

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

independence; continues

crushed or be reduced to a rump state, the next phase of Serbian military operations will be to annex all the territory of former Yugoslavia, east of what remains of Croatia.

This means the conquest of the republics of Bosnia and Macedonia, and intensified repression against the Albanian population of Kosovo, and the Hungarians of Vojvodina. Serbia's neighbors, who are ethnically close to these three regions, will not sit idly by.

Albania has already warned Serbia that it will militarily intervene should Serbia attempt to force a mass expulsion of Albanians from Kosovo into Albania. Similar warnings have been conveyed to Belgrade by Bulgaria and Albania concerning Macedonia. Bulgaria, which has fought three wars against Serbia in this century over Macedonia, will not tolerate a Serbian invasion. Macedonia has a majority of Christians, who linguistically and culturally are very close to Bulgaria, and a large Albanian minority. Inclusion of Macedonia in the definition of "Greater Serbia" would also trigger a very strong Greek reaction.

Even Hungary, which so far has practiced remarkable restraint, cannot remain inactive if Serbian pogroms against the Vojvodina Magyars expand past a certain point. War has so far been contained to the territory of former Yugoslavia simply because Serbia, tied down in Croatia, and forced to deploy large forces to intimidate any resistance from forming in Bosnia and Kosovo, does not yet have the military means to risk war with its neighbors.

Aggression rewarded

The cease-fire rhythm has granted a predictable military advantage to Serbia. In the brief span between this new cease-fire and the previous one, the Serbian Army had: 1) Consolidated the separation of Croatian Dalmatia from the rest of Croatia through the capture of the key town of Gospić, the gateway to the Adriatic coastal region of Dalmatia, and completed the conquest of the Dalmatian hinterlands. The Army's offensive confined the Croatian presence in Dalmatia to little more than a string of isolated and surrounded coastal cities: Dubrovnik, Split, Šibenik, and Zadar. 2) Completed the encirclement of the three main towns of Croatian eastern Slavonia still in Croatian hands: Vukovar, Osijek, and Vinčevci. Advances made in the region of Pakrac in western

Slavonia consolidated the isolation of Slavonia from the rest of Croatia. 3) Through an offensive from the already occupied Banija region, between Bosnia and Zagreb, the Army came within 35 kilometers of Zagreb, and close to the strategically crucial city of Karlovac, south of Zagreb and close to Croatia's border with Slovenia. The fall of Karlovac would partition Croatia, already cut in three, once again, by severing all inner-Croatian routes linking Zagreb with Rijeka and Pula, the only large Adriatic ports not yet cut off.

The Yugoslav Air Force bombing of the Presidential Palace in Zagreb during the time between the last two cease-fires, in which the Croatian leadership miraculously escaped death or serious injury, gave a foretaste of what can be expected when the current cease-fire gives way to the next round of Serbian conquest.

Croatia bleeds, as diplomatic farce goes on

The war launched by Serbian bolshevik President Slobodan Milošević and the Serbian Army Command is committing cultural-historical genocide against a largely defenseless population. The aims of the Belgrade leadership in their dirty war are the physical uprooting of the entire Croatian population from the regions intended to be brought under Serbian rule, through a policy of terror by endless mortar, artillery, and air bombardments against Croatian towns and villages. The terror is the means to enforce the mass flight of Croats from the regions of Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Banija, and to create a depopulated strip between these regions and what remains of Croatia.

Figures released Oct. 8 by the Croatian Catholic Church document the true nature of the genocide being committed against Croatia. According to the daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung's* summary of the document on Oct. 10, to date well over 1,000 Croats have been killed, and more than 250,000 have been forced to flee from the regions occupied by the Serbian forces. In the vacated areas, the systematic destruction of buildings representing the cultural and historical legacy of Croatia has begun, including at least 151 Catholic churches.

While the farce of international diplomacy goes on—including the appointment of former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance on Oct. 9 as the personal emissary of U.S. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuellar—Serbia and its international backers are preparing for the next round in the war. Army units are regrouping in preparation for the next offensive, and even the measures taken which appear at first glance to be concessions are actually in concert with the policy goals of "Greater Serbia."

As to what Serbia's backers really believe concerning the so-called peace process, on Oct. 8, as the cease-fire had gone into effect, the French announced that they were reducing the size of their staff at their consulate in Zagreb. The United States announced the closing of its consulate there, and instructed Americans to leave Yugoslavia.