

Europe stabs Macedonia in the back

Paolo Raimondi reports on a visit to Macedonia, which could become a new Balkan powderkeg due to the stupidity of the world's governments.

On May 2, the Council of Ministers of the European Community (EC), meeting in Portugal, refused to recognize the national independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Macedonia, one of the republics of former Yugoslavia. Once again, Europe has capitulated to the Anglo-American destabilization game, and failed to deal independently with a problem which, if not solved, is soon going to explode, contributing to making Europe not the continent of economic and political stability that it should be, but the victim of bigger and bigger wars.

Since Jan. 15, after the release of the report of the Arbitration Commission of the EC, which included some of the best-known experts in international law, the Republic of Macedonia has done everything requested of it as a precondition for recognition by the EC as an independent nation. It had declared its right to independence on Jan. 25, 1991, and the overwhelming majority of its people had approved the goal of independence in the referendum of Sept. 8, 1991. On Sept. 17, 1991, the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, democratically elected in November and December 1990, declared its sovereignty, and a new Constitution was proclaimed on Nov. 17, 1991.

But the EC refused to recognize Macedonia, supposedly because of the opposition of one European member, Greece, which complained that the use of the name of "Macedonia" would sound like a provocation, and could lead to a future attempt to claim Greek territory by that name.

Kissingerian blackmail

This argument is a lie. The reality is that Europe has been paralyzed by fear, blackmail, and stupidity by the same powerful political forces, best identified as "Henry Kissinger's geopolitical friends," which were responsible for unleashing the Greater Serbian communist aggression against Slovenia and Croatia, in order to destabilize continental Europe. The simple reality is that if Europe does not recognize the independence of Macedonia, then this territory will not have any international juridical status, and thus will be occupied by foreign armies and integrated into one or more foreign states. In other words, Macedonian territory has been offered to the Greater Serbians, with Greece playing the card of

non-recognition in hopes of getting a few crumbs from the geopolitical gamemasters.

Kiro Gligorov, the President of the Republic of Macedonia, in a very polite statement addressed to the European governments the first week of May, said that "making the name of our state a precondition for recognition came first, without precedent; this then led to postponement of recognition, followed by all the unfavorable consequences and dangers affecting the boiling region of former Yugoslavia and beyond. This places our republic and our people in a state of suspense and a situation which no people would tolerate, since it calls into question its very identity and dignity.

"We have shown readiness to conclude an agreement for inviolability of existing borders, and have offered an agreement for overall friendship and cooperation with the Republic of Greece, regardless of the damage it is causing us by its behavior so far," continued President Gligorov. "The European Community was given a mandate by the entirety of Europe, through the CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe], to resolve the Yugoslav crisis and war. It will be tragic, not only for Macedonia and its people, if the European Community, with regards to Macedonia, the most peace-loving republic of former Yugoslavia, gives in and passes unjust decisions, biased because of the fact that one of its members cannot free itself from some historical burdens and irrationalities."

In the first months of 1992, President Gligorov had taken the urgent step to inform all the governments of Europe and the world about the situation in Macedonia. "The disintegration of the economic and political system of Yugoslavia has created a power vacuum which has been filled with an ethnic war, followed by a crisis and breakdown of authority of the state and a threat of economic destruction. Macedonia, which has always stood for the principle of peaceful self-determination, refuses to take part in the war," he wrote. "We see the state of Macedonia as a stabilizing factor in the Balkans and in Europe. We are prepared for constructive cooperation with our neighbors and with the countries of the world. Formal recognition of Macedonia will be a clear signal which will discourage attempts to change borders by force."

The Schiller Institute's intervention

I was recently in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, for a short visit with government officials. As a representative of the Schiller Institute, I was given the opportunity to inform the authorities about the activities of the institute to promote the economic and political stability and development of Europe, as elaborated in Lyndon LaRouche's Paris-Berlin-Vienna "Productive Triangle" program. The Schiller Institute, through the initiative of its founder, Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche, at the beginning of 1992 launched an international mobilization for the recognition of the independence of Macedonia, as a *conditio sine qua non* to avoid the expansion of the Yugoslavia crisis into a full-scale Balkan war.

Macedonia has a well-defined territory, with Greece to the south, Bulgaria to the east, Albania to the west, and Serbia to the north. It has just 2.1 million people, 64.6% of them Macedonians, and 21% or more Albanians. To say that Macedonia would represent a threat to Greece is absurd, since Macedonia does not have an army, but just a small police force, too small even to deal with domestic and foreign organized crime and smuggling.

Domestically, Macedonia faces two main problems: the economic crisis and the ethnic and social destabilization. In 1991, the level of unemployment was 30%, and today it is much worse. Until April, Macedonia was victimized by a horrendous inflation rate, because it had to use the old Yugoslavian dinar, printed in Belgrade to pay for Serbia's war and economic crisis. The currency change effected in April has not been easy to carry out, as Serbians have been bringing large amounts of old dinars into Macedonian territory, for purposes of speculation. The national economy is going into a period of collapse, as in every other country of the former communist eastern Europe, compounded by the damage from the war and the irresponsible economic boycott applied by the Greek government, which sealed off all the border passes months ago. Every day, dozens and sometimes hundreds of refugees from the battlefields of Bosnia arrive in Skopje and other towns, asking for food and a place to live. It is reported that the living standard, which was relatively high for a communist-controlled region, is down to about one-quarter of what it was during the 1980s.

The government of Macedonia has officially rejected the disastrous "shock therapy" economic program of Harvard University's Jeffrey Sachs, and has embarked upon its own program of privatizing former communist holdings, while trying to maintain living standards. But the program has no chance of success in the current situation.

Macedonian political and economic leaders express great interest in becoming part of a European program for industrial and infrastructural development, along the lines of the Productive Triangle. They express their support for a new railway and road connection with the Adriatic Sea, linking Albania, Macedonia, and Bulgaria and, once the war is stopped, for the construction of a navigable canal the Danube



at Belgrade) via the Morava and Vardar rivers at Skopje to the Aegean Sea at Thessaloniki.

A flashpoint for regional war

Macedonia's social and economic instability, combined with the international isolation provoked by the EC refusal to recognize Macedonian independence, could trigger a very dangerous internal political and ethnic crisis. There is the possibility of a series of continuous government crises which could foster the emergence of new, more radical forces and leaders. The trigger point then could be foreign-created tension between the Macedonian and Albanian communities.

The current government is in constant contact with the Albanian community in Macedonia and with the Albanian government in Tirana, to maintain and consolidate the current good working relationship. But Macedonian political leaders fear that, as a result of its international isolation, Greater Serbia may decide to open up a "second front," provoking terrorism and ethnic warfare in Macedonia. It should be clear that, if the Greater Serbians destroy and occupy Bosnia, they would turn around and take Macedonia easily by brutal force.

If the genocide in Bosnia is not stopped, if the occupation of Macedonia is not prevented, then we are going to have a full-fledged Balkan war. Macedonia has been before in history the place where wars began, because conflict there has provoked the involvement not only of domestic ethnic communities, but also of other nations, like Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, and Turkey. And if this happens, thanks to its own stupidity, Europe will find itself faced with a totally uncontrollable situation, and even the "clever" Greek political leaders will see hell at home.