

Half a million Bosnians face death; Balkan war looms in next phase

by Konstantin George and Nora Hamerman

In early November, Croatia, with one-third of its territory occupied by Serbia, was told that unless it agreed to demobilize 40,000 troops, it had no hope of gaining membership in the International Monetary Fund. Vainly hoping to lift the credit embargo against his country, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman agreed to this humiliating demand, and by mid-November the 40,000 troops were demobilized.

This action, and the Anglo-American pressures that precipitated it, marked another fatal step along the way to the obliteration of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the march toward a Balkan-wide war. Up to now, Croatian forces have been the decisive factor in preventing Serbia from completing its conquest of Bosnia. Serbia, ruled by an aggressive communist dictatorship under Slobodan Milosevic, is determined to annex its neighbors by military force and "ethnic cleansing" into a Greater Serbian empire. The 40,000 troop cut means that Croatia, which must deploy large forces opposite the Serbian troops occupying Croatian territory in Eastern Slavonia, Western Slavonia, Krajina, Baranja, the Adriatic hinterland, and Herzegovina, has lost the free energy to provide reinforcements to hold the front in central Bosnia.

About 500,000 Bosnians are threatened with death as winter approaches, trapped in hopelessly overcrowded conditions in towns such as Gorazde and Srebrenica in the east, and Tuzla, Maglaj, Doboj, and Travnik in the north and center. This is apart from Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, which has had the international media spotlight; and in addition to the appalling toll in deaths and refugees which have already resulted from the Serbian offensive against Bosnia this year.

Sarajevo has, in reality, already fallen. Its defenses have crumbled, the Serbian forces can take it whenever they choose. Military observers in Zagreb, the Croatian capital, believe that the cynical Serbian leadership will wait, in order to avoid "negative publicity" around Sarajevo, until it has completed the capture of the rest of the Muslim part of Bosnia, and then in the final stage, walk in and grab Sarajevo.

International backup for Serbia

The Serbian offensive to finish conquering the interior of Bosnia is expected to culminate during December. Serbia has enjoyed a series of military successes in central Bosnia, starting with the fall of Jajce and, as of Nov. 23, is close to

capturing the strategic bastion of Travnik. These victories have relied on tacit or active international support. Russia, China, and France all back Serbia more or less openly. The international arms embargo imposed by the United Nations against all of the republics of former Yugoslavia has choked off Croatia and Bosnia from supplies, while ensuring that Serbia, which inherited the formidable Yugoslav Federal Army's machine, has the military superiority and the logistical capability to wage a war of conquest unparalleled since the Nazi annexation of Czechoslovakia in 1938. U.N. "peacekeeping" troops, as *EIR* previously reported, have merely guaranteed Serbian conquests in Croatia, freeing Serbia's army for its onslaught into Bosnia.

Serbia is being assisted by numerous Russian military "volunteers" in a modern replay of what happened throughout the 19th century, when Moscow backed its Serbian imperial-minded cohorts. There has been a heavy influx of these mercenaries this autumn. Russian units played a key role in capturing Jajce, and also in the "Serbian" halting of what otherwise would have been a successful Croatian counter-offensive in eastern Herzegovina. On this front alone, at one point 250 Russian mercenaries arrived, led by a retired general, and stemmed the Croatian advance. A flow of arms and equipment from Russia, China, Romania, and elsewhere, has also been vital to the Serbian war effort.

In addition, the Serbian capture of Jajce in October occurred after highly destructive battles between what international media dubbed "Muslim and Croatian forces" in several towns of central Bosnia. But the media portrayal of local internecine warfare is—as usual—not accurate.

Fighting in Bosnia are several thousand "Mujahideen," or "Muslim" mercenaries from abroad, who are being whipped up against Croatian nationals of Christian confession as "infidels." This Muslim contingent has a heavy Turkish and Afghan Mujahideen component and is funded and equipped by countries like Saudi Arabia and Turkey, the two main Islamic allies of the recent Anglo-American colonial war in the Persian Gulf, Desert Storm.

The geo-strategic picture

Once Bosnia were defeated, the theater of war would shift to the southern Balkans and open the way for Turkey to return to the Balkan stage in a revived version of the defunct

Ottoman Empire, which once controlled the whole peninsula. A Croatian source predicted: "Turkey has abandoned Bosnia, but will draw the line in the southern Balkans." Of course, this would be a Turkey which had lost all claim to national dignity, and become a mere pawn in the hands of the Anglo-American oligarchy.

The trigger for a Balkan war may be the Kosova province in Serbia, which in the Yugoslav federation was an autonomous province because the majority of the population are ethnic Albanians. Serbian repression has made Kosova into a social tinderbox. So far, it has not turned into a war zone primarily because of Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, the moral leader of the Kosova Albanians, who has waged a non-violent struggle for rights in the footsteps of the American civil rights hero, Dr. Martin Luther King. Dr. Rugova's tactics have frustrated the leadership in the Serbian capital, Belgrade, which is itching for a pretext to repeat in Kosova the "ethnic cleansing" of non-Serbs conducted in Bosnia through mass murder and expulsions.

Under heavy Serbian provocation, resistance may not remain non-violent. Kosova by mid-November had become tenser than at any time since the bloody eruptions in March 1981, when scores were killed. If war breaks out in Kosova, it will tend to draw in the two bordering states: Albania, for obvious reasons, and the Republic of Macedonia, which has a 25% ethnic Albanian minority.

Once that occurs, the likelihood is high that every other Balkan state—Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, even Romania—will be in the fray, each allied with what it sees as "the enemy of my enemy." Turkey on Nov. 19 concluded its second military pact with Albania this year, when Defense Minister Nevzat Ayaz visited Tirana. It commits Turkey to fight with Albania in any conflict with Serbia. Following the pattern of past Balkan wars, Bulgaria would invade the Republic of Macedonia to prevent a southward extension of Greater Serbia. Greece would view as a vital threat the combination of a Turkish military presence on its northern border, and Bulgaria's expansion into Macedonia, and ally openly with Serbia. It has already done so de facto, witness the Greek government's role in preventing recognition of Macedonia's independence.

At the higher, geo-strategic level, this scenario includes an Anglo-American design to install Turkey as the dominant regional satrapy. Greece, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, and for that matter, Serbia, too, would slaughter one another, and Turkey eventually could pick up the pieces. While Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel was in London on Nov. 22-24 for talks with John Major on the Balkan crisis, Turkish military officials were holding secret talks in Sofia, Bulgaria. On Nov. 24, the German daily *Frankfurter Rundschau*, citing "western intelligence agencies," reported that the Turks demanded transit rights for Turkish forces across Bulgaria into the Republic of Macedonia and Albania when war breaks out.

Was Windsor Castle fire an act of God?

by Mark Burdman

Has a higher benevolent power happily decided that the era of the British House of Mountbatten-Windsor is coming to an end? Numerous telltale signs point to that conclusion.

In an unusually candid Nov. 24 declaration, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II confessed to a City of London audience attending a lunch in her honor given by the Lord Mayor of London, that the year 1992, which is her 40th "jubilee" year as reigning monarch, was a "horrible year" for the royal family, rather than the year of celebration it was supposed to have been. It is very rare, in Britain, for the monarch to speak so openly about the royal family's tribulations.

A 'horrible year'

Waxing philosophical, the monarch characterized 1992 as "not a year on which I shall look back with undiluted pleasure. In the words of one of my more sympathetic correspondents, it has turned out to be an *annus horribilis*." According to the Nov. 25 *Daily Telegraph*, this reference, in Latin, to the horrible year, "raised many eyebrows" among those in the audience.

The statement was made against the backdrop of a new round of scandals centering on a reported extramarital affair of her eldest son and heir Prince Charles, the publicity about which has reached such a level in the continental European and British tabloid press, that there is now speculation that he may renounce his claim to the throne. Should this happen, one London insider affirmed, "this royal line would be doomed." The Charles scandal is the latest, in a year of scandals that have hit all of her brood.

Even worse, only four days before her City of London address, a major fire had broken out in Windsor Castle, the historic royal residence and frequent locale of state visits to the the United Kingdom. The fire raged for hours, and before it was brought under control, had caused tens of millions of dollars in damage to the royal premises. On hearing reports of what was going on at Windsor Castle, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II rushed to the scene. Her son Andrew, Duke of York, told the press that his mother was "absolutely devastated." Prince Charles echoed this on Nov. 22: "It's a nightmare, and I keep hoping to wake up! The whole family was devastated."

Police, firefighters, and Buckingham Palace officials are adamantly excluding terrorism as a cause of the fire. The