

Rapprochement Among Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia

Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic was in Sarajevo with a trade delegation on June 12, for meetings with the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina, to discuss economic cooperation, including protection of investments, a ban on dual taxation, and ways to regulate smooth money flow between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.

The day before, the Interior Ministers of Yugoslavia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Republika Srpska, which is part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, met in Belgrade, to discuss cooperation in the fight against organized crime and illegal immigration. At the meeting, a joint monitoring group was established, as had been agreed upon a month earlier.

On June 9, Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica and Croatian President Stipe Mesic, meeting at an informal summit of Eastern and Southeastern European heads of state in Verbania, Italy, issued a joint declaration, stressing that neither of them had any territorial ambitions in Bosnia, and that a stable Bosnia was in the best interest of both their countries. They want a complete normalization of bilateral relations, including guarantees of minority rights, return of refugees, and clarification of the fate of missing persons, Kostunica and Mesic declared. They also called for the free exchange of persons, goods and ideas.

No less important is the fact, that after being disrupted for ten years, the rail line connecting the Croatian capital, Zagreb, to the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, has been reopened, and a regular daily train connection established as of June 12. — *Alexander Hartmann*

vately” arming, training, and “advising” foreign governments and foreign groups, including the KLA (see box, page 23).

The KLA is better armed than ever, according to observers, and based on the findings of secret weapons caches in Kosovo, Serbia, and Macedonia. Evidence is also piling up that the structure of the KLA-KPC coincides with that of the Kosovo mafia. The Albright-sponsored Thaci continues to be the political leader of Kosovo, despite the fact that his political adversary, Ibrahim Rugova, can still count on the large majority of the Kosovo-Albanian votes. “Kosovo is set to become the cancer center of Europe, as Western Europe will soon discover,” stated Marko Nikovic, vice-president of the New York-based International Narcotic Enforcement Officers As-

sociation, speaking to the London *Guardian* March 13, 2000, one year after the NATO bombing campaign had officially installed the KLA in power in Kosovo.

“It is the hardest narcotics ring to crack, because it is all run by families,” said Nikovic, who estimated that as of March 2000, the Kosovo mafia was handling between four and a half and five tons of heroin a month, and growing fast, compared with two tons per month before NATO and the KLA took over the province. “It’s coming through easier and cheaper, and there is much more of it. The price is going down, and if this goes on, we are predicting a heroin boom in Western Europe, as there was in the early ’80s” — i.e., the boom due to the increase in opium production in Afghanistan and Pakistan during the Afghanistan war. Sources in the Balkans have confirmed that the Kosovo mafia bosses, divided into four major families, are concentrating even more on Western European and U.S. markets. A high-level informant admitted, “There is nobody to stop them.”

“Kosovo is the Colombia of Europe,” Nikovic explained. “When Serb police [during the ruthless retaliation for the KLA assassination of Yugoslav police officers, which led to the NATO intervention] were burning houses in Kosovo, they were finding heroin stuffed in the roof. As far as I know there has not been a single report in the last year of KFOR seizing heroin. You have an entire country without a police force that knows what is going on. Everything is worked out on the basis of the family or clan structure—their diaspora have been in Turkey and Germany since Tito’s purges, so the whole route is set up. Now they have found the one country between Asia and Europe that is not a member of Interpol.”

NATO Troops Do Not Police

Under the NATO protectorate, Kosovo organized-crime activities have been left *officially* undisturbed for a long time. “Generals do not want to turn their troops into cops. . . . They don’t want their troops to get shot pursuing black marketeers,” a top NATO official in the Brussels headquarters told a reporter.

“The KLA is indebted to Balkan drug organizations that helped funnel both cash and arms to the guerrillas before and after the conflict,” according to a report published by the U.S.-based *Stratfor Global Intelligence* on March 3, 2000, entitled “Kosovo: One Year Later.” “Kosovo is the heart of a heroin trafficking route that runs from Afghanistan through Turkey and the Balkans and into Western Europe. . . . The KLA must now pay back the organized crime elements. This would in turn create a surge in heroin traffic in the coming months, just as it did following the NATO occupation of Bosnia in the mid-1990s. . . . The route connecting the Taliban-run opium fields of Afghanistan to Western Europe’s heroin market is dominated by the Kosovo Albanians; this ‘Balkan Route’ supplied 80% of Europe’s heroin. The U.S. government has been—and likely continues to be—well aware of the heroin