

Superpowers create civil war in the heart of Europe

by Nancy Spannaus

Asked whether U.S. Secretary of State James Baker had given secret approval to the Belgrade army leadership to launch its bloody assaults on Slovenia, the Slovenian parliamentary president Professor Bucar said: "I believe that the army and [federal Prime Minister Ante] Markovic would not have undertaken anything without Baker's approval. . . . The West is cynical. . . . Objectively the West is supporting the Bolshevik-leaning army and with it the policies of [Serbian communist demagogue Slobodan] Milosevic."

Bucar's answer is obviously true, and as a result, the heartland of Europe is currently headed directly toward a spreading civil war.

The current line-up around the Yugoslav crisis is ominous indeed. On the side of the Serbian-dominated army are the United States, the U.S.S.R., and the European Community (EC) as a whole; on the side of Slovenia and Croatia's rights to independence are Austria, Germany, and certain prominent politicians in Italy. From this configuration one can expect few restraints on the escalation of a "Greater Serbia" drive by the so-called federal army, and hence the devolution of the situation into long-term partisan strife.

Equally alarming is the adoption by the Serbians and the French of the ludicrous British charge that Germany is maneuvering in order to reconstitute a "Fourth Reich." This rhetoric betrays the underlying geopolitical assumptions of these forces, the idea that any possible pretext should be used to smash German economic power, which could form the core of a drive to end the world depression.

Great instability

While the Slovenian parliament has voted to suspend its declaration of independence for three months, as the EC mediators demanded, there is no reason to believe that the hostilities will end. For one thing, although the Slovenian

militias have been forced to agree to demobilize, the 200,000-plus Serbian militiamen have been left free to continue their activity.

The primary focus for Serbian mobilization at present is Croatia, where 600,000 ethnic Serbs live. Serbian leaders, including Milosevic, have consistently demanded that this population be "protected" or annexed into a Serbian state. The Serbian-dominated army has already been mobilized in Croatia, allegedly for the eventuality of deploying against Slovenia. Clashes are occurring regularly between the militias of both the Serbs and the Croats.

Most chilling was the report of a meeting of all Serbian parties held around July 9, at which the patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church presided and demanded a sacred oath for the defense of Serbia, the attacker.

Other major flashpoints are the province of Kosovo, which is 92% inhabited by Albanians, and Macedonia. The Albanian Democratic Alliance in Macedonia has charged that Serbian reservists are flooding their province, and are threatening to declare independence from Yugoslavia. Neighboring Albania has heightened military preparations as well. In Macedonia, a state of emergency has been declared, and there is widespread anticipation that this province might also declare its independence.

The Belgrade army authorities continue to talk tough. Most virulent has been General Adzic, the federal army chief of staff, who appeared before 150 senior officers on July 6 to issue bloodcurdling threats. "We are ready for our revenge," said Adzic. "From now on fear will compel the adversary to capitulate and this means the use of all weapons at our disposal: We will have to open fire against everyone who wants to oppose our action."

General Adzic also accused Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia of working against Yugoslavia, in

league with Slovenia and Croatia. In fact, the Serbian-dominated command has charged that the secession is part of a NATO plan under which Yugoslavia is allegedly to be invaded by Germany, Austria, and Hungary. The defense plan is code-named "Bedem '91."

The 'Fourth Reich' gambit

In line with the general's accusation has been a whole wave of propaganda in the Serbian press, backed up by a similar line in the press of France and Great Britain. According to this scenario, Germany is allegedly carrying out a "bloody plan" for "domination" of Europe, by means of its opposition to the Serbian military aggression. The detonator for this stream of vile abuse was a statement by German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher in which he warned of "harsh diplomatic and economic consequences" if the Serbian-communist army did not observe the cease-fire.

The idea that a reunified Germany would become an aggressive "Fourth Reich" was floated most prominently for the first time in recent history through the mouth of Nicholas Ridley, formerly an official in the Thatcher government. The statement, made during the throes of German political union in 1990, was considered enough of an embarrassment for him to resign several months before Mrs. Thatcher did. But the concept did not die with his government career. Indeed, it has been an axiom of British oligarchical policy for nearly a century that German industrial power has to be controlled or destroyed.

During the course of the war against Iraq, for example, the British press lost no opportunity to come forward to attack Germany. But now the "crime" was not German militarism, but economic ambitions which it called Germany's "excuse" for failing to send troops into the Third World.

Beginning in early July, Germany again began to be attacked as a "Fourth Reich." All the major Serbian press featured this line, arguing that Germany was in alliance with Slovenians and Croatians in an effort to conquer access to the Adriatic coast. "The latest conduct of Austria and Germany," wrote the biggest Serbian daily, *Vecernje Novosti* on July 5, "was clearly the intention of destabilizing Yugoslavia and incorporating Croatia and Slovenia into a future Fourth Reich."

The line was picked up by France, albeit in coded language. Foreign Minister Roland Dumas declared at the EC foreign ministers' meeting on July 5 that "we must avoid in every possible way, that some republics become too openly under foreign influence. This would create an ever more complicated situation. . . . When we had zones of influence in the past, it was not the happiest of times."

Dumas could have been talking about Serbia's historic alliance with Moscow, but he wasn't. Participants at the meeting understood this as a warning against Slovenia aligning too closely with Austria. There indeed have been demonstrations throughout Austria in favor of Slovenia's

declaration of independence—which were undoubtedly catalyzed all the more by the brutal actions of the Serbian federal army command.

On July 6 the London *Times* echoed the French-Serbian line, warning Bonn to "take special care to avoid reviving fears of German dominance, in France as well as Eastern Europe. However exaggerated, such suspicions would make a Balkans peace even more elusive."

Such rhetoric is geared to have an enormously inflammatory effect in Yugoslavia, which underwent a very bloody civil war between Serbs and Croatians in the 1930s and '40s. But it would be a gross error to believe that these tensions came to the surface "naturally." They have been systematically fanned by not only the British and Soviets, but also by the the economic debacle created by the measures of the International Monetary Fund.

The condominium deal

The real "danger" of an independent German approach to the Yugoslav crisis, is that it might adopt the economic and political program which could stabilize all Eastern Europe. The agreement between the U.S. and U.S.S.R., to the contrary, is one of crisis management, in which each hopes that the other's economy will collapse first, and that his country will reap the imperial benefit.

Thus the Soviets have agreed with the United States to put their political backing behind the Serbian military, in the name of "inviolable borders." At the same time, they undoubtedly look at the situation as a window of opportunity for returning to the East bloc. The Serbs, as emphasized by Lyndon LaRouche back in 1988, represent a major asset of the Soviet military in the East bloc, and to put backing behind them is to play with the potential for future East-West explosions.

It appears that the short-sighted Americans can't think this far ahead. Instead, they are crowing about the fact that the Soviets are once again going ahead with U.S. policy.

What some of the U.S. financial establishment believes, is that the chaos in Yugoslavia is actually in the interest of the United States! A senior spokesman for the New York-London investment bank Morgan Stanley, interviewed July 3, was crowing about the alleged financial benefits of the crisis. Predicting capital flight out of Central Europe, and especially out of Germany, the spokesman believed that "it would strengthen the U.S. dollar and raise European interest rates. This would damage economic activity in Europe, and raise budget deficits (particularly in Italy). U.S. and U.K. financial assets would command a safe haven premium."

The same kind of insanity unfortunately predominates in the U.S. State Department, where former Yugoslav investor Lawrence Eagleburger handles policy for the country. Eagleburger was once a business partner of Serbian communist strongman Milosevic. Usury does make for strange bedfellows—and a lot of destruction. And no one seems to mind that such games could lead to World War III.