

UNDP privatization drive dogs E. Europe

by Kathleen Klenetsky

Despite its name, which implies that it has something to do with fostering physical economic development, the United Nations Development Program has recently embarked on a new program to foist the destructive cult of the “free market” on the already suffering economies of eastern Europe.

Under William Draper III, a lifelong political and personal crony of President George Bush, the UNDP is orchestrating an aggressive campaign to promote the market economy—the euphemism currently applied to unbridled Adam Smith-style looting—throughout the region.

Impoverished Albania is being used as a test case. In mid-August, Draper traveled to Tirana for extensive discussions with Albanian officials on how to develop a free market in that country.

According to Tirana’s press service ATA, Draper held a press conference Aug. 14 to announce that the UNDP will increase its involvement with the reformation of the Albanian economy. He specified that the UNDP would provide experts and counselors to speed up Albania’s transition to a market economy, and that these experts would conduct a sweeping restructuring of the economy, from its banking and health system, to its infrastructure.

Draper said the UNDP would even play a role in channeling foreign investments into Albania. But before this can happen, he admonished, Albania must approve new laws on private business, private property, and land ownership—all designed to make Albania more “attractive” to those foreign investors more interested in making a quick buck, than in developing the country’s infrastructure and industrial base.

The Albanian model

According to a senior UNDP official, the agency UNDP has taken “a lead role in trying to assist Albania with its reform program.” Together with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Community, the UNDP will hold a conference in Brussels Sept. 17 to consider how “we can facilitate foreign investment” in Albania: “We will discuss what kinds of legal changes are necessary to permit joint ventures and foreign ownership, and we will try to help identify which industries could be made attractive to foreign investors.” If the meeting is a success, there will be similar ones targeting other eastern European countries in the future.

But it isn’t just Albania which is being subjected to the

UNDP’s not-so-tender ministrations. The same official confirmed that the UNDP has a full-fledged privatization program going on in every eastern European country, modeled on its Albania project, and carried out in coordination with the State Department’s eastern European honcho, Deputy Secretary Lawrence Eagleburger.

The UNDP has “programs in all the East European countries,” the official disclosed. These have been in existence going back to Cold War days, but since the collapse of communist rule, “we have greatly intensified our efforts to promote the democratic process and help these countries move toward a market economy.”

Lamenting that there has been “a real problem in getting foreign investments in these countries,” because “there aren’t sufficient guarantees that they will be profitable,” the official said that the UNDP has decided to place major emphasis on “encouraging eastern European countries to adopt reforms that will convince potential investors that they are safe investments.”

And just what kind of help is the UNDP giving? When asked to cite an example of the UNDP’s free market program, the UNDP official unhesitatingly pointed to a program the UNDP conducted in Poland with the U.S. Agency for International Development. The program sent a “team of experts” to Poland, “which went through a list of Polish enterprises and decided which could succeed with some outside technical advice and which couldn’t.”

This kind of “hit list” mentality has led to massive plant closings in Poland, throwing hundreds of thousands of people out of work, and creating a troubling increase in political and social unrest.

Does this faze the UNDP? Not one bit. “We must move ahead with privatization, no matter how much unemployment takes place,” the UNDP official insisted, when pressed on the human costs of the free-market cult. “Some countries may try to slow the process down, but it can’t be avoided, because many of the companies in these countries just shouldn’t survive.”

What really gives the UNDP’s game away is the fact that a key component of its eastern European “privatization” program is population control. The official confirmed that the UNDP is cautiously—but assiduously—“providing the benefits of family planning in Poland and Albania,” despite the fact that “neither government supports contraception.”

The emphasis on population control comes as no surprise to anyone familiar with UNDP head Draper’s pedigree. His father—an intimate of George Bush’s father, Prescott—was among the most influential proponents of radical malthusianism in the United States, and a founder of the Population Crisis Committee, whose board was chaired by William Draper III for several years. As UNDP administrator, William Draper III gave a speech last January bluntly asserting that “population control” would play a central role in Bush’s new world order. Eastern Europe is finding out how true that is.