

## Editorial

### *The mandate for Balkan reconstruction*

Speaking at a joint press conference with leaders of Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania, Macedonian Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievsky said on July 1 that “there is fear that what has been promised will be prolonged to an unspecified time. The stability pact is being delayed from month to month.” Initial Western promises of a huge new Marshall Plan for all of southeastern Europe appear to have been watered down, and the focus narrowed to Kosovo itself.

Prime Minister Georgievsky’s statement was made at the conclusion of a World Economic Forum conference held in Salzburg, Austria, and he was not alone in expressing his dissatisfaction. Romanian President Constantinescu and Bulgarian President Stoyanov also voiced their dismay that the West does not seem to have realized that investing in economic reconstruction is much cheaper than facing the destructive effects—economic and more—of another war.

Yet, without the immediate initiation of a Balkan Reconstruction plan, on a grand scale through the entire region, the seeds for new violence, and eventually war, will grow. It may start with what United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan fears: an unprecedented humanitarian disaster this winter. It will continue with much, much worse.

Think back, for example, to the Treaty of Versailles. It has now been broadly recognized that the draconian reparations which were imposed upon conquered Germany after World War I, created the conditions which spawned Hitler’s movement, and, with the indispensable aid of British financial backing, brought on the Second World War. A different tack was taken after World War II, largely because of the perceived danger of war-devastated European nations turning to the Soviet Union. But the program for prosperity worked.

In fact, as the nations of the Balkans know, the infrastructure for carrying out the necessary Balkan reconstruction plan still exists today. What is needed is a credit mechanism, like that of the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (Credit Bank for Reconstruction), an institution which still exists today, and is fully capable of beginning, with the necessary amount of seed-capital,

to start the investment process. It is also crystal-clear that what is needed is an immediate blast of credit into rebuilding the devastated transport and energy infrastructure of the region, starting with the bridges across the Danube River.

The requirements have been laid out by Lyndon LaRouche in the most depth, but even institutions like the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) know the needs. In its latest Economic Survey, the ECE states:

“It needs to be stressed that if the Yugoslav economy remains in shatters, if the Danube is not cleared so that navigation can resume, if the bridges are not rebuilt and the roads and railroads repaired to enable normal merchandise traffic between southeast Europe and the rest of the continent to be re-established, it is inconceivable that any attempts to revive the economies of the neighboring countries will bring about the expected results. Moreover, if the Yugoslav economy remains in dire straits for a long time, it will not only impede the economic recovery of the region but will remain a threat to the economic and political security of Europe as a whole. A core of instability in the heart of the Balkans will not only continue to deter private investment, domestic and foreign, in the southeast European region but also to generate political and social tensions throughout the continent. Hence, a comprehensive program for reconstruction and recovery in southeastern Europe must, almost by definition, include as a key element the rebuilding of Yugoslavia and the revitalization of its economy.”

In other words, the decision of Tony Blair, now adopted by President Clinton and most of Europe, to exclude Yugoslavia from the reconstruction plans, is a recipe for a new war. The same can be said for the bureaucratic obstruction of the European Union, and the clinging to the ways of the IMF and World Bank. Under these conditions, there will be no reconstruction worthy of the name.

Any sane leader wants peace, not war. And if you want peace, action must be taken for Balkan reconstruction, LaRouche-style, now.