

On June 16, the two newly independent nations formally signed a mutual defense pact, the first such bilateral treaty in Europe since World War II.

### 'The violence will persist'

Fears of what would likely happen under Alexander's rule were heightened by his own statements in an interview with France's *Le Figaro* June 11, where he made clear that the war will continue under his prospective rule. He also lined up strategically with the provocative policy of London, Paris, and Washington, which portrays the conflict as a consequence of German ambitions in the Balkans.

Faithful to the public relations needs of the moment, Alexander portrayed himself as the arch-reformer, insisting that he wanted to install a "democracy under the auspices of constitutional monarchy." In his view, Milosevic's departure from the political scene is now inevitable. A "government of national salvation to install democracy" would be set up, with the foundations of the society being "the Army and the people," and his own role being more that of an arbiter than a "little bridge" between various social forces: "I would like to establish durable and solid bridges. I am in contact with all the forces which, in Yugoslavia, believe in the virtue of democracy." He would meet all such forces, he said, in Belgrade.

The democratic mask came off when the question was posed whether he thought it were "utopian" to think of a monarchy "in what was Yugoslavia," given that Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina were now independent states recognized internationally. Alexander's reply exuded contempt for these new nations: "In most of the ex-Yugoslav republics, power is in the hands of communists, who have traded their former faith for an obsessional nationalism, in order to maintain themselves in power. Constitutional monarchy, respectful of democracy, is the only response to the problems of the region. Its installation must begin in Belgrade itself, where it is necessary to end, through it, the communist dictatorship. But in Zagreb, too, a change must manifest itself. The least that one can say, is that democracy is not very familiar to [Croatian President] General Tudjman. In truth, it is even totally unknown in Croatia. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, [President] Mr. Izetbegovic dreams of an Islamic state, which is not, perhaps, the best democratic reference. I admit that these states are independent. But it is necessary, at the same time, that the rights of their minorities be respected. As long as these rights are not recognized and guaranteed, one can be sure that the violence will persist."

When France's *Le Figaro* asked him about his views of Europe's position toward the crisis in former Yugoslavia, the would-be monarch attacked former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher for changing Europe's "impartial" position when the European Community recognized Slovenia and Croatia. "Everything is happening as if Germany had not learned the lessons of a recent past."

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## Interview: Ivan Culic

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# Bosnian refugees pouring into Croatia

*While the focus of the firefight in the Balkans has moved to Bosnia, Croatia remains under the thumb of Serbian black-mail. Culic is the president of the Croatian Democratic Union in Villeurbanne, France. He was interviewed on his return from Croatia, by Eric Sauze, of the Lyons bureau of the French bi-weekly newspaper Nouvelle Solidarité. The interview appeared in its June 12 issue.*

**EIR:** What is the situation in Croatia?

**Culic:** It has not changed; it has even gotten worse with the arrival of refugees from Bosnia. I was in Zagreb, and especially in Split. Every day, 3,000-4,000 new refugees arrived: They were housed in sports arenas, movie theaters, sleeping on the ground without mattresses. There is also the problem of food: There is plenty of food, but no equipment to prepare it. So, the refugees can only eat canned goods, when there are any; that was why I went, to bring food in.

But the morale of the Croats is good. We are certain that Croatia will be freed without European aid, because we expect nothing from Europe, especially not military aid. The attitude of the European Community (EC) and the United Nations would be rather inhibiting, because the Serbs are continuing to shoot, while we are respecting the cease-fire. At the front, people are nervous; they cannot live with this situation.

**EIR:** What is happening at the front?

**Culic:** It's a disaster: All the villages are abandoned. I was 50 kilometers from Split, in my hometown, and all I saw were two dogs and a donkey walking around. On the other side, 500 meters away, there are the Serbs. There is no water or electricity. But the Croatian Army has good morale. Up to now, it did not have any weapons, but it now possesses light arms. The fields are mined on both the Serbian and Croatian side, and therefore, it's very difficult to attack; so, they have to remain at their positions, but that cannot last.

**EIR:** Then what do you expect to do?

**Culic:** If the EC and the United Nations do nothing to get Croatia out of this situation, it is certain that we will retake our territory by force.

**EIR:** What do you think of the attitude of Europe?

**Culic:** I've told you: We expect nothing from Europe, which, to the contrary, is seeking to preserve the Yugoslav state—even though Europe already recognized Croatia several months before. Yugoslavia no longer exists, and really it has never existed: It was artificially created in 1918 from the Treaty of Versailles. First called the "Serb, Croat and Slovene Kingdom," it was christened Yugoslavia in 1932. For centuries each of these states had a different culture, religion, writing, and language, and even their populations never wanted to live together. For example, from about A.D. 925-1200, Croatia was the "Croat Kingdom" led by King Tomislav, and was then rejoined to the Kingdom of Austria-Hungary, the same as Slovenia. By comparison, Serbia, and also Macedonia, were Turkish colonies up to the first Balkan War, about 1884. Thus, there were very different states. The proof is that, within what has up to now been called Yugoslavia, there were four official languages and two styles of writing. Under these circumstances, can one talk about the Yugoslav nation and language?

**EIR:** What do you think of a European embargo on arms and oil against Serbia? Since the principal importers of oil are Romania and Greece, the latter being an EC member, it would be easy to set this up.

**Culic:** Sure, but it will never work. Remember Iraq. There are always countries which don't respect the embargo. We know, for example, that Yeltsin's Russia is continuing to provide direct aid to the Serbs, to which they are tied by religion. The Russians and Serbs are Orthodox.

**EIR:** What are the ties between the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches?

**Culic:** On the one hand, both are politically active, and, on the other, some of the United Nations representatives in Vukovar [in eastern Croatia near the Serbian border] are Russians completely run by Serbia. I am thinking especially of one general who is there and who is overtly aiding the Serbs. The weapons and the energy supplies are coming from Russia, with Romania as the intermediary, which is very difficult to stop. It would possibly be easier to prevent Greece from allowing weapons to go through, because, as you said, it's an EC country, but the problem with Greece is different because of Macedonia.

**EIR:** What are the relations between the Croat government and Bosnia?

**Culic:** I've just spoken with some refugees: There are nearly a million who have come through Croatia and have decided to establish themselves here. By contrast, from the standpoint of policy, Mr. Aliya Izetbegovic, the Muslim President of Bosnia, did not get involved in the Croat problem until after the Serbian offensive against his own country. But since then, the relations between our two countries have been excellent, to the point that Mr. Izetbegovic is considering form-

ing a confederation with Croatia. Croatia has recognized Bosnia and has no territorial claim whatever on that republic, which, in fact, is comprised 20% of Croats and 40% of Muslims. We should be perfectly able to envisage a confederation between Bosnia and Croatia, with each remaining a sovereign state. But, for this, Bosnia cannot be divided, which is what the Serbs want, or it will cease to exist. Despite a certain tendency toward excessive nationalism, the Croat government is completely favorable toward the establishment of a Bosnian republic.

**EIR:** What would Croatia need to get its economy restarted?

**Culic:** Croatia needs energy supplies, roadways, and railroads. We no longer have highways and our railways have not been upgraded for 50 years. So, in order to have tourism and industry, we need transport infrastructure.

## Refugee situation is nearing disaster

*On May 17, Croatian Foreign Minister Zvonimir Separovic sent an urgent letter to the foreign ministers of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The following was translated from the French:*

Europe and the world must know that, at this moment, more than a million people in ex-Yugoslavia are no longer living in their homes. The flight of inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina before the terror of the ex-Yugoslav Federal Army and before the Serbian and Montenegrin terror is taking a dramatic turn. Croatia has already taken in 350,000 refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina, but the system for protecting refugees is on the threshold of catastrophe.

The latest information is that in Zagreb, a train has arrived from Slavonsky Brod with 1,500 refugees who are continuing to stay in the railcars at the Zagreb central station, because the receiving facilities are saturated. From the same source yet another train has arrived with more than 1,200 refugees. In Split, there are more than 2,500 refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina who are living in buses. From the center of Bosnia, they are expecting 25,000 refugees (the majority of them coming from Zenice). The flood shows no prospect of abating. Croatia is taking them in, but it is unable to take care of them.

Europe must decide: Either take in the refugees or help them survive.



*The town wall of the Adriatic seaport of Dubrovnik in Croatia. The Serbian-run Yugoslav Army and the Chetnik irregulars have renewed bombardment of this ancient, non-military city, which had earlier been declared by Unesco a cultural treasure. Now, France's Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, Bernard Kouchner, has floated a proposal to further divide the country by separating Dubrovnik from Croatia.*

**EIR:** Have you met with the Croat leadership?

**Culic:** I met with the mayor of Split, who talked with me especially about humanitarian problems, because Split is the way station for refugees from Bosnia. In Zagreb, I met with Croat ministers whom I have known from some time. They explained to me that if the Americans aren't helping Croatia, it is because they have no historic past. Born only 150 years ago [sic], they cannot understand what it is to lose your country, which is in the process of happening to the Croats right now. The Croats have a history—we were just looking at a book, tracing the history of Split from 300 B.C. to the present. Then, one of these ministers jokingly brought up the fact that back when Croatia already had a National Assembly, the goats were still chomping grass in New York.

**EIR:** What do you think of the humanitarian corridors of Bernard Kouchner [France's secretary of state for humanitarian affairs]?

**Culic:** Some of my friends who were with Mr. Kouchner on New Year's Day in Dubrovnik, told me that he had tried to make a personal profit from the situation and that he wanted to make Dubrovnik an independent city detached from the rest of Croatia, which is totally unacceptable for the Croats. Since then, Kouchner has never come back to Croatia.

**EIR:** What is the fate of the refugees from Bosnia?

**Culic:** Eighty percent of the Bosnians are remaining in Croatia, because Slovenia doesn't accept them. Two days ago, Italy—as did the Albanians—refused to receive 2,000 Bosnian refugees. So, in Croatia, there are 800,000! We are launching an appeal for international aid on their behalf so we can send them food, medications, and clothing. These refugees will be able to remain in Croatia, but we have to feed them.

In Lyons and in France as a whole, we have addresses where we can take personal donations, but now, this is not enough; we need to have aid at the state level, given the scope of the problem. The EC has food surpluses that it often throws out, rather than send it there!

**EIR:** Would you like to add any other remarks?

**Culic:** On my way to Split, I went through Zadar, a town of 150,000, which is attacked by the [Serbian] Chetniks every day. For the last three weeks, there has been no water or electricity. There is no production any more, and even the factories that were untouched cannot open. People are living in shocking hygienic conditions. Europe must do something. It cannot let these cities die a slow death!

**EIR:** Why is there no water or electricity in Zadar?

**Culic:** Because the electricity comes from an area under Serbian occupation. They have cut everything off in order to pressure the people, and will not restore water and power unless they get gasoline in exchange.

**EIR:** What do you think about an eventual intervention by Turkey?

**Culic:** Turkey is dissatisfied with Serbia's attitude, but it's waiting for the U.S. to give the green light before intervening. The Serbs want Turkey to intervene in the Balkans in order to be able to denounce Bosnia as a fundamentalist state. But the Bosnians are not Muslim integrists: These are people you rub shoulders with every day. . . . Moreover, 8-9% of the Croatian people are Muslims and, of the 43-44% of the Bosnian population who are Muslims, 20% have declared themselves Croats.

But, of course, you know that it was Tito who set up the Muslim nationality. Earlier, that didn't exist as a nationality. This has divided the people. It was as if one were talking about a Catholic nationality—it's a religion, not a nationality. Before that, people would just consider themselves Serbs or Croats, that's all.