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## Interview: Dr. Zvonimir Separovic

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# 'I would like to see a regional central European community'

Croatian Foreign Minister Dr. Zvonimir Separovic gave a press conference in Vienna, Austria on Oct. 2. Earlier, he met Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock and other Austrian officials. Among the points he made at the press conference, the following stand out:

- *The Yugoslav army, which has conducted a putsch in Belgrade, is issuing ultimatums that are really warnings to the civilian population. This army, the last "tank-communist army" in Europe, is acting in violation of both the laws of war and the Geneva convention. Genocide is being committed against the civilian population.*

- *The international community must demand the immediate withdrawal of all irregular troops.*

- *The next flashpoint of the war would be Bosnia-Herzegovina, which the authorities in Belgrade claim as part of "Greater Serbia." Also, in the days following the formal, joint declarations of independence by Slovenia and Croatia on Oct. 7, it was not to be excluded that the army would resume attacks on Slovenia.*

- *The call by Austrian Foreign Minister Mock for a "targeted economic embargo" against Serbia in energy, transport, and other areas, should be welcomed. The United States, among others, should endorse this.*

- *International recognition of Croatia is critical, because then the Serbian aggression becomes totally illegal and Croatia can exercise "all its rights and duties as an independent state." Foreign Minister Mock is advocating the creation of a bloc of nations that would recognize Croatia. Dr. Separovic is in constant contact with Iceland Foreign Minister Hannibalsson toward this end. Hannibalsson was scheduled to visit Zagreb during the week of Oct. 7.*

- *Even if Croatia is resolved to fight "to the last man," the international community "cannot watch such a war of aggression for so long from the sidelines, in such an indifferent way."*

- *In response to questions about the Ustashi-Nazi atrocities committed in the 1940s and their relation to the Croatian cause today, Separovic rejected the idea of a collective "genocidal people," giving as a comparison the Germans: There were, yes, the Nazi atrocities, but also Bach, Beethoven, and Goethe. A nation's culture must be differentiated from "genocidal cliques."*

*Dr. Separovic was interviewed by EIR correspondent Elke Fimmen following the press conference.*

**EIR:** Could you characterize the present situation in Croatia, and could you tell us what you expect from the world, especially from Europe?

**Separovic:** The present situation in Yugoslavia could be characterized as chaos and full-scale war against Croatia, on the soil of Croatia, by Serbia and the Yugoslav army. We are happy that the U.S., with the statement by Mr. James Baker, and other countries too—especially Austrian Foreign Minister Dr. Alois Mock at the U.N. Security Council—who have declared recently who the aggressor is. . . . These were serious warnings to both Serbia and the Yugoslav army.

The present situation is the following: The Yugoslav military has carried out a putsch. This has been executed over time, starting with the war against Slovenia, but began even before that, when they did not obey their commander-in-chief, the President of the state. The collective presidency of Yugoslavia has been inefficient, as it is dominated by Serbians, and has not been able to pass any decisions. It was not ready to accept a Croatian representative [Stjepan Mesić] when it became his turn to step into the presidency; they did not accept him. But then, after the defeat of the Yugoslav army in seven days in Slovenia, the troika of the European Community [Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal] installed him.

At the moment, on one side we have a military putsch with generals who are fighting on their own. A special case of this is General Uscelac from Banderluca, which is a Serbian-dominated part of Bosnia. He declared a mobilization, which has been accepted only by Serbians, but has been fully rejected by Muslims and Christians and condemned by the Bosnia-Herzegovina presidency and government.

On the other side of the coin, at present in Yugoslavia there is no government, no parliament in session. It has been replaced by the presidency [i.e., the rump presidency illegally announced by a Serbian-dominated bloc of Serbia, Montenegro, and the "autonomous republics" of Kosovo and Vojvodina], after the decision last night by the deputy President, who happens to be a Montenegrin man, Montenegrin being on the side of Serbia. They passed some decisions, which in-

clude the replacement of the federal government.

So the country now has no government nor parliament—generals, yes, but no legitimate presidency. And they still pretend to be Yugoslavs in terms of federal Yugoslavia, which still includes Croatia and Slovenia—until independence, which will be declared and enforced fully after Oct. 7, when the moratorium [on declaration of independence that was agreed to with the European Community] expires. We are absolutely against any prolongation of the moratorium. . . . There is no longer any legitimate government and representative of Yugoslavia as a whole, and we should recognize this.

There is now only the problem of recognition of new states which will arise out of former Yugoslavia, and that is Croatia and Slovenia, and maybe Macedonia tomorrow. I wish there would be a Serbia too, because we would very much like to respect the full sovereign rights of an independent Serbia.

But the problem is one of recognition of the fact that Yugoslavia no longer exists. [Yugoslav Foreign Minister] Budimir Loncar represents nobody; he might represent Serbian President [Slobodan] Milosevic and his group, which committed a coup—which is absolutely unacceptable. The international community must realize the terrible situation in Yugoslavia, which is making it not only possible, but also necessary, to recognize those states that are arising out of the former Yugoslavia.

Peter Lord Carrington told me personally: We know, we see that Yugoslavia does not exist any more, that there is no Yugoslavia, but let's see, and let's discuss what to do with the remnants, with the future of the peoples that once have been part of Yugoslavia. That is why we are going to The Hague with no great hopes, and are not, by any means, ready to discuss any kind of new Yugoslavia—not one with a king from the Karageorgevic family, which is an absolutely crazy idea, because he himself is Serbian. There is also the bad experience with the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, or the first "Kingdom of Serbia, Slovenia, and Croatia" in 1918. This is how Yugoslavia started, on Dec. 1 of that year. We are not ready to accept it. It will be another state dominated by Serbs. This is what Serbia would like. . . .

It was the minister of foreign affairs of Montenegro, who told me the other day in The Hague: "You know, we support the federal state, but what will happen if we are going to be the only one to be for that idea?" The question brought out the absurd: There is no federal state if there is one state only! What I suggested to him was, "You don't need a federal state, you need your own beautiful kingdom or republic of Montenegro, which was there in the 19th century and in the 20th century, until Serbia dominated Yugoslavia and you disappeared with the genocide and the atrocities committed by Serbia against Montenegro by cutting Montenegro from the Montenegro orthodox church." . . .

We are going to The Hague to discuss solving the prob-



*American supporters of Croatian independence rally in Washington, D.C., July 1991. The Bush administration and the governments of Europe are effectively taking the side of the Serbian communists, in their war against Croatia.*

lems we have, in terms of assets and debts and what is left, and then maybe some kind of commonwealth—but without a queen—and some kind of, not union, but some kind of conference, like Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. This would be a loose association, with Serbia, Austria, Hungary, and Slovenia as partners.

**EIR:** Do you think that Croatia is being used as a pawn in the balance-of-power game in Europe?

**Separovic:** Yes, unfortunately. . . . We belong to central Europe. *Mittleuropa* is my obsession. I would like to see a regional Central European Community—by no means a Balkan one. We—Slovenia and Croatia—have this strong tendency, this historic heritage and connection to the Danube and to central Europe, and we would like to see a connection, be it a union of one sort or another for the future. . . .

I would not mind expanded German influence in the area, but we are not just trying to start a big German-oriented union. I am oriented toward central Europe, which might include Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and I don't know which other countries, maybe Poland; this might be a good combination. There are conflicting interests from the side of France-Germany, U.K.-Germany, U.K.-France, and so on.

There is a power game, and we wouldn't like to be the victims of that game. We would like to become a respected, full member of the European Community, which respects others, and with our recognition being at the same time a right and duty.

We are ready to fulfill our duties for the rights of minorities, and on peaceful behavior and politics within European integration. We would like to contribute what we can in science, culture, university life, sports, and so on. And economics, too—we have great capacities, from tourism to industry and agriculture. We can be well-off on our own. What we need is independence, and then prosperity will come. We have 4 million people of Croatian origin in the world, from Australia to Canada, and in Germany. Of 10 million Croats today, 4 million are outside the country. Many of them are willing to come back, or are willing to give support, to send money, and so on. We believe that if the war ends—and we hope it will be very soon—and if the international community recognizes Croatia and guarantees its borders to bring peace, we are absolutely positive that we shall make an immediate good start for reconstruction of the economy, being part of Europe and the world economy at the same time. This is my hope.

**EIR:** It would also be a lasting basis for peace if Croatia could be integrated into the “Productive Triangle” of Paris, Berlin, and Vienna as a locomotive for the reconstruction of eastern Europe, which is another big problem.

This balance of power has already led to many wars, including the First World War, where there was also the question of economic competition between Germany and Great Britain. I think the world has to understand: The question of Croatia is the question of peace for Europe and the whole world.

**Šeparović:** I like what you said. I didn't believe there could be another big conflict. The time for big conflicts and great wars on European soil is over. Unfortunately, the last possible one, which nobody believed would be such a heavy conflict, a real war, is a full-scale war now inside Croatia, against Croatia. But let it be the last one in the world, and especially in Europe, which has been through so many wars. Let force be rejected as a way of thinking and acting.

Now, we have a bad situation on our territory; we are in trouble and we need international help, especially humanitarian assistance. We face a terrible winter with so many displaced persons. I said to [Iceland Foreign Minister] Hannibalsson, who is going on a fact-finding mission in Croatia and Slovenia as one of the efforts toward recognition, that we have exactly as many refugees now as there are citizens of Iceland. Can you imagine those Icelanders being sent to Greenland, Denmark, or Norway overnight, or over a time of three months, as has happened in Croatia? It is a terrible problem. The world should realize the necessity of acting in concert. . . .

# Croatia declares its Serbian aggression

by Konstantin George

The Croatian Parliament convened in a secret location on Oct. 8, fearing an air attack, and formally proclaimed its “breaking off of all state ties with former Yugoslavia,” and thus its full independence. The Parliament declared that henceforth the Yugoslav Army on Croatian territory would be considered an occupation army, and demanded its immediate withdrawal. The resolution, however, showing Croatia's isolation, declared that Croatia will continue to take part in the peace talks under European Community (EC) auspices, set to resume in The Hague on Oct. 14.

On the same day, yet another cease-fire negotiated by the EC went into effect, temporarily “halting” the Serbian Army's war of conquest and pillage against the Republic of Croatia. As in all previous cease-fires, this one was followed by pious statements from European capitals expressing the belief that this cease-fire, in contrast to all its broken predecessors, has a “good chance” of holding. Every cease-fire has been used by the Serbian Army to regroup its forces, call up fresh reserves, and prepare for the next round of conquest and butchery.

On the international political front the cease-fire tactic has been exploited by Serbia's backers—the United States, Britain, and France—to create hope that the pretext exists for a political solution, under a European peace conference chaired by Britain's Lord Carrington. Britain and France, with American backing, have utilized this process to prevent any international recognition of and effective support for the independent republics of Slovenia and Croatia. Behind the Anglo-French pious phrases of “no border changes through violence,” and the “principle of self-determination of peoples,” lurks a pro-Serbian policy. The reasons have relatively little to do with Serbia as such. By backing Serbia's war of conquest, these powers know they are allowing the inauguration of wars and conflicts across the Balkans, creating the same sort of open wound on the European continent that existed in the decades before World War I.

## Toward a Balkan war

The potential for the war launched by Serbia against Croatia to spill over into the third Balkan war this century is expanding with each week. The success of Serbia's aggression against Croatia is the precondition for this tragedy. Should Croatia be