loyalty." Anfuso's impression of Pavelić's talks with Mussolini was clear: "Of these two men of politics, who are discussing their national problems, one is fatally returning to his home country as a traitor." Pavelić was well aware what effect the loss of Dalmatia would produce, but only wanted "to avoid the impression of being a renegade."



At his second meeting with Mussolini on April 11 Pavelić (l.) confirmed the agreement on Italy's right to annex Dalmatia reached two weeks earlier. He left Rome for Trieste on the same day. On 12 April at 10 p.m., with his two hundred men in tow, he left Trieste in a convoy of municipal buses provided by the local military command. They crossed the old Italian-Yugoslav border at Sušak shortly after 2 a.m. on 13

April.

The group passed through the area of Gorski Kotar in jubilant mood. In the village of Srpske Moravice, the first settlement with a large Serb population (as its name implies), Pavelić's entourage halted and seized some two hundred inhabitants from their homes. They were lined up at gunpoint, abused, threatened, and eventually set free. This was, after all, only the first day; but the writing was on the wall. The spectacle was repeated at Ogulin, where the local Roman Catholic priest, Fr. Ivan Mikan, addressed the captive Serbs: "Now there will be some cleansing.... Scoot you dogs over the Drina." The terror started on the same day Pavelić arrived to take over his 'state.'

On 15 April Pavelić arrived in Zagreb and entered the Ban's Palace in the Old City (Gornji Grad). The NDH had become the latest addition to the 'New European Order.' Thanks to Maček's endorsement of the new regime – contained in his radio call for *sincere co-operation* – Pavelić could rely on the administrative and paramilitary network of the HSS. Establishment of state authority would have been much more difficult if the HSS rank-and-file had remained on the sidelines.

In the first weeks after 10 April, there existed a degree of support for the new order among many Croats, reflected in the tremendous welcome given to German troops in Zagreb (above). This early wave enabled Pavelić to

consolidate himself in the initial period. Although he lacked the charismatic personality of a Hitler or a Mussolini, he was the undisputed leader of his initially small movement, and proceeded to equate



'Croat' and 'Ustaša.' This was the key feature of his propaganda throughout the war, coupled with the *Führerprinzip*. His mix of Nazi brutality and racism, fascist irrationality and reinvented primitivism soon turned Croatia into a pandemonium of anarchy and genocide.

The NDH never had a constitution; instead, on 16 April 1941 Pavelić swore an oath on the 'Ustaša Principles' and proclaimed them 'the supreme law' of the state. Numerous fiats introduced in the first weeks were not legislated through an assembly, because no such body existed. Legislation was reduced to a series of decrees and ordinances issued by Pavelić or on his orders. He had the sole right of appointing and dismissing ministers, secretaries of state and heads of state directorates (the 'Law' of 24 June 1941). All ministers were directly responsible to him; cabinet sessions were very rare and Pavelić dealt with his ministers one-on-one.

In addition, Pavelić established separate 'directorates' (*Ravnateljstva*) in charge of certain affairs that were taken away from the ministry originally responsible for them. The heads of the directorates were directly under his command. A prominent example was that of the notorious Eugen-Dido Kvaternik, 'Marshal' Slavko's son, who became Director for Public Order and Security (*Ravnatelj za javni red i sigurnost*, RAVSIGUR), an institution separate from the interior ministry. In that post he unleashed an unprecedented reign of genocidal terror against Serbs, Jews, and any suspected or real opponents of the regime.

The state had no coherent program. The all-pervasive Serb-hatred and copycat Nazi antisemitism were coupled with the proclaimed goal to turn the NDH into an 'Ustaša-state' (*Ustaška država*). This meant Pavelić's unlimited personal power. In a speech on 21 May 1941 he said that he would bear responsibility "to the entire Croat people for all [government] acts, while all state organs, officials and employees will be responsible to me – and you know that I am not joking."¹ In practice this meant that he was not going to be accountable to anyone.

An elaborate apparatus of internal control was soon established. On 10 May the Ustaša movement constituted an armed militia (*Ustaška vojnica*) as its military muscle, and the Ustaša Supervisory Service (*Ustaška nadzorna služba*, UNS), the security service similar in structure and

¹ *Hrvatski narod*, 22 May 1941.

methods to the Gestapo in Germany. Independent of both stood Kvaternik-junior's dreaded Directorate for Public Security, with its own network of agents and armed units, and the Ustaša police (*Ustaško redarstvo*). The tools of terror were ready; the bloodbath could begin.



Germany's limited interest in Croatia was apparent in Hitler's instructions given to his newly-appointed military representative in Zagreb, General Edmund Glaise von Horstenau (l.). Suave and eloquent, a polished KuK officer with a solid reputation as a military historian earned between the wars, Glaise combined an intense nostalgia for the Habsburg Monarchy with Nazi sympathies. On 14 April 1941 Glaise reported to Hitler at his special train in southern Austria to receive

instructions. Knowing that Glaise was an inveterate Italophile, Hitler warned him that Italy would have to be granted priority in the new state:

As for Croatia, the task is to get it swiftly consolidated so that German troops can withdraw. I will need the Second Army in another place soon, the Fuehrer remarked significantly, and he did not need to explain where that could be. This would be our political objective in Croatia; everything else the country would have to do by itself, while taking into account Italy and her aspirations.¹

Similar instructions were given to the newly appointed German minister in Zagreb, *SA-Obergruppenführer* Siegfried Kasche – a newcomer to diplomacy, drafted by Ribbentrop into the Foreign Ministry to infuse it with the Nazi spirit. Kasche was told on the eve of his departure for Zagreb that the Croats and Italians were not likely to get on well, and that the former would appeal to Kasche, hoping to turn him into an arbiter. As long as the war was going on, however, the German side was obliged to respect Italian sensibility without reserve. Any mediation would have to result in support for Italy, which would only alienate the Croats. Therefore, the German Minister should “stay aloof.”

On 17 April Glaise came to see Hitler again and asked him if Germany had already accepted obligations regarding Italy's borders. Hitler said that no specific promises had been given but that Italian interests had to be given priority. He added that handing over Dalmatia to Italy could be useful because it would create “a permanent basis for conflicts between Italians and Croats, whereby Germany could always reserve the role of an arbiter.” In addition to

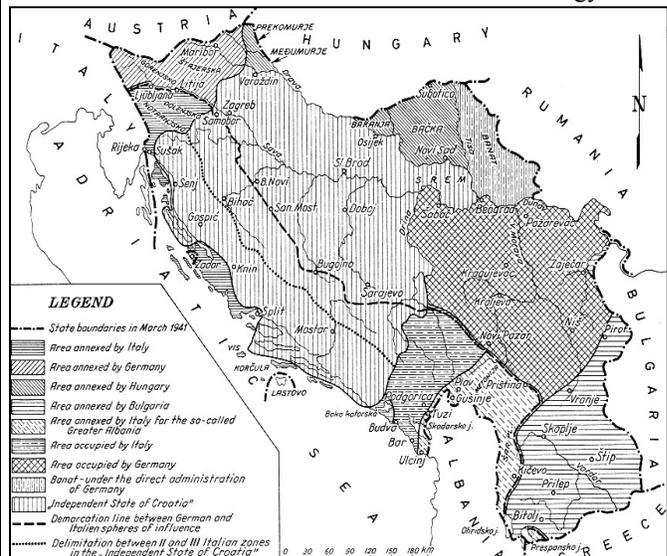
¹ Glaise's diary, 14 April 1941. Hitler was alluding to the forthcoming Operation *Barbarossa*.

predicting Croat-Italian strife Hitler also envisaged the flaring up of internal conflicts between Serbs and Croats, which would prevent stabilization of the new state and result “in a permanent schism between nations which had been within one state until now.” The effect on the future role of Germany would be the same: by creating discord between Croats and their neighbors, the Germans ensured their presence and enhanced their influence.

Hitler was to repeat this formula often in later years, to the chagrin of German generals who regarded the Ustašas' anti-Serb policy as a major cause of permanent turmoil in the NDH. The policy of letting Italy make enemies of Croats and letting Croats make enemies of Serbs may have seemed a clever ploy to Hitler in April 1941. Ultimately it turned into a major liability for Germany's position in southeast Europe.

The occasion to settle the partition of Yugoslavia (see map, below) and to coordinate Axis policy came in Vienna on 21-22 April 1941, at a meeting between Ciano and Ribbentrop arranged on German initiative. Ribbentrop indicated that the frontiers of the newly created state would be drawn “in accordance with Italian interests.” He said that the main goal of the new order in the Balkans was to prevent “once and for all” the repetition of a betrayal such as Serbia perpetrated in March 1941. Ciano responded by producing a map: the whole of Dalmatia and the rest of the Adriatic coast from Fiume to Cattaro [Kotor] would be annexed by Italy. Montenegro would be resurrected as a state in personal union with Italy, while parts of northwestern Macedonia and Kosovo would go to Albania. Croatia was likewise to be tied to Italy by a personal union.

The Germans had no objection to the Italian annexation of Dalmatia. The only surprise was their decision to maintain an occupation force “in a strip of Croatia running from north-west to south-east in order to safeguard the railroad communication with Serbia.” The Vienna talks confirmed the nature of Hitler's strategy in the



Balkans. Germany would let Italy enlarge itself on the eastern Adriatic shore, and Italy could do it only thanks to German acquiescence. Hitler was going to let Mussolini fall into a trap of his own making – and make Germany appear magnanimous for doing so.

The surrender of Dalmatia eroded the credibility of the new regime. Three days after returning from Rome Pavelić attempted to rectify the effect by delivering a major speech in which he admitted that “we had to make some sacrifices.” He ended with grave threats against the Serbs, seeking to shift the focus away from the Rome Agreements onto the enemy within:

We shall not allow enemies of the Croats to work against them, to poison them from within. [...] The times when the Croat people were but an object are over. The Croat nation is the master now, and everything else will be *its* object. These are clear indications of our intentions, which are being applied and will be carried out. I shall carry them out! And you know that I have fulfilled all my promises.

Pavelić was true to his word. The ‘fulfillment’ was to cost hundreds of thousands of lives.

After the coup of 27 March, Hitler was determined to brutalize the Serbs, as shown in the indiscriminate bombing of Belgrade on 6 April. Hitler’s vindictiveness was confirmed when Pavelić visited him in June 1941. During a preliminary meeting with foreign minister Ribbentrop, who asked Pavelić about his plans for the large Serb minority in the NDH, the visitor replied that “there had been no Serb question” in Croatia until 70 years earlier, when the impact of Orthodoxy imbued those people with the “mistaken” feeling of Serb identity. He said they would be expelled.

Adolf Hitler welcomed Pavelić on 6 June. He said that the course of events in March 1941 had made him an unwilling instrument of Croatia’s liberation as he had not intended to act against Yugoslavia, but the Serbs forced his hand. The key part of the conversation concerned national policy. Picking up the theme mentioned by Ribbentrop, Hitler described plans to transfer Serbs from the NDH to



Serbia and Slovenes from the Reich into Croatia as a shortly painful operation that was nevertheless preferable to constant suffering.¹ Then he added the key sentence: “After all, if the Croatian state wishes to be strong, then a nationally intolerant policy must be pursued for fifty years, because too much tolerance on such issues can only do harm.” With this statement, Hitler explicitly endorsed the mass persecution of the Serbs in the NDH that had already started, but was to reach its climax in subsequent months. Hitler’s encouragement to Pavelić at their first meeting (above) to pursue ‘intolerance’ was in line with his intention – stated to Glaise on 17 April – to encourage internal Serb-Croat conflict as “the guarantee of a permanent schism between nations which had been within one state until now.” Using the formula of *divide et impera*, Hitler let the Italians make enemies of Croats; and he would let the Croats make enemies of Serbs. In the event, both Pavelić and Mussolini performed on cue.

Hitler’s advocacy of ‘intolerance’ did not make any difference to the thousands of Serbs already slaughtered in the NDH before 6 June. The first recorded mass murder of Serbs occurred in Bjelovar on the night of 27-28 April 1941, when 190 civilians of all ages were murdered. Such instances were repeated in different areas throughout the month of May. It is nevertheless unlikely that the wave of terror, which engulfed the NDH in the summer of 1941, would have been so bloody had Hitler wanted to put a stop to it. His encouragement to Pavelić had a major long-term impact, not because it induced the *Poglavnik* to embark on genocide – the intent had been there all along – but because it gave him *carte blanche* to pursue his goal. Hitler made Pavelić *feel authorized* to proceed with his attempted destruction of the Serbs, Jews and Gypsies.

The Serb population in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Srem was shocked by the speedy fall of the state they regarded as their own, and displayed mute acceptance of the new order. Some saw it as a re-enactment of Austria-Hungary, which, while not loved, was well respected. As they were to learn to their peril, in the NDH there was no rational correlation between a Serb’s deeds and the state’s attitude. Having a Serb identity was a political act in itself, tantamount to treason: those who ‘wanted to be Serbs’ and who ‘insisted on being Serbs’ should be punished for that.

The quasi-legal instruments of punishment were developed with remarkable speed. Two days after arriving in Zagreb, on 17 April, Pavelić enacted a fiat called *The Law on the Protection of the People and the State*. It literally made it ‘legal’ for the regime to kill anyone. Capital punishment was made mandatory for all those who ‘offended the honor and vital interests of the Croat people’ and who ‘in whatever way’ threatened the NDH. There was no appeal, and each sentence had to be carried out within

¹ The Serbs in the NDH numbered two million, or one third of the population; for Ustaša estimate see *Hrvatski narod*, 19 May 1941.

two hours. Mobile court-martials were immediately established. On April 18, the first anti-Semitic racial law, on the *Aryanization of Jewish property*, was enacted. It enabled the regime to take Jewish businesses and real estate and to distribute the spoils. Jewish-owned apartments were swiftly given to the emerging Ustaša *nomenklatura*.

Dozens of speeches by Ustaša officials at public meetings all over the NDH and countless propaganda articles published in May and June 1941 were preparing the ground for the pogrom. Pavelić's men were frank about the Serbs: "Destroy them wherever you see them, and our Poglavnik's blessing is certain," Viktor Gutic, district commander in Banja Luka, declared. Pavelić's 'minister of justice' was equally clear:

This State, our country, is only for the Croats, and not for anyone else. There are no means which we will not be ready to use in order to make our country truly ours, and to cleanse it of all Serbs. All those who came into our country 300 years ago must disappear. We do not hide this is our intention. It is the policy of our State. In the course of its execution we shall simply follow the Ustaša principles.¹

In a highly publicized speech in the town of Gospić (Lika) on 22 July 1941, Mile Budak, Pavelić's minister of education, announced, "We have three million bullets for Serbs, Jews and Gypsies. We'll kill one third of all Serbs. We shall deport another third, and the rest of them will have to become Catholic." The *so-called Serbs*, Budak added, are not any *Serbs* at all, but people brought by the Turks "as the plunderers and refuse of the Balkans... They must know, and heed, our motto: *either submit, or get out!*"

Ustaša ideology evolved from three intertwined components: Ethnicity, religion, and violence. In the spirit of Starčević, the Serbs' nationality was categorically denied and the term *Vlachs* or 'Greek-Easterners' (*Grko-iztočnjaci*) applied instead. Paradoxically, the Serbs were also depicted as apostates and traitors, implicitly not of alien and subhuman stock, who had betrayed Croatia to foreign, i.e. Serbian interests. The implication was that they were Croats who had converted to Orthodoxy and thus accepted the Serb name by default. (This view was reflected in Pavelić's tragicomic 1942 experiment with the *Croatian Orthodox Church*.) The notion that some Serbs in the NDH belonged to one category, and the rest to another, had never been coherently elaborated by the Ustaša regime.

Hermann Neubacher, Hitler's political expert for the Balkans, summed up the Ustaša intent: "One third must be converted to Catholicism, another third must be expelled, and the final third must die. The last part of the program has been carried out." Another German observer noted the wide circulation, as soon as the new regime took over, of slogans such as "Hang the Serbs on willow trees" (*Srbe na vrbe*), "there will be blood up to the knee," or "we shall tear their

¹ From a speech by Dr. Milovan Žanić. *Novi list*, 3 June 1941.

babies out of their mothers' wombs!"² The religious component was prominent. The old notion that Serbs were 'Orthodox Croats' was replaced by the demand for outright conversion or death. The Croatian Catholic press wrote gloatingly about what was in store for the 'schismatics' and other enemies of the New Order:

When God spoke through papal encyclicals, they closed their ears. Now God uses other means. He will set up missions ... upheld not by priests but by army commanders, led by Hitler. Their sermons will be heard thanks to guns, tanks and bombers.³

The German security service (SD) expert for the Southeast, Dr. Wilhelm Hoettl, noted that forced conversions from Orthodoxy to Catholicism figured prominently on the Ustaša agenda:

Since being Croat was equivalent to confessing to the Catholic faith, and being Serb followed the profession of Orthodoxy, they now began to convert the Orthodox to Roman Catholicism under duress. Forced conversions were actually a method of Croatization."⁴

The Roman Catholic hierarchy in Croatia, aligned with the Habsburg cause until 1918, saw the creation of Yugoslavia as an unwelcome episode. After the *Sporazum* of 1939 its publications felt emboldened to publish articles calling for full independence. After April 10, part of the hierarchy became *de facto* accomplices, as did a majority of the clergy. The leading NDH racial 'theorist' was a clergyman, Dr. Ivo Guberina, whose writings sought to reconcile religious 'purification' and 'racial hygiene.' He urged Croatia's 'cleansing of foreign elements' by any means. His views were echoed by the influential head of the Ustaša Central Propaganda Office, Fr. Grga Peinović. When the anti-Serb and anti-Jewish racial laws of April and May 1941 were enacted the Catholic press welcomed them as vital for "the survival and development of the Croatian nation."⁵ On the subject of those laws the Archbishop of Sarajevo Ivan Šarić declared that "there are limits to love."⁶

The head of the Croatian Catholic Church, Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac, was careful with his early public statements and initially remained on the political sidelines. Šarić was less circumspect: "It is stupid and unworthy of Christ's disciples to think that the struggle against evil could be waged in a noble way and with gloves on."

Within weeks of April 10, 1941, all gloves were off.

² Dr. Josef Matl in *Iskra* (Munich), March 20, 1959.

³ *Katolički Tjednik*, Zagreb, 31 August 1941.

⁴ Walter Hagen. *The Secret Front*. London, 1953, p. 238.

⁵ *Hrvatska Straža*, May 11, 1941

⁶ Šarić published a poem in the Christmas 1941 issue of *Katolički tjednik*: "Dr Ante Pavelić! the dear name! Croatia has therein a treasure from Heaven. May the King of Heaven accompany thee, our Golden Leader!"

CROATIA SHOULD APOLOGIZE FOR WORLD WAR II GENOCIDE

James Bissett

Last spring a *Christian Science Monitor* commentary by the Chairman of The Lord Byron Foundation, James Bissett, caused quite a stir in the Balkans. Croatia is nearing the finish line of its multiyear race to join the European Union, Ambassador Bissett notes, but it has some unfinished business to attend to.

Croatia's accession has been pushed along by traditional ally Germany, and by the United States, which has encouraged the EU's southwest expansion to include all of the Balkans and even Turkey. Croatia has complied with most of the formal entry requirements and is expected to join in 2012.

However, there is another, moral requirement Croatia should have to meet for its own sake before being admitted.

It should fully and publicly acknowledge its role in World War II as a loyal ally of the Nazi cause, and its ardent participation in genocide against its Serbian, Jewish, and Gypsy (Roma) populations. The scattered, vague, and half-hearted denials masking as apologies that Croatia has used to improve its image in recent years don't count. The country should come to grips with its genocidal role in the same way Germany has come to grips with its Nazi past.

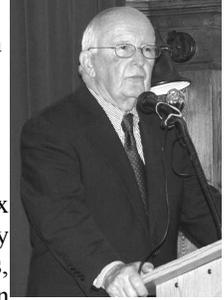
Last March the Serbian parliament apologized for its role in the infamous Srebrenica massacre of 1995 that killed some 7,000 Bosnian Muslims. Such an apology was considered unthinkable even a few years ago, yet the pressures of joining the EU helped nudge that nation to account for this war crime.

It's time Croatia did the same. Croatia has more than its share of apologies to make for crimes it committed during the Balkans conflict of the 1990s, but it can start with the massive killings it unleashed during World War II. Although estimates vary, between 300,000 and 700,000 victims were murdered by Croatian fascists during the war.

When Hitler's forces invaded Yugoslavia in the spring of 1941, Croatian right-wing extremists, under the leadership of Ante Pavelić and his fascist "Ustashi" movement, were given control of Croatia. Pavelić aligned the country enthusiastically to the Nazi cause and immediately launched a horrific onslaught against the Serbian minority. The official policy was expressed as: Kill one-third of the Serbs, convert another third to Roman Catholicism, and expel the remaining third from Croatia.

The Roman Catholic Church insists it condemned the atrocities, but the record suggests a mix of official responses, ranging from weak condemnations to tacit support. While the killing was under way, the Croatian Archbishop, Aloysius Stepinac, blessed the new regime.

Pavelić was granted an audience with Pope Pius XII. A number of Franciscan monks participated in the killing. After the war ended, the Vatican helped Ustashi criminals evade capture and flee to South America.



During the war, Serbian Orthodox churches were burned and many Serbian communities wiped out. Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies were interned in concentration camps, where thousands of victims were slaughtered like animals. The carnage was so horrific that senior ranking German officers in Croatia, including SS-Obergruppenführer Artur Phleps, sickened by the slaughter and worried that it was driving Serbs and anti-Ustashi Croats into the ranks of resistance groups, urged Berlin to demand a stop to the slaughter. These protests were in vain: the genocide continued. Senior Italian officers also were appalled at the killing and are on record as not only complaining but often offering protection to fleeing victims.

When the war ended and Josip Broz Tito's communists took command of Yugoslavia, they had no desire to renounce these dreadful events. Yugoslavia's slogan was "Brotherhood and Unity." Every effort was made to bury the past and, because Yugoslavia did not align itself with the Soviet Union, Western democracies had little interest in exposing the genocide.

Unlike Germans, who recognized the moral obligation to acknowledge their crimes committed under the Nazi regime, citizens of Tito's Yugoslavia and the Croat state felt no such obligation. Consequently, the slaughtered victims and their surviving family members still await justice. Even today, Pavelić is looked upon by many Croatians as a national hero, as are some of the most vicious Ustashi criminals.

In 2001, Croatian President Stjepan Mesić apologized to Jews in an address delivered at the Israeli Knesset. In 2003, he joined Serbia's president in a mutual apology for "all the evils" each side had brought during the Balkan conflict. Such carefully worded official apologies are a step in the right direction, but authentic repudiation of the past should be demonstrated by Croatians themselves.

Evidence suggests they still have a long way to go. Crowds at Croatian soccer games and concerts flout Ustashi and Nazi symbols and sing old fascist chants and songs. Croatians indicted by the ICTY are hailed as defenders of the nation.

Croatia needs to purge itself of its dark past. Its prolonged denial of outrageous crimes committed in the 20th century has created what the Croatian exiled writer Dubravka Ugrešić has described as a "culture of lies." Until Croatia can learn to tell the truth about its history, there should be no place for it in the European Union.

HOLOCAUST DENIERS AT THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT

Srdja Trifkovic

The latest U.S. Department of State human rights report on Croatia, released on March 11, says matter of factly that last September 24 “Cardinal Josip Božanić visited Jasenovac, the site of the largest concentration camp in Croatia during World War II, where thousands of Serbs, Jews, and Roma were killed” [emphasis added; a daily scene from Jasenovac, r.].

This remarkable claim is the exact moral and factual equivalent of asserting that “tens of thousands” of Jews and others were killed in Auschwitz or Treblinka.

The number of victims at Jasenovac is still uncertain. The lowest estimate with any pretense to methodological seriousness – tens of thousands of victims – was made by the late Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, famous for saying “Thank God, my wife is neither a Serb nor a Jew.” Tudjman’s “estimate” on Jasenovac fits in with his other assessments:

In his book *Wastelands: Historical Truths*, published in 1988, Mr. Tudjman wrote that the number of Jews who died in the Holocaust was 900,000 – not six million. He has also asserted that not more than 70,000 Serbs died at the hands of the Ustashe – most historians say around 400,000 were killed. (*The New York Times*, August 20, 1995)

Other sources provide estimates tens of times greater than Dr. Tudjman’s, and hundreds of times greater than that presented as fact by the U.S. State Department:

- “Jasenovac” - entry by Menachem Shelach in *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Yad Vashem, 1990, pp. 739-740: “Some six hundred thousand people were murdered at Jasenovac, mostly Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, and opponents of the Ustasa regime.”
- The Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team: “It is estimated that close to 600,000 ... mostly Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, were murdered at Jasenovac.”

So much for the Jewish sources. Let us look at what the contemporary German allies of the Ustasa regime had to say on the subject (all quotes from *The Krajina Chronicle: A History of the Serbs in Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia*).

Hermann Neubacher, Hitler’s foremost political expert for the Balkans, in his book *Sonderauftrag Südost 1940-1945. Bericht eines fliegenden Diplomaten* (Goettingen: Muster-Schmidt-Verlag, 1957, p. 18):

The prescription for the Orthodox Serbs issued by the leader and Führer of Croatia, Ante Pavelić, was reminiscent of the religious wars of the bloodiest memory: One third must be converted to Catholicism,



another third must be expelled, and the final third must die. The last part of the program has been carried out. [i.e. one-third of cca. 1.9 million were killed]

In a report to Heinrich Himmler, SS General Ernst Frick estimated that “600 to 700,000 victims were butchered in the Balkan fashion.”

General Lothar Rendulic, German forces commander in the western Balkans in 1943-1944, estimated the number of Ustaša victims to be 500,000. In his memoirs *Gekaempft, gesiegt, geschlagen* (Welsermühl Verlag, Wels und Heidelberg, 1952, p.161) he recalled a memorable exchange on this issue with a Croat dignitary:

When I objected to a high official who was close to Pavelić that, in spite of the accumulated hatred, I failed to comprehend the murder of half a million Orthodox, the answer I received was characteristic of the mentality that prevailed there: Half a million, that’s too much – there weren’t more than 200,000!

The U.S. Department of State may have in its possession some newly discovered and incontrovertible evidence that Yad Vashem’s researchers had exaggerated the number of victims at Jasenovac a hundredfold or more. It may prove that German eyewitnesses were all wrong, that even the Holocaust-denying President Franjo Tudjman was wrong, and that the actual number of victims of Jasenovac was indeed in some “thousands,” rather than tens, or hundreds of thousands.

If it does, the U.S. State Department should make such evidence for its extraordinary claims public. If it does not, it should issue a correction and an unreserved apology.

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A TRAMPLED ARMISTICE

Nebojsa Malic¹

When NATO launched Operation Allied Force in March 1999, everyone involved in the operation thought it would be a short, victorious war. How could a tiny country, devoid of allies, besieged from without and divided from within, possibly hope to resist the world's greatest – nay, only – military alliance?

Yet for 78 days, Yugoslavia (later Serbia and Montenegro) resisted anyway. As May drew to a close and NATO showed no signs of winning, there were murmurs and rumors of ground troops and carpet-bombing of civilians, as the last resort. In the end, both air power and propaganda power failed NATO, and the war ended using one of the oldest subterfuges in history. Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari (representing NATO interests, but claiming neutrality) and Russian envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin persuaded Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic that he could stop the bloodshed by agreeing to a set of terms. Milosevic, persuaded by Chernomyrdin that no Russian help was forthcoming, agreed. On June 9, Yugoslav forces signed an armistice in the Macedonian town of Kumanovo, which took effect on June 11.

Within days, Chernomyrdin's armistice was revealed as the Trojan horse it was, with the KLA pouring into Kosovo on the heels of NATO "peacekeepers" and launching a campaign of terror and violence that has continued to the present day.

A Paper Victory – The fact that NATO took 78 days to accomplish nothing at all was completely ignored by the cheerleader press, which nonetheless had to wonder how the supposedly obliterated Yugoslav army retreated in good order, with few casualties. Shaking off inconvenient facts, the Western media began reporting on the KLA atrocities as "revenge attacks" and claiming that Milosevic had "caved" and "capitulated."

At the time this seemed to be mere spin, an effort to make NATO look good after an embarrassing several months. Few analysts understood at the time that this was no mere posturing: the American Empire truly did consider the Kumanovo armistice to be an unconditional surrender.

Opposition parties in Serbia (Montenegro, the other partner in the Yugoslav federation, was already ruled by an Imperial client) mocked Milosevic for claiming victory. Yet on paper, Kumanovo was a victory. Its terms were much better for Belgrade than the disgraceful Rambouillet ultimatum, which NATO sought to impose at the beginning of the bombing. What was to be a purely NATO occupation became a UN mission (UNMIK), and Serbia's territorial integrity was explicitly guaranteed by the UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

¹ Antiwar.com, June 14, 2010.

What Milosevic did not understand was the mentality of Empire. For the folks in Washington believing themselves to be the "indispensable nation" and a power without precedent, rules and treaties and laws were at best a necessary evil. After all, their war violated not only the UN Charter and the NATO charter, but also the U.S. Constitution. The Empire had demonstrated that its only law was that of force. Treaties and laws were something to be observed between equals; but the Empire recognized no equals. Like the Athenians of antiquity, the choices it offered the world were submission (or "compliance," in modern parlance) or ruin.

From Troy to Munich – Over the years, the Kosovo war was forgotten, even as its pattern was repeated in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unable or unwilling to sever the province from Serbia outright, the Empire chose a gradual amputation. Over the years, the UN mission drafted a constitution, organized elections, created a "security force," and ignored the ongoing campaign of violence against the remaining non-Albanians. For a moment, the March 2004 pogrom threatened to expose the horrors of the occupation. Within a year, however, Albanian violence was being used as the key argument for "independence"!

By 2006, the very same Martti Ahtisaari who helped Chernomyrdin deliver the proverbial horse to Milosevic in 1999 was appointed "mediator" of the status "talks." His proposed solution was the pinnacle of hypocrisy: give Kosovo to the Albanians, as the Serbs had forfeited the province through "human rights violations." Ahtisaari's traveling circus, in which Serbs and Albanians never met and never talked, ultimately ran aground at the UN. But the Empire was not easily defeated. Having exhausted all subterfuge, it opted again for brute force, and in February 2008 endorsed a unilateral declaration of independence. The first country to recognize the "Republic of Kosovo" was the quisling regime of Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan.

Starting with the Balkans interventions, the Empire has consistently invoked the ghost of Neville Chamberlain. Its enemy du jour would always be likened to Hitler, and anyone who even suggested talks over bombs would be branded an "appeaser." Yet when Czech officials criticized what was being done to Serbia as comparable to what happened to their own country at Munich, their voices remained alone in the wilderness.

Submission – One of the reasons the Empire was able to trample over a variety of treaties and even its own laws when it came to Kosovo was the absence of resistance by Serbia. After the occupation of Kosovo, Washington began a furious campaign to oust Milosevic from power through an NED-engineered "popular revolution" that would later become a model for other takeovers. Aided by "suitcases of cash," a motley coalition of Serbian opposition parties (DOS) challenged Milosevic in a presidential election in September 2000. The actual result of the poll will never be known – the rioting "revolutionaries" destroyed their

ballots while sacking the parliament building. Rather than start a civil war, Milosevic stepped down from power. In June 2001, he was betrayed by the quisling government of Zoran Djindjic and sent to the Hague Inquisition.

By 2003, Djindjic – the leader of DOS – had established complete control over Serbia (Yugoslavia perished by his pen along the way). Yet he was unhappy with the way his Imperial masters continued to treat him and the country. In February 2003, Djindjic spoke to a reporter of a local Serbian TV network. In what would end up being his last interview, he told of his disappointment in the West and its broken promises, and he said he would soon initiate talks on the status of Kosovo. A few weeks later, he was shot under mysterious circumstances and replaced by a cabal of Imperial lickspittles.

Their rule did not last. By early 2004, DOS was gone, and Vojislav Kostunica – used by DOS as a figurehead to oust Milosevic, then rudely cast aside – became prime minister. At this point, Belgrade began resisting Imperial designs in Kosovo and Serbia itself, greatly frustrating Washington.

In the end, Kostunica succumbed to Empire’s pressure and made an alliance with Washington’s client, Serbian President Boris Tadic and his Democratic party. The Democrats then dutifully sabotaged the government’s resistance efforts. It was Tadic’s reelection that cleared the way for “Kosovo” to declare “independence.” Once again, when brute force failed, bribe and subterfuge produced results: in July 2008, Western diplomats helped Tadic establish a coalition government, which has ruled Serbia in near-absolute obedience to their demands ever since.

Life Imitating Art – Thirty years ago, George Lucas released the sequel to his 1977 hit *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*. Arguably the best of the “Star Wars” series, Empire established Darth Vader as the one of the most iconic movie villains. In one particularly memorable scene, Vader demonstrates what happens to those who attempt to bargain with the Empire he serves. Obsessed with finding one of the rebel leaders (for reasons explained at the end), Vader had offered a bargain to Lando Calrissian, head of the mining colony of Bespin, to betray the rebels. Once in control of Bespin, however, Vader casually violates the bargain. When Calrissian protests, he is met with this reply: “I am altering the deal. Pray I don’t alter it any further.”

One doesn’t have to agree with the claim that art is the true measure of any culture to recognize a whiff of Vader in modern Imperial officials. Serbian leaders, from Milosevic to Djindjic, Kostunica to Tadic, have never realized the Empire’s true nature, as it repeatedly “altered” any deal that no longer served its needs. The Vance Plan, Dayton, Kumanovo – all became “dead letters” at Empire’s convenience. Yet people keep trying to make deals with it, hoping that if they don’t hear the slow hissing breath or see the polished onyx mask, there’s nothing to fear.

THE PERILS OF HONEST REPORTING AN INTERVIEW WITH LEE JAY WALKER Liz Milanovich

As a journalist who takes the time to sort fact from fiction when reporting about past and present events in former Yugoslavia, Lee Jay Walker is an exception to the rule. He actually researches his material before making conclusions. As a reporter for the *Modern Tokyo Times* and the *Seoul Times*, he experienced the pressure by the “Embassy” of Kosovo in London to print favorable items about the terrorist Albanian organization known as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

When did you become interested in the events in the Balkans, specifically ex-Yugoslavia?

My interests began prior to the convulsions that erupted throughout the former Yugoslavia. During the numerous conflicts that engulfed the former Yugoslavia, it was abundantly clear that the media on a whole distorted the real facts. The current situation in Kosovo is also being hidden by many news agencies. This also applies to the role of Albanian nationalism and radical Sunni Islam in Bosnia.

What set off your radar to the Balkans?

I remember people like Paddy Ashdown on British television clearly distorting the reality of Bosnia. The same media machine manipulated the reality of Kosovo. *The New York Times*, for instance, reported on April 19, 1999, that “up to 500,000 Kosovar Albanians were missing and feared dead.” President Bill Clinton openly distorted the truth on May 13, 1999, when he stated that “there are 100,000 people [in Kosovo] who are still missing,” clearly implying that Serbian armed forces were slaughtering Kosovo Albanians. The same lies are still going on. Other questions should be asked, too, for example why did America and others support radical Islam in Bosnia and just how did the KLA grow from zero into a trained terrorist unit?

A full settlement of the Kosovo conflict was within reach and could have been achieved at Rambouillet. What caused the agreement to break down? Late in the negotiation process, the Western mediators proposed that a ‘Military Annex’ be added to the final agreement. The proposed addition affirmed that NATO peacekeeping forces would have “free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the FRY [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia].” This section was highly significant; it meant that not only would Kosovo be occupied by a NATO peacekeeping force, but potentially all of Serbia and all that remained of Yugoslavia would be occupied as well. After the Military Annex appeared, the Serb delegation appeared to lose all confidence in the negotiation process, and the peace talks broke down.

The suspicious wording of the Military Annex was originally noted by British journalist John Pilger in 1999,

during the course of the NATO bombing campaign. In response, U.S. officials have insisted that the Annex was a harmless detail, and deny that there was any effort to sabotage the peace talks.

In a post-war parliamentary hearing, former Defense Minister of State John Gilbert affirmed that key negotiators were in fact seeking to sabotage the conference. Gilbert was the number two figure in the British Defense Ministry, with a specific responsibility for intelligence gathering, and he supported the war. He is a credible source. He offered this observation: "I think certain people were spoiling for a fight in NATO at that time. We were at a point when some people felt that something had to be done [against Serbia], so you just provoked a fight." With regard to the peace terms themselves, he said, "I think the terms put to Milosevic at Rambouillet were absolutely intolerable: How could he possibly accept them? It was quite deliberate."

These facts, and others, have led to innocents being killed; and even today radical Islam is still a threat in Bosnia and in modern day Kosovo. The de-Christianization of this land is ongoing. The consequences are still being felt by Serbians and other minorities in Kosovo.

What are your views about the close friendship USA and allies continue to pursue with the extremist Muslims of Bosnia and Kosovo, while at the same time supposedly waging a war against Muslim terrorism elsewhere?

In the Balkans you have had three flashpoints involving mainly Orthodox Christians and Muslims since World War Two – in Bosnia, Cyprus, and Kosovo, respectively. America supported the side of Islam every time. Some people could argue that it was just a coincidence, but I do not accept that view.

India is a democratic nation but once more America was closer to Pakistan and Islamists have used Pakistan in order to destabilize both Afghanistan and Kashmir. So why did America support a military general Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq in the late 1970s and 1980s over democratic leaders in India? If we add this question to the reality of Afghanistan and Iraq then it becomes even more confusing. Both Afghanistan and Iraq were ruled by secular leaders. However, the USA supported the implementation of Islamic Sharia law in both nations. For non-Muslims in Iraq this was fatal, because Christians, Shabaks, Mandaeans, and Yazidis, are all suffering from Islamization.

America had been supporting radical Islam and Islamic terrorism prior to the crisis that engulfed Yugoslavia. Yet the fact that America had supported radical Islam in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and other parts of the world, meant that it was easy for Clinton's administration to do a deal with radical Islamists in Bosnia. The same networks which funded Osama Bin Laden and other Islamic terrorists were easy to use: it was second nature for the U.S. security forces and others, notably the British. People should read Richard J. Aldrich's book *The Hidden Hand:*

Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence. It highlights the reality of radical Islam throughout the wider world. It stresses the role America and others have played in using Islamists and allowing this ideology to expand. Clinton played the Islamic terrorist card in order to further his foreign policy objectives. There were divisions within the security services in America but Clinton merely overruled everybody and took an independent decision.

Americans claim that they supported radical Islam against Najibullah in Afghanistan because they were fighting communism. Yet events in Yugoslavia had nothing to do with the Cold War. They happened after the demise of the Soviet Union – and America continued to have good relations with The Taliban well after the ending of the Cold War. America is still a staunch ally of Saudi Arabia, which is spreading radical Islam. The Bosnian Islamic card is still a potent force for Saudi Arabia in order to spread radical Islam throughout Europe.

Do you foresee the Obama administration exerting its influence further in the region?

President Obama is in appeasement mode towards Islam and despotic nations. Deals are on the table for all and sundry. In the Balkans he will follow a similar policy. America is already over-stretched in both Afghanistan and Iraq. America will turn a blind eye to the de-Christianization of Kosovo, and the same applies to other nations that supported the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

Events in Bosnia and Macedonia are more complex because the "allies" of America are divided. This applies to Croat and Bosnian Muslim tensions and those between Macedonian Slavs and Albanians. Yet America will also be open to Serbia if this nation bows down to more pressure - on the terms of Washington. In Kosovo America's policy will remain the same. Obama is tied to past administrations and the future remains bleak for Serbians and all minorities in Kosovo. America will continue to favor the Muslim and Croat side in Bosnia. Given this reality, America is still anti-Serbian in a political sense.

Have you encountered criticisms from those to whom the truth about ex-Yugoslavia is not palatable?

Many people have thanked me for writing about the former Yugoslavia. However, I have had some strong emails the other way, including death threats, but when this happens it merely proves to me that I must be challenging people. I do know that an official from the "embassy" of Kosovo in London tried to put pressure on *The Seoul Times* and he refused to speak to me directly. However, my article on the KLA persecution was based on my findings and my editor, Joseph Joh, supported me.

People should do their best to tell the world about the ongoing crisis in Kosovo and support people like documentary filmmaker Ninoslav Randjelović. He and others need to be supported because the voiceless have been ignored and marginalized.

ROMANIAN ASPIRATIONS: THE PROBLEM, THE RESPONSE

Srdja Trifkovic

Presented at the AIU forum in Kiev, June 17, 2010¹

Ukraine faces sustained security challenges from its southwestern neighbor Romania. Those challenges reflect a remarkable continuity of Romania's geopolitical objectives, regardless of the nature of its domestic regime. They require carefully calibrated policy responses from Kiev. This fact was blurred by the visceral Russophobia of Ukraine's previous government, to the detriment of both parties. It is now finally possible to look at the challenges Ukraine faces on its southwestern borders through the realist prism, and to consider specific counter-measures that are proportionate to the challenge.

THE PARADIGM – The notion of *interests* and the *policies* that they engender are defined by the ideological framework in which they are embedded. Both the old Soviet notion of the “fraternal community” and the current notion of “European integration” are derived from neo-



Marxist utopianism. Both hold that Man is improvable and that permanent peace within a stable, supra-nationally controlled system is the attainable order of things. Both believe in their ability to make the

international system as they wanted it to be, rather than dealing with it as it is.

It is *realism* that, unlike either utopian school, places *national interest*, pragmatically defined and quantifiable, at the basis of international affairs. It accepts the reality of a world where might is often right, rivalry the norm, and the immutable constants of history, culture, and geopolitics outweigh propositional slogans emanating from Moscow (before 1989) or from Brussels (today).

From the realist vantage point, it is evident that Romania's *cultural narratives*, *national objectives* and *state interests* – as articulated by its political elite ever since the Congress of Berlin (with the exception of two decades following World War II) – make that country Ukraine's most adversarial and potentially dangerous neighbor.

THE CHALLENGE – At this time, four key elements of the Romanian elite consensus directly affect Ukraine:

1. Romanians are claimed to be a civilizational outpost of “the West” amidst the Slav-Magyar sea,

¹ www.aminuk.org/index.php?idmenu=12&idsubmenu=167&language=en

and in the 21st century they supposedly remain Europe's “last bastion before the immense, vague and unsettling space left behind in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union.”

2. Moldovans east of the Prut speak the Romanian language and *are* Romanians (even when they feel otherwise); therefore, they should be incorporated into Romania by the *right to self-determination*.

3. Not only the Republic of Moldova, but also Ukrainian territories to its south and north (Bukovina), annexed by the USSR in 1940, should be “returned” to Romania based on its *legal rights* – by undoing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Last January President Basescu declared in Kishinev that he would not sign a Border Treaty with Moldova: “I will never sign what Hitler with Stalin have signed. I will never confirm that Romania's border passes on Prut River. There may be discussions about a contract, an agreement concerning the border regime, but there is no way I can discuss an agreement based on which I will confirm that the border passes from here to there.”

4. In any event, Bucharest has a valid title to the territories of pre-1940 *Romania mare* on the basis of its *historic rights*. In May 2010, President Basescu thus stated: “If Kiev has pretensions concerning the return of Transdnistria to Ukraine, then officials there should not forget about the return to Chisinau of Southern Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, territories which the former Ukrainian SSR received after the Second World War.”

HISTORICAL LEGACY – Before 1878, the Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (united in 1859) looked upon Russia as an essential source of support in their emancipation from the Ottomans. The United Principalities took part in the siege of Plevna, but their hopes of enlargement along the Black Sea were dashed: Russia took back Bessarabia (lost after the Crimean War) and awarded southern Dobruja to its then favorite, Bulgaria. The effect on the political class of the newly established Romanian state (“undeserving of statehood” as it was, according to Bismarck) was both immediate and decisive:

- 1 The early-19th-century national-romantic myth of the Romanians as linguistic and cultural heirs to Rome morphed into the nationalist ideology of Romania as an outpost of the Western civilization amidst the allegedly inferior ocean of Slavs and Magyars.

- 2 The irredentist aspiration to Bessarabia and resentment of Russia outweighed the bitterness over the Magyar treatment of the Romanian minority in Transylvania, drawing Romania to the Central Powers in the three decades preceding World War I.

Romanian nationalism, freshly minted, weak and insecure, thus came to rest on two pillars, and the equation has not changed in essence for almost a century and a half:

audacious territorial aspirations, primarily directed eastwards, and antagonism to “the Other,” directed at Budapest and St. Petersburg.

The collapse of Austria-Hungary and imperial Russia made possible the creation of the Greater Romania (1918-1940), by crook more than by hook. East of the Prut, however, Bucharest proved singularly unequal to the task of nation building. Bessarabia remained un-integrated socially, undeveloped economically, resentful politically; most of its Moldovan-speaking plurality remained reluctant to embrace a “Romanian” identity.

The disasters of 1940 – the loss of northern Transylvania to Horthy, southern Dobruja to Boris and Bessarabia to Stalin, without a shot being fired – were to be alleviated by Hitler’s gift of Bukovina and an insanelly expanded “Transnistria” all the way to the Bug, comprising a fifth of Ukraine, as a reward for Romania’s participation in the Barbarossa. Ethnic cleansing started right away, justified by an openly racist attitude of Romania that treated Jews and Slavs as equally sub-human. The hasty switch of allegiance came in August 1944, however, enabling Romania to avoid facing squarely the demons of its recent past. They are still with us today.

PLUS ÇA CHANGE... – A radical change in the composition of Romania’s political class took place under communism. Its core consensus and nationalist agenda have not changed, however. In 1991 Romania rushed to be the first country to recognize the newly-independent Republic of Moldova. The government of Ion Iliescu, Nicolae Ceausescu’s neo-communist successor, saw its independence as a step towards its reunification with Romania. It hailed the event with a rousing statement that could have been counter-signed by Marshal Antonescu:

“The proclamation of an independent Romanian state in the territories annexed by force following the secret agreements of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact represents a decisive step toward the peaceful elimination of that pact’s unfortunate consequences directed against the rights and interests of the Romanian people.”

During the Transnistrian conflict, Romania sent volunteers and military advisers to fight alongside Moldovan forces, and supplied them with weapons. When Moldova started having second thoughts about the union, however, the reaction in Bucharest was acerbic. On April 14, 1994, the Romanian Parliament adopted a declaration of protest against the decision of the Moldovan Parliament to join the CIS. The protest contained an audacious blend of nationalist claims based on ethno-linguistic, historic, and late-19th-century “civilizational” arguments:

The vote of the Parliament in Chişinău regrettably reconfirms the criminal [Ribbentrop-Molotov] pact and irresponsibly cancels the right of the Romanian nation to live within the integrity of its historical and spiritual space. [...] By the geographical position,

culture, history and traditions, the natural place of our brothers from across the Prut is, undoubtedly, together with us, in the great family of the European nations, *and by no means in a Eurasian structure.*

Sixteen years later, in May 2010, President Traian Basescu used the same terms of reference in his aggressive reaction to the unsubstantiated claim that Presidents Medvedev and Yanukovich had reached a secret understanding on the future of Moldova and Transnistria:

Moscow and now Kiev are trying to create on the territory that, at the end of World War II should have been returned to Romania, a pseudo-federation of three political-legal pseudo-subjects. But we will do everything to oppose the Russian-Ukrainian plan for the amputation of Bessarabia.

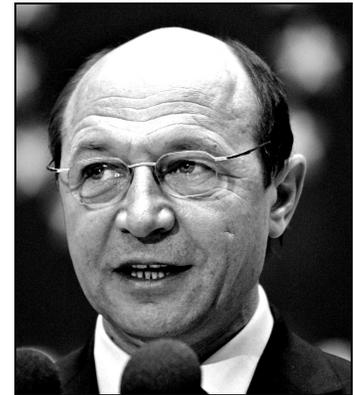
It is remarkable that the head of state should feel compelled to react to an allegation that is unconfirmed and unproven; it is even more noteworthy that he should use such bellicose language.

But at he last he is consistent and open: already in January 2006, Basescu (r.) had declared that “the *minimal policy* of Romania is for the unification of the Romanian nation to take place within the EU.”

Note the phrase *minimal policy*, implying the existence of a *maximal policy* that presumably goes way beyond Romania’s mere unification with Moldova. The reality of the project is apparent in the decision to grant Romanian citizenship to all residents of the territories belonging to the pre-1940 Greater Romania and their descendants, up to the third generation – including the denizens of Bukovina (Chernovtsy) and southern Bessarabia (Budjak).

UKRAINIAN RESPONSE – The policies and stated positions of Bucharest represent an open challenge to Ukraine as a state and a threat to its core interests. The response to that challenge has been muted and indecisive thus far. Its articulation in realist terms should be a priority.

To start with, Ukraine should overcome the previous government’s propensity to embrace the Euro-integrative discourse, which inhibited asserting its interests. Ukraine’s reluctance to do so over the years has created the expectation in Bucharest that it can get away with a dual-track policy of pursuing its revisionist-nationalist agenda, and at the same time pretending to be Ukraine’s special friend and advocate within the EU. With “friends” like Basescu, Ukraine needs no detractors.



ROMANIA'S WEAKNESSES: Kiev's response to the challenge should take account of the fundamental weakness of Romania's position, both internally and externally:

1 Romania does not enjoy a *carte blanche* from Brussels, or from any major West European capital, for its irredentist-revisionist policy. In fact, its status within the EU – low to start with – has been further eroded by the Greek financial crisis. Key European countries are more impatient than ever with their poor relations along the EU periphery. They have no time for their special pleading and don't care whose flag flies over Kishinev or Tiraspol. They will not hesitate to express their lack of support for Romania's designs if asked to state their preferences. Romania has been able to pretend that it enjoys the support of "Europe" in its aspirations due to its neighbors' reluctance to force the issue and test that proposition.

2 Romania does not enjoy the support of the Obama administration for its irredentist designs. Admittedly, Bucharest gets private encouragement for such ambitions from various neoconservative "analysts" who still pursue a Russophobic, NATO-for-ever agenda, yet those people represent nobody but themselves. They may pretend to have connections and influence, and their Romanian hosts may be lured into believing it. Their bluff should be called.

3 Romania is no longer able to count on the Orange animosity to Russia as the welcome focus of Ukraine's external priorities. To the contrary, Ukraine is now able to discuss and coordinate its policies with Moscow, since their interests in the region are "objectively" identical. This is particularly significant in view of the growing special relationship between Russia and Germany. Europe's overall indifference to the rekindling of regional tension is strengthened by Moscow's ability to exert influence in Berlin on specific issues it deems worthy of attention.

4 Romania cannot count on clear support for its agenda in Moldova – not even for what Basescu calls the "minimal policy" of unification. The Unionists may be ascendant right now, but the opposition to "the reunion with the Romanian motherland" remains strong. The support is pragmatic (EU membership, associated benefits) rather than emotional-cultural, which makes it soft and volatile.

5 Within Romania itself, there is no consensus on the irredentist objectives of the political elite. Ordinary Romanians are too preoccupied with the daily struggle of making ends meet in what is officially

the poorest EU member-country (per capita GDP). Polls indicate that barely one-half of the population supports a union with Moldova and a third rejects it. The cost of the project is suspected of exceeding (in relative terms) FRG's cost of integrating GDR. Anecdotal evidence also indicates a sense of cultural detachment from the trans-Prut Moldovans, perceived as less than diligent and "primitive."

6 Romania's aspiration to "regional leadership" is bogus, and it is the source of actual or potential friction with Warsaw and Budapest. "Leadership" presumes the qualities of legitimacy and cultural, political or economic power that underpin the leader's willingly accepted benevolent authority. On no account can Romania aspire to such a lofty position. In the words of a Bucharest-based Western diplomat, "it needs to be led, rather than lead."

7 Romania has ambiguous relations with all of her neighbors. The new Fidesz government in Hungary takes an active interest in the status of Hungarian minorities in the neighboring countries. It advocates autonomy for the Hungarians of Transylvania, which the authorities in Bucharest say they will not accept. In eastern Serbia, the Romanian government is actively promoting the "awakening" of the Vlachs, traditionally well integrated, and the unprecedented establishment of parallel ecclesiastical structures of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

8 Romania has no military option a la Saakashvili, being within NATO and having no green light from any quarter for an act of adventurism. Far from giving it the muscle for assertiveness, EU and NATO membership create salutary constraints in the behavior of Bucharest and provide third parties with the means of exerting indirect pressure.

The challenge Romania's neighbors face from the "Greater Romania" project (see 1919-1940 map below) is not going to fade away, because it is based on the cultural, military-strategic and geopolitical realities that are relatively constant.

That challenge can and should be met more forcefully than before, however. Recognizing its existence and its disruptive potential would be the necessary first step.

The source of the challenge is relatively weak and vulnerable.

With their size, resources, and comparative advantages, Ukraine and other potentially or actually affected countries – such as Serbia – have nothing to fear in tackling it responsibly but firmly.



AN ALBANIAN'S FIGHT AGAINST THE SWISS MINARET BAN

Julia Gorin

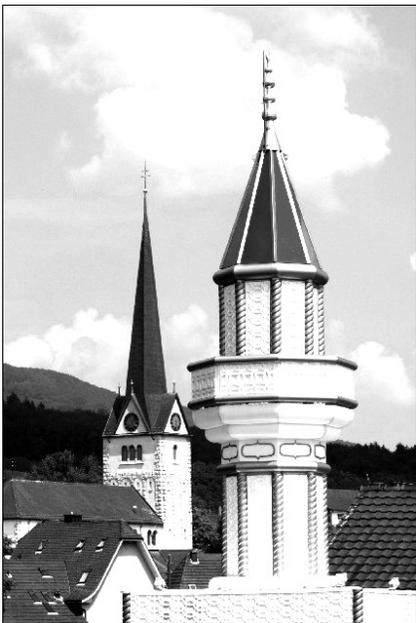
From a *Spiegel* article on the ban on the building of the minaret of the Islamic religious community in the Swiss town of Langenthal:

Mutalip Karaademi, 51, an ethnic Albanian who emigrated from Macedonia 26 years ago, is standing in front of the building used by his religious association, a former paint factory on the outskirts of town. There is a wooden construction on top measuring 6.1 meters (20 feet) It shows the height of the planned minaret, the first one that cannot be built.

Karaademi is the leader of the local Islamic community, whose 130 members come from Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. The small mosque has been here for 18 years. At the outset the minaret wasn't so important, says Karaademi. It was simply an ornamental addition. But now it's a matter of principle. He wants to take legal action — if necessary going all the way to the European Court of Human Rights, where it is very possible that the judges in Strasbourg will end up reversing the Swiss constitutional decision. He loves Switzerland, this model country, says Karaademi. But this ban is “racist and discriminating against us,” a scandal for the civilized world.

On the contrary, as Italian politician Roberto Castelli was quoted in the article: “The Swiss have once again given us a lesson in civilization. We have to send a strong signal to stop pro-Islamic ideology.”

Wouldn't it be something if, after being just about the first in line to open an embassy in “independent” Kosovo, Switzerland ended up getting its minaret ban reversed by



those self-same Albanians they'd supported?

The man behind the ban, meanwhile, is Daniel Zingg, 53, a balding man with wire-rimmed glasses. The minarets, those ‘spearheads of the Sharia,’ those ‘signs of territory conquered by Islam,’ can no longer be built, he says.

“It's a well-known fact that

first come the minarets, then the muezzins, with their calls to prayer, the burqas and finally Sharia law,” he says. According to Zingg, the ban is not directed against Muslims - although it is naturally true that ‘the Koran gives (people) the mission to Islamize the world, and the Muslims here have no other mission, otherwise they would not be Muslims.’



And just a few more paragraphs from the article:

For the past 15 years, Zingg has been giving lectures in support of Israel and against Islam. He's a politician with the ultraconservative Christian party, the Federal Democratic Union, which received 1.3 percent of the vote in the last election.

American author and journalist Christopher Caldwell recently published *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam and the West*, a widely-read and skeptical book on Europe and its Muslim immigrants. What fascinates him about the result of the Swiss vote is the gap between the rejection of the ban in surveys and the considerable support that it received during the referendum.

“It means there is an official discussion of Islam and that there is a subterranean discussion of it,” Caldwell says.

Sweet. “That should worry Europeans.” It should reassure Europeans.

Caldwell doesn't sound the same alarmist tones in his book as other conservative authors who have dubbed the old continent as “Eurabia” and see it — due to higher birthrates among immigrants — as a future outpost of the “Islamic world empire.” But he also writes:

It is certain that Europe will emerge changed from its confrontation with Islam. It is far less certain that Islam will prove assimilable.

So he's saying the same thing except in as round-about a way as possible:

Caldwell believes that Muslim immigrants have had greater difficulties than other groups integrating themselves into European society...

(Translation: “difficulties” = “reluctance”)

Caldwell says that Muslims are a small minority, but Europe is changing its structures because of them:

When an insecure, malleable, relativistic culture meets a culture that is anchored, confident and strengthened by common doctrines, it is generally the former that changes to suit the latter.

Well said, finally.

Beyond the Balkans (I)

ISRAEL, THE WEST AND THE REST

Srdja Trifkovic

The recent unpleasantness in eastern Mediterranean with the “Gaza Convoy” of Turkish ships intercepted by Israeli forces has unleashed a torrent of self-serving nonsense on both sides of the issue. In reality, it was a sordid affair. A bunch of nasty Jihadist types and their enablers who have taken over the government in Ankara devise a brilliant scenario for drawing Israel into a lose-lose situation. The Israelis play on cue, with their customary subtlety and sensitivity. Most of the rest of the world recoils in shock and horror. The elite class of the Western world is enjoying itself with a fresh focus for externalized self-hate, now that the Serbs are down and most Afrikaners out. (Needless to say, amidst the general brouhaha nobody took notice of the jihadist murder of Roman Catholic bishop Luigi Padovese in Turkey...)

What is a man with no horse in this race to do? He needs to ask himself, “How does this business affect the survival prospects of my demographically, culturally and morally decrepit civilization?” For all their differences of emphasis and substance in foreign-policy making, Western Europe and North America share objective interests in the Middle East that require broadly similar policy responses. The realist knows that our primary interests in the Middle East are not to defend human rights, or to promote democracy, or to build a Palestinian state, or to treat Israel as an existential American ally “with no space between us whatsoever.” Our interests are continued access to oil resources that demand regional stability and containment of the Jihadist menace -- which entails countering the terrorist threat and stopping the immigrant invasion of the West. Only secondary interests include ameliorating the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and finding a solution that will leave both parties equally dissatisfied.

Peripheral interests lie in opening the region to trade, encouragement of more pluralist forms of governance, promotion of the rule of law, human rights, free enterprise, diversity, pluralism, tolerance, anti-discriminationism, multiculturalism, multiracialism, inclusivism, environmentalism, free abortion on demand, constitutionally guaranteed gay marriage, healthy diet and exercise, non-smoking, animal rights, prevention of global warming, etc, etc.

Secondary and peripheral must remain subordinate to the primary interests when policy outcomes come into conflict. Should we promote “democracy” even if its beneficiaries are Osama and Ahmadinejad? Should we seek “justice” for the Palestinians -- however defined -- at the cost of risking the disappearance of the state of Israel? No, heck no!

Even if an even-handed and generous agreement were to be offered to the Arabs -- including the establishment of a viable Palestinian state, an equitable sharing of natural resources, and a generous compensation package that would resolve the refugee problem -- it would be unworkable in the long term -- the notion of Israel’s legitimacy is simply unacceptable to traditional Islam.

The Israeli-Arab conflict is a problem that may have been amenable, a few decades ago, to the conventional conflict-resolution approach. It has morphed into a religious dispute beyond politics. The founder and leader of Hamas, the late Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, blended the nationalist slogans of the secularists’ pre-1990’s struggle against Israel with principles derived from the doctrines and values of Islam. The Islamic component in the equation, however, goes well beyond inspiring youngsters to sacrifice themselves and to hope for victory or martyrdom: “Nationalism, from the point of view of the Islamic Resistance Movement, is part of the religious creed.”

From the orthodox Muslim point of view, there is nothing remarkable about such statements. They are derived from the Koran, and from the political tradition and social outlook of 13 centuries. Relinquishing any part of Palestine at the negotiating table is a disobedient act of blasphemy against Allah, and the alternative is the only right way (*al-hal-wahid*). As a modern Muslim commentator points out, “Such an outlook renders struggle a religious duty, not a nationalist or patriotic one.” The struggle against Israel is more than a “war of national liberation”: It is *an act of worship* for which God rewards a struggler in the form of victory in this life and eternity in the hereafter. No permanent peace is possible because it would be against Allah’s will to grant any piece of land once controlled by the faithful to non-Muslims.

A mirror image of this view, of metaphysical sophistry seeking to push its way into legitimate discourse, is the claim that the modern state of Israel is the embodiment of a biblical covenant. The Jews supposedly have the right and the duty to settle the entire land, *Eretz Ysrael*: as per the book of Numbers, “the people that dwells alone, and that will *not* be counted among the Nations.”

The development of a Realist anti-jihadist strategy should go hand-in-hand with demystifying the relationship between America and Israel, redefining it in terms of mutual interests devoid of metaphysical or emotional mists. This would help Israel mature into a “normal” nation-state and help her to overcome the paradox that the state of Israel, instead of solving the perennial problem of Jewish insecurity, remains beset by it. America should grasp the causes of that insecurity from without -- by scrutinizing the structure of the Middle Eastern conflict and the nature of the Islamic threat -- rather than pander to its symptoms from within by the un-dissenting acceptance of whatever Israel does as her right to do, from USS *Liberty* 43 years ago to the Gaza flotilla now.

Beyond the Balkans (II)

GEERT WILDERS: A HERALD OF EUROPE'S RECOVERY?

Srdja Trifkovic

The impressive electoral breakthrough of the anti-Jihadist Party for Freedom (PVV) in the Netherlands last May has sent predictable shock waver through Europe. “The impossible has happened,” its illustrious leader, Geert Wilders, has said. “The Netherlands chose more security, less crime, less immigration and less Islam.”

“Less Islam” is the key. Forget the currency crisis, social policy, welfare payments, and other nitty-gritty elements of most European elections. The biggest loser is Holland’s former Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende, and his demise is long overdue. Six years ago, in a display of suicidal idiocy be expected from a supine Eurocrat, he declared – in the immediate aftermath of the Jihadist murder of Theo van Gogh in an Amsterdam street – that “nothing is known about the motive” of the killer, and called on the nation “not to jump to far-reaching conclusions.” Balkenende also referred to van Gogh’s “outspoken opinions” – hinting that he had it coming – and added that it was “unacceptable if a difference of opinion led to this brutal murder.” Mijnheer Balkenende seemed to be implying that “this brutal murder” would have been deemed less “unacceptable” had it been caused not by “a difference of opinion” but by some more profound reason—by the sense of pain and grievance in the Muslim community, perhaps, caused by the late filmmaker’s insensitive and inappropriate actions.

Balkenende’s defeat was also due to a host of other issues, but his undissenting dhimmitude is the key. His Islamophile inanities are no longer acceptable to a growing segment of the electorate. The Old Continent is waking up, slowly, to the fact that, by 2050, Muslims will account for over a quarter of its young residents west of the Trieste-Stettin line. Millions of them already live in a parallel universe that has very little to do with the host country, toward which they have a disdainful and hostile attitude.

Today’s “United Europe,” epitomized by Balkenende and his fellow-*bien-pensants* in Brussels and most national chancelleries, operates on the basis of disdain for inherited values. It creates the dreary sameness of multicultural “tolerance.” It breeds contempt and haughty arrogance on the other side: Tariq Ramadan thus calmly insists that Muslims in the West should conduct themselves as though they were already living in a Muslim-majority society and were exempt on that account from having to make concessions to the faith of the host-society. Muslims in Europe should feel entitled to live on their own terms,

Ramadan says, while, “under the terms of Western liberal tolerance,” society as a whole should be “obliged to respect that choice.” If such “respect” continues to be enforced by the elite class, by the end of this century there will be no *Europeans* as members of ethnic groups that share the same language, culture, history, and ancestors, and inhabit lands associated with their names.



The shrinking native populations will be indoctrinated into believing – or else simply forced into accepting—that the demographic shift in favor of unassimilable and hostile aliens is a blessing that enriches their culturally deprived and morally unsustainable societies. The “liberal tolerance” and the accompanying “societal obligation” that Tariq Ramadan invokes are the tools of Western suicide. “No other race subscribes to these moral principles,” Jean Raspail, a true sage, wrote a generation ago, “because they are weapons of self-annihilation.”

The Dutch voters – traditionally among the most liberal in Europe – are waking up to the fact that those weapons must be discarded, and the upholders of those deadly “principles” removed from all positions of power and influence, if their nation is to survive.

In 1938 Hilaire Belloc wondered, “Will not perhaps the temporal power of Islam return and with it the menace of an armed Mohammedan world which will shake the dominion of Europeans—still nominally Christian—and reappear again as the prime enemy of our civilization?”

Seven decades later, the same traits of decrepitude are present all over the West. Its cause is *the loss of religious faith*. It is visible in the elite class hostility to all forms of solidarity of the European nations based on historical memories, ancestors, and culture. The end-result is the Westerners’ loss of the sense of propriety over their lands.

Wilders is shaking an elite consensus that open immigration and the existence of a large Muslim diaspora within the Western world are to be treated as fixed and immutable facts. That consensus is flawed in logic, dogmatic in application, and disastrous in its results. The grand *Gleichschaltung* of nations, races, and cultures that will mark the end of history, is not preordained. In Holland the fruits are all too visible. Gibbon could have had today’s Rotterdam in mind, when he wrote of Rome in decline, its masses morphing “into a vile and wretched populace.”

Wilders has shown that this crime can and must be stopped. The founders of the United States overthrew the colonial government for offenses far lighter than those of which the traitor class is guilty on both sides of the Atlantic.

BYRONICA

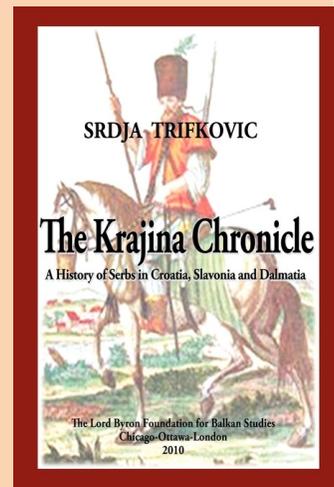
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE LORD BYRON FOUNDATION FOR BALKAN STUDIES

This pioneering work takes the reader through more than half a millennium of the rich and tragic history of the Krajina Serbs. They endured an attempt to exterminate them in 1941-45 that horrified even the Germans. Most recently they were ethnically cleansed from Croatia, aided and abetted by the Clinton Administration. Dr. Trifkovic ably shines the light of truth on this, a crime that is still largely ignored in the West. - **Doug Bandow**, former Special Assistant to President Reagan

Dr. Trifkovic has written a long overdue history of the Serbian warrior farmers who for centuries formed the first line of defense against Islamic incursions into Europe. It is a story of heroism and tragedy. It ends with mass expulsion of the Krajina Serbs in 1995 from their ancestral lands, abandoned by their fellow Serbs in Belgrade and former allies abroad. This excellent book is essential reading for anyone who seeks to understand the often complex and violent history of the Balkan powder keg. - **James Bissett**, former Canadian Ambassador in Yugoslavia

This comprehensive study provides the best explanation yet of the fact ignored by most media and Western governments during the 1990's Balkan upheavals: that rather than being bent on conquering the lands of other peoples, the Serbs in what is today's Republic of Croatia were actually trying to hold on to their historical native soil. It casts light on one an egregious violation of human rights that continues to be ignored by the "international community" – the right of the ethnically cleansed Krajina Serbs to return to their homelands. - **Col. Dr. Ronald Hatchett**, Schreiner University, Texas

This book brings together in one short volume episodes of European and South Slav history which are known only in fragmentary form. - **Dr. Michael Stenton**, Royal Naval College Britannia



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This newsletter is not *only* about the Balkans; it is not *only* about Western policy in that region either. It is not *only* about the problem of globalist *hubris*, nor is it *only* about the decline of Western civilization. It is about all of the above. Each problem in the equation is inseparable from the rest.

Our Foundation's primary brief is South-East Europe, and its objective is to assert the essential unity of the "Latin" West and "Greek" East; but the problem of the Balkans under the neoliberal order is inseparable from the quandary of America under the Duopoly, or that of Europe "united" under Brussels. Can a meaningful unity of nations sharing European and Christian heritage be restored? To what extent, how, and why has the modern, secular, "post-Christian" West inherited the antipathy of Western Christendom to the carriers of the Byzantine tradition? The purpose of our Foundation, and of this newsletter, is to consider whether such old historical animosities, fanned by new political ambitions, can be countered by the upholders of traditional culture and morality. It monitors the role of the West along the old fault lines of Christendom in the Balkans. Such issues are not merely political. They are as much "cultural" as theological, and they have been political all along. It is on the way we deal with them today that the future of our civilization will depend.