

barded every day at different times and naturally many die as a result, with most of the victims being civilians. We have just learned that only yesterday four people were killed in our city and one was wounded. They were all civilians.

The people in Osijek are living in the cellars. Winter has already begun, and there is a danger of epidemics. If the semi-blockade were to expand into a total blockade, then there would again be the threat of famine. I believe that these bits of information give you a picture of how things stand in Osijek.

EIR: What is your view of the attitude of the West, in particular the European Community?

Kramaric: From the standpoint of the victims we judge Europe's attitude as criminal. That's a harsh word, but it's true. And we would still have to debate the political aspect. This proves once again that humanitarianism is not an element of politics.

Europe should have gotten more directly involved in this war. The behavior of the Europeans in this case is more cosmetic, so they did not behave like surgeons, whose job is to isolate the cancer.

EIR: What do you expect from the German government?

Kramaric: I already said at my press conference that Germany is politically and economically strong enough to act effectively independently from the rest of Europe. Germany is so strong, that it should not be afraid of any resulting sanctions against it. By effective action in this war Germany could free itself from the mortgage that has been hanging over it since World War II. So today we are living in a totally different context, and a clear attitude by Germany in this conflict would have nothing to do with the actions of 50 years ago.

As you know, Chancellor Kohl invited our President, Dr. Tudjman, and Mr. Kucan, our prime minister, to Bonn and I must admit that I have high hopes from these talks.

EIR: What do you concretely need from Germany?

Kramaric: Besides official recognition, we can make good use of any other aid. So, medicines, food, clothing, etc. And above all we should work for the future. When the war is finally over, there should be close economic ties between Germany and Croatia. On the basis of its extraordinary economic strength, Germany can and must play the decisive role in rebuilding central and eastern Europe.

EIR: Since the German government unfortunately has not given enough aid, what can we German citizens do to really help Croatia and her cities?

Kramaric: In western democracies the possibility exists to build up and exert extraparliamentary pressure; i.e., the population can constantly make the government aware of what is going on in Croatia and urge it to help.

Balkan-style wars in Transcaucasus

by Konstantin George

A fatal juncture has been crossed in post-coup events in the former Soviet Union with the successful seizure of power in the Russian Federation's Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic by renegade Soviet Air Force General Dzhokhar Dudayev, an ethnic Chechen. Dudayev's coup, setting up a fanatical Muslim regime, has opened wide two major flanks against Eurasian stability. Chechen-Ingush A.S.S.R. is but one of 16 such autonomous republics, several of which are also Muslim, within the Russian Federation. The Dudayev putsch will encourage kindred western-manipulated radical Muslim nationalists to emulate the Chechen precedent.

Even should the Russian leadership contain the damage on this front, Dudayev's coup, staged in the context of an already highly explosive situation in the Caucasus, has opened an era of protracted, multi-front wars and conflicts embracing the North Caucasus region of Russia, the Transcaucasian republics of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaidzhan, and eventually spilling over into Turkey and Iran.

Dudayev, a member of the Muslim North Caucasus Chechen tribe, backed by tens of thousands of armed Chechens, seized power Oct. 27, proclaiming himself "President" of a "Chechen Republic" which declared its independence from Russia. His move followed a month of negotiations with a Russian leadership team led by Russia's Vice President Aleksander Rutskoi, and Parliament President Ruslan Khasbulatov, himself an ethnic Chechen. Dudayev was offered everything short of full independence, all to no avail. His Oct. 27 "independence" declaration was then declared null and void by the Russian leadership and parliament. Dudayev's response was to warn that he would launch armed Chechen "terrorist actions," including to "blow up Russian nuclear power plants" unless Russia recognized his coup d'état. That threat, not an idle one as we shall see, was the immediate backdrop to Russian President Yeltsin's imposing, on Nov. 8, a state of emergency over the Chechen republic.

Past the point of no return

The state of emergency, because of its extremely hasty planning and execution, led to a debacle for Yeltsin and the Russian leadership. This was the prime reason why the same Russian Parliament which had demanded that Yeltsin take

action, voted on Nov. 11 to revoke the state of emergency. They had realized too late that it is sometimes better to do nothing than proclaim a martial law which becomes exposed as a bluff. What had happened?

The sending on Nov. 9 of a mere 800 Interior Ministry troops by air to the Chechen-Ingush capital of Grozny ended up as a fiasco. They were surrounded by thousands of armed Chechen "volunteers" at the airport where they landed. They were evacuated the next day in a bus convoy that took them to the neighboring North Caucasus region Autonomous Republic of North Ossetia. The blunder of proclaiming martial law without the means to enforce it was astutely seized on by General Dudayev. On Nov. 9, he formally installed himself, in a televised ceremony, complete with swearing an oath on the Koran, as "President" of an "independent" Chechen republic. Many of the Russian deputies who voted to revoke the state of emergency not only feared the backfire effect in the volatile North Caucasus, but also the danger that Russia's defeat there will set off domino effect in other autonomous republics of the Russian Federation, such as among Muslim nationalities like the Tatars and the Bashkirs.

The Russian military leadership shares these very fears, but their view is that it is better to move in now and use force and crush the Chechen uprising as a lesson to the others. In the Russian Parliament debate on how to handle the crisis by Russia's Vice President, Gen.-Maj. Aleksander Rutskoi, vehemently defended the imposition of martial law.

Foreign involvement

The Chechens, a Muslim tribe of only 611,000, through arrangement with corrupt strata of the old *nomenklatura* and their western "friends," have been one of the three most powerful mafias in the former Soviet Union, alongside the Israeli and Georgian mafias, since the Brezhnev era. This side of the matter began to emerge in the Nov. 10-11 Russian Parliament debate on martial law for the region. The President of the Russian Parliament, Ruslan Khasbulatov, a Chechen who had tried to negotiate with the clique around Dudayev throughout October, declared: "You cannot negotiate with them. These people are bandits."

The Chechens are a mountain tribal society based on clans, and since their very late conversion to Islam, two centuries ago, have been led politically by families who are in radical Sunnite Muslim Brotherhood-like organizations. The behavior and statements by General Dudayev and his coup associates show both the organized crime and Muslim Brotherhood pedigree. On the Islamic fanatic side, he was joined in his Koran oath swearing-in ceremony by clan leaders from 14 North Caucasus Muslim tribes; in his inaugural speech, Dudayev called on "all the Muslim nations of the Caucasus" to unite in an uprising against Russia.

Dudayev in early November threatened that he would deploy "terrorists" to "blow up Russian nuclear power plants" unless independence were granted. Four Chechen

terrorists, on Nov. 9, hijacked a Soviet airliner to Ankara, Turkey, then returned to the Chechen capital of Grozny to a "heroes" welcome. Since then, Dudayev has threatened a terrorist bombing campaign inside Moscow, including against the subway. The Chechens definitely have the personnel and the logistical and financial capabilities to carry out terrorism, including vast sums of foreign currency.

Over decades, Chechen clan leaders have developed extensive commercial and smuggling arrangements with the Israeli and Georgian mafias. Georgia's demagogic President Zviad Gamsakhurdia has endorsed the Chechen uprising. He launched his own confrontation against Russia Nov. 11, the same day Dudayev installed himself as "President," through a Georgian decree seizing all assets of Soviet Interior troops in Georgia. Simultaneously Georgia launched its latest offensive against Muslim Ossetians.

The Gamsakhurdia regime has been conducting in South Ossetia, a region within Georgia, a copy of the killings and mass expulsions that Serbia is waging against Croatia, if on a smaller scale. To date, 100-200,000 Ossetians have fled into the North Ossetia A.S.S.R. of the Russian Federation. The Ossetians, the largest single Muslim nationality in the North Caucasus, refuse to break with the Russian Federation, and have thus become a military target for two of their neighbors, the "Chechen Republic" of Dudayev and Georgia's Gamsakhurdia regime.

The Transcaucasus

On Nov. 11, Turkey became the first country to recognize the Muslim Transcaucasian republic of Azerbaidzhan as an independent state. They recognized a regime headed by President Ayaz Mutalibov, the communist now turned rabid nationalist, who in August had publicly backed the coup attempt in Moscow. Since August, Mutalibov has been inching toward provoking war with neighboring Armenia.

The Turkish recognition was unconditional, and will thus be read in Armenia as Ankara's endorsement for the total energy, rail, and road blockade of Armenia imposed by Azerbaidzhan, as well as of the provocative Azerbaidzhani troop movements near Armenia's border in early November.

The Azerbaidzhanis, albeit Shiites with historical and cultural ties to Iran from long periods of living under Persian rule, are ethnically Turkish. Ankara's decision is immensely popular inside Turkey, where, as in Azerbaidzhan, pan-Turkic sentiments are on the rise.

The Turkish decision was made Nov. 9, during a session of the cabinet under lame-duck Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, and first announced Nov. 11. This avoided forcing the incoming prime minister, Suleiman Demirel, to undertake such a sensitive move, yet left him all the benefits of its popularity. The decision was made on the same day that Chechen terrorists hijacked a Soviet airliner to Ankara, and renegade General Dudayev installed himself as "President" of the "Chechen Republic."